Abstract

Through Mount Allison's Undergraduate Teaching Internship Programme, professors pair with a student intern who performs a variety of teaching duties in a particular class. This paper will tell the story of the programme by a professor who has participated twice. It explores how the internships energized the professors who mentor the student interns, how it enriched learning for students in classes where interns worked, how interns themselves developed (and documented) skills, knowledge and values through their participation in the programme; and the substantial pros and occasional cons of the internship from an instructor's perspective. The time commitment, advance planning, and appropriate duties and responsibilities of the interns are discussed, and a case study of two interns for one introductory-level course provides a context from which internship in general can be viewed.
greatly increase the excitement and energy in those courses. Although the duties, responsibilities, and experiences of the many faculty who took part in this program differ from intern to intern, a case study of one professor with two interns will show the substantial pros and occasional cons of the program.

Implementation

General Electric funded, through the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, a pilot which began in the Fall of 2005. The donation, totaling $100,000, has been spread out over two years to allow the maximum number of faculty members to take advantage of this opportunity. Funding covers the stipends of the students (approximately $750 based on a 5-hour work week per semester), a small allowance for teaching materials for the professor, and the costs of administering the program. Although the funding for the program from GE ends with this academic year, Mount Allison is seeking other avenues of support to keep this very valuable program running. Eileen Herteis, Director of the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, has administered the program, with the help of an intern in some of the semesters the program has operated.

Recruitment of Faculty and Interns

The first concern that the program raises is how professors, so accustomed to a particular and often solitary method of instruction, will react to such an idea. Will the undergraduate students chosen be trained adequately and have significant background to assist with the course? Will they be privy to the grades and performance of some of their undergraduate colleagues? How will they interact with other undergraduates in a system which seems to establish them as authority figures? How much time, energy, and commitment will the program take? For professors carrying a heavy teaching and research load, the thought of adding another series of duties and responsibilities can be daunting. Although some of the obvious benefits of the program can certainly be imagined, how many faculty will be ready and willing to take on a new, experimental program that might not “work” for their course?
The second concern is recruitment of student interns. Although there are always students who excel in their coursework, they may not have the particular skills or interest in taking on a leadership role in the classroom. Like professors, students are usually fully committed to their existing courses and workload. Five hours per week is a substantial time commitment for full-time undergraduate students, no matter how talented and productive they might be. Although the stipend is a fairly attractive one (averaging $10 per hour for the semester), the intern will by necessity need to learn new skills and take on areas of responsibility that usually only the professor does. The skills of the prospective student may not match the intentions or plans of the professor for the particular course. And more importantly, how will an internship differ from a simple teaching assistantship? What documents and processes will ensure this contrast?

The Learning Contract

One of the elements that make this program different from a normal teaching assistantship is the development and implementation of a Learning Contract. Mentors and interns establish guidelines for their partnership, sharing individual and joint expectations and values. The contract addresses a number of questions: What goals do you each have for the Internship? What duties and responsibilities will the intern have in terms of teaching, grading, leading tutorials, finding materials, etc.? Duties aside, what goals do you have for acquiring knowledge, skills (or values)? How will you know when you have met these goals? What can you do to help each other achieve these goals? Meeting with the student to establish the guidelines for the internship is one of the first and most important steps in the internship process. The Learning Contract generally used at Mount Allison is one adapted from North Carolina Wesleyan College (see Appendix A) and involves a number of areas of development and contribution. The sample contract, by Matthew Andriessen in Mount Allison’s music department, gives an example of the kinds of activities agreed to in the Contract. Not so much a promise of productivity, the contract instead offers an opportunity for both professor and intern to creatively imagine ways that the student can learn skills and course material and how these objectives will be

1 Names have been changed
realized and documented. The development of the contract is one of the most important processes in the internship, focused as it is on learning outcomes, not just duties assigned or agreed to.

**Internship Duties and Activities**

The duties and responsibilities of the intern are as various as the partnerships themselves. In a general sense, however, the internship activities tend to run along certain general guidelines: helping to plan the course and testing strategies, choosing text books or other supplementary materials; presenting or co-presenting classes; running extra-help sessions; providing review before tests; giving help in writing essays; marking assignments; and using WebCT, Mount Allison’s online course delivery system. Most interns take on a variety of tasks, the less quotidian the better, in most cases. Attending each course lecture is often a component of the commitment, but for courses that the student has already taken, it is sometimes more profitable for interns to attend some class hours and to spend the rest of their time on formative or organizational work.

