

Coaching Future Innovative Leaders Across Disciplines

Marcel Lebrun, Plymouth State University, United States

The IAFOR International Conference on Education in Hawaii 2024
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This study's focus was how to coach and mentor students, faculty, leaders, and administrators using three different Leadership Coaching models (FUEL, GROW and Transformational Leadership Model). Each Model will be discussed in terms of their use, effectiveness, challenges, and weaknesses. Specific highlights will be presented from an ongoing 4-year study of Doctor of Education (EdD) candidates in a doctoral program at Plymouth State University. Purpose of the study was to investigate and apply different coaching models to build retention, increase completion rates and foster transformational opportunities for students for new employment options upon the completion of their degree.

Keywords: Higher Education, Mentoring, Coaching, Doctoral EdD Programs

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Introduction

Candidates in Doctor of Education (EdD) programs tend to struggle to completion of their dissertation and their programs. Studies show that 40-60% of students do not complete their programs, (Lyons- Lawrence, 2022). Plymouth State University found in New Hampshire, NH. has had a EdD program since 2009. Graduation rates since the inception of the program were in the 80-90% completion rates for the years prior to the substantial change in leadership 2017 and programming in 2019.

In 2017-18, the faculty and director of the program decided to join the prestigious Carnegie Program for Educational Doctorate as the basis for the new revisions in the program. Director of the program leads the massive curriculum changes with the first cohort admitted to the new program in May 2019. The cohort began with 10 students. The director who serves as both advisor and mentor began using three different models within the coaching and advising sessions with the students within this program. It was at this time that the coaching and mentoring was decided to advise students and build retention and graduation levels. A time log was kept from 2018 on documenting every appointment with students and the purpose of the meeting. It was at that time the director in conjunction with the student introduced the model that would best address the concerns, growth or transformation of the student and their leadership skills as a doctoral student.

Program Demographics

- 3 Doctor of Education Programs
- Leadership, Learning and Community
- Higher Education in Administration and Leadership
- Higher Education in Curriculum and Learning

Student Demographics

- Ages 33 to 70
- Locations: USA, Canada, Kenya, Peru, China, Vietnam, India, France
- Disciplines: Education (K-12) teachers, principals, superintendents, special education, counselling, curriculum and instruction, Speech and Language, Library Science, Media and Technology, Wellness, Mental Health, Youth Violence and At Risk
- Abuse and Trauma
- Nursing, Business, Science, Military, Dental hygiene, Urban Planning, Mathematics, Agricultural Science, English, Environmental Science, Psychology
- Higher Education: Deans, Vice President, Residential life, Student Affairs, Campus Accessibility and Disabilities, Advancement, Faculty Development and Training, Professional Development. Data management, Internships

Graduation and Retention Rates

In table 1 please find the summary data for each of the cohorts for the last six years. The chart is divided by the following categories: Year, Number of applications for the program, number of admitted students, retention, and graduation of the students within each year Cohort.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Program	Original 8-year time frame	Original 8-year time frame	Original 8-year time frame	Revised CPED 4-year time frame	Revised CPED 4-year time frame	Revised CPED 4-year time frame	Revised CPED 4-year time frame
Total Applicants	20	7	26	12	12	13	16
Enrollment	17	4	22	10	10	8	10
Retention	16 - 94%	4 - 100%	16 - 77%	9 - 90%	10 - 100%	100%	100%
Graduation	15 - 94%	3 - 75%	95%	100%	90% there are still 2 remaining	Students have 4 years to graduate by 2025	Students have 4 years to graduate by 2026

Table 1. Application, Retention and Graduation Rates

As indicated in the above chart the numbers are indicating a rise in graduation and retention rate due to the use of the new format for coaching and mentoring students during advising throughout their four-year program.

The three models were the FUEL model, Transformative Leadership Model and GROW model. Each model will be discussed throughout this paper.

FUEL Coaching Model

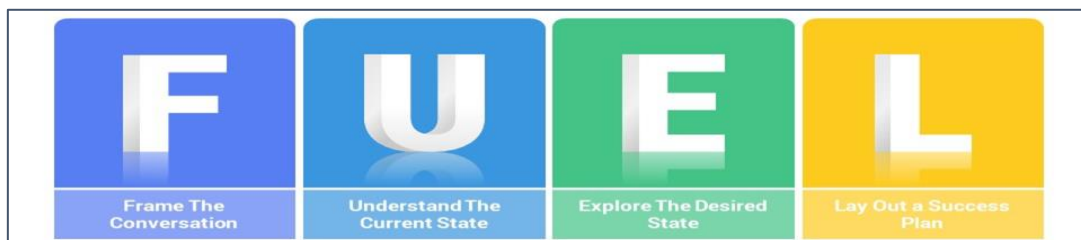


Figure 1. John Zenger and Kathleen Stinnett developed the FUEL model in the book, *The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow*.

