

***Junior Internship Program:
Innovative Ways to Fulfill the
Pre-Service Student Teaching
Hours in Music Education***

Research and Evaluation by

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Dr. Kirsten C. Kunkle (Assistant Professor of Voice and Opera Workshop) and Dr. Christine Limb (Assistant Professor and Music Education Coordinator) are faculty members of the Performing Arts Department at Lincoln University of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Lincoln University was founded in 1854 and is the nation's first Historically Black College and University. Notable alumni of Lincoln include the poet Langston Hughes and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Located between Baltimore and Philadelphia in southeastern Pennsylvania, Lincoln University offers 46 Bachelor Degree programs to approximately 1,700 undergraduate students. The main campus covers 422 acres and consists of buildings constructed as early as 1850. Current architectural advancement on campus reflects the college's motto of "Advancing the Legacy" of Lincoln. The Graduate and Continuing Education Center in downtown Philadelphia offers four Master Degree Programs to approximately 200 additional students.

Lincoln University identifies five "Centers of Excellence." Each of these centers identifies areas where minority students are currently underrepresented as professionals in today's workforce. One of these centers is "Teacher Education and Urban Pedagogy," which prepares students to teach in urban areas, especially those in Pennsylvania.

All music education students must earn both the music degree, and, as future teachers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, complete their teacher preparation through the Teacher Education and Urban Pedagogy Center of Excellence at Lincoln University, which is in full compliance with the standards of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. One important qualification that each student must fulfill is the pre-service field hours. These are the hours spent in a public school prior to student

teaching. Some states refer to these as “pre-practicum” hours; the number of hours required varies from state-to-state. Pennsylvania requires 190 pre-service field hours. This number offers a challenge to our education department, which offers numerous ways for students to obtain these hours. One solution to fulfill this goal is to assign a certain number of “field hours” to certain required education classes, such as educational psychology. Another way to obtain hours is via a summer internship program, where a student can amass 80 hours in a two-week session. Still, a number of these field hours must be discipline-specific. Some field hours were assigned to the elementary and secondary music method classes. This was a natural assignment, but caused practical problems because there are not enough music education majors to justify a university van or bus to transport the students to a public school.

The original purpose of the Junior Internship Program was to “shadow” a particular professor for 20 hours. These 20 hours must be completed within the time span of one collegiate semester. This opportunity allowed a student to work one-on-one with a professor whose assignment mirrored a particular student’s interest, for example choral conducting, band directing, or tutoring music theory. The original version of the Junior Internship Program became impractical as our enrollment grew and we could no longer accommodate the one-on-one tutorial nature of the program.

The option of the Junior Internship Program, or “JIP” was jointly investigated by the Music Education Coordinator (Dr. Limb) and the primary voice instructor and Opera Workshop Director (Dr. Kunkle) over the past calendar year to see if the existing program could be modified to assist current music education majors.

Unique to music is the aspect of production, whether it be musical theater or opera. Opera is similar to musical theater in that it is sung drama, involves scenery, costumes, acting, staging, etc. It is generally more challenging in musical content. A student who is competent in producing an opera can transfer those skills to other staged productions. We decided to modify the Junior Internship Program to include opera, rather than the “shadow” format. Drs. Kunkle and Limb submitted this proposal to the Lincoln University education department, along with a modified Junior Internship Program form, and were met with approval.

Within the field of Music Education, there are numerous courses that are well-designed for accommodating the Junior Internship Program pre-service hours. All courses that serve as ensembles make for particularly feasible opportunities, although methods classes, theory, aural training, and other more academic, as opposed to “hands-on,” classes are also options. As with any pre-service or service education hours, much of the success of the endeavor depends upon co-operative teacher involvement. Through a joint collaboration between Dr. Kunkle and Dr. Limb, there has been much success within the music department at Lincoln University of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with acquiring Junior Internship Program hours.

To be successful as a music education major undertaking the Junior Internship Program hours, certain knowledge must have been already attained by the student. He or she must have a good working knowledge of how to read music. He or she must be able to sight-read and know how to answer questions regarding the reading of sheet music. He or she must have a functional and working knowledge of the piano keyboard. He or she must have solid rhythmic skills and relative pitch. He or she must be willing to work

with others, have a good working relationship with the faculty, be respectful, and be willing to be flexible. These skills are necessary regardless of which class or teacher the student will be assisting. All of these skills come from previous coursework and performance experience, including, but not limited to: fundamentals of music, music theory, aural theory (sight singing and dictation), music history, applied instrument coursework, and ensembles. In addition, when attempting to fulfill these hours in Opera Workshop, it is helpful if students are able to lift set pieces, construct a set, work with lighting, and a number of other skill sets outside of the realm of music.

Many secondary schools do not have an opera program. The major exception would be performing arts schools, where students may have opera scenes or full productions. In general, musical theater tends to be the dominant musically-oriented theater form in secondary schools in the United States. The skills involved in putting together an opera are incredibly similar to those of producing a musical. Quite often, obtaining royalties for performance is involved in both operas and musical theater. Both scenarios involve casting appropriate singers, dancers, and actors for the best possible production. Any production onstage requires lighting, set design and construction, make-up, hair and costume design, publicity, blocking, and ample musical rehearsal, including individual and group coaching. The primary focus, thus far, with the Lincoln Opera Workshop Junior Intern Program Hours has been in musical rehearsals and coaching of singers.

