



Charles Ott Academy

Bridging Humanities and STEM

Inside the classroom that is Charles Ott Academy lies a small wall that divides the space into the respective classrooms of math and science and English and the humanities. A visitor can walk in and easily tell the difference between the two spaces; microscopes on lab stations on the science side and maps of the world hung with care on the wall of the humanities side. Stick around for a while and that visitor will also see a bridge of sorts that connects the students learning from one classroom to another. That figurative bridge, of course, is what educators refer to as interdisciplinary learning.

Interdisciplinary learning is a successful type of learning where a student

applies similar knowledge and modes of learning across two or more subjects. This practice has been happening a lot this year here at Charles Ott Academy. For example, the students this semester have been focusing on forensic science with Mr. Shawver and psychology with Ms. Lipka. Ms. Lipka recently completed a unit on the anatomy and physiology of the human brain. Students learned about the regions of the brain and how these regions are associated with our senses, emotions, and overall well-being. In our class, as part of our forensic pathology unit, students continued this understanding of the brain by analyzing medical case studies that involved trauma to the brain and how

this may have resulted in the victim's untimely death.

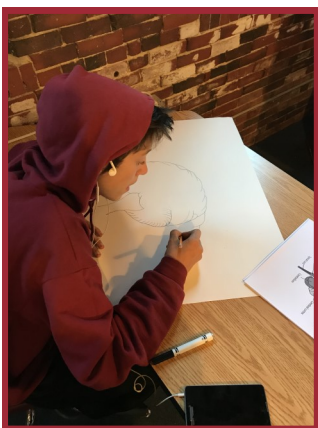
As our school year progresses, Ms Lipka and I will continue to apply the benefits of interdisciplinary learning. We will provide our students with more opportunities to demonstrate their learning and understanding in multiple ways and support and

build their confidence to overcome new challenges. The wall may still stand between our two classrooms, but this is no obstacle for the enriching educational experience our students are attaining this year at Charles Ott Academy.

- Joshua Shawver



Students engaged in a math lesson with Mr. Shawver



COA student uses his artistic talent to label parts of the brain.

Brainy Bookworms

This semester at Charles Ott Academy is all about rigor, relevance, and engagement. Students are studying the parts and functions of the central nervous system; how sleep can improve memory and learning; and how to condition teachers to give them ramen noodles with Pavlov's Classical Conditioning techniques. Along with designing behavioral experiments and building model brains, students are taking more traditional style assessments and writing one page essays that extend their depth of knowledge. These essays give them a chance to practice Standard American English techniques in writing and prepare some of our seniors for their transition beyond high school! I am so proud of their efforts this semester, and I am looking forward to our culminating project! Stay tuned for details!

- Kourtney Lipka

Strafford Learning Center

Charles Ott Academy
36 Canal Street, Suite 125
Somersworth, NH 03878

Classroom Phone:
603-692-5472

Program Director:

Paul Newell
pnewell@slc.k12.nh.us

Special Ed Teacher and Counselor:

Amanda Bisnett
abisnett@slc.k12.nh.us

Humanities Teacher:

Kourtney Lipka
klipka@slc.k12.nh.us

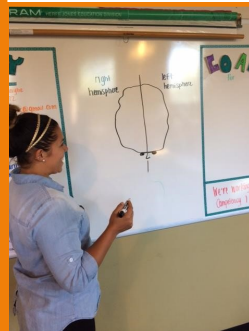
STEM Teacher:

Joshua Shawver
jshawver@slc.k12.nh.us

Message from the Director

Greetings,

This has been an exciting first quarter here at the Charles Ott Academy! One of our goals this year has been to elevate our curriculum, instruction, and assessment beyond what we've done in year's past. Every year we strive to get better at what we do and work harder to serve you and our students. Rigor and engagement have been the focus as we serve a wide variety of student needs. We are delighted that we support students who plan to go to college and others who want to enter the workforce immediately after high school. We work hard to make sure all our students are ready for life beyond their high school experience. For some it means learning how to study for exams and take notes, for others it means learning how to work in socially tough environments. All of the skills needed to be successful are personalized for our students. We are proud of the willingness and openness of our students to set goals and look at their needs with an eye towards improvement. Your help is crucial to their success and we appreciate the open and honest communication from all of you. We are fortunate to have a great community of parents and school districts. Just as our students look to improve, so do we. Please let us know how we can serve you better, or stop by if you would like a more in depth look at how we do what we do. We would love to sit down and share our school with you!



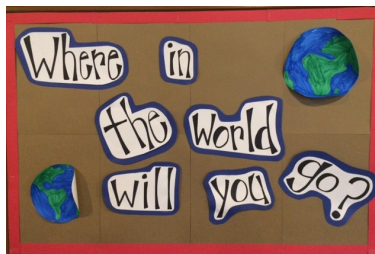
-Paul Newell

COA Students Talk Transition

Transition is a major theme in a student's life. Throughout their career in public school, students transition from school to school, teacher to teacher, and social group to social group. Students are constantly in transition and it can create a lot of stress for them. We are looking at transition in a new light this year by being prepared, planning ahead and making thoughtful decisions.

COA students have a number of transitions ahead of them. For some, returning to their sending high school, for others, graduation. Some students are planning their transition into a full time job or into a college lifestyle. Another group of students don't know what transition is next for them- and that's okay too.

No matter which path is next for a student, we're here to help them make knowledgeable decisions, connect them with re-



COA students on a campus tour at SNHU in Manchester, NH.

sources and avoid stressful risks.

Throughout the year, students will be participating in a new course called TABS. In this course, students will work with the school counselor to identify areas of strength and areas where they need support in order to help plan for their future. Each student's TABS class will look a little different based on their goals. Students will also have the opportunity to begin meeting with the NH Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who comes on the second Monday of every month. Field trips, guest speakers, and other activities will give students new and different opportunities to prepare for their upcoming transitions.

-Amanda Bisnett