Warriors L.E.A.D. Change: Learn, Educate, Advocate, Develop

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Recommended Citation
Osland, Melissa; Selvaratnam, Naren; Preston, Paul; Fricker, Rick; Lake, TJ; Albrecht, David; Greig, Ashley; Ohnstad, Cassie; Bolstad, Kurt; Teague, Luke; Hagmann, Lynn; Magdzas, Dani; Erickson, Mirlande; Moldenhauer, Liz; McKinney, Lawren; Fruechte, Maria; Endrizzi, Tom; Schoh, Tyler; and Huang, Grace, "Warriors L.E.A.D. Change: Learn, Educate, Advocate, Develop" (2019). Leadership Education Newsletters. 8.
https://openriver.winona.edu/leadershipeducationnewsletters/8

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Leading in Real Time - by Melissa Osland

As a leader, you need to be ready for anything, including leading a project with people in multiple locations across the Midwest who have differing personalities, perspectives and ideas. Reflecting back on this project, I found that the skills leaders need to possess in order to achieve success, especially during times of change, include the ability to communicate effectively, motivate others, set clear goals, delegate, engage in and promote collaboration, and most of all, have confidence in your own ability to lead. Leading is challenging and I value this experience, it gave me the opportunity to work with such a talented group of individuals to accomplish this project. The knowledge I have gained is immeasurable!

“Melissa knew what needed to be done and laid out a clear plan to get there. She kept everyone on task and on target to drive the task to completion”
- Tom Endrizzi

“Melissa facilitated the completion of this newsletter through her dedication and drive to lead our class to its completion. Her ability to collaborate and communicate effectively with each contributor was essential to our success!”
- Dani Magdzas

“Melissa was thrust into the role of Editor of this newsletter and kept the entire class accountable to delivering a quality product.”
- Rick Fricker
Learning to Lead

The Spring 2019 semester of Change Leadership (LDRS 614) brought together 20 unique personalities with varying personal and professional backgrounds. With this newsletter, we, Winona State University Warriors, aspire to L.E.A.D. change through our collective course learnings and practical experiences.

To lead is a gift for some, a calling for others, but ultimately a goal for everyone. As members of this course, with the instruction of Dr. Barbara Holmes and through the readings in Peter G. Northouse’s *Leadership: Theory and Practices* (7th Edition), we strive to learn what it means to lead and how to effectively apply leadership principles and techniques. As aspiring leaders, we collectively aim to share our knowledge to educate our peers and the next generation of great leaders. It is our mission to constantly advocate the theories we have learned to properly implement and develop the change we wish to see.

In the pages that follow, you will learn more about the authors and read about our views on leadership, particularly our experiences in implementing change. While we each have our own personality traits, professional journeys, and leadership styles, there are clear patterns that emerge from this eclectic group of leaders through our collective behavioral and situational approaches to leadership, including variations in servant, authentic, adaptive and team leadership styles.

While working collaboratively in smaller teams each week, and then collectively as a class on our newsletter and eBook projects, we discovered our strengths and weaknesses while better understanding how to work together as a fully functioning team – parallel to the discovery that occurs in growing as leaders. Those strengths didn’t always mirror one another’s, but proved beneficial to the whole. Despite differing points of view and diverse backgrounds, we united as classmates to learn from each other. After all, continued learning and adaptability are keys to leadership!

Throughout the completion of our Master’s program, we strive to learn, educate, advocate, and develop change leadership principles, not only within ourselves, but also in each of our areas of expertise and everyday life.

“We strive to learn what it means to lead and how to effectively apply leadership principles and techniques. As aspiring leaders, we collectively aim to share our knowledge to educate our peers and the next generation of great leaders. It is our mission to constantly advocate the theories we have learned to properly implement and develop the change we wish to see.”
Paul Preston

Paul Preston is in his second semester of Graduate classes in the Leadership Education – Sports Management program. He graduated from Winona State University with his B.A. in Business Administration and Human Resource Management. Paul is currently a Graduate Assistant football coach at Winona State University. Paul is passionate about sports and upon completion of his graduate degree; he will pursue a football coaching position. In his free time, Paul likes to spend time with friends and family, watch sports and be outdoors.

“The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.”

- Ronald Reagan

Naren Selvaratnam

Naren Selvaratnam is an academic from Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is specialized in clinical and counseling psychology, with a research interest in addictions, self-efficacy, and psychometrics. Naren holds a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Winona State University (WSU), and a master’s degree in applied psychology from Coventry University, United Kingdom. Naren currently pursues a master’s degree in Education Leadership at WSU. Naren plans to continue his teaching in Colombo upon the completion of his master’s degree. Naren loves to read and he spends most of his time reading religion, philosophy, and politics.

