KEEPING GOOD INTERNSHIP JOURNALS

Your internship journals have three functions:

1. **Keeping track of time**: You need to record the time in/time out, hours each day, and running total of hours. Then you, your site supervisor, and I can clearly see how you are progressing in terms of completing the required hours.

2. **Describing your activities**: Write what you did and/or what you observed, in as much detail as you can record.

3. **Reflecting sociologically and/or applying your academic learning to your internship experience**: Most beginning interns do well in recording their activities but are less likely to be systematic in reflecting on the significance of their observations. An important part of internships is the conscious application of academic learning to the internship work and vice versa. Your professional development depends on making the connections between the body of sociological and other academic knowledge and their applications in real world settings. Each day’s journal, therefore, needs to include a reflection on the significance of what you are doing with an application of sociological or other academic learning. These reflections should be set in the framework of the goals you listed in your Learning Contract.

**Required format for your journals:**

1. **File name**: Please include your last name in the file name. Imagine the faculty supervisor having to open and/or save fourteen different attached journals all named: “Journal” or “Internship!” Suggested example: “Keating-Journal-Oct.1.”

2. **The heading for each journal entry should include:**
   - **Name**: Student Intern
   - **Placement**: Help Others Agency
   - **Date**: October 1, 2009
   - **Time**: 1:00 – 5:00 PM
   - **Hours**: 4 hours (the number of hours worked today)
   - **Total Hours**: 52 hours (the number of accumulated hours worked so far at this internship)

3. **Activities**: Describe what you did and/or what you observed in as much detail as you can record.

4. **Reflection and Application**: Review your expanded, customized list of sociological terms and concepts. Reflect on the significance of what you did and the patterns you are seeing. What concepts from sociology do you see in play? How would you look at the situation from various sociological perspectives (exchange theory, symbolic interactionism, conflict theory, feminist theory, etc.)? Think of concepts such as socialization, differential association, social stratification, status inconsistency, social power, the definition of the situation, social-emotional leadership vs. instrumental leadership, etc.
Aided Recall:
“A Brief List of Sociological Terms or Concepts” is posted on the D2L Content Page. Copy the list to your own computer document. Expand and customize the list to include what you learned in your academic courses that might be applicable to your internship experience. Add your favorite sociological concepts, insights, ideas, theories, and research generalizations. Review your list each day as you reflect on your internship activities. Social scientists refer to this as “Aided Recall.”

Students doing their internships for gerontology or nonprofit leadership are certainly invited to use or start with the list of sociological terms or concepts. They are encouraged, however, to create their own lists using gerontology or their own academic disciplines. Review the materials from the courses you have taken. Create your own list of terms, concepts, theories, insights, ideas and research generalizations.

Make this kind of reflection a daily part of your journaling. Sometimes this reflection may be brief and sketchy. Other times it will be more extensive and in-depth. It will depend on the nature of what you’re doing on a daily basis.

Making it a habit to think reflectively every day will maximize the quality of your experience and the transferability of the skills you are developing. Being able to generalize from a specific experience to a wider context will help you as you interpret this experience to potential employers. They may ask what you gained from your internship that would be useful in a new work situation.

If you have taken Social Research, Applied Sociology, Qualitative Methods, or Sociological Ethnography (or comparable research courses), you should apply the principles of taking good field notes to your internship journals.

Use your journal entries for your final paper:
Your reflections will be useful to you as you write your final paper. Review all of your journal entries before you start the final paper. Integrate the hands-on experience in the internship and the sociological knowledge you gained in your coursework. Apply both to your professional development.

For graduate students: Integrate professional sources:
Graduate students will also integrate a brief review of the professional literature with the knowledge gained in their coursework and their internship experiences in their final paper. This literature review will include at least five professional sources (books or articles in professional journals). Graduate students are encouraged to integrate these sources in their journal entries as well.