

High schoolers jump start a college career

Story and photo by Jack Spencer

Back in high school we all wanted to be ready for college by the time we graduated. One aspect that is hard to imitate would be the experience of the college classroom. However some high school students are choosing to take college courses before they graduate. Whether it be to pursue a career or hobby, to get credits for college early, or a number of other reasons, the one thing they get regardless is experience.

"After they finish high school they just move right in without any problems," said Clackamas Community College instructor Justin Voskuil. Voskuil, who instructs three courses that are exclusive to high school students, is somebody that is very familiar with instructing high school students in a college environment. "From the second they come in to my classroom for the first time, I make it known that they are college students while they're here. They are not to be looked at as high school students." Voskuil went on to say, "I think that they really hold their heads up high being able to come over here and handle taking a college course and blending in with the college students."

Transitioning from high school to college is difficult for a good chunk of people. These students that choose to take both high school and college classes have to balance the different environments and that's not a very easy task. Yet after talking with instructors and students in this environment that may not be the case. Eagerness, confidence, excitement and motivation are some of the words these instructors used to

describe their students, but how do they describe themselves?

"If you have the chance in high school, take it," said CCC student Dana Liechty.

Liechty, 19, is involved with the welding program here at CCC and took several courses while in high school. Along with sports and his high school courses, Liechty seemed

to take these courses with the same enthusiasm the instructors had. Liechty now pursues a career in underwater welding.

His enthusiasm was shared by welding instructor John Phelps. Phelps, who had nothing but encouraging words about his students, expects the same level of effort of his students no matter the age. "They are

right in line with a college student," said Phelps. He sees every student as a welder, high school or college.

Instructors gave nothing but encouraging words about high school students and the students share the enthusiasm of their instructors. These high school students don't seem to be too bothered by the fact that they are in college too.



A CCC instructor shows his welding skills during class. High school students are able to take welding courses at CCC.