“It is far better to earn the confidence of the people than to rely on fortresses.” - Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince
Rick Fricker

Rick Fricker is in his second year of the Organizational Leadership Master’s program through Winona State University (WSU). He received his undergraduate degree in Communication Studies through WSU. Rick is employed by Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN as a Senior Business Analyst in the department of Documentation Services. Upon completion of his master’s degree, Rick will look to hone his leadership skills in his current role, which entails managing a team of Associate Analysts. In his free time, Rick loves spending time with his wife and two daughters, watching movies, going to concerts, and supporting local craft breweries.

“A person always doing his or her best becomes a natural leader, just by example.” - Joe DiMaggio

TJ Lake

T.J. Lake is in his first semester of Graduate classes in the Leadership Education - Sports Management program here at Winona State. He is a graduate of the University of Dubuque with his B.A. Sport Management. T.J. is currently a Graduate Assistant basketball coach here at Winona State University. Upon completion of his degree, T.J. will be pursuing an assistant basketball coaching position. In his free time, T.J. likes to play with his dog, watch sports, and hang out with friends and family.

“Don’t tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.” - George Patton

Dave Albrecht

Dave Albrecht is in his second year of Winona State’s Leadership Education – Sports Management program. He was hired at Winona State University in August 2017 as the Director of Athletic Communications to cover the Warriors’ 15 varsity sport programs. Dave previously worked at Midland University as the Assistant Athletic Director/Sports Information Director for four years, prior to which he spent four years working in professional baseball. Dave earned his undergraduate degree from Eastern Illinois University in Sports Management with a minor in Business and Professional Writing in 2009. He hopes to continue evolving in his career path as an Athletic Administrator upon completion of his graduate degree. Dave enjoys traveling to tropical destinations in the winter and spending his summers at the ballpark.

“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson
Ashley Greig

Ashley Greig is an Organizational Leadership graduate student at Winona State University (WSU). She received her bachelor’s degree in Paralegal Studies with a minor in History at WSU in 2015. Ashley is currently a Paralegal within Mayo Clinic’s Legal Department, focusing on immigration cases and process improvements. When not working or doing class work, you could find her traveling, volunteering, sailing, hiking, or reading about history.

"We're here for a reason. I believe a bit of the reason is to throw little torches out to lead people through the dark." - Whoopi Goldberg

Cassie Ohnstad

Cassie Ohnstad is the Adult Education Coordinator for Faribault Public Schools Community Education. She also coordinates enrichment activities, as well as Project ABLE, a program for Adults with Disabilities. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire with a Bachelor's in Elementary Education and Learning Disabilities. She taught special education at the Faribault High School for 3.5 years until last February. She is in her last semester of graduate school at Winona State University pursuing her master's in Educational Leadership in hopes of pursuing her K-12 Principal license and Community Education Director's license. In her free time, Cassie spends her time playing and coaching volleyball, camping and kayaking. Her dream is to visit every National Park in the United States and every State Park in Minnesota

“Leaders become great not because of their power but because of their ability to empower others.” - John Maxwell

Kurt Bolstad

Kurt Bolstad is a first-year student in the Professional Leadership program at Winona State University (WSU). He also received his Bachelor of Science degree from WSU in Management Information Systems. Recently, Kurt worked at Merchants Bank in Winona, MN as a Lead Computer Operator in the IT department. He intends to be a Director of IT at a university or hospital in the future. During his free time, Kurt enjoys running races to support the local community and walking his two Shiba Inu.

“I learn the most from making my own mistakes.” - David Fincher
Lynn Hagmann

Lynn Hagmann is an advocate for young children and families. She has been an early childhood educator for more than 30 years. Currently she is the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten teacher and Student Parent Coordinator at Winona State University Children’s Center. Lynn has Elementary and Early Childhood degrees from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She enjoys travelling and attending concerts with her husband, caring for their two dogs, and reading. She will obtain her master’s degree in Education Leadership in May 2019.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
- Maya Angelou

Luke Teague

Luke Teague is a second semester graduate student, who is pursuing his master’s degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis on Sport. He is a graduate of Winona State University, with a Bachelor of Sociology focusing on Criminal Justice. Luke is employed at Winona State University as a Graduate Assistant for the football team. Luke’s aspirations are to become a college football coach at the Division 1 level. Luke would apply his past knowledge of playing college football, starting three of 4 years and being a two-time captain Junior and senior year to develop young student athletes in their critical years of development. Luke spends his free time studying and watching game-film of past football games, enjoys the outdoors and activities like fishing and camping, weightlifting, and spending quality time with family and friends.

