



CASE STUDY

Marygrove College

SUPPORTING TOMORROW'S TEACHERS WITH TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY

Professional Learning Model: PD In Focus[®] online application

Focused Area of Need: Multiple Areas

Organization Type: Private College, Master in the Art of Teaching (MAT) Degree Program

OVERVIEW

In search of a more affordable yet comprehensive and deeply contextual way to provide video on demand for its Master in the Art of Teaching (MAT) students, Detroit-based Marygrove College switched from a competing product to ASCD's PD In Focus (PDIF) 37-channel video library several years ago.

The online MAT program uses the PDIF platform to support distance learning in almost every class, and all 300-plus students in the program—most of whom are working teachers—make use of the videos. This has enabled them to

- Build upon the lessons learned from written materials.
- Feel as if they're actually on-site, observing from the back of the classroom.
- Garner insights about topics such as differentiated instruction or best practices in reading or math instruction.
- Gain targeted information to use in their classes and in their own classrooms.

Instructors and students in the program have raved about the content and functionality of the PDIF application, and college administrators have found ASCD's customer support and billing operations extremely subscriber friendly.

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—Dr. Diane Brown, chair of the education division, Marygrove College

BACKGROUND

ASCD's PDIF digital product boasts a 37-channel video library full of learning opportunities for K-12 teachers that's frequently used by schools and districts to create assignments. For example, when teachers are on a classroom management performance plan, school leaders can direct them to certain videos and then log on to ensure those teachers completed the assignments. Schools and districts can create their own customized channels, and teachers can tailor individualized libraries and construct journals with key information for their classrooms. The site contains a robust search engine that enables easy filtering. ASCD continues to add new content and functionality, and schools and districts that subscribe can enjoy these new features as they are added online.

Instructors can also use this product to build specific videos into their collegiate teacher education program syllabi or to offer their teaching students broader edification. Marygrove College has used the platform for this purpose with the 300-plus students in its MAT program over the past three years.

CHALLENGES

Although schools and school districts are the most common institutional subscribers to the PD In Focus online application, teaching degree candidates at colleges and universities also use the product. Marygrove College is among such higher education subscribers to the service.

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— Gayle Wicker, instructor

When the video provider that Marygrove previously used raised their prices, the school shopped around for a similar product. The goal was to continue providing quality video instruction to students in the school's online, distance learning program. ASCD is

PROGRAM PROFILE

MARYGROVE COLLEGE'S MASTER IN THE ART OF TEACHING PROGRAM

Total students: 315

Race: 83% white
4% black
4% Hispanic
2% mixed
1% Asian

Gender: 82% female
17% male

First-generation college: 21%

Age: 22-29: 45%
30-34: 28%
35-64: 27%

Geographic breakdown:
29.8% from outside Michigan

providing just-in-time professional development to solve immediate classroom problems, says Dr. Diane Brown, chair of the education division.

“We need our MAT students to see what good classroom practice looks like, but we no longer had access to hundreds of videos,” she says. “We started reaching out to other resources to find out, ‘How do people do this?’ The problem we were trying to solve was, how do we provide quality, online virtual experiences for teachers all over the country?”

ASCD appeared to offer the best solution, and as Marygrove renews its subscription, Brown can attest that the platform has lived up to its promise and then some. “The videos show teachers in the classroom, children doing projects, teachers reflecting over their teaching, and principals talking about their teachers,” she says. “I went in, I did a little exploration, and I said, ‘This is exactly what we need!’”

ASCD SOLUTION

Brown continues to be impressed with the application's streamlined suite of in-depth content, detailed video descriptions, and lessons that are

relevant to education students. In addition, the PDIF videos are in the process of becoming ADA compliant.

“Once teachers are subscribed to ASCD, they have access to the complete library,” she says. “They can watch videos that they are required to watch as part of their courses. If they have other problems in their classrooms [not specifically addressed in courses], they can access videos that speak to those.”