Dr. Kunkle works directly with each student to accommodate their schedule and plans accordingly to make sure that each student will earn the required 20 Junior Internship Program hours by the end of each semester. In the past two semesters (Spring

2011 and Fall 2011), seven students have attempted to earn Junior Internship Program hours through involvement with the Lincoln University Opera Workshop class. In the Spring Semester, three students participated, but only one fulfilled the hours. Because he did not submit the appropriate paperwork to his cooperative teacher, his hours were not granted to him. For the Fall 2011 semester, Dr. Kunkle kept all paperwork and documented the hours herself. This decision proved to be much more successful, as she not only kept a record of all documents, but was also able to make sure that time was being fulfilled at a steady pace. During the Fall 2011 semester, four students worked with Dr. Kunkle in preparation for the opera workshop production to acquire Junior Internship Program. Three of the four students who participated in the program in the Fall 2011 semester were successful in acquiring the twenty hours necessary to fulfill the requirements.

Of the five students who participated in the program who finished the service hours (including the student who did not turn in paperwork), three fulfilled all of their pre-service Junior Internship Program hours by coaching music for the upcoming opera production of *Hansel and Gretel*. All three of these students are more advanced in sight-reading than the majority of the cast. In addition, all students participating in the pre-service Junior Internship Program for Opera Workshop have high grades in music theory, ear training, and piano. By utilizing these skills from other classes, they are able to apply their knowledge in a way that is helpful to the class, the production, and train them for future music education work.

One student worked primarily as a musical coach, but also worked on some minor set construction. Because of the need for set construction work to be done, he was able to

fulfill his hours more quickly, but also become more aware of the different aspects of putting together an opera production.

The final student worked primarily as a choral director to teach the chorus music for the Spring 2011 opera *Treemonisha*. With a chorus that primarily did not read music and had learned “by rote” until that point, he was directly challenged with having to teach notes, rhythms, and style, as well as choral cohesiveness. He also worked to transport set pieces, work with costumes, make-up, and set design. Of the five students, his work with the pre-service Junior Internship Program hours was, quite possibly, the most difficult and the most enlightening. There are numerous skill sets that are applied when producing an opera, especially when there is not an entire production team. This student was able to see just a few aspects of the production and realize the skill, effort, and time management that is needed to promote a quality production.

Dr. Kunkle requested that each student give feedback on their Junior Internship Program experience. The primary goal of asking for feedback was to assess if the experience was deemed helpful in their learning and if the students could use skills utilized in this process as part of their future teaching. Three of the five students who attempted Junior Internship Program hours complied with the request. Their feedback and discussion of their experience is as follows:

Over the course of the semester, I have learned a lot about my musicianship and myself. By doing the JIP hour program, it showed me that I do not have as much patience as I thought that I had. Being a musician and a pianist, people always ask me to accompany them or even play their vocal line. It also helped me to build my sight reading skills and to play parts to speed. The opera of *Hansel and Gretel* by Engelbert Humperdinck has a lot of compound meters and difficult rhythms, but it was great for me to play that and make sure I know how to count difficult rhythms. As a future music educator, I was glad I was able to participate in this, because while helping people with their parts, I was able to give them advice on how to use their voice and correct breathing and correct posture. I was able to use what I learn in my private voice

lessons, and to use it when helping people with their role in the opera. Learning an opera can be very difficult, as is teaching and playing notes for the students in the opera. I feel that with more opportunities like this, I am getting closer and closer to a lifetime career with teaching music and performing.

- Gyasi Blanton, Sophomore Music Education Major, Lincoln University

As a future performer and educator this Intern program has allowed me to develop a stronger compassion for humanity, a love for learning, and it helped me to practice the act of striving for excellence in all that I do. While working with my peers to achieve the mastery of their characters in the opera *Hansel and Gretel*, I realized that we all do not work at the same pace. It was still my duty to teach accordingly. Whether fast or slow paced, I had to remain compassionate to my peers' ability levels and feelings. In the process of teaching, I also learned patience, stability, and the ability to change my lesson plan at a second's notice. If one of my peers were having a down day, I would warm them up with soft humming exercises into a short meditation to clear their mind. Instead of singing that day, we would watch scenes with their character on the web so we could still work on mastery and understanding of their role. It was Dr. Kunkle's and Dr. Limb's enthusiasm and eagerness for the show that inspired me to stay busy and work harder and creatively. As a musician, I come to sing and teach, and I believe that whoever and wherever you are, excellence is something we all should be striving for. Whether cast in an opera, member of a dance troupe, or robotics club, keep striving until accomplished, because no one can stop or silence you.

