

Quality Education News

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Issue 22

May 2012



A quarterly publication issued by the South African Quality Institute in the interest of promoting educational excellence.

Striving towards Olympic-quality results

Dear Friend of Quality Education

On Friday 27 July 2012, billions of TV viewers will be watching the Opening Ceremony of the London Olympics. Most likely, London will put on another event filled with panache, pomp and precision in the British tradition. For every competitor privileged to walk behind his nation's flag around the Olympic Stadium track on the Big Day, the occasion will be unforgettable.

Emotions will run high; the capacity-filled stadium will applaud and welcome the medal-chasers from over two hundred nations. In the midst of the fanfare, there will be many competitors who will be mindful of their own personal tough experiences leading up to the spectacular day. They will remember the selection trials held in their home countries and how they were rigorously assessed. They made the grade to go to London and perform on the world's biggest sports stage.

On the South African educational stage, which is the province that gets the gold medal for performance? Based on the Grade Twelve results over recent years, the Western Cape takes gold. What do they do to be the best? They have a number of strategies. One of them is the attention given to ongoing whole-school assessment.

In the Western Cape, the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) process is given much attention. The long-term goal is to have every primary school visited by an evaluation team every five years and once in three years for every high school. The provincial education department works hard to achieve this goal. In one Cape Town circuit, for example, six of the thirty schools have had a WSE. Immediately after the evaluation process had taken place, identified problems were highlighted and intervention strategies put in place.

Members of their WSE teams have professional credibility. Team members have been role-model school principals or have successfully held senior management posts. If a WSE team member lacks excellent performance at senior management level, that person is on the team as a subject specialist of teaching distinction.

A teacher union stated its rejection of the introduction of performance contracts for teachers and principals because the, 'existing regulations are sufficient'. (Business Day, 28 March 2012, page 1). Really?! Please look at the different provincial Grade Twelve results over the last five years. If we truly want to improve education in our schools, the WSE process is a winner. The process deals decisively with corrupt, incapable and unwilling-to-work staff members.

Presently, the Western Cape is leading the race towards achieving Olympic-quality education. They're the benchmark; they're the Olympic torch bearer. Let's assess all our schools in a fair, professional and unbiased manner. Educational achievements will follow. Then all nine education departments can hold the torch high for education excellence.

Richard Hayward

2012 School Governance Award Competition

A quality school and a quality school governing body go together. When the school is good, there's likely to be a good governing body guiding and supporting it. Last year Proudly South African (PSA) and the CGF Research Institute inaugurated a competition to salute such schools.

South African schools whether private or public, are warmly invited to enter the 2012 competition. The winning school will receive the PSA – CGF Research Institute trophy and runners-up will be awarded certificates. Prize winners will be invited to attend the Proudly South African Homegrown Awards ceremony to be held on 28 September at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg.

For more information, please contact Dalene Du Preez at PSA (dalene@proudlysa.co.za: 011-327-7778). The PSA website is www.proudlysa.co.za



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed to those schools benefiting from their participation in the MySchool programme. MySchool acts as a conduit which raises and delivers essential funding for education and social development on a sustainable basis. This enables members of the community to participate in the future development of our nation.





Yes, *YOU* are an influential leader!

Many folk don't believe that they personally are leaders. They might mention names of business and political leaders but can't believe that they're leaders too. When teachers are asked who the leaders in their own school are, they often list the names of the senior management team. The fact that they personally are already leaders in their classrooms or as sports team coaches, doesn't seem to fit into their understanding of leadership.

Displays of leadership behaviour can start at a very young age. Even toddlers on a jumping castle could be vying for leadership! One toddler leader might be trying to encourage playmates to be brave, to jump even further and higher!

John Maxwell has famously defined leadership as 'influence and nothing else'. The leader influences others to do what he wants them to do. Positive influential leadership gets followers to follow willingly.