“Leadership is a matter of having people look at you and gain confidence…If you’re in control, they’re in control.” - Tom Landry

Dani Magdzas

Dani Magdzas is in her final semester of Graduate classes in the Leadership Education- Sports Management program here at Winona State. She is a graduate of Augustana University with her B.A. in Exercise Science and B.A. in Fitness Management. Dani is currently a Graduate Assistant volleyball coach here at Winona State University. Upon completion of her degree, Dani will be pursuing an assistant volleyball coaching position. In her free time, Dani likes to play her ukulele, watch movies, cook, and be active with friends and family.

“Becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. It is precisely that simple and it is also that difficult”. - Warren Bennis
**Mirlande Erickson**

Mirlande Erickson is a Minneapolis, MN resident originally from Haiti. Mirlande has her bachelor’s degree in Organizational Communication with a minor in Ethnic Studies from Metropolitan State University. She is halfway through the Organizational Leadership program at Winona State University, with the anticipated graduation date of May 2020. Mirlande currently works for Bemidji State University (BSU) as their Distance Learning Program Manager. When she is not working or studying, she enjoys watching her daughter excel in her academics and basketball (they have gone to state nine consecutive years); and when the weather is nice, you can find Mirlande cruising on her Harley wherever the wind takes her.

"Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence" - Sheryl Sandberg

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**Liz Moldenhauer**

Liz Moldenhauer is in her second year of the Organizational Leadership graduate program at Winona State University. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, with a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with an area of emphasis on Organizational Communication. Liz has more than twenty years of experience in health care education and administration roles and is currently the Manager of Continuing Professional Development at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. Upon completion of her master’s degree, Liz plans to continue her growth as a leader within the healthcare setting. In her free time, Liz enjoys spending time with her husband, dog and three grown children. She is also active in the CrossFit, running and powerlifting community.

“Leaders of character must have courage to engage in positive conflict, to trust their people and the put the needs of others ahead of their own needs.” - Gen James L. Anderson, USA (Ret)

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**Lawren McKinney**

Lawren McKinney currently is the graduate assistant for the Winona State softball team. She graduated from Pittsburg State University with a Bachelor of Science in Education specifically Physical Education. Lawren is in her first year of graduate school at Winona State University, pursuing a master’s in Educational Leadership-Sports Management. Upon completion of her master’s degree, Lawren hopes to get a teaching position while also pursuing a coaching job at a high school or college level. She plans to look for jobs in the Kansas City area once done with the program.

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader” - John Quincy Adams
Maria Fruechte

Maria Fruechte graduated from Winona State University with an undergraduate degree in Exercise Science. She is now pursuing her master’s in Education Leadership, with an emphasis in Sports Management. She is currently a Graduate Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach for Winona State University. Her goal is to become a full-time Strength and Conditioning Coach after graduation. In her free time, Maria loves to exercise, be outside, read and spend time with family.

“To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart.”  
- Eleanor Roosevelt

Tom Endrizzi

Tom is in his second year of the Organizational Leadership Master’s program here at Winona State. He received his bachelor’s degree in Health Information Administration from the College of St. Scholastica and is currently the Manager of Client Relations for the Documentation Services department at The Mayo Clinic. His goal in studying organizational leadership is to continue to learn new ways to develop and empower those in his professional and personal life to make the most out of their talents, goals and dreams. In his free time, Tom spends time with his immediate and extended family, cares for a family fruit/vegetable hobby farm and is always up for new adventures.

“Earn your leadership every day.” - Michael Jordan

Melissa Osland

Melissa Osland is in her second year of the Organizational Leadership master’s program at Winona State University. She is a graduate of North Dakota State University, with a Bachelor of Science in Apparel in Textiles. Melissa is employed as the Assistant Director of Human Resources at Minnesota State University Moorhead in Moorhead, MN. Melissa has over 17 years of experience in the field of Human Resources in both public and private organizations. She is passionate about higher education and plans to continue to develop her leadership abilities in hopes of becoming a Chief Human Resources Officer in a university setting. Melissa enjoys spending time traveling and at the lake with her husband and five children.

