

# CTE offers new experiences for students

*Editor's note: This is the second in a series of stories examining career and technical education programs. This week, students and instructors offer perspective about how CTE classes are changing learning in classrooms.*

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Dallas High School junior Joe Foster said he's never experienced a class like engineering.

A new partnership with Chemeketa Community College made the class possible. Chemeketa instructor Steve Greco teaches the class, which provides college and high school credit to students.

The handful of students taking the class have been busy building robots and hydraulic models.

"I've wanted to get into engineering to see what it was about, so I took the engineering class instead of the all the others they had to offer. I didn't really know to expect. It's interesting," Foster said. "He kind of gives us a goal, and we try to figure out how to do it. We work together."

Foster said it's the essential nature of the teamwork that separates the class from others he's taken during high school.

He said Greco gives them challenges and the groups have to figure out how to achieve goals, such as building a robot that can follow lines or avoid running into something.

Foster's teammate, Tristan White, said unexpected roadblocks come up and

need creative solutions to solve them.

"We also have to figure out how to fix those things. If there is a problem, we break it down and try to see what we can do to fix it," White said. "That's pretty good for anything that has to do with engineering. Even if we are not making robots in the future, that is good for anything, really."

Greco said his goal is to introduce students to college-level work and — he hopes — spark interest in continued education in the field at Chemeketa.

"It benefits the students by exposing them to college-level material and resources that many of them would not likely see in a high school setting," he said.

That could be said of all six of the programs now part of Dallas High School's career and technical education.

In Kelleigh Ratzlaff's Foods for Life culinary class, a clock ticks down the time groups have left to prepare dishes for the judges.

Their mission is to make a ramen noodle dish using packaged noodles but not what Ratzlaff calls "the silver packets of death" — sauce flavoring provided in the packet.

Groups must use a randomly selected source of protein and a lot of vegetables to add flavor to their dishes.

The judges are high school staff members who critique each offering on presentation, taste and creative use of ingredients.

Ratzlaff said the "Chopped Challenges" have a way of inspiring creativity.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
**Tristan White, left, and Joe Foster, at computer, program their robot to perform specific tasks during Dallas High School's engineering class last week.**

She said groups have experimented with making teriyaki sauce or fashioning the noodles into hamburger buns or even a pizza.

She said with each challenge, she sends request for staff members to judge, warning that she doesn't know what to expect.

Last week, her class was crowded with volunteer judges. No one was disappointed in what the students prepared.

"They blow me away," Ratzlaff said.

The Foods for Life class is introductory level — a course Ratzlaff hopes all students take because it gives them the basics to cook with real ingredients and a basis



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
**A student-prepared poached egg and ramen dish.**

to continue learning if they choose.

This year the program has

the introductory class and two advanced classes for those who had taken culi-

nary I and culinary II in the past. Those classes will be redesigned with career training in mind, and reintroduced next year.

The food and culture class hints of what is to come. Ratzlaff tests students on their measurements or "kitchen math" and has them researching the cultures of the food they are cooking.

Junior Andy Ban said the class gives students room to be creative, a part of the class he likes and a reason he may continue next year.

"Next year, there may not be as much cooking as there used to be because I will be focusing on management, and they have to have their kitchen math down," Ratzlaff said.

She'll teach management procedures and standard recipes that students seeking a career in the industry will need to have down.

"More of that restaurant management, leadership and communication, I'm going to be really digging into that next year," she said.

Tim Ray, the school's CTE coordinator, said they've discussed designing a capstone class, like opening a bistro or a food truck-like business that students could operate.

"We've talked about that, and I think it would be absolutely phenomenal," Ray said. "It could be the capstone class that really ties all of this together. The kids get the management piece, they get the leadership piece, they get all of those things."

Next week, hear from school leaders and business representatives about their goals for CTE at DHS.

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