In our own leadership position, how do we influence others? How do others influence us? Ways of influencing others can range in manner from being very negative to most positive. Seven levels of influence that are found in any school or organisation are:

1 Force (extremely negative)

This is the crudest form of influencing others. The influencer threatens to use force to get people to do as they're told. There are still teachers in 2012 even though corporal punishment is banned, who threaten learners with thrashings for poor work performance. The student is influenced to work hard not because of an intrinsic desire but because of fear.

2 Intimidation (negative)

'Do it my way or suffer the consequences,' seems to be the slogan of the intimidator. The intimidated person knows that if they don't comply, there will be unpleasant happenings. A single example is the Head of Department (HOD) who demands that teachers set exam papers in a narrow prescriptive manner. Teachers aren't allowed to use their professional initiative. Defy the HOD at your peril where you could get a public-dressing down in front of colleagues.

3 Manipulation (negative)

A sly tactic used by the manipulative influencer on others is to dish up 'half-truths.' Selective use is made of facts or information. A staff member, for example, is encouraged to take on responsibility for a particular subject. What has been 'forgotten' is to tell the person is that a major curriculum revamp is imminent. The revamp will entail the teacher attending a week course in the next holidays.

4 Exchange (neutral)

Many leaders influence others through exchange or 'barter'. It's usually reflected in monetary terms. A teacher does a variety of tasks in exchange for a monthly salary. When extra work is required, extra money is put on the table. The school or education department pays, the teacher works. No extra pay, no extra work!

An unfortunate unintended consequence of this level of influence is the lack of commitment. Teachers could be reluctant to debate or discuss how to further improve the school. Their pre-occupations centre on conditions of service and the salary package.

5 Persuasion (positive)

All effective influencers use persuasion. The leader influences others through two major factors. Firstly, interpersonal relationships are sound. He is seen as honest, likeable and a person of integrity. Therefore, when he gives the reasons for making changes, his credibility isn't questioned. Secondly, the persuasive leader has good communication skills.

6 Motivation (positive)

Every effective leader understands what 'makes people tick.' The leader knows how to motivate a person into action.

There are a number of theories on motivation of which Maslow's is often cited. Maslow states that there are five levels of need starting at the most basic one. The levels are:

- i. Basic biological and physiological needs: air, food, drink and sleep

- ii. Safety needs: law, protection, security and order
- iii. Belongingness and love needs: affection, family and relationships
- iv. Esteem needs: achievement, reputation, responsibility and status
- v. Self-actualisation: fulfilment and personal growth

Different motivation buttons need to be pressed for different staff members. In the same school, for example, two staff members could be motivated to organise a sports programme during the school holidays. The one could be

motivated because of wanting to be more accepted in the school community (3rd level need), the other for gaining a reputation as being a good organiser (4th level need).

7 Spiritual authority (very positive)

The highest level of influence is that of the spiritual authority of the leader. The follower looks up to the leader because of that person's absolute integrity and set of personal values. Such a leader is seen as a role model who is inspirational ... a person to be willingly followed.

SKILLS OF INFLUENTIAL LEADERS

A positive influential leader has certain skills. Ten of the more common ones that you need are:

- **An active listener:** An influential leader is a good listener. You need to listen intently to not only what is being said but also to what is left unsaid.
- **Conflict resolution skills:** Trying to influence others can cause conflict. Not everyone wants to be influenced to go along with your vision. You need to remain cool when the emotional temperature rises; you need to handle conflicting viewpoints in a sensitive but sensible manner.
- **Interpersonal skills:** An influential leader works hard at being on good terms with others. When there's friendship, there's often willing following.
- **Factual knowledge:** The leader is knowledgeable about the facts that are pertinent to the task at hand. During the task there will be questions posed by the followers. When the leader knows the answers, his credibility increases.
- **Stakeholder balance:** Every influential leader needs juggling skills! The leader needs to keep the different stakeholders happy. No two groups working on the same project see it in the identical manner. (Think of the different viewpoints around a new tuck shop menu. Most parents want it stocked with healthy foodstuff; many learners would prefer junk food to be sold!)
- **Management of diversity:** South Africa is a rainbow of cultures, languages and religions. The influential leader works hard at understanding the diversity. He strives to get the different strands to work harmoniously together.
- **Strategic planner:** The leader has 'the big picture' in his mind. Followers turn to him for direction and guidance.
- **Team builder:** A number of individuals are turned into a single team by the leader. The aim is to take up the Three Musketeers' motto of, 'One for all and all for one.'
- **Technical skill:** There'll be times when the leader needs to have specific skills to move a project forward. If he lacks the skills, he uses the team members' skills and openly appreciates their assistance.
- **Verbal and written communication:** Much influence is achieved through verbal and written skills. Two outstanding communicators are Barack Obama and Oprah Winfrey. Every influential leader needs to continually improve their speaking and writing skills.

