

Karen Leitenberger: First Lego League Challenge Smart Move

Participation in First Lego League Robotics introduces younger students to real-world engineering challenges by building LEGO-based robots to complete tasks on a thematic playing surface. FLL teams, guided by their imaginations and adult coaches, discover exciting career possibilities and, through the process, learn to make positive contributions to society.

Through the year-long process, students design, build and program robots using LEGO MINDSTORMS technology; apply real-world math and science concepts; research challenges facing today's scientists; learn critical thinking, team-building and presentation skills; and participate in tournaments and celebrations.

The challenge during the 2009 season was to look at your community and discover how people, animals, information, and things travel. We chose one main mode of transportation and did some research. We asked ourselves: What kinds of problems keep people and things from getting where they are going safely? What kind of problems keep people and things from moving efficiently, getting where they are going quickly and using the least amount of energy? How could your team help solve one of those problems?

Students used gifted process skills of: communication, thinking (critical thinking and creative problem solving), group dynamics, self-directed learning skills of goal setting, research, and interdisciplinary connections to many science and language arts benchmarks.