**Professional Development and Networking**

Teaching can seem like a very solitary activity, and so can being a teaching intern. Faced with different kinds of challenges and difficulties, interns sometimes need more support than simply the encouragement or guidance of their individual faculty mentors. At Mount Allison, the internship began with a meeting including all professor and intern teams. The participants introduced themselves and the courses they would be teaching, and the Director and administrator of the program covered the basics of the internship, including how the interns would be remunerated and basic information on their duties and rights. Over the course of the semester additional meetings were held to help the interns to develop a Learning Portfolio, another important aspect of the program which makes it different from a teaching assistantship. Put simply, a Learning Portfolio is a strategic collection of student work, representing an array of performance over time. It presents a complementary balance of narrative sections and evidence, and is an authentic approach that encourages students to reflect in and on learning. Typical elements of the Portfolio are lesson plans,
rubrics, or assignments that the intern has created; letters from the faculty mentor or student evaluations; and reflection on how well the student has achieved the goals of the internship as well as future goals. Assembled over the course of the internship, the Learning Portfolio is both a product and a process. Portfolios help students to translate experience into learning through reflection, analysis, and documentation.\(^2\) The student asks what he or she has learned, and how that learning has taken place. Helping to establish what kind of learner the intern is, the Portfolio is an important step in facilitating future learning. Along with what has been learned, the intern is prompted to imagine what more they want to learn, and how they will go about learning it. The Portfolio is not simply a document that the student puts away after the internship is over; many interns from Mount Allison’s program have used the Portfolio as evidence of teaching experience when applying for teaching assistantships in graduate school.

At the end of the Internship, participants meet again for a discussion of the experience, sharing stories of teaching successes and failures, comparing notes on how particular duties were carried out, and giving advice to interns involved in the next cohort. This process allows the intern to feel part of a larger peer group that shares the intern’s concerns and experiences. An evaluation of the program by both intern and professor rounds out the internship and allows both to reflect on what worked and what caveats they would give future partnerships.

**Commitment and Advance Planning**

Although certainly help with grading and class presentation would seem to lighten the professor’s load, an internship in fact increases the time and energy commitment on the part of the instructor. From an institutional perspective, a director or administrator of the program is essential, as well as lead time to plan the meetings, documents, and processes that are required to make the program work. Although each student commits 70 hours for the semester, the time commitment for the faculty mentor varies from person to person. Certainly, each

A professor who is contemplating the program needs to spend some time looking at their courses and selecting one which would benefit most from the internship. Although at first glance, the larger-enrollment courses would seem the obvious ones, internship sometimes works better with smaller or elective courses. Although help with grading or class management may not be as urgent, these courses can benefit from interns who like to meet one-on-one with students and help with writing or essay skills. One good rule of thumb is to choose a course that the professor feels may have become “tired” or a new, experimental course where some assistance and added input would be of great value. Once a course has been selected, the professor needs to think carefully about how the intern will be integrated into the course, how the course will need to adjust to account for the intern’s duties and identity. A semester’s worth of advance planning, at least in this regard, is valuable, if not absolutely essential. Meeting with the intern for the development of the Learning Contract and discussion over the intern duties takes another several hours of consultation. Answering emails, attending meetings, and dealing with the more administrative of the internship tasks adds up to only a few hours over the semester, as does the completion of the internship evaluation at the end of the course. Meetings with the intern vary widely, from very little to a few hours per week. Writing up assessments of the student’s lectures or work from the internship may take up to three hours throughout the semester. The internship certainly does not save time, but the time and energy committed to it enhances the professor’s (and the students’) experience of the course.

Case Study: Wells with Warner and Andriessen

I first became involved in the Internship program at its inception in Fall of 2005, and since then I have had two (and am currently on my third) intern. Andrea Warner and Matthew Andriessen assisted me as interns in a course entitled “Introduction to Music History and Literature” in Fall 2005 and 2006 respectively. This course was a foundation first-year course I had created in 2004 that was meant to ground entering music majors in the basic history of classical music while at the same time developing research, writing, and critical skills. It was a tough course for both students and professor, with a heavy workload of assignments and marking. I had taught it on my own in 2004, but
due to illness could not see out the semester. I was eager to get at it again, this
time with an intern. Of all my courses, this one seemed the most appropriate: it
was experimental, it dealt with students new to university, and it attempted to do
many things at once. The first task was to choose my intern. Although simply
relying on a GPA or a high mark in the course would be an automatic criterion
for most professors, I have learned that seeking out students with ideas was
more important. In all cases, I have sought out interns who interact well with
others, who are vocal about their ideas, and who are genuinely interested in
broader aspects of education. My experience with each intern was quite
different, leading me to new methods and approaches to the class. With Andrea I
met a number of times over the summer, both of us getting used to the idea of
the internship, and fleshing out what Andrea’s needs were and how she saw the
class. She was a fourth-year student who had never taken this particular course,
and so she was able to react to the content and assignments newly (like a first
year student might) but with the experience of already finishing our core music
history sequence. She could tell me what was missing in the sequence and how
she felt the course might remedy those areas. Matt was quite different: he had
taken the first incarnation of the course, and had been a very vocal student in it.
With him we reviewed what had gone well and badly the first and second times
around, what he had wished he had done in the course as a student, and how
other students reacted to the course in general. Both Andrea and Matt were
excellent students, with different kinds of intelligence and skills that they
brought to the table. These initial discussions were key to my rethinking of the
course. Were there too many assignments? Should I change the listening lists?
Should anything be added, or taken away?