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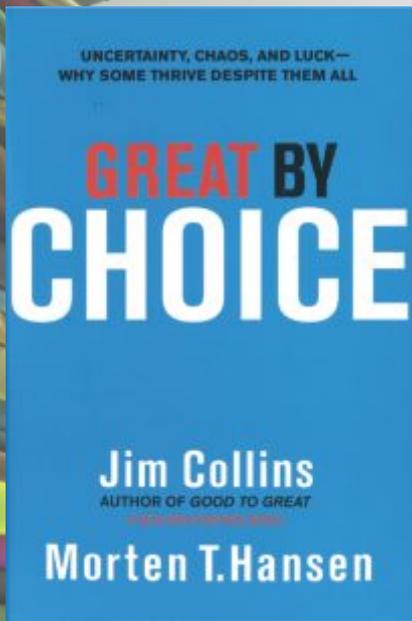
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Read at least this chapter



Exclusive Books: R 400

In 2001 Jim Collins published a world-wide business book bestseller titled: *Good to great*. His latest book *Great by choice* was co-authored with Morten Hansen and published last year.

There are commonalities of excellent businesses and schools. One of them is a focus on continuous improvement. The title of chapter three of *Great by choice* is: '20 Mile March'. The chapter explains why so many plans of organisations fail. They have grand plans which might soar spectacularly but suddenly plummet into oblivion. (Remember the negative fall-out of Outcomes Based Education in many schools even though it was given such initial 'hype').

Achieving businesses and schools are close to the forefront but not at the very front of new ideas. There's a disciplined, cautionary approach to new ideas yet they're not scared to confront big challenges. They realise that the best ideas need continuous tweaking. You won't win in the end if you're too busy unthinkingly rushing ahead. These organisations refuse to get swept up on a wave of enthusiasm; they know that there will also be ebbs and back-wash factors. As Collins observes, most adults are able to walk across the entire width (3,300 miles) of North America. All that's required is to discipline yourself to do only twenty miles a day!



Karen Walstra having a chuckle with one of the attendees

Making a world of difference

Every quality school has an ongoing staff development programme. It recognises the importance of continuous improvement. A smaller number of these schools willingly use their resources to help other schools.

One such school with a giving heart is St Stithians College, Randburg. Without any fanfare it runs the Thandulwazi Rokunda project. Teachers from across Gauteng and neighbouring provinces arrive at the school on Saturday mornings to take part in a wide range of professional enrichment programmes.

Karen Walstra is the director of the project. She cheerfully coordinates the enormous logistics needed for the 900 attendees and her team of teachers. A marketing slogan for St Stithians is: 'A South African school making a world of difference.' For the teachers who attend the programmes, the school is making a world of difference to their professional lives.



Adding Quality to your profession

SAQI has a range of school leadership and management programmes. They focus on the practices and principles of Total Quality Education (TQE). Where requested, programmes are adapted to the professional needs of a school. Poor schools are sponsored. For more details, please contact either Vanessa du Toit (012-349-5006; vanessa@saqi.co.za) or Richard Hayward (011-888-3262; rpdhayward@yahoo.com)