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## WKU, city schools partner for new math camp

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Jonathan Saravia (left), Jeremiah Combs (center) and Kenny Rosales (right) program a robot during a new math camp for advanced elementary school students in the Bowling Green Independent School District.

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Students flew paper helicopters, programmed a robot and perfected 3D-printed designs Wednesday at a new math camp for elementary students in the Bowling Green Independent School District.

For Antonia Szymanski, an associate professor in Western Kentucky University's School of Teacher Education, the camp at Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School was a safe space to try new things without the fear of failure.

Often, it took students multiple tries to get the right 3D-printed design or to program a robot to steer itself around an obstacle. Another class designed paper helicopters and tested their best prototype by recording multiple drops from the school's second-floor balcony.

"It allows the kids to learn that mistakes are part of the learning process," Szymanski said.

The camp is the result of a new partnership between the district and WKU. It brought together advanced students from Dishman-McGinnis, T.C. Cherry and Parker-Bennett-Curry elementary schools with teacher education students from WKU.

“It’s a great experience for me as a teacher,” said Clay Harville, one of the WKU students assisting the camp’s four certified teachers.

Harville said he’s studying special education and plans to work with students between kindergarten and the fifth grade. For Harville, the camp offered fun ways to break through to students and show what math is about.

“They love doing this stuff, but you just have to find a way of opening that up to them,” he said.

Learning to work through mistakes is especially critical for advanced students, Szymanski said.

“If everything comes easy, you never learn what to do when something doesn’t,” she said, adding the camp offered opportunities to work through those frustrations.





Along with activities, the district is providing transportation to the school as well as breakfast and lunch, which Szymanski said she appreciated. She added that WKU will continue working with the school district into the school year.

The camp left positive impressions on several students.

“It should be three weeks instead of two,” said Dev Bhatia, who worked in the class using the 3D printer.

Dev’s classmates, Amina Hasanova and Anjelica Juan, also enjoyed themselves.

“It really keeps me interested in doing a lot of things,” Anjelica said.

“I like problem solving,” Amina said.

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## Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.