- Malcolm Richardson, Junior Music Education Major, Lincoln University

Throughout the course of my undergraduate career at Lincoln University, I have been afforded many wonderful opportunities to enhance my experience as a music education major. I am grateful for every chance given to me to maximize my artistic potential. At the very beginning of my final year, I was faced with the task of fulfilling my JIP (Junior Internship Program) hours. Of course, I desired to something related to my field. Although I could have taken an alternate route, I was determined to find a project that would strengthen my skills as a young singer and conductor. Thankfully, my voice professor, Dr. Kunkle, had proposed that I serve as chorus master for the Opera Workshop's production of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*. Well, how could I say no? I didn't!

Serving as chorus master for *Treemonisha* meant quite a bit to me. Holding this position meant several things: I would be responsible for holding and heading rehearsals, preparing various parts of the score for critical review, and would hold the accountability of teaching every chorus section with precision and rigor. I considered myself the student choral nerd of the department, so the descriptions of the job made a great fit. As an aspiring teacher, this experience also offered me a classroom simulation. Being a part of this process served as a live, in-action premonition of student teaching and teaching after undergrad. My peers would be my students, and

that was something I was all too nervous about. This JIP opportunity, however, was too important to me to focus on a single fear. I gladly dove into the process.

Dr. Kunkle walked through all the requirements and expectations with me in a way made me comfortable and excited at the same time. Looking over the scores up until the first choral rehearsal, I became more excited. The parts sounded amazing and my confidence was at a very high level. The first rehearsal came to pass and I was quickly overwhelmed by the demands of the people. I was expecting to do a 'run-through' of the first and second acts, but I encountered some negative attitudes from the cast. Some complained the music was too complex, other found it boring, others found the choral rehearsal series to be pointless. I was swamped with playing parts repeatedly and dealing with countless questions. The ideal first rehearsal was quickly falling apart before me. I was in desperate need of solutions to survive the choral rehearsal series.

Between the first and next rehearsals, I took much time to reflect on how I could make these rehearsals as productive as possible. With all of my preparation and willingness, I was missing something that could make all the other rehearsals successful. It was the element of effective rehearsal management. I had the plan and the music, but I lacked the creative management to make rehearsal time more accessible and productive. I linked the pacing of my university choir experience to the *Treemonisha* chorus rehearsals. I divided up rehearsal for instruction, sectional practice, and full chorus practice. I discovered that when the rehearsals are managed properly by the conductor, the responsibilities are then shared which give the entire ensemble experience a sense of purpose and direction.

My JIP hours were well spent honing my craft and exploring new areas of discipline and self. Because of this experience, I've grown as a conductor and student of opera. The *Treemonisha* experience allowed me to be a part of something much bigger than myself, obviously. Needless to say, the entire rendered fabulous results. Linking JIP to the LU Opera Workshop experience was one of the best experiences and decisions that I've carried out. At this point of reflection, I can say that my student teaching and remaining undergrad experiences were rich and powerful because of my department-linked JIP hours. Much thanks to my music professors for choosing me for this assignment and for instilling in me a fine foundation for success in all endeavors.

- Khyle Wooten, Senior Music Education Major, Lincoln University

As can be seen from the student feedback, as well, as the success of the Fall 2011 semester in attaining the Junior Internship Program Hours, working through an Opera Workshop program is an innovative and engaging way to obtain pre-service hours. It is helpful to the students participating in the hours, and also to the students that they coach

and mentor along the way. This opportunity provides quality bonding for cast members, as well as a boost in self-esteem for both the student mentor and the student tutee. The Junior Internship Program student feels fulfilled because he or she has helped to improve the overall quality of the musical production. The tutee feels successful because he or she has mastered his or her music before working directly with the music director or (in this case) the opera director.

Further exploration of the perimeters of the Junior Internship Program within the realm of Opera Workshop seems warranted. There has been considerable interest from students to fulfill these pre-service hours by aiding the production with lighting, set construction, make-up design, costume design, choreography, fundraising, and publicity. All of these options are valuable experiences for the budding music educator and are certainly applicable to opera (or musical) production. In general, the use of students in preparation for an operatic production serves the department, the overall production, the community, and most importantly, the students themselves. The learning process of how to teach within a supervised environment prior to student teaching seems to be beneficial in the following ways: students learn to work with others, students learn to convey information in their field, and students learn how best to work within a set time frame. Every student that has attempted the Junior Internship Program in Music Education at Lincoln University (thus far), regardless of completion, has found the process to be beneficial. In the future, Drs. Kunkle and Limb intend to offer opportunities to most music education students to work in the capacity of musical or opera production, regardless of instrument. The role of musical coach, particularly, seems to be beneficial to the students, as they will need to prepare future students with musical preparation,

regardless of if they need to produce a musical or opera as part of their job description.

The Junior Internship Program offers a number of worthwhile opportunities for collegiate student learning outside of the conventional classroom. Drs. Kunkle and Limb highly anticipate continued success and growing interest in fulfilling the Junior Internship Program hours through innovative music curriculum. Success of the internship program, as a whole, will continue to be assessed and improved upon as we strive toward an effective learning opportunity for collegiate music students.