

Diana Rodgers
MicroChange Project
Part 10
Reflective Essay

The MicroChange project was not designed for me or for my work situation. I do not contend with an institutional culture that is, by tradition, resistant to change. I do not have colleagues who are characterized by complacency, inefficiencies, or impotence. I have me, with a strong desire to grow my practice, and to root that growth in an intentional institutional culture. In a lot of ways, the MicroChange project was comparatively easy for me, and I was able to draw, as appropriate, from my coursework, in able to consider how these issues related to my unique work situation.

This is not to say, however, that my MicroChange project was not rigorous. On the contrary, I think I actually did a **MacroChange** project this semester between my personal development portfolio and my MicroChange process. I spent a lot of time really thinking and reconsidering everything that my practice does in advance of hiring our first employees and then working to fix everything. I did not tackle one inefficient form, I created all new ones. I did not analyze an existing mission and vision statements, I created them from scratch. I realized where I was struggling as a small business owner, undoubtedly a leadership position, and I worked to fix it. Ultimately, I realized that I should have been doing these things all along, but I didn't have the tools, the push, and the vocabulary to know how to do it. While at times I complained bitterly about this project taking over my life, I cannot tell you how grateful I am that it is finished and the direction on which it has put Fit Education Consulting.

Our readings this semester have focused on how you manage and create a culture in order to facilitate change. Perhaps the most important thing that I have realized this semester is that while Fit provides excellent service now, we will be outperformed and miserable to work for if we do not develop a system that evolves with the times and the current concerns of parents and students. This is something that I am still struggling with, although, far less than I was at the beginning of the semester.

Because I am selling a product in a business, I have to be totally mindful of the fact that my clients want results. When something changes, and because I don't get results until many months later, it can be scary because there is no way to fix what went wrong. For that reason, I think any changes to our college application process have to be done slowly and extremely intentionally which clear communication to employees and to clients. I think I can do this, but I want to be able to do it while projecting confidence, and I am still working on that.

One thing that I think I am doing well is setting up a structure and a culture that allows people to do their best work. I have learned about the necessity of praising employees for excellent work and allowing them the freedom to improvise based on their professional expertise. Letting go of total control of Fit will be challenging, but I feel confident that I have the skills to hire the best people to do excellent work. Fit will be better because of their expertise, if I allow them to freedom to use it.

As an educator, I know how to nurture talent. This has come through in my students and my parents value the mentorship that I provide. I have never not had a younger sibling for a reason. I think I need to take this ability to mentor young adults and apply it in a slightly more mature way to future employees. In addition, I need to be open to their suggestions for improvement, which is something I might struggle with as Fit has been my project for so long.

On a final note, because of this course and this project, I do feel empowered to go back to all of our processes on a regular basis to ask why we are doing something and how it can be better. I am so excited that the next time I do that, I will be in conversation with more people than just myself. I have complete institutional review on the calendar for next February, and I will take seriously the PDSA cycles that I have learned about this semester. It is an exciting time for me and for Fit.