

B547 PUBLIC INTEREST EXTERNSHIP EXCERPT ABOUT REFLECTIVE LAWYERING

Please read this page as well as the chapter on e-reserves (linked below).

Reflective Essay-Writing in Law School Internships

The signal goal of clinical legal education, including internships and externships, is often defined as helping students to become “reflective practitioners”.

The term “reflective practitioner” is usually attributed to Professor Donald A. Schon of M.I.T., a non-lawyer whose career was devoted to examining how effective professionals, across all the disciplines, are educated and formed.

“Reflective” in this context broadly refers to the qualities of thinking through professional actions in advance; being self-aware during each interaction - such as a client interview, a discussion with a supervisor, or an appearance before a judge or legislative committee - and taking the time after the fact to examine the impact of professional choices.

The reflective-essay component of your internship is designed to help make these habits of planning, awareness, and analysis - that is, scrutinizing your decision-making and experience before, during, and after the event - an integral part of your professional training, and eventually your practice.

In your weekly reflective essays, do not merely describe what you did or observed in your externship, but instead examine your preparation; your analysis of events as they unfold; and your “post-game” evaluation. For example, a reflective essay about a settlement conference that you attended with your supervisor might explain what your expectations were before the conference; how the choices that you and the lawyers made before or during the talks affected the outcome; and how this experience changed your perceptions of negotiating.

Read this chapter on Reflective Lawyering (by Prof. Margaret Martin Berry, from J.P. Ogilvy, Leah Wortham, & Lisa G. Lerman, *Learning from Practice* (1998)) posted on e-reserves; use the password “pubint” to gain access:

<http://ereserves.indiana.edu/eres/coursepass.aspx?page=docs&return=courses.aspx&cid=7069>

Further accounts of the process of reflective essay-writing as part of legal education may be found in J. P. Ogilvy, *The Use of Journals in Legal Education: A Tool for Reflection*, 3 *Clinical L. Rev.* 55 (1996); Stacy Caplow, *A Year in Practice: The Journal of a Reflective Clinician*, 3 *Clinical L. Rev.* 1 (1996); and Richard K. Neumann, Jr., *Donald Schon, The Reflective Practitioner, and the Comparative Failures of Legal Education*, 6 *Clinical L. Rev.* 401 (2000).