“If serving is below you, leadership is beyond you.” - Anonymous
**Anthony Reisdorfer**

Anthony Reisdorfer is a first semester graduate student, who is pursuing his master’s in Educational Leadership. He is a graduate of Winona State University, with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Anthony is employed at Winona State University Children’s Center, as the School Age Program Lead Teacher/Coordinator. Upon completion of his master’s degree, Anthony hopes to take a job in the state of Minnesota as a school principal or early childhood director. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his friends and family.

*“Being positive in a negative situation is not naïve. It’s leadership.”* - Ralph Marston

**Tyler Schoh**

Tyler Schoh is in his second semester of graduate classes in the Leadership Education-Sports Management program at Winona State. Schoh started his undergraduate studies at Western Technical College in La Crosse, Wisconsin. He then transferred to Iowa State University where he graduated in 2018 with a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication. Schoh is currently an Academic Success Coordinator at Winona State. In his free time, Tyler enjoys hiking, playing with his dog, and spending time with family and friends.

*A leader is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind.* - Nelson Mandela

**Grace Huang**

Grace Huang is an Education Leadership graduate student at Winona State University (WSU). She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Finance at WSU in 2016. She started a business in 2017. It is a Chinese Restaurant nearby the University of Minnesota. The mission is to offer, elevate, and promote gourmet authentic Chinese cuisine and provide exceptional customer service, a mission she has always and will continue to pursue, never wavering.

*“It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.”* - Lucius Annaeus Seneca
Naren Selvaratnam

As I believe, implementation of change is a dialogue that first emerges within one’s self. This is a conscious decision-making process where we consider ourselves of the importance of changing the nature of something at present. In a way, all of us are agents that exercise change. However, the entire affair of implementing change is often not idiocentric. The journey of initiating change in a given organization is an endeavor that requires the inclusion of all its stakeholders. As an academic, the primary goal of initiating change predominantly revolves around improving the education that we provide for our students. That is easier said than done.

Reckoning from personal experience, change is an intentional process that a person or a group pioneers to initiate for the welfare of a larger community or society. In my case, we initiate changes in the academic processes to provide a better learning experience to our students. At times, it could be restructuring a syllabus, or it could be the implementation of a student club where students are encouraged to demonstrate their skills. As an academic who teaches research methodology to psychology students, I always try my best to alleviate statistics anxiety in students. As a teacher, I introduce amendments to the syllabus to make sure the students in my class learn and retain the information discussed in the class as they leave the room. As a teacher, my primary concern is on imparting knowledge to students. In doing so, I also strive to ensure the happiness and safety of my students.

Tom Endrizzi

In my 20+ year professional career, I have had the pleasure of leading various initiatives in organizations for which I have worked. In every situation, I have learned that the proposed changes can only be planned and prepared for so much and it isn’t until the switch is actually flipped that you really see how things are going to play out. In addition, the funny thing is, many times the most interesting things that happen during the process – both good and bad – are not the changes to the systems themselves, but the effects on the people involved. It is always curious that those involved in the same initiative, can come out on the other side with very different views and results than what may have been expected.

The decision to go back to school is my most recent and most personal example of implementing change, and I must admit that the results thus far have been unexpected. At a level, the decision was to check a box that I needed to advance my career and to be honest I was kind of dreading it. I have never been a great student and it wouldn’t be a stretch to say that still I have room to grow in my scholastic habits. However, what I didn’t plan for was to be so engaged, so interested, and so enthusiastic about the subject matter and the opportunity to learn from those in my classes. Yes, there are things that are tedious and difficult, and I would really like my free time back. However, as I get through it week by week, my world and thinking continues to expand and change more than I imagined it would. And, as I march through my program, I continue to be excited to see how I will come out on the other side of an implementation I somewhat hesitant to start and never imagined would go the way it has.
Experiences
Implementing Change

Rick Fricker

Looking back at the last 15 years of my professional career, so much of my work experience has centered on the implementation of change at varying levels. The entirety of my career has been in healthcare. As if healthcare doesn’t change enough in and of itself, I have extensive background in technology implementation to user populations (and I think we all know the speed at which technology changes!). In addition to being the one who presents the change, I’ve also had many experiences where I was receiving change in some capacity. This perspective has helped me immensely in my career to-date and in my pursuit to lead others; the ability to give and receive change and the juxtaposition of those elements has positioned me to provide insight not many have experienced for themselves.