The framework was developed to drive conversations around behavioral coaching needs. The FUEL coaching model is versatile and pairs open-ended questions from the coach with the coachee's analysis/ownership of their own performance. The FUEL model uses a strengths-based accountability approach (Zenger & Stinnett, 2010).



Figure 2. FUEL Model of Coaching

www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-use-fuel-model-coaching-step-guide-leaders-joseph-abraham

Strengths of the Model

Ownership in a development plan comes from the coachee's buy-in. This is the main benefit of using the FUEL coaching model.

- Buy-in is increased when the coachee feels they have control over the process.
- Coachees have input in the situation, solution, and action steps.
- This ownership creates a strong coach/coachee relationship.
- Increased motivation & engagement.
- Increases coaching skills through collaboration - higher EQ (The Peak Performance Center, 2022).

Challenges of the Model

Encouraging buy-in from the coachee can be challenging; this takes a certain level of trust and high EQ/SQ from the coach.

FUEL is designed to achieve behavioral changes, often addressing revealing questions that can be hard to discuss and confront.

One objective of the FUEL coaching model is to have the coachee feel in control of the process; this takes patience, empathy, and flexibility - which can take time.

Coaching does not happen in a vacuum, so a FUEL coach should be present, caring, inspiring, rigorous, caring, and inspiring – these qualities are crucial to ensure results, however, can often be demanding of the coach (Blackbyrn, 2023).

Personal Skills Needed for Successful Implementation

Coaching Students over a 4-year time span indicated that the students needed the following characteristics and dispositions to be successful through the coaching and mentoring. Depending on the issues presented it became very clear very quickly whether the FUEL Model would be the correct model to use in the advising and mentoring sessions.

They needed:

- Emotional Intelligence - EQ
- Spiritual Intelligence - SQ
- Patience
- Vigilance - self-awareness
- Prudence
- Growth Mindset – challenge their beliefs
- Vision - be able to identify goals that were realistic
- Transparent Communication - rapport
- Ethical Decision Making – guidance to identify their moral compass

In conclusion this model was used successfully about 75% of the time. The student needed to have a strong foundation in who they were and how to solve problems. If the student was in crisis mode it needed to be addressed so that the student was able to proceed through the steps successfully.

The GROW Model

GOALS: REALITY: OPTIONS: WILL

This model was used when students were seeking guidance and coaching on how they could grow and develop within the program as their identity was evolving and changing as a doctoral student. These students were seeking self-improvement and ongoing change.

Goals needed to be articulated early in the session. The student was asked a series of questions to establish the goals. We needed to start by setting a SMART goal. (Kunos, 2017) What do you want to do or where do you want to go? Student goal will determine the focus of the coaching. (Grant, 2011).

Reality: What are the factors that impact you from achieving the goal? (Kunos, 2017) Where are you now versus where do you want to be? What do you need to achieve your goal?

Options: What possible routes/actions can be taken to reach the goal? (Whitmore, 2017) Think about it as if there were no obstacles standing in your way. (Whitmore, 2017).

Will: TWO Parts: accountability + follow-up/feedback. Commit to a plan of action. (Deiorio et al., 2022) What needs to happen in the future to convert this idea into an action /result? (Whitmore, 2017). What is your motivation to reach your goal?

Strengths of the GROW Model

- Simple, straightforward design: easy to understand and follow, can be implemented for group coaching or 1:1 coaching (Kunos, 2017)
- The flexibility of the model: can start at any stage, and revisit stages as needed (Wilson, 2020)
- Bridges the gaps between present and future: reality check-in (Thipatdee, 2019)
- Aligns with the SMART goals approach: adding onto already existing, familiar approaches (Kunos, 2017)
- Promotes self-efficacy: highlights awareness and responsibility (Mogonea, 2022)

Challenges of the GROW Model

The student needed to have the following characteristics to be able to use the model successfully.

