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## Students design Lego golf course



Mark Sprague/Iowa State Daily  
Megan Ingebretson, left, Kristin Walker, center, and Heather Green, all sophomores in elementary education, play on the Lego golf course Tuesday afternoon in Lagomarcino Hall.

Wonderland.”

Larry Genalo, professor of materials science and engineering who coordinates the class, said the project took about two weeks of class time to create.

Gallagher said each hole represented a separate chapter of the book “Alice in Wonderland.” Groups of three students used Legos to build the actual holes, and then brought in props corresponding to the chapters.

by Anna Holland  
Iowa State Daily  
April 25, 2001

White rabbits, teapots, playing cards and Legos covered the basement of Lagomarcino Hall Tuesday afternoon as students presented an eight-hole miniature golf course built entirely out of Legos with the theme “Alice in Golfland.”

Melinda Gallagher, graduate student in curriculum and instruction, said the creators of seven holes on the miniature golf course were the 21 students in the Toying with Technology class, an engineering course designed for elementary and secondary education majors. The other hole was a creation of student assistants for the course.

The golf course was part of a project to “help make connections between classroom subjects and technology,” said Gallagher, teaching assistant for the class.

Lisa McElroy, senior in biochemistry, said she was impressed with the course.

“It’s really cool,” she said. “They have to learn how to program all of this, and then they get to relate it to Alice in

Gallagher said each hole also had to integrate moving parts.

"One motorized part had to be triggered either by a light sensor or a bump sensor," she said. "The golf ball will actually have to create the action by either passing by the light sensor or by the golf ball bumping into the bump sensor."

Students in the class said programming the movements at times could be challenging, but they still had a fun time with the project.

"It was fun to be creative and think what we should do," said Kim Bjornson, junior in history and secondary education. "It was fun but challenging."

Genalo said the assignment "left the students to be creative," but also emphasized important engineering aspects.

"The moving parts add programming, designing and problem solving, all in building a golf hole," he said.

Genalo said the purpose of the course is twofold.

"First, we want to teach technology literacy," he said. "The students learn a little bit about what engineering is and how engineers work."

But Genalo said the most important purpose of the course will not be realized until the students have graduated and have classrooms of their own.

"It's for the future students," he said. "So they can see the importance of technology-based learning. It might bring more to future students to make them more comfortable with technology in the classroom."

Gallagher said she agrees.

"The students are being taught that technology should be regarded as naturally as using a writing utensil such as a pencil," she said. "Technology in the classroom should never be thought of as a separate entity. It should be integrated seamlessly into the curriculum." ■

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