Change is a bit of an oxymoron. Our bodies and environment are ever changing, yet most find change to be difficult and unwelcoming, and therefore are generally unaccepting of it. To be the one who implements change, I’ve experienced people who are stressed out, unreceptive, and angry. On the receiving end, I too have felt similar emotions. The perspective of living through both sets of experiences, however, has taught me that when applying change, there must be a level of sensitivity and understanding for the receiver’s side. Having been through bouts of change myself, I must remember what that experience was like and utilize those emotions to empathize with receivers so that I can ease the burden of change when I’m the one dishing it out. This approach is generally well received because it’s relatable. People often want a partner when their world is being altered, so empathy is a valuable tool.

TJ Lake

I have had many experiences implementing change over the course of my time as a graduate assistant of the men’s basketball program whether it is changing our team’s strategy during a timeout or doing personal workouts with kids helping them develop good habits on the basketball court. An example that sticks out to me is that I have worked very closely with a player of mine and his shooting form throughout the course of the season. He has all season to work on his game and the only thing he was missing was a jump shot. I explained to him I used to have bad form as well and changing your shooting form can be one of the toughest things to do in the game of basketball.

We worked constantly on his craft and soon he began knocking down jump shots left and right. I told him however that it was not going to be the time he and I spent together that changed his shooting form. I told him it was going to take a commitment from himself to do it when nobody is watching. Nights after everybody is long gone after our homes games are over you can hear a ball bouncing and if you look in the gym you can see him doing it when nobody is watching and most are sleeping. This shows it takes true ownership and commitment to change.
Experiences Implementing Change

Dave Albrecht
Throughout my professional career, perhaps the only constant factor I’ve experienced has been ever-present change. In the 10 years since completing my undergraduate degree, I’ve had 10 different employers and lived in 5 different states. I’ve experienced unemployment and my “dream job” working in professional baseball and I’ve gone from unpaid intern to the head of my own department. There was even that stint as a substitute teacher. Throughout all my experiences with internal and external change, I’ve learned valuable lessons on how to be a better leader and collaborate with team members.

Organizational change is often met with resistance and discomfort. And what has struck me as a common denominator in that opposition is the belief among organizational members that change is a directive sent from above without the consideration of those it ultimately affects. As I have evolved from follower to leader, I’ve come to further appreciate the importance of collective inclusion in the process of implementing any type of change. After all, I would not be where I am today without the input and support of my peers, mentors and co-workers; so as a leader I always strive to gather feedback from every available resource. Feeling heard and having a sense that your opinions are valued, no matter your positions or status in the organizational hierarchy is crucial to follower moral. Any change process requires collaboration and collective group buy-in, so it makes sense to seek the input of every stakeholder from unpaid intern to CEO. Rather than feel like it is happening to you, like I did for much of the first half of my career, there’s an undeniable peace of mind that accompanies the feeling of empowerment when you are part of the change process.

Mirlande Erickson
Over the years, I’ve had a lot of opportunity to experience change implementation not only in my professional life but also personally.

In my position with Bemidji State University (BSU), I’ve had the opportunities to witness and be a part of many changes over the years. We’ve obtained a new university president, our department has gotten a new dean, and I’ve received a new direct supervisor. In addition, I had the opportunity to reclassify my PD and create a position outlining what I do day to day. I had the opportunity to work directly with leadership in the office of the chancellor for reclassification of my position as well which gave me a different perspective on change implementation.

Change implementation I’ve experienced personally as of late is allocating time to get classwork done. The transition going back to attain a graduate degree after completing my undergraduate degree so many years ago really is a big change. I’ve been working hard on implementing small changes to make this season of my life as stress free as possible and allocating time to study the material I’m learning so I can figure out ways to apply it to both my personal and professional life.

“There’s undeniable peace of mind that accompanies the feeling of empowerment when you are part of the change process.”
Coping with change can often be difficult, and implementing change can be even more difficult to do. Over the last three years, I have often been tasked with implementing small changes throughout the department I am a part of. These changes are largely due to my department having to change specific processes due to constant changes in government regulations. Regardless of how small the change is, there are still several things I do to have a better chance at the change being implemented successfully.

The process of successfully implementing change starts before the change is even decided upon. It is important that all affected team members of the proposed change know what the change is and how it is implemented, as this increases the teams’ attachment to the success of the change and allows the team to discover any potential issues the change may bring to their individual work. Once the details of the change have been determined, I properly relay the established plan and explain the reasons why the change must happen to everyone affected by the change. Once the plan is decided on and communicated, I continuously communicate with team members to ensure any issues are immediately taken care of and that the implementation plan is being followed. As long as the team is involved in the implementation and there continues to be active communication between team members, I have found that the implementation of the change has a higher rate of being successful.