After revamping and refining some areas of the syllabus, we went on to forge
the Learning Contracts. Both Matt and Andrea, although very different in
personality and career objectives, both wanted to do some very similar things:
lecture, mark, and be a resource for the students. Their lecturing styles were
quite different: Andrea was more artistic, creative, and whimsical in her lecture
style, whereas Matt was a very PowerPoint-oriented person who was a stern
taskmaster. Their marking styles were quite different as well: Andrea came up
with a grading rubric, then refined it when it didn’t seem to reflect the true
character of submitted assignments, whereas Matt made up a very detailed and
rigorous rubric that he stuck with throughout the semester, even in the face of
some student criticism. Both took their approach to one-on-one guidance differently; Andrea was approached by students after and between classes for feedback and support; Matt set up specific meetings with groups of students to discuss research strategies at a certain point in the semester. Both saw themselves going on to grad school, and wanted experiences that would give them a good feel as to what teaching in a university is really like. By the end of the process, both seemed to feel that they had learned this. Andrea says, “My teaching internship has given me a tremendous advantage in securing assistantships and being successful at them in graduate school. The one-on-one experience working with Dr. Wells was invaluable; she taught me how to communicate more effectively with students through the example of her teaching and through her helpful critique of my own. The opportunity to grade regularly and to be solely accountable for those grades gave me a sense of the responsibility of a professor, and helped me to understand the significance of a professor’s dedication to providing detailed comments. Being a teaching intern was among the most beneficial learning experiences of my undergraduate career.” Matt adds, “The internship gave me valuable experience in many aspects of university teaching, including lecture preparation, lecture skills, marking and course planning. Dr. Wells gave me pertinent feedback on improving lecture skills, and dealing with students one-on-one. Through the internship at Mount Allison University, I also had a chance to exercise these skills with a small class of first-year students, but always with firm guidance from Dr. Wells, who was very forgiving of errors and encouraging in new ideas.”

The benefits of having both interns were tremendous to me. The process of revisiting the syllabus was something I could not experience from simply reading end-of-term student evaluations and implementing their suggestions. The interns really took on the role of course designers and thought through every aspect of the course. I have always belaboured marking, wondering if I am always objective and clear in my assessments and expectations. The creation of a rubric which was designed by a student helped greatly with this, and allowed the interns to be comfortably accountable to the students. I had very few, if any, complaints that the interns were marking too hard, or that the feedback was not understood. The course itself involved eight listening logs, fairly lengthy journals that students completed after listening to musical examples. I split the
marking with the interns so that each of us would take one week’s journals. By comparing my own marking with that of the interns, I was able to reflect on my own approaches to student work, and it helped me to clarify what my objectives were with the assignments. Watching my interns lecture was a good reflection to me of myself in front of the classroom. Small habits or styles that infect my own teaching were made more obvious to me by seeing my interns do the same things. The content of the modules they taught gave me insight into how I would teach the same material. Both interns lectured, not on music history per se, but on study skills, citation styles, how to approach listening journals, etc. By watching their presentations, I was able to see what an undergraduate needs to be told about these areas.

One of the greatest advantages of the internship for me was that the intern could take the intellectual and emotional temperature of the class and relay that back to me. Any issues of boredom, frustration, confusion, or excitement were easily perceived by the interns, and they could give me guidance on my approach or technique. I was simply too far away from the students because of my age and experience to always be able to determine these things accurately for myself. The interns helped me to see the class in a fresh way.

