

Student teaching a learning experience

Education majors reap priceless benefits from classroom efforts

By Dawn Wilson
Staff Writer

Jennie Starling still treasures her golden goose.

Starling, a senior from Winston-Salem, completed her student teaching last semester at Eno Valley Elementary School in Durham County.

A hyperactive child who had to take Ritalin was a student in her fourth-grade class. "He was a sweet kid. I tried to be there for him," Starling said.

The boy was from a low-income family that didn't have much spending money. Yet on Starling's last day of class, he gave her a goose figurine. "I only had \$5, and I spent every cent of it," he said.

Starling said, "That's why I didn't need money," in reference to her unpaid internship. "The job is a reward."

"I was so in love with the kids," she said. "When I saw those light bulbs go off in their heads, I didn't need money."

Required by the School of Education, a semester of student teaching provides students with the opportunity to apply the textbook lessons to a classroom setting, said Fran Jackson, director for the School Practice in the School of Education.

Once students are accepted into the School of Education their junior year, they submit applications to a committee

that works carefully with the public school system and assigns internships for the fall.

Gail Jones, a coordinator of the middle grades program in the School of Education, said supervising teachers were carefully selected and matched with students. Most teachers have participated in clinics that teach them to train student teachers. Students are matched by their area of certification, the skills of the student and teacher, and to some degree, their personality.

In the internships for elementary education, students have the choice of staying with one teacher for the whole semester or participating in the "split experience." In the split experience, student teachers spend eight weeks in one class of students in kindergarten to third grade and the remaining eight weeks in a class of grades four through six.

Student teachers follow the schedule of their assigned teacher and may have to teach mixed grades if it is a part of the schedule of their supervising teacher.

Tamsen Webb, clinical assistant professor in the education school, said that since students are certified to teach kindergarten through sixth grade after graduation, the split experience is good because it gives insight to a widespread level of child development.

"There is no substitute for teaching

to learn how to be a teacher," Webb said.

Students involved in the middle school education program are assigned an internship dealing with their area of specialization. In the middle school program, students observe class from the first day and are with the middle school students until May.

Jones said this provided students not only with a close relationship with the students, but also with a supervised atmosphere to practice teaching skills.

Kathy Rockett, a senior from Conover, said being present on the first day of classes at Neal Middle School was helpful. "I got to gradually know the kids, and it made a smoother transition."

Rockett taught three eighth-grade math classes and one sixth-grade academically gifted class. "The AG (students) are the biggest challenge because they are able to handle more difficult questions."

"I've enjoyed being in school and the creative side of teaching, like making bulletin boards and lesson plans," Rockett said math was especially important, because if middle school students could handle the kind of problem solving involved in math, they would be able to tackle more difficult problems.

"The internship definitely prepared me for what I want to do. I got a lot of

hands-on experience. Everything is very relevant, and I go into a classroom with more developed skills," she said.

There is also an internship program for high school education.