Over the last several years, I have had the great opportunity to work with some talented individuals in the IT department at Merchants Bank. As Lead Computer Operator, I directed and managed a small team to back up data from the entire day and begin nightly processing. As time went on, procedures became obsolete and outdated. This is where much of my experience implementing and leading change began. As a team, we commonly began discussions about updating and adjusting current processes. After the initial planning phase, we tested proposed changes in a neutral environment. Once we were satisfied with the results, I instructed the team to begin rolling out changes to a live system.

In more general terms, I liked to encourage my team to examine various tasks and duties in their current roles and provide feedback about overall efficiency. On many occasions, I was aware of certain procedures that needed to be adjusted, but including team members in the process was a great way to get everyone involved in the solution. Eventually, some ideas involved changes in areas outside of my control. At that point, I communicated with my supervisor to discuss the possibility for changing systems or procedures that may have affected other departments. Providing a better experience for our customers by working with leaders from other areas in the bank has been one of the best experiences I have had as a leader.
Experiences
Implementing Change

Luke Teague

In my perspective, the implementation of change must come from within. Before transferring to Winona State University, I attended a Division II school in my home state of Indiana where the enrollment was just under one thousand students. The year before I enrolled to St. Joseph’s college, the football program was implementing changes towards the culture of the team. The seniors taught me how to make these changes, as I was a part of the first class the coaching staff wanted to apply these adjustments to. The seniors then taught me the importance of hard work, dedication, consistency, and holding one another accountable. After taking minimal snaps as a walk-on my freshman year to starting the next, two seasons; all students were informed that the school would be shutting down due to insufficient funds by the end of my junior year in May 2017. As my last year at St. Joseph’s College, the lessons I learned from the players whom I played with showed through my leadership as I was honored with being a captain my year. I knew that the lessons I learned at St. Joseph’s college would help me implement change at wherever college I went to next. Transferring to Winona State University I had a good idea how others would react to a guy coming in thinking he has it all figured out. I led by example through the leadership skills I learned at Saint Joseph’s College. Implementing change within a football team to an organization comes from within. When players or employees hold themselves accountable, others will notice and feel as though they could put them in a position to hold a group of players or people accountable. Implementation of change relies on trusting those in charge are seeking the betterment of the team or organization.

Dani Magdzas

Anyone who has ever entered a new role, position, or profession in an organization or on a team and has tried to change “the way things are” knows that resistance from coworkers, employees and teammates can cause resistance against any effort towards change. A key aspect of implementing this change exists in the management of supporting change. During my experiences within collegiate athletics, I faced and survived many instances of change. In the 5 seasons that I was a participant on the women’s volleyball team, I had the pleasure of being taught by nine different head coaches, assistant coaches, and graduate assistant coaches. How did I manage to survive this transformational change? Through the support of my peers and with a consistent relentless ideal of our overall goals.

While this change in personnel, schema of the game, and coaching style was challenging to adjust to, the program was held to a standard of excellence where the changes that were happening could not define us or detract us from our goals. Moving forward and trusting the process of change allowed us to continue success on the court, in the classroom, and in our personal lives. Empathy may not be the first characteristic that is thought of when implementing change, but it may be one of the most important. Having the ability to understand and share feelings with others plays a key role in the application of any sort of change. Understanding that transforming the comfort of a known environment may create unrest, frustration, and doubt, can allow leadership to forge stronger relationships with those they serve. Building relationships where change is considered a constant, rather than an obstacle that seems impassable can create trustworthy responses to change.
Melissa Osland

During my career in human resources, I have experienced vast amounts of change. I have worked in various industries such as healthcare, construction and higher education and whether the process of change is slow moving or fast, it still occurs. I do believe it is true that the only thing constant is change. Whether we like it or, not everything eventually changes.

As a leader implementing change, I have learned that the success or failure of the change begins with me. Anderson and Anderson-Ackerman (2001) indicate, “the need for change is driven from the outside in but, the outcomes of change are caused from the inside out” (p. 78). This describes the need for leaders to look externally and internally to be and inspire the change they wish to see. If I do not believe in the change myself, I won’t be able to get others to follow. When my heart hasn’t been in it, my effectiveness has waned and leading others to embrace the change has been difficult. The road is met with more resistance caused by a lack of hope that the change will mean something different and better. When leading change that I am passionate about, there is a marked difference in the path. Speaking about the need for the change is almost effortless; my desire to hear others concerns’ and lay them to rest becomes a mission. Communication is something I look forward to and I take time to understand the fears and concerns of others so that I can address them.