Not every aspect of the internship was easy or positive. With both interns, inexperience in public speaking or classroom teaching was something I had not adequately anticipated. Although their sessions were well received by the class, sometimes small errors or confusing methods of instruction left me in a tough position. I did not want to correct the interns in front of the class, but I also didn’t want the students to become confused. Although I had discussed the content of the modules with the interns in advance, I still did not know exactly what was going to happen in each lecture, and I had to be very alert to guiding in a positive and discreet way. Matt led a discussion when I was out of town, and decided to give the students a new, interesting listening assignment. I did not know this was going to happen in advance, and so had to communicate to the students that this was not required, since I had no place for an extra assignment in my syllabus. The problem was fairly easily solved, but happened as the result of an inexperienced intern trying to do something interesting without thinking of all the ramifications.
I also had not anticipated in advance how much energy and time the internship would require. Although I met with interns for shorter periods of time and more infrequently than some of my colleagues, I felt at the end of the process that I should have given them more formal feedback on their work on the course. They were so able and helpful in the course that I forgot they were still students, not colleagues, and that my responsibility was to teach them as much as I could, not simply rely on them for support. Although I talked to my interns frequently throughout the course, a regular weekly meeting time that is not interrupted by other tasks would seem a good resolution for the future.

**Conclusions**

Although expensive to administer and time consuming to take on, internship seems to offer many benefits to both students and professors. A liaison between the class and the instructor, the intern can help both contingents operate much better with increased communication and understanding. Everyone wins in this situation, including the students in the course who have an extra resource they can turn to. Funding of such a program remains the most challenging task, but it could be managed in other ways: by offering some kind of course credit for the intern or by integrating the internship into a more general mentorship program. For small universities like Mount Allison, where student development is emphasized but without graduate students to fulfill teaching duties, internship bridges the gap between the needs of the institution and the enrichment of the student.
### Appendix A

Matthew Andriessen’s Learning Contract

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<tr>
<th>Learning Contract</th>
<th>(To be completed by Student Intern and Mentor prior to the Internship)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student:</strong></td>
<td>Matthew Andriessen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Number:</strong></td>
<td>24601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E-mail:</strong></td>
<td>mcndrssn@mta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty:</strong></td>
<td>Elizabeth Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dept.:</strong></td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty phone:</strong></td>
<td>364-2598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E-mail:</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ewells@mta.ca">ewells@mta.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course in which Intern will work:</strong></td>
<td>MUSC 1201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Learning Objectives</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fulfillment/Evaluation Methods</strong> (What evidence could you provide in your portfolio that you have achieved these objectives)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Developing lecture planning and delivery skills, including tailoring the teaching methods to the specific group and what they have already studied.</td>
<td>Create 2-3 lecture plans for different (and spaced out) lectures that suit the student audience. An evaluation of the lectures by Dr. Wells and detailed notes for the presentations could be included in my portfolio, as well as a brief explanation for each lecture why I chose to approach certain issues in certain ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning how to properly develop and apply a rubric (for marking) and how to constructively evaluate and critique written work.</td>
<td>In conjunction with Dr. Wells, develop a rubric for evaluating listening journals, present it to the class and apply it to journals throughout the semester. The portfolio would include the rubric, some description of its planning and a few examples of marked student work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Revisit and enhance my level of study on early music (pre-1700) and develop a fuller understanding of the sequence of musical, social and political events and how they interconnect.</td>
<td>Teach lectures on early music that effectively deliver the concepts and understanding of the period without going into too much detail. As part of my portfolio, Dr. Wells could write a critique of the lecture. Part of this goal could also include helping to develop a curriculum for introducing students to early music.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Give 3-4 10-15 minute seminars on sections of the Wingell book in reaction to specific student writing to familiarize students with how to reference the book and direct them to important information in the book.
- One lecture: basic essay structure – many students did not gain a good background of this in high school.
- One lecture bibliographies and citations (as done in university).

Meet with groups of 5-6 at non-school locations (house, Bridge Street Café) to discuss term papers in progress. Hopefully this will provide a non-threatening environment and a chance to relax, become less defensive and openly discuss how to improve all the projects. This is also an important opportunity to bond, as first year music history and literature is the primary connecting course for most music students.

2 full class lectures (one on Early Music and one on New Music)
- Forty minutes in length each.

Power and politics group discussion.
- Dr. Wells will be absent for a couple days during the term. On the first, I will hold a group discussion talking about how music ties in with current events and politics; which will also reference the week’s theme.

Develop a rubric for listening journal marking. The rubric will be specific and clear so that students are aware of exactly what they need to do to obtain a specific mark.

Mark every second week of listening logs.

Help exam marking – short answer/multiple choice/etc.

Intern marks family tree assignment.

Both intern and professor both mark Conservatory Ethnography Assignment of each student.

Faculty Mentor Signature: ________________________________

Print/Type Faculty Name: Dr. Elizabeth Wells ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

In signing this contract, the Intern agrees to work with integrity and to maintain confidentiality, especially with respect to students’ grades and other privileged information.

Student Intern Signature: ________________________________

Print/Type Student Name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________