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Professor Denning  
Internship Reflection  

The past couple of months have had a major effect on my experience in Pace’s MS in Publishing program. During my first two semesters, I took eight classes altogether and was a graduate assistant in the Multimedia Lab. Thanks to my phenomenal professors and through this position, I did have some hands-on experience with publishing professionals and the industry in general. However, these experiences were all from a distance. While my classes were extremely informative, and the work I did for the blog and internship website definitely prepared me for my internships, the work was nowhere near as gratifying. As much as I loved each class and cherish my assistantship, nothing can prepare you for the field quite like an internship.

I was fortunate enough to secure two internships for Professor Denning’s PUB 699A course. One is at Workman Publishing, in the Marketing department, and the other is at Charlotte Sheedy Literary Agency, as an agent intern. They are both incredibly different positions; however, due to the nature of the publishing industry, they overlap and intersect from time to time. At Workman, I am a social media intern, working on a “high-profile” cookbook author’s social media platform. Like most other people in this program, I am very interested in the editorial side of the publishing industry. However, I wanted to branch out and experience other aspects of the field before blindly committing myself to editorial. I was pleasantly surprised to discover just how much I love this internship. I have become an even more proficient blogger and have learned the ins and outs of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google Plus, Google Analytics, and other websites and features. In the digital age, these are really useful skills to possess, and I am excited
to add them to my resume. The Charlotte Sheedy Literary Agency internship is clearly on the editorial side of publishing. During my time at CSLA, I have mostly read manuscripts and written reader reports, editorial letters, and rejection letters. Prior to my first day, I had some experience with a couple of these tasks, but for the most part, I took on a host of new responsibilities. Spending the summer reading has truly been a dream come true. I have learned how to separate myself from the text in order to determine whether a manuscript should be taken on or rejected. This is a skill that always filled me with anxiety, so I feel proud that I have learned how to manage it.

Katie is the Workman author with whom I work very closely; she went on a number of book tours this summer, and while she is in New York or elsewhere, we work together to maintain a very fresh and original blog about her travels, recipes, and other food for thought. While she was away on a west coast tour, Katie participated in this really interesting food blogger conversation called #SundaySupper. As indicated by the hashtag, it takes place through Twitter, and each month (it will take place once a month), there is a specific theme. This time, they discussed portable dishes for potluck summer events. It was definitely one of the highlights of the internship because it was really exciting to see how many people used Katie’s recipes from her Mom 100 cookbook. I have loved watching Katie’s author platform morph and rise in terms of content and activity because I feel personally connected to the success. It has been my sincerest pleasure visiting her at her Upper East Side apartment and getting to understand how to relate to an author. Working with the ladies at Workman has been an immensely rewarding experience for so many reasons. If I had to pick one, it would be the knowledge I have gained about social media websites (Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest)
and tools (Facebook Insights, Tweetreach, and Google Analytics). Each week, I create PDFs of the most recent Facebook Insights, Tweetreach, and Google Analytics reports, and I have learned how to analyze them based on the week’s tour and blog activity. It is fascinating to see how every action affects an author’s platform and position in the industry. Whether I wind up in a marketing department or not, these are such important skills to have, and I feel confident in my knowledge of each, which is something I definitely could not say three months ago.

During my time at CSLA, I have read four manuscripts. The story of the third manuscript, however, was most important to me, as an intern. To recap, at this point, I had read two manuscripts and written two reader reports. I enjoyed the concept of the first manuscript, but we took issue with the final product, so my boss, Mackenzie, decided not to take it on; I loved the beautifully-crafted second manuscript, and Mackenzie requested that the author send us the final parts, for which I am very excited. Now, with the third manuscript, I was unsure of how to feel. The writer’s voice is engaging, and the material is interesting, but I still was unsure if I liked it. The first two manuscripts were both fiction, but this one was a memoir, which is why I was at odds with myself. As I read, I kept asking myself what makes this man so special that he should write a memoir about his life. I believe that memoirs need to be about really extraordinary people in order to captivate readers, and I could not decide if this writer had what I think it takes. I spoke to Mackenzie about this, and she said to keep reading but to trust my instincts – easier said than done! I kept second-guessing myself while reading that manuscript because I am still new at this, and how do I know that my instincts are right? It is nerve-wracking, but it was this accomplishment that made me really begin to
enjoy the agenting process. CSLA is a great place to learn about it too because of the small office and inviting environment. This is the most valuable aspect of this internship because I receive an exorbitant amount of personalized attention, and I have gotten to dabble in many different aspects of the agenting process. I love that I can pick Mackenzie’s brain and not feel self-conscious or like a sub-par intern. She wants to teach me everything she knows, and I am excited to continue learning.

Overall, I have had an amazing time interning at Workman Publishing and Charlotte Sheedy Literary Agency. Each experience has given me a glimpse into the world that I will enter upon graduation. Every office is different, and all bosses have their own expectations, but I feel confident that I have met their requirements and certainly my own. During the first week of this course, we set personal goals for ourselves. Mine were as follows:

1. I hope to take initiative and present myself as an eager and proficient worker, not just an intern.
2. I would like to network with the other people in my offices and make lasting connections that will lead to a successful future.
3. I aspire to become a well-rounded member of the publishing industry so that regardless of which department I ultimately settle in, I will have an understanding of all aspects of the business.
4. Lastly, I really hope that this summer provides me with the skills necessary to secure an entry level position at a publishing company or literary agency.

After reviewing these goals and comparing them to my endeavors over the last six weeks, I feel proud of myself and my accomplishments.