Video content supplements and augments written teaching materials, connecting teaching students to classroom lessons in a way that even the most descriptive, clear writing cannot, Brown says. “If I can read about it, I can understand a certain percentage” of the lesson being imparted, she says. “But if I can see it in action, I get a much better understanding.”

Nearly every class in Marygrove College’s MAT program uses the PDIF platform. Brown says that the assessment videos have seemed especially “dynamite” to her, that students frequently access lessons on differentiated instruction, and that the videos on teaching reading and math classroom best practices are “particularly good.”

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In addition to the strong content offerings, ASCD’s PDIF customer support is “fabulous,” Brown says. “A frequent problem is that one or more of our students will be part of a school district where the school district has automatically subscribed every teacher in the district whether or not the teacher has ever taken advantage of that,” she says. “Teachers have logins but don’t know it and don’t understand what is going on. I can always count on calling the customer support and getting that straightened out in one phone call. You don’t know how rare that is.”

ASCD’s billing operations team is also very customer friendly, Brown says, which pays dividends. “In terms of nitty-gritty, nuts and bolts, I get notified before the bill is due,” she says. “Early notification ensures that our students never lose access. I also get a notification every time a student enrolls so I can keep track.”

In early 2017, the PDIF system will allow users to upload their own videos. This will offer users a unique opportunity to generate tailored professional development for their own school systems and supplement those videos with existing wisdom from such experts as Carol Ann Tomlinson and Pérsida and William Himmele. Users can send out these videos to spearhead group conversations and encourage best practices.

PD In Focus Features

The PDIF platform offers more than 800 on-demand videos on a variety of popular topics, including differentiated instruction, leadership, formative assessment, STEM education, and much more.

Some of the platform features include a custom channel creator, group discussion boards, assignment capabilities, and reporting tools.

In addition to being a personalized learning tool, the PDIF application can also be used with groups. Schools and districts can use the platform to deliver professional development to thousands of teachers in any grade or subject area. Teacher teams or professional learning communities can work collaboratively on video topics and use the facilitator materials to guide discussions. Professional development leaders can set up learning groups, make assignments, and monitor activities and progress. Also, schools and districts can embed the application within their existing professional learning initiatives to connect research-based practices with real-life examples of effective classroom instruction.

Survey data shows that more than 80 percent of PDIF users are likely to recommend the platform to a colleague or peer, and more than 84 percent of users give the system a positive rating. In addition, the platform has received several industry awards, including the 2015 EDDIE Award for Best Online Professional Development Tool.

RESULTS

All 315 MAT students have used the PDIF platform during the program. In addition to the usage data included in this case study, Marygrove instructors have heard plenty of anecdotal positive feedback, Brown says. Instructor Gayle Wicker reports that her students found the videos of teachers modeling their strategies the most helpful, particularly the tiered lesson in "Meeting the Needs of All Students."

"Teachers really want examples of how to apply the strategies in their classrooms," Wicker reports. "Math teachers are very excited when they see a technique or strategy applied to their subject area." She adds that she has "read many great examples of how students use the videos and create great lessons for their classrooms."

Instructor Kay Foreman has used strategies from PDIF videos about formative assessment, the links between instruction and assessment, how quizzes and tests help check for understanding, holding high expectations for students, and providing effective feedback.

Foreman's students also benefitted from PDIF video instruction. One student said the formative assessment videos were most applicable to her work as a visual

arts teacher, and Willie Peterson said these videos provided a solid understanding of what the concept means and how to apply it in the classroom. For Kate Bezak, the most helpful videos shared a six-step process for instituting formative assessment and described how quizzes and tests can help measure a student's level of understanding. And Erin Kelley learned a great deal from the videos on assessment, high expectations, and using effective feedback, adding "I found all of them to be very helpful!"

Top Ten Videos Watched by Marygrove Students (number of completed views)

