Rube Goldbergineering Class/Vampy

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Some of the smartest kids in the state are putting their spin on Rube Goldberg machines in the newest class offered at VAMPY camp.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham looks at the innovative ideas of these verbally and mathematically precocious youth.

Rube Goldberg's cartoons became well known for depicting complex devices that performed simple tasks in convoluted ways. Now students are using the concept to stretch their creativity and teambuilding skills in ways they never thought possible.

The 2011 Purdue University Rube Goldberg machine shattered the world record for most steps ever successfully completed by such a machine.

It’s the same type of brainstorming and teamwork that’s happening at WKU.

 “It all starts with human intervention, someone presses a button or something and continues for several modules and finally completes a task.”

The Rube Goldbergineering class, renamed Steam Machines, is a brand new course offered at Vampy this year.

 “It is part of our effort to help kids get more interested in and aware of engineering in Kentucky.”

Each module carries out the VAMPY camp social scene, and eventually integrate for the final task of pinning Big Red to a wall.

 “It’s especially good if you’re into writing or story telling because with each of the modules you sort of have to tell a story.”

 “With Vampy there’s this whole thing about the camp experience<<<<CUT and you try to get the most out of it,>>>>> with lots of traditions, we thought it would be good to implement and put in a machine.”

A true test of ingenuity and problem solving that is also loads of fun.

 “The enthusiasm is infectious, it’s really cool to come in and see what they’re creating.”

The class is being sponsored by Innovate Kentucky, a three year grant from the James Graham Brown Foundation in partnership with The Center for Gifted Studies, the Gatton Academy and the Honors College. VAMPY camp ends on July 14th.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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