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## German Chocolate Pizza and Other Research Findings

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## German Chocolate Pizza and Other Research Findings

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Students from a marketing class at Illinois Wesleyan University looked down upon their research subjects during a recent market survey – but that’s only because they were much shorter.

Nearly 30 Illinois Wesleyan students from Karen Bussone’s course on “Principles of Marketing” visited third graders at Grove Elementary School in Normal, hoping to gain insights on a topic generally loved by children – pizza.

“The goal of incorporating The Pizza Hut Challenge project into the classroom curriculum is to provide students an opportunity to conduct primary research with a given subject in a real world situation. “ said Bussone, a visiting assistant professor of business administration. Bussone asked Illinois Wesleyan students to create marketing concepts that target grade-school children and are geared to make a local pizza company more profitable. To assist them in their research, the students of Julie Swango’s third-grade class offered to take part in group surveys.

The children answered questions ranging from “Who is your favorite cartoon character?” to “If you could put anything on pizza, what would it be?”

“German chocolate on pizza? Yum!” said Kyle Borkowski after one third-grader’s response. Borkowski’s group posed more questions for the children, writing each answer. A junior business major from Crete, Ill., Borkowski said the interaction with the children offers a unique perspective. “We’re not just assuming what the kids like, or saying what we liked when we were kids.”

Children shouted out answers to Illinois Wesleyan students who were hunkered into small desks or sat cross-legged on the floor. One student group broke the ice with the children by playing a game of “Dough, Sauce, Cheese,” which used the concepts of the game “Rock, Paper, Scissors.” Junior and business major Sean Dwyer cried out “Oh, man, he sauced me again!” as a laughing third-grader defeated the Arlington Heights native for a second time.

Bussone has assigned this challenge all three semesters she has taught at Illinois Wesleyan, but this is the first semester her students came into a grade-school classroom. Bussone

approached the idea with Swango, her son's third-grade teacher, who agreed. The partnership has added meaning for Bussone because Swango and her husband Greg are Illinois Wesleyan alumni. A 1974 graduate who has been teaching for 32 years in the Unit 5 School District, Swango will retire from teaching in June. "This is a great way I feel I can give back to the University," said Swango. "The students we've known from Illinois Wesleyan throughout the years have been top-notch, and it is always a pleasure to work with them."

The children will have a chance to see the results of their suggestions when the Illinois Wesleyan students return March 9 to Swango's class and present their marketing concepts.

Junior economics major Beth Talentowski said the challenge offers more than an opportunity to learn how to do target marketing. "This lesson teaches us how to talk with people, and understand their thoughts and ideas," said the LaGrange native. "That's something I can use anywhere in my career and life."

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