- Emotional Intelligence: Hearing and understanding differing viewpoints and/or suggestions
- Forward Thinking
- Identifying and presenting potential problems or idea shortcomings
- Positive emotional contagion
 - Positivity about the outcome and the ability to implement change
 - Confidence in what I am presenting and my clear vision

This model was used successfully with students who were not in chaos, we able to see what a future could hold and be ready to challenge themselves in ways of personal growth and development. This model had a very high success rate of about 96% when student interacted with the director during advising and coaching sessions.

Transformative Leadership Model

The transformative leadership model was used with students who contacted the director for advising as they neared the end of their program with the successful defense of their dissertation. These students were wondering what the next steps would be once they achieved their degree. The students at this level were considering life changes as well as advancement in their chosen disciplines. They wanted to explore what the future could look like now that they were EdD graduates.

The transformational model conceptual framework is found in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Transformational Model

The four key components of the TLM are:

Idealized Influence: Which is practice what you preach mentality, charismatic leadership, Lead with integrity (Ugochukwu, 2023).

Inspirational Motivation: Establish a clear vision. Carry oneself with optimism about the future, radiate positivity (Ugochukwu, 2023).

Intellectual Stimulation: Inspire innovative thinking, Intentional conversations about the future, (Ugochukwu, 2023).

Individual Consideration: Personalized supervision, Requires high level of emotional intelligence, (Ugochukwu, 2023).

Strengths of the Transformational Leadership Model

Increase in Morale and in Retention: Transformational leaders make employees feel valued (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). People don't leave jobs, people leave people.

Clear Goals and Expectations: The TLM helps establish clear goals for employees leaving little room for ambiguity of what expectations are (Thompson, 2019).

Evokes Passion: Transformational leaders make those they work with feel passion and excitement in their work. This leads to a decrease in burnout and an increase in retention (Thompson, 2019).

Increases Organizational Integrity: The consistent communication within this model creates a culture of transparency and passion to 'do the right thing' (Thompson, 2019).

Encourages Consistent Communication: Transformational leaders drive flow of communication to provide clear and direct messages. This encourages those involved within the organization to do the same (Thompson, 2019).

Weaknesses of the Transformational Leadership Model

Long vs Short Term Goals: Transformational leaders focus on long term goals. This leaves room for short term goals to have less priority (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

Big Picture: Transformational leaders are visionaries who think big picture. However, the implementation the vision, and execution can get lost in the mix (Thompson, 2019).

Sustainability of Expected Communication: The expected amount of communication is difficult and takes intention to follow through on (Thompson, 2019).

Efficiency in Decision Making: Transformational leadership requires leaders to talk to all stakeholders involved individually especially when in the process of decision making (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). This can significantly slow the organizational decision making (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

Burnout: Burnout can be high for employees who are not as dedicated or inspired to live and breathe the organizational values the way in which the transformational leader expects them to (Thompson, 2019).

Tension with buy -in: A transformational leader is all-in. If things have been done differently within an organization in the past, the transformational leader may experience push back and difficulty getting buy-in from employees (Thompson, 2019).

The findings of the study indicated that the following leadership skills were necessary for the implementation of this model in the student's future growth and development in their disciplines.

Integrity and Transparency. They must remain transparent even when it may be difficult to do so. Transparency creates organic space for integrity to live.

Communication: They must be continuously motivated to maintain a feedback loop and also not be afraid to have difficult conversations.

Charisma: They must maintain charisma even though there are difficulties with individuals or team members.

Active Listening: Be mindful of the space they use. Intentionally create space for communication and a repetitive stream of feedback.

Intentionality: Intention must be present to be forward thinking and successful.

Self-Discipline: Self-discipline is crucial in maintaining consistency with transformational leadership practices.

This model was successful about 92 % of the time it was used. The issues of maintain contact after the student had completed the program was the challenge. Follow up between student and director needs to be ongoing and continuous to measure the success of the coaching over a long-term period.

Conclusion

There is no formal conclusion at this point in the study as the data continues to be gathered with the remaining and new cohorts in the program. In summer of 2023 Cohort 7 which started their program in 2015 now have 100% completion rate. Likewise, Cohort 11 has achieved 100% graduation and completion rate as well. Cohort 12-13 are on track to have 100% completion rate as well. The impact of the three coaching models have indicated a high level of success in helping student complete their doctoral program. As of right now the program has a 94.4 % completion rate for all cohorts (8,9,14,15) that are active as of the writing of this article. In closing advising paired with coaching and mentoring will successfully enable doctoral students to complete their doctoral degree and become effective and transformative leaders across disciplines.

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