

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

- 1~Investigate
- 2~Brainstorm
- 3~Plan
- 4~Build
- 5~Test & Present



Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times

Second grade students at Washington Oak demonstrate a portion of their assembly line project to the members of the Coventry School Committee during a recent meeting.

Washington Oak students mass producers

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COVENTRY — As part of a science and engineering lesson, the second graders at Coventry's Washington Oak Elementary School — all 86 of them — planned, organized and created an assembly line called the Thanksgiving Snack Challenge as a way to take a basic idea and mass create it through role definition and communication.

Second-grade teachers, Betty Nadrowski, Jessica O'Connell and Paula Jacquard wanted to bring lessons from the Next Generation Science Standards along with the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) process that requires students to think about their project and come up with ways to problem-solve.

Nadrowski said she has an engineering book called "Engineering is Elementary" that contains dozens of classroom projects, ranging from the very simple to those that are a little

more complex.

She read up on the project to start an assembly line and, given it was just before Thanksgiving, let the students create a holiday snack.

"They were given a challenge with criteria and had to create something and work as a team," Nadrowski said, adding, "For second graders, isn't always easy."

Jacquard said as a class, they did some

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Students show new skills

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research about how assembly lines worked at the Hershey Company, Jelly Belly and the Ford Company.

Following the Next Generation Science Standards, the work began with an investigation session, followed by a brainstorming and planning session.

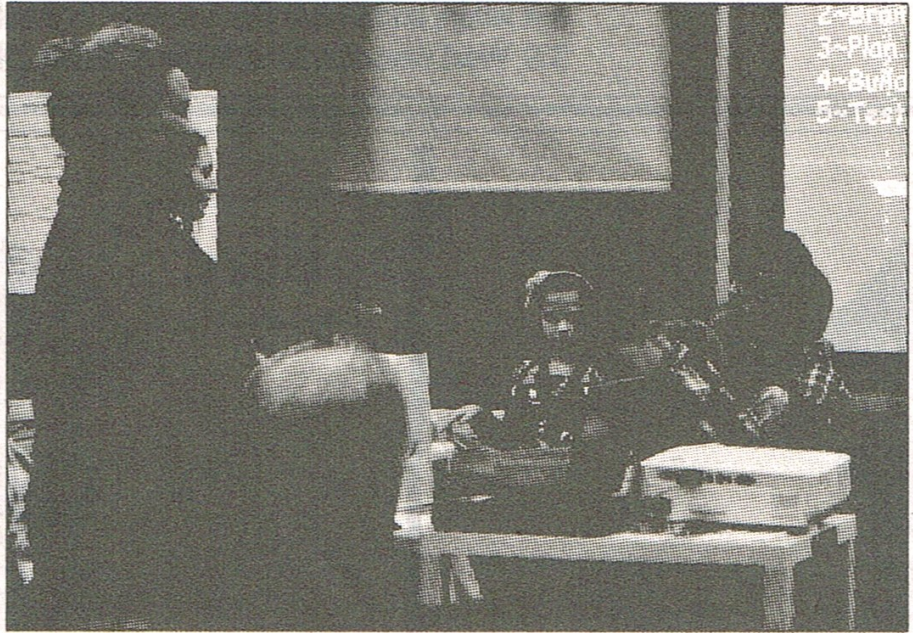
"The idea was to create a snack, which consisted of popcorn, Chex cereal, chocolate chips and berries," Jacquard said.

Given how strict the schools must be with food allergies, the teachers got the approval of the principal, Don Cowart.

"It's great what these kids were and are able to achieve," he said during a recent school committee meeting where the students demonstrated their project to the crowd.

"They're using their English Language Arts skills, communication, math, science and engineering skills to work out and solve problems."

The students' planning session was about creating step-by-step instructions for themselves and they had to figure out who was responsible



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As students prepared a snack at the meeting, teachers walked those in attendance through the process and what students were doing.

for what job with a work station and presentation table.

"We hold them accountable for respecting each other and working together," Nadrowski said.

Both teachers agreed the hardest part for them was to sit back and watch them work their way through and problem-solve on their own.

"When we saw them do something they weren't supposed to do, it was hard not to stop them but after the lesson

was over, we all had a discussion about what they learned," Jacquard said. "And, it was a great learning experience for us too because we learned what aspects of the lesson we had to enforce."

Nadrowski said it's the first activity they've done from the engineering book but they're planning to try more.

"It's a great book because it doesn't matter what a student's learning ability is. It uses everyone's skills."