While change in either situation in never easy, the past can be a little more smooth when the leader believes and buys in to the change that they are promoting. I know that not every change is one that I can be passionate about, but experiencing leading change when my heart is and isn’t in it provides perspective of the need to better understand the change and look for what you can believe in. As I stated above, if you don’t believe in the change, you won’t be able to get others to follow.

Anthony Reisdorfer

As an educator, change happens on a daily basis. In a moment’s notice, schedules change, emotions change, attitudes change. Educators need to embrace the change and take it upon themselves to handle it in the most positive and friendly manner. A manner that makes everyone involved in the situation feel safe, heard, and a sense of belonging.

As a current classroom teacher, I lead my classroom with the “golden rule” mindset- treat others the way you want to be treated. This leadership style makes everyone feel welcomed into my classroom. Students, staff, and administrators walk into my classroom and are treated with respect and kindness. As the classroom leader, this makes accepting and initiating change easy. All of my followers trust that I am making the decision with the best for everyone in mind. They “buy-in” to the change because they know I will treat them with the same respect that they treat me. Change will happen, but it can happen with the best of other people and the best of the organization in mind.
Experiences Implementing Change

Liz Moldenhauer

In the healthcare industry, change is expected, but this doesn’t mean that individuals react positively in each situation or that leaders are not responsible for clear communication and facilitation. As a leader, I take my role seriously and spend a lot of time planning strategic communication when managing the change process. Whether the change is system-wide or affects a small team, going forward with a solid and timely communication plan is critical.

Think about a change that you experienced where you resisted the change. Why did your unwillingness occur? Was it the cost? Was it an inconvenience or was it lack of information? No matter where a change occurs (in personal or work-life), the same concepts remain. Lack of awareness – merely knowing that a change is coming is a top proponent to employees resisting change (Zafar & Naveed 2014).

When working through change, awareness explains what the difference is and why the change is occurring. Awareness answers the fundamental questions of any individual when change is introduced. Nevenhoven states the following items are the basic answers needed to satisfy awareness: What is the change? What factors led to it? Why is the change required? To aid in awareness, the leader should develop an awareness communication plan that aligns with the overall project timeline. A transparent, proactive approach consisting of intentional communication will help lessen the resistance to change implementation.

Paul Preston

In my experience throughout my college and short professional career, I have had numerous experiences with change. As a college athlete, the team dealt with multiple coaching changes. Post-graduation the changes continued as I began started working at a family company right after commencement. The family decided to sell the business and then I began working in downtown Chicago. A year later, I decided to leave the city I call home to pursue a master’s degree and accept a graduate assistant coaching position with the football team. All of this change within a short span of my life taught me many things.

In the organizations and businesses I have had an opportunity to play or work for, change has been consistent and often viewed the same way. When organizations are first met with change, they are often slow to accept it. I often felt the same way when I first began experiencing change in college. However, in hindsight, as time has gone on I have learned to accept and grow from it. Each time I have experienced a change in my career I have become better because of it. Change has forced me to develop more and better relationships, gain skills such as work ethic, dependability and possessing a positive attitude in the work place and now to pursue a higher education and eventually, hopefully, a dream job in coaching. Going forward I will look to learn from these lessons in my short career and view change in a positive light and as a welcome opportunity.
Lynn Hagmann

The National Association for Early Childhood Education (NAEYC) defines early childhood as occurring before the age of eight. During this period children go through the most rapid phase of growth and development in their lifetime. Their brains develop faster than at any other point in their lives, so these years are critical. The foundations for cognitive learning, social skills, self-esteem, perception of the world and moral outlook are being established. Early education teachers need to think outside their mature perspective and be able to interpret the world through the eyes of first-time learners. As an early childhood educator, I must be creative and highly adaptive to continuously come up with new ways to guide children through their early learning stages. Developing interpersonal relationships with administrators, colleagues, parents, pre-professional teachers, and college student employees is also critical to the ever-changing aspects of an early childhood educator.

When planning student curriculum, I must find lessons that are fluid and malleable based on the children’s diverse needs and abilities. In addition, working with adults who share the same vision of progressing the importance of early childhood education, requires commitment, communication, respect, a safe environment, and willingness to change. A colleague recently described me as a “nurturer.” It took me aback because I thought it made me sound weak and inconsequential, rather than strong, progressive, and influential. However, upon further thought, I’ve realized it was I who was wrong, not her. As it turns out, I am nurturing—and assertive, adaptive, and empathic. Being all those things gives me the ability to be a successful leader within a continually changing environment.

