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MARYGROVE COLLEGE

Master of Arts in Educational Leadership

Principal Coaching

Building a Community and Improving
Teacher Quality & Student Performance
in 3 Simple Movements

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EDL

Principal Coaching:

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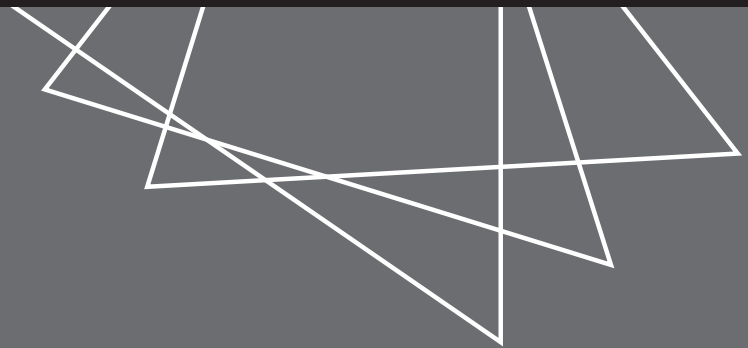


“You can accomplish anything in life, provided you do not mind who gets the credit.”

HARRY S. TRUMAN

“You got a real attitude problem, McFly. You’re a slacker.”

MR. STRICKLAND—*BACK TO THE FUTURE* (1985)





The Role of School Principals Has Changed

To outsiders, the role of a principal might seem straight forward: maintaining a timely and well-greased bus schedule; making sure the supplies are ordered and stocked; meeting with parents and addressing their concerns. And if you went to the movies in the 1980s, well, you know that a principal's chief responsibility is combing the halls for truants—and more specifically, maintaining a strict disdain for “slackers!”

Of course the role of a principal has *always* been significantly more important—and complicated—than the commonly-recycled Hollywood buffoonery we saw in *Back to the Future* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Research proves this.

What is true, however, is that in the last few decades, the role of principals has changed dramatically. Now in addition to all of the administrative and managerial duties he or she organizes behind the scenes, recent scholarship suggests that principals are also expected to:

- Design, implement and refine effective curricula
- Offer **instructional support** and improve teaching and learning
- Understand the **importance of ongoing student and leadership assessment**
- Motivate and inspire their community of students and teachers

THE IMPACT OF AN EFFECTIVE PRINCIPAL

Schools that have highly effective principals:

- *Perform 5 to 10 percentage points higher than if led by an average principal*
- *Have fewer student and teacher absences*
- *Have effective teachers stay longer*
- *Typically replace ineffective teachers with more effective teachers*
- *Have principals who are more likely to stay for at least 3 years*

HOW DOES ONE PERSON ACCOMPLISH ALL OF THIS?

Recent scholarship does suggest that principals are a key ingredient to improving a school's performance. In fact, according to Louis et al., “Leadership is found to be second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors that affect student learning.” Even so, it would be a fallacy to suggest that they can, in the words of Jim Hull, a senior policy analyst for the National School Boards Association's Center for Public Education, “ride into a school on a white horse” and do it on their own. So let's be realistic: If school leaders are going to fulfill the new and increasingly difficult challenges of this role, they must engage in a collaborative, communal approach to mentoring. One effective way to accomplish this is to begin with **formative principal coaching**.



What is Formative Coaching?

Formative coaching is a term coined by [Maya Sadder and Gabrielle Nidus](#). Essentially, it describes an approach to literacy coaching that uses the classroom and student work as the foundation for mentoring and professional development.

Unlike, say, workshops and theory transferal—all of which take place *outside* of the classroom and can make mentoring seem somewhat vague and hypothetical—**formative coaching** is integrated directly into the classroom experience. It is also an ongoing, collaborative (as opposed to a seemingly punitive) way for **educational leadership** to support their teachers.

HOW DO I GATHER DATA?

Supporting students and teachers will require formative data, but fear not: this data is essentially your environment. Data is contained in the classroom conversations and activities you overhear and in student work and portfolios. Learning how to use this information—and showing teachers how to use it too—will help you create a collaborative, self-reflective community of learners.

Observe student work



Examine formative data



**Bridge the gap between professional development
and actual classroom practice**

GABRIELLE NIDUS AND MAYA SADDER



The Formative Coaching Cycle in 3 Movements*

MOVEMENT 1: *PRE-OBSERVATION*

As principal, you set up a meeting with Mr. Jones. During the meeting, he explains that the learning objective is for his students to use textual evidence to support their ideas in discussion groups.

