COMPLEXITY FITNESS:
META-SKILLS FOR NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY

Inspiring excellence. Transforming lives.

COMPLEXITY·FIT

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complexity fit

Do you want to explore the beauty of **complexity** and learn more of how to navigate uncertainty?

Are you overwhelmed at times and experiencing conflicting emotions?

Tired & Wired.
Excited & Numb.

Do you often feel stuck between the proverbial **rock and a hard place.** Needing to make decisions or plan for the future with too little (or too much) information?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions above, this programme is for you.

The context that senior decision-makers have to function in has become increasingly complex, uncertain, and volatile in the last decade. The mechanistic and deterministic paradigms that have shaped management best practice is no longer sufficient. In this entangled and messy world, we all need to focus on becoming complexity fit. Luckily, complexity is not new. We already know how to navigate it, however in work contexts, these skills have been under-utilised or even ignored. In a way our complexity fitness muscles have become weak. This programme will create a context where participants can flex those muscles again and improve their adaptive capacity, sense- and response ability and mindful creativity .

META-SKILLS FOR COMPLEXITY FITNESS

An important part of this programme is to introduce participants to the meta skills needed to thrive in uncertainty. This means (among other things) the ability to recognise complexity and distinguish it from other kinds of systemic contexts; making sense of messy contexts in order to improve our decision-making and interventions; managing psychological, emotional and physical responses to the inherent uncertainty in order to reduce stress and overwhelm; and understanding how to bring our full humanity including our imagination and curiosity into our work in order to find novel ways towards new adjacent possibilities.

In this programme we re-author our relationship with complexity and uncertainty. Discover how the meta skills of being **COOL** can support your navigation of complex challenges.

Meta-skill

a high order skill that serves as a catalyst for learning and building new skills faster.

"When the playful me shows up, I am ready to be a serious learner ... a culture of playfulness I closely related to the capacity to learn."
– Rosemary Sutcliff

We **COURAGEOUSLY** enter the unknown space of learning together. We question the Status Quo. We mindfully navigate the creative boundary between knowing and unknowing. We cultivate the ability to respond despite our fear, not react mindlessly.

We are **OPEN** to the ambiguity of multiple perspectives, paradox and questions we don't know the answers to. We engage with difference with curiosity, not judgment. We learn and unlearn continuously.

C O O L

We are keen **OBSERVERS**. We notice... moments, patterns, our environment & our own internal responses. Continually zooming in & out is a habit we intentionally cultivate.

We practice **LIGHTNESS**. We don't take ourselves (or others) too seriously. We hold our own opinions lightly. We show up with humour. We value beauty, non-doing, play and imagination.

OUR LEARNING PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Becoming complexity fit is a way of being, a journey of continuous learning and questioning. Therefore, our intent with this program is to create a unique learning journey that is in itself complex. As instructors, our main role is not to teach or provide new answers, but to catalyse new questions and a habit of continuous learning.

We are guided by the following principles:

1 The role of the instructors is to provide new language, provocative questions and a safe container for learning.

2 We acknowledge that participants come from different contexts, that they need different things, and that we cannot presuming we know what those things are. We commit to multiple learning paths.

3 We don't believe there are 'best practices' for complex fitness. Every situation is different. Every participant brings their own context-specific knowledge, curiosities and intuitions into the learning environment. These inform our learning.

4 We see learners as nomads traversing their personal learning networks in their own ways in the context of a community of co-learners, and, by doing so, work to co-create wonderful and unique learning "rhizomes". *

5 We value questions and curiosity over answers and "being right". Learning how to deal with uncertainty, and the discomfort of moving forwards despite not being sure what the right answer is – that is the critical step towards creating new knowledge.

6 We learn out loud … we (ALL) are active learners and sense-makers, not passive consumers of content.

*(*adapted from Chris Cormier)*

What is the difference between learning and life?

None.

When is something living NOT learning?

Never.

– Nora Bateson

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

This SLP comprises of the following six learning units:

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME

- Learn to manage overwhelm and stress
- Find ways to get unstuck
- Improved decision-making
- Renewed curiosity, imagination and creativity
- Gain understanding in complex relational dynamics

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of the programme, participants will gain an increased ability to:

Recognise and make sense of their external context (complex adaptive systems and how they are different from ordered systems)

Recognize the impact of complex systems on self and others (Mindfulness)

Illustrate an increased ability (fitness) to respond rather than react to complex situations

Apply the meta-skills learned to be effective in complexity

LEARNING UNIT 1

Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)

Understanding what complexity it, how to recognise it, and what the implications are for your life and work.

LEARNING UNIT 2

Mindfulness in the context of CAS

Understand the importance of cultivating mindfulness practices to manage your nervous system responses to uncertainty, increase your mental capacity and improve decision-making.

LEARNING UNIT 3

Cultivating a systems view

Complex problems present as patterns. Learn how to notice systemic patterns, practice perspective taking and zoom in and out to notice your internal patterns and biases as well.

LEARNING UNIT 4

Catalysing innovation

Innovation involves serendipity and improvisation. Learn how to playfully experiment, show up with curiosity, employ our imagination and span boundaries.

LEARNING UNIT 5

Leaning into emergence

A key concept in complexity is messy coherence. In this learning unit we will explore how to shift from alignment to coherence, how to embrace ambiguity and improvise.

LEARNING UNIT 6

Navigating uncertainty

Uncertainty is part of the flow of life. In this learning unit, we will explore how to befriend uncertainty, reframe change and learn more about flow and the importance of rhythm.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Individuals earmarked for senior/executive roles in the organisation OR those currently in such roles, but with the need to broaden their skillset; entrepreneurs; OD practitioners.

HOW IT WORKS:

The programme starts with an online orientation session with the purpose of introducing the participants to the methodology and approach, the technology and LMS, and pod assignments.

Participants will be allocated to "Pods" that will meet virtually in between virtual classroom sessions. Pod interactions will tie into the Assessment Strategy.

A flipped classroom approach is utilised i.e. participants will be expected to perform preparatory self-study/research to optimise contact time. To this end, self-paced learning content will be provided for each of the learning units.

The program consists of 6 x 2-hour contact sessions (virtual classroom), supplemented by self-paced learning modules and "learning pod" reflection and working sessions.

The assessment approach will facilitate a sense-making experience within your chosen context – this is an eye-opener!

Mode of delivery
Online

Duration
12 weeks online

Accreditation
After the successful completion of the programme, the student will receive a certificate issued and endorsed by the UFS.

All short learning programmes can be customised and offered on an in-house basis.

Academic level: 7

Total Learning Time: 60 hours

ENQUIRIES

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