Lawren McKinney

Growing up in a sports environment, change was always in play. New coaches, new level of play, learning new positions, all of these aspects were implemented into my life. All of these changes are small but make a huge difference. If the changes are not implemented correctly, the change is not effective. I also as a leader of the team have had to help others by implementing the change onto them. Not everyone can adjust to change as fast as others, so having help from a leader is what will make the change effective. In my experiences, the help is what implements the change. It is what puts the change in to effect for the program.

My career path is coaching softball at a college level, leaving me to have to implement change with every new team I get. Working with 20 plus girls every year makes the team dynamic different each time. There has to be small changes that come into play to help make the teamwork together to bring a successful season. With each girl reacting to change in different ways, I as the coach have to implement change in ways that can help the girls handle it. I must help them work with the change, to make it effective for the whole team. Implementing change is helping work with the change.
Experiences
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Maria Fruechte

As a strength and conditioning coach, my main purpose is to elicit change within my teams. Whether it is team building aspects and helping athletes realize their abilities, or helping them become physically stronger, quicker, more explosive athletes, my role is to implement positive change during their time in the weight room. During training sessions, I program to drive adaptation that is beneficial to their sport. Sometimes for this to happen there must be a change in the attitude and culture of the team.

I’ve found that change can be synonymous with growth. Change is a requirement of life. In my life, I have found change to be hard and slow. As a coach, change requires belief and buy-in from athletes. Change requires a consistent effort. One of the teams I work with has never been fully committed to the weight room and lifting is not mandatory. Half of the athletes come in and half of them don’t. Consistency is extremely important to drive the adaptations we are pursuing, so I would love them to all be at training regularly. In order to stress this, I have found that expressing my commitment to their team, knowledge of their sport and compassion for them individually has created a deeper respect. The more they understand how their time in the weight room benefits them on the court/field, the more likely they are to come in. I have spent the past year learning as much about their sport as I can. Things such as the energy system they use, the repetitive movements, the usual injuries and even the rules and lingo. I have worked on developing relationships that show I am concerned about them with more than just their sport. I have focused on letting them know I was happy to see them in the weight room and asking what else I could do to help them. This past week, I had all but three athletes come in and train each day. It is not perfect, but it is improvement. Change is hard and slow, but if there is a consistent effort, it can be done and it can be worth it.

Cassie Ohnstad

What do you think of when you think of the word “change”? The words associated with change often hold negative connotations, such as uneasiness, resistance, different, more work, increased responsibility, and “here we go again.” When I think of the word change, I think of new, bright, exciting, innovation, embrace, and growth. The differences between these two thought processes are that the first is a fixed mindset and the second is a growth mindset. A growth mindset is being open to new ideas and change, while improving skills and abilities through dedication and hard work.

In my experiences with implementing change, I have always been a dreamer and often bite off more than I can chew at first. I have learned throughout my various positions that I need to strategically plan my dreams, prioritize tasks, and exhibit patience, dedication, hard work, and consistency. I started my position as the Adult Education Coordinator last February and wanted to implement change immediately; however, I quickly retracted because I knew I needed to establish relationships with staff first and understand the entire program before implementing changes. The school year concluded in June and I had until September to redesign the programs to implement in early September. My strategic planning, patience, and dedication produced a strong and successful commencement for Adult Education for the 2018/2019 school year. Change is necessary to allow for growth and success; however, it needs to be strategically designed and executed.
Tyler Schoh

Change is inevitable, but it is often rejected because people are uncomfortable with their current situation. I lived in five different states by the age of 16. These constant changes in my life caused me to accept change and embrace it with a positive attitude. Accepting and embracing change, however, is much different from implementing change. Accepting change is being reactive to the environment, whereas implementing change is actively making an effort to improve the situation. Through my experiences, I have seen change accepted and implemented.

I find that implementing change takes intelligence and personability. It is easy to get into a routine, follow steps, and become monotonous. Implementing change first takes intelligence to recognize the opportunity for change. Change is not always necessary, but it can create endless opportunities of improvement if it is implemented at the right time. Along with that, one single person cannot implement change. I have experienced that implementing change needs support from all of the parties involved. Many of my own experiences involve the participation from everyone in an organization to begin the process of change. I have experienced that one or a small number of people discover the opportunity for change and bring that knowledge to the greater group. Through collaboration and communication, everyone can work together to understand the reason for change and how it can help the organization. It is important to understand people in order to motivate them about implementing change.

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“The call for leadership is not one that can simply fall on deaf ears. It is a continuous process of expanding one’s circle, residing outside one’s comfort zone, and sustaining performance and momentum through collaboration” – Dani Magdza
References


