

CSIU, class adapt toys for students with disabilities



Rick Dandes/The Daily Item

A class from Columbia Montour Vo-Tech spent Friday adapting toys for students with disabilities.

Students act as toy testers for Vo Tech project

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MONTANDON — Six students from a Bloomsburg Elementary School special education class acted on Friday as toy testers in the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit's first Toy Adaptation Day.

"We got the idea for doing this

from another intermediate unit in the Jim Thorpe area," said intermediate unit assistant technology consultant Kaitlyn Hock, who helped organize the day's activities.

What the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) did, with the help of 26 students from Montour-Columbia Vo Tech, is to

"adapt roughly 48 toys to provide to special education classrooms in Valley schools," Hock said. "CSIU purchased the toys, but in the future, we are hoping to secure a grant so that we can buy more toys. This year we will bring the toys to the classrooms.

"It's all about accessibilities," Hock said, "so, the purpose of

this is that traditional toys, with on-off switches, can be very challenging for students with physical disabilities or limitations. It might be too small for them to turn on, or the force of it might be too challenging for them. We have amazing high school students

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from Columbia-Montour Vo Tech who are learning to take the toys apart, re-wire them, and connect them with 3-D switches. Those are basically larger on-off buttons.”

You can already buy adaptive toys, Hock added, “but they are really expensive. We’re trying to cut the cost by taking regular toys so that students can use the switch.”

CSIU serves 17 school districts and they sent out notes to all the special education classes to see which ones

would be interested in receiving the toys. “Eleven classes will be receiving one or two toys,” Hock said.

Avery Lanzi and Leland Altmirano, of Berwick were doing the wiring. “It’s interesting,” Lanzi said, “but easy.” Reed Gansell, also of Berwick, was working on switches.

As testers, “My students are very much enjoying this,” said Bloomsburg teacher Tesa Sponenberg. “We have students here from kindergarten, third and fourth grade from the Bloomsburg Area School District in our autistic support

program.

“We have tested a lot of great toys today,” she said. “Tested switches for the bouncing chick-

ens. So the kiddos are having a really great time. And we are fortunate enough to be able to take the toys home with us.”

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