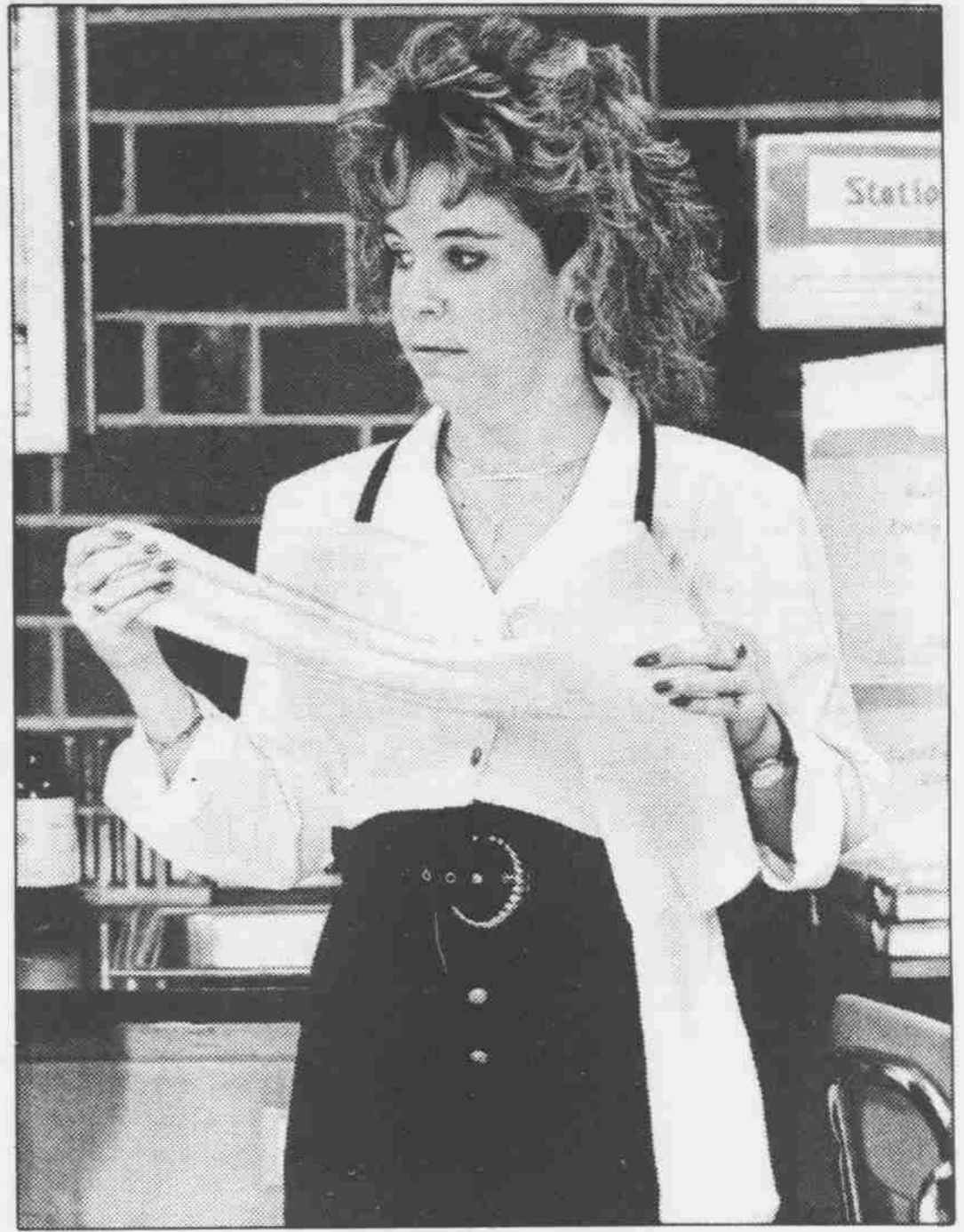
Traditionally, most internships last for ten weeks. Students observe classes in the fall and actually teach in the spring.

Education majors must prepare carefully for the student teaching positions. Juniors, through the model clinical collaborating program in partnership with the local schools, participate in school board meetings and shadowing activities. They also become a part of teaching teams and micro teaching, where they teach in front of a video camera and are critiqued by others.

Jones said studies have proven that graduates indicate the student teaching experience was the most important part of their teaching preparation.

"The University has been very supportive in committing resources that we need," she said.

Webb said that graduates of the School of Education have a good record of being hired. The internship program also gives the professors an opportunity to learn. "That's what I love," she said. "Every semester is different. I am in 18 different classrooms, and I learn from the college students and their students."



Future science teacher Kim Davis explains the importance of recycling to 7th graders

Teach for America exposes new teachers to ups and downs of education across the nation

By Mary Moore Parham
Staff Writer

In 1988, Princeton student Wendy Kopp's senior thesis outlined a program to recruit non-education majors to teach for two years in areas where there was a teacher shortage.

Kopp's thesis became what is now Teach for America, a program which has provided jobs for more than 500 graduating seniors and reached students in 11 cities in its first year.

Kopp targeted corporations to fund the program, raising more than \$4 million in grant monies, which allowed for an eight-week summer training program at the University of Southern California and placement of teachers in both inner-city and rural school districts.

It was during the training program that the recruits took courses in classroom management and got to student teach in area summer schools.

By the start of the school year, they had 12 education credits and the hands-on experience required for teaching certification.

"I had wanted to do something useful after graduation, and Teach for America appealed to me because of the contact with people," said Lia Stuhlsatz, a Smith graduate.

"Many entry level positions don't allow for that."

Although Stuhlsatz plans to follow her job as a seventh-grade social studies teacher at New York City's Stitt Junior High with law school, Stuhlsatz said her experience with education has

challenged her beliefs.

"I always thought I was a pretty liberal person, and teaching has made me put my money where my mouth is."