After this, the two of you compile a plan—this will help determine how to assess student progress towards this goal—and set up a date for the observation. Your plan might look something like this:

GOAL FOR STUDENT LEARNING	DATA TO COLLECT
<i>For students to use textual evidence to support their ideas during their small-group discussion.</i>	<i>Principal and Mr. Jones will move from group to group, listening and recording how students express their ideas and use the text to support those ideas.</i> <i>Principal will also note how Mr. Jones engages with students to ensure that his goal for student learning is achieved.</i>

MOVEMENT 2: *DURING THE LESSON*

You arrive at the class. During the activity, you observe and document the techniques Mr. Jones uses. Let's say that you notice how Mr. Jones models the activity first by using post-it notes to flag relevant parts of the text. As you walk around the class, both Mr. Jones and you jot down bits of conversation and record how students incorporate the “post-it strategy” modeled by Mr. Jones into their group discussion.

Important Note: Since your notes will create the context for your post-observation meeting, it is important that they are detailed and specific. Additionally, it might be useful to predetermine not only which students will be in each group, but where each student will sit. That way, the principal—who is most likely not as familiar with the students' names—will be able to identify and generate more substantive and student-specific feedback.

PRINCIPAL COACHING OBSERVATION SESSION




MOVEMENT 3: *POST-OBSERVATION*

During this movement, Mr. Jones and you review the data collected during the observation. This is what you noticed during the activity: Although most of the students were using the post-it notes to mark significant parts in the text, some of the students were simply quoting passages that did not sufficiently support their ideas. Mr. Jones explains that he noticed the same thing.


Since you had a roster and knew the names of the students in each group, you were able to tell Mr. Jones which students struggled with the exercise. Mr. Jones jots down the names and the two of you brainstorm for ways that he might respond to the needs of these specific students. Both of you conclude that although using post-it notes is useful, Mr. Jones may need to backtrack—by creating a rubric or assignment sheet—and show students how to choose evidence that supports their idea.

Both Mr. Jones and you know that **continuous student assessment** is essential to his class's success, so you jot down the follow-up plan and schedule a subsequent observation date.

* Adapted from Gabrielle Nidus and Maya Sadler's article, "The Principal as Formative Coach."
Photo used courtesy of Jennifer Cogswell: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cityyear/5078918428/>



More than ever, **educational leadership** is expected to successfully manage the institution and also improve teaching and learning. The effective administrator also needs to be a visionary! Marygrove College offers a [Master of Arts in Educational Leadership](#), a program that will give you the tools, advanced knowledge and skills necessary to lead a high-performing school.



You should also know that Marygrove College has reduced tuition rates for our [Master of Arts in Educational Leadership](#) Program by 19 percent! This is one step—amongst a few others—that the college is taking to ensure that a Marygrove education is an achievable, financially-sustainable investment.

A Master of Arts in Educational Leadership is a State Approved Administrative Certification Program that provides candidates with the knowledge, dispositions, and skills to manage and lead today's schools.

Courses are offered both on-line and on-campus. The program prepares the educational leader to promote the success of all students by facilitating a vision of success that engages the school staff, families, and community members in research-based practices that lead to increased student achievement. It also prepares administrators for K-12 school principal, supervisory, and director opportunities.

Candidates completing the program will be eligible for Administrative Certification K-12. The program focuses on the principal as the instructional leader and the chief architect of change in the school. In addition to a thorough grounding in the fundamental principles of administrative and management theory and capacity building, students will be introduced to the concept of the principal as change agent working closely with teachers, parents, and community members to create a supportive environment where teachers can teach and students can learn.

PROGRAM OFFERED

Master of Arts in Educational Leadership leading to School Administrator Certification

The program consists of 36 credit hours of course work, including 11 core classes and one sociology elective.

More Information: 1-855-628-6279 or onlinegrad@marygrove.edu

Program Coordinator: James J. Rivard, Ed.D



MARYGROVE COLLEGE

Quick Facts

PRESIDENT (Since 2006)

David J. Fike, Ph.D., is the 8th president of Marygrove College.

LOCATION

Founded in 1905 in Monroe, Mich., by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), Marygrove was later relocated to Detroit in 1927. Marygrove has six buildings that sit on 53 acres.

CAMPUS

Marygrove College is a private, liberal arts, co-educational institution.

ACCREDITATION

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)

Michigan State Department of Education

Council of Social Work and Education

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16 Certificate Programs

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Marygrove College has been known for excellence in teaching since 1905 and was one of the first U.S. colleges to offer the convenience and flexibility of obtaining a master's degree via distance learning. With over 28,000 graduates since 1990, Marygrove has a history of serving students with a program that is relevant to today's working educators, with outcomes that improve classroom practice and help graduates fulfill their career aspirations.



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