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High school class gives teens a look at world of teaching

Program filters strongest prospects to the top

Pat Kossan

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What surprised Jeremiah Thompson, 16, is the amount of energy generated by a roomful of kindergartners.

"Everybody is eager and hyped to see what is going on," said Thompson, a junior at Queen Creek High School and member of the Future Educators Association.

What didn't surprise Thompson was that he loved to teach. Now, he's earning high school credit by learning to put together lesson plans and volunteering as an aide.

Stephanie Hahn, 33, encouraged Thompson to join her course and the club, which she started last year, her first year of teaching. Hahn received her bachelor's degree in social work before spending nearly two years taking University of Phoenix teacher-training courses.

She has 22 future teachers who help in district classrooms twice a week while learning the history of education, child development and the secrets of keep all those energetic kindergartners on task. Last year, Hahn's six senior students passed the state test needed to become a certified teaching aide.

Not only is the program good for recruiting high school students into teaching, but it also weeds out those students who don't like teaching before they hit a college campus.

"You really don't want them if it's not a fit," Hahn said. "So, they learn that early."

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