

Grade 12 students gain teaching insights through Teaching Apprenticeship Program

Leila Meilman | Media Team

As part of the experiential learning curriculum offered by the school, the Teaching Apprenticeship class enables Grade 12 students to gain experience working with young children first-hand in the second semester. Along with learning about educational methods, including social-emotional development and responsive classroom management, students also assist their assigned teachers by planning lessons and volunteering in their classrooms.

Director of Teaching and Learning Jennifer Kirstein said the class aims to provide students with a greater sense of how schooling works.

"I want students to have a better understanding of what learning looks like and how teachers actually facilitate that learning," Kirstein said. "For students interested in education, it's giving them that hands-on experience to gain some knowledge and skills and to feel more confident in working with children."

Saoirse Burlingame ('24) said she has been eager to take the class as an unprecedented opportunity to flip her role in the classroom.

"It's been something I've been hearing about for a long time, and I've been looking forward to it," Burlingame said. "It's great having the organized type of teaching experience and the academic side of teaching and consistency with the kids."

Clay Olson ('24), who assists with math classes such as High School Algebra I and Grade 8 Algebra, said he learned about the program from a teacher during the add-drop period and was immediately intrigued.

"I am interested in education, and I want to go to college for education," Olson said. "I've always wanted to teach a class."

Kirstein said the program is unlike other classes as it allows students to explore subjects they are passionate about outside their high school classrooms.

"It's been a really foundational experience for them to be able to pursue something they're interested in," Kirstein said. "We try to have the students choose something they are passionate about."

As he has begun working with students, Olson said pursuing his interest in math within the context of a middle school class is really interesting. Olson said it is

especially engaging since the age group he works with is when he became passionate about math.

"I hope to learn more about how teaching works, especially for middle and high school because Grade 8 is kind of in between," Olson said. "I'm really interested in math, and I've always loved teaching math in general."

Kirstein said teaching younger students a subject they are passionate about is a great way for Grade 12 students to end their journey in high school.

"For the seniors, it's a really fulfilling and meaningful experience because they feel like they are coming full circle, kind of giving back to the school in terms of being able to work in the Lower School," Kirstein said.

Although TAP is distinctive as only one of six experiential learning classes, Burlingame said she has found the class to be similar to AP Psychology due to its focus on the stages of development.

"We've talked about how kids develop, looking at, 'In this grade, you'll be at this stage socially and physically in terms of your cognition,'" Burlingame said. "That's so you can sort of be able to support students as best as possible."

Given the flexibility of the class, Kirstein said specialists such as LS Math Coach Nova Katz come in and speak about topics that haven't been

covered or that students would like to learn about in greater detail. In addition, students apply these concepts during their time in the Middle School or Lower School.

"[They spend time] getting to know the teacher and students and being able to understand what the theory actually looks like in practice in the classroom."

Burlingame said this time in the classroom is essential in aiding her understanding of children's stages of development.

"A lot of it has been based on our observations when we go down into the Lower School classrooms," Burlingame said. "We're participating and helping run the class, but we're also sort of taking notes on their stages of development."

According to Kirstein, the final semester project is to work with their assigned teacher to plan, teach and reflect on a lesson of their choice, allowing them to gain insight into what being an educator is really like.

Ultimately, Kirstein said the class allows Grade 12 students to reflect on their growth throughout their educational careers.

"The class is very much about metacognition and reflection as well, so the students who are at the end of their education career are also looking back on their own education," Kirstein said. "They often have a lot of insights about why their teachers do things the way they do. There's a lot of 'aha' moments."

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*– Director of Teaching and Learning
Jennifer Kirstein*

A peek inside the classroom



Berto Wadsworth ('24) observes the teacher during a math demonstration Jan. 31. He was selected to teach alongside Grade 4 teachers Lillian Petersen and Sweta Ramgarhia.



Saoirse Burlingame ('24) works one-on-one with a student to help edit her writing assignment Jan. 31. She was assigned to Grade 3 teachers Catalina Cuadrado and Shaden Tarek's classroom.



Millie Rajguru ('24) provides feedback to students during a math class Jan. 31. She was selected to work alongside Grade 2 teachers Kristin Howe and Carlos Carter.



Celia Allen ('24) talks to a student at the beginning of the school day Feb. 20. She was assigned to Kindergarten 2 teachers John O'Toole and Lynn Sacks' classroom.

Left: Saoirse Burlingame ('24) poses with students on the playground during the class break Jan. 31. She said she had looked forward to being enrolled in the program for a long time.

Photos by Eva Marriott-Fabre

