Diana Rodgers
Micro-Change Project
Element 1
Define the Scope of the Project

My micro-change project will be to write down the college application process for a typical student and develop appropriate tools and forms that a future employee could use while executing the Fit system. I have subcontracted for a college admissions consulting firm in China, and I find their system of documentation to be unnecessarily cumbersome and not in touch with the reality of the pieces of the college admissions process. I would like to improve upon this system for my future employees. Further, I would like everything to be electronic in order to be instantly referenced by me and by my future employee regardless of geographic location.

Fit Education Consulting has been in operation since 2008 and was formally incorporated upon my move to Pittsburgh in 2015. I have been incredibly lucky because of a strong referral network and the blessing of social capital. This success, however, has led me to a place where I never thought that I'd be. Fit Education Consulting has grown beyond a client base that I can serve alone, and I need to either start hiring people or start turning away clients. Of those two options, only the former is tolerable to me.

The vast majority of my clients are late adolescents and their parents. Over the years, the parents have told me that the most valuable thing that I provide is a strong rapport with their teenagers. I believe this is because I can project both empathy to their stress and a sense of reassurance. There are many ways of relating to teenagers, and I surely don't have a lock on a single method, however I do believe that the reassurance comes from knowing that I have a system for attacking the college application process. But, I have never written down my methods. I know what questions I ask during an intake, I know what order I like to do the steps of the process, I know how I like to coach students on their essay development, but I have no way to begin to teach this process to other people or to assess how well someone else is doing in coaching a student.

I am excited to start hiring my first employees, however, I have no business experience. I am educator both by design and by training. I have only worked in the public school system that had unnecessarily bureaucratic human resources structures, a culture of contempt, and little excitement over innovation. Our readings and this course philosophy have made me begin to think about what I want both our corporate culture and our processes to be as I begin to involve more people. For the purpose of the micro-change project, however, I will be focusing on the process.

In order to accomplish this, I will evaluate the usefulness of my current forms for student information and meeting reports and will improve upon them. Then, I will be tracking what I do with two students this spring and project what their meeting schedule will look like this summer in order to develop a standard protocol for college applicants. Finally, I will edit and reformat some of the college admissions information materials that I have developed over the years and update them for use by employees. Ultimately, my project will be measured by the creation of an electronic employee handbook that includes informational materials, forms and meeting reports, and a protocol for standard service.