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Professor Bruce I Lazarus of Purdue University's School of Hotel and Institutional Management has for the past several years had students in his hospitality law class keep a "drinking diary" for a one week period. In the diary students record "their drinking behavior patterns and any other observations they may make in relation to alcohol." Professor Lazarus describes the main purpose of the assignment as to get his students "to learn about themselves and society's attitude toward drinking." He describes the student response as "overwhelmingly positive.: Professor Lazarus is the only person who reads the diaries, and he allows students who don't want to keep a "drinking diary" to choose an alternative assignment. (Reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Feb.'93)

Is the "drinking diary" an ethically acceptable assignment? If so, why? If not, why not?

Moderator's Answer: Yes: It is very important for students entering the hospitality field to reflect thoroughly both about social attitudes toward alcohol as well as about their own attitudes and behavioral patterns in regard to alcohol use. By not letting anyone else read the diaries, and by giving students the option of doing another assignment Professor Lazarus provides sufficient safeguards for student privacy.