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## Book Review: The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning

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## Book Review

**The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic  
Development in Experiential Learning  
Belmont, CA: Brooks Cole (2014, 4th ed.)  
by H. Frederick Sweitzer and Mary A. King**

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The fourth edition of Sweitzer and King's text on internships and experiential learning is one that could be used by internship faculty in the social sciences or other disciplines that are increasingly incorporating experiential learning into their curricula, as a guide for providing a rewarding internship experience for their students. It could also be utilized as a text for students and faculty together in the seminar portion of an internship, but ideally, this text would be used for both purposes. It describes specific aspects of a successful and rewarding internship experience, such as the inclusion of purposeful tasks, quality feedback, applied learning, reflection, development of substantive relationships, and engaging across differences (diversity). This material, introduced in the first chapter and reinforced throughout the text, provides guidelines for faculty in designing an internship program and assists students in understanding that a quality internship program involves much more than simply accumulating unpaid hours at an agency related to their college major.

The new edition retains the basic structure and organization of the previous editions. Each chapter is followed by a series of exercises that can be conducted by students on their own or as participants in face-to-face or online internship seminars. In addition to the categories of exercises from the third edition, which include *Personal Reflection* (now retitled *Personal Ponderings*) and *Seminar Springboards*, the fourth edition adds *Checking In*, which reinforces the key concepts of the chapter; *Experience Matters*, which focuses on topics relevant to more experienced students who are participating in internships; and *Civically Speaking*.

An important concept given increased focus in the fourth edition is that of teaching civic responsibility to interns—particularly those in the helping professions. Young students completing their internships understandably tend to focus on the micro-level factors that are affecting the immediate needs of their clients. The *Civically Speaking* exercises at the end of each chapter are designed to clarify for students the macro- or structural-level factors that contribute to the crises that bring clients to their internship sites. This is an important lesson for students, as internships are frequently offered in fields such as social working, psychology, and human services, which often do

not thoroughly stress social and structural influences. If these influences are appropriately addressed, the social problems that interns are working to help clients ameliorate can be lessened or prevented. Going beyond simply making students aware of their civic responsibilities, the *Civically Speaking* exercises help students explore the steps they can take to bring about systemic change, such as conducting research, educating the community, and lobbying for political and legal change.

The most significant change in the latest edition is a revision of Sweitzer and King's Developmental Stage Model of student internships. The model presented in the third edition shows that more than the task progressions of an internship needs to be attended, including the important affective progression. Task aspects include the skills, knowledge, and discovery that occur while students work in their host agencies. These are what have been traditionally considered as the goals of experiential-learning programs. The affective progression presented in the third edition posited that interns experience a predictable emotional progression of Anticipation→Disillusionment→Confrontation→Competence→Culmination. This theory predicted that students would be nervous, excited, and doubtful during the anticipation stage; become disillusioned after they got settled in at their agencies; overcome disillusionment by deciding to make the most of the internship and to work through any challenges or disappointments felt early on; gain competency as they honed their skills and benefitted from the mentoring provided by their supervisors; and eventually develop a sense of closure as their internships come to their conclusions.

Investigation showed the authors that, in reality, some students never experienced disillusionment and others became disillusioned at various, and sometimes multiple, points during their internships. The fourth edition reduces the number of stages of the internship Developmental Stage Model to four: Anticipation→Exploration→Competence→Culmination. A further refinement of the theory is the realization that each stage has a number of possible outcomes, including the development of new concerns, the completion of critical tasks, engagement or disengagement, and the *potential* experience of disillusionment. This updated model more accurately fits the stories shared by students in the authors' internship seminars, as well as my own. The flexibility of this new developmental model is a great improvement, which will be more relatable to students, who all have their own subjective internship experiences.

Sweitzer and King's book is an excellent guide for faculty and students to use in creating an enriching and enjoyable internship experience. The authors' professional backgrounds are in human services and social science, but the book's Developmental Stage Model, general principles, and exercises can be used in any college program that incorporates formal experiential learning in its curriculum, which is occurring more frequently in a broader array of majors.