"I discovered that I don't have the stamina for this, but it has really given me a newfound respect for teachers," she said.

For MIT graduate Alison Lynch, also at Stitt Junior High, teaching seventh-grade life science and math required more than simply presenting her subject matter in an interesting way.

"I tried to think about great teachers I'd had and also those that were not so good and figured that if I could be excited about the subject matter, it would rub off."

"I learned that this wasn't always true," she said.

Discipline proved to be a problem in many cases. It ranged from talking and note-passing to more hormone-related behavior.

"I had a 13-year old boy pull down his pants in front of a girl, who then started to cry," Lynch said.

"I grew up with brothers at home

and realized it really hasn't been that long since seventh grade and that kind of behavior. The hardest thing is keeping a straight face."

Lynch also said she took and read notes passed in her classes, but that they were returned at the end of the period. Her main goal is to get students to pay attention.

"Notes are a good way to keep track of students' personal lives, but for the most part I get a lot of 'I heard so and so likes you,'" she said.

Stuhlsatz found that a lot of rowdy or loud behavior was done out of a need for attention. She recalls asking a student why he kept acting up and he told her it was because she ignored him.

"It was so clear his actions were to turn my head. Some of the parents of these children are working two jobs and there is simply not enough adult attention in their lives," Stuhlsatz said.

In other cases, students do not have the socialization necessary to function in a school environment.

UNC graduate Susan Harris teaches fifth grade to students who have been in

the United States for less than two years. Classes are taught in Spanish with one hour a day allotted for English.

"I had a father, who had recently come to New York, drop off his daughter and ask if she had to be at school (everyday)," Harris said.

"Often there is an education of the parents as well as their children that takes place."

For each teacher, whether in a rural or inner-city school, there are stigmas involved with the geography.

"After hearing that I'd be working in a ghetto, my parents' friends imagined the worst," Stuhlsatz said.

"But during a parent-teacher conference, I had one mother that was so horrified that I was living without my family in New York that she baked me casseroles which her child brought to school," she said.

Lynch said that although there were drugs, violence and child abuse in the Washington Heights section of New

York where she taught, there was also a vibrant neighborhood with people who were much like those she knew in Iowa.

Despite misconceptions about the ghetto, Stuhlsatz found that telling a child he or she could work hard in school and be successful was not a fair statement.

"When facilities are so unequal across the board it's not true that an inner-city student has the same opportunities as a suburban one."

"You have to have books before you can learn to read," she said.

Despite a lack of necessary facilities, the predominantly black and Hispanic backgrounds of the district's students do offer a fresh perspective on subject matter.

When asked by Lynch to cite one example of how humans were like a tree, she received the traditional answers from the class' chapter on classification as well as one student's observation that they were both brown.

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Mandela

not receiving adequate educations in the fields of math and science and will not be able to compete with whites in special fields.

"The question we must answer is to what extent we are going to participate in the crucial sectors of the economy in post-apartheid South Africa," she said. "I cannot foresee an increased level of (black) participation because of the built-in constraints we've seen for over half a century."

Problems in education need to be handled immediately, she said.

"Without an education, blacks will continue to be inferior, even in post-apartheid. Whites with skills will still be in control and dominate the crucial sectors."

Mandela said people were concerned about violence and anger in black townships and what Western society has called "black-on-black violence."

The reason for this violence often is not explained, she said. The harsh police treatment in response to peaceful demonstrations held by blacks created an attitude of retaliation and violence among young people.

Black youths grew up in the strife and violence created in the search for peace, she said.

"It is sad and painful to admit there is black-on-black violence," she said. "But ethnic violence exists in many parts of the world."

Mandela gave examples of white-on-white violence in North Ireland and during the U.S. Civil War.

"This country was able to solve its problems," she said. "I do not foresee any problems for blacks to solve their own differences in the future."

Mandela said South Africans must pressure government officials to hold open talks.

"I do not see sanctions alone as a tool to bring the government down. Blacks are most affected by sanctions. I haven't seen any difference in whites' standard of living."

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suspect. Members of the committee are in the process of interviewing associates and other people who may have useful input.

The committee also is making plans to keep Internationalist Books open. Anybody who still needs to do business with the store or who would like to assist the committee in its efforts should call spokeswoman Ashley Osment at 929-7372 or write the committee at P.O. Box 951, Chapel Hill.

The committee will present a proposal regarding the future of Internationalist Books in mid-March, according to an announcement released last week.

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