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Friends Select Sixth Graders Get Brainy



Sixth graders taking part in Brainology extension activities that reinforce how the information they recently learned applies in school.

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• Wed, May 04, 2011

By Haywood Brewster
Staff Reporter

Before spring break, the sixth grade class participated in a six-week intensive course called Brainology, an award-winning program by Mindset Works™ that helps middle- and upper school students gain confidence and motivation to learn by teaching

them about the brain, how to strengthen it and how to apply brain-friendly study skills.

Held during both the Advisor and the Research & Technology periods, the interactive program operates as an online game where Friends Select students master brain-related material to move on to the next level. In between each of the four levels, the sixth graders reflected on their experience in an online journal as well as discussed the material as a class.

"The more students understand about who they are, the more they can become independent learners who can advocate for themselves," states Terry Kessel, director of the middle school.

In its first year at Friends Select School, Brainology was introduced by middle- and upper school learning specialist Molly Patterson, during her search to find a study skills program to integrate into the existing middle school curriculum.

"Brainology is an important tool to incorporate into our study skills sequence because it helps students work with their own brain to improve school performance," said Patterson.

Before Brainology officially got off the ground, the whole middle school faculty discussed, tested and approved its use. Then a select group of middle schoolers were asked to test drive the online game, which in turn, garnered positive feedback.

Kessel declares, "Sixth grade is a huge time of development and the perfect class level to introduce the program. With the amount of success we've seen so far among the students who have completed the program, looking ahead, we will continue to introduce Brainology in sixth grade."

From now until the end of the school year, sixth graders will partake in Brainology extension activities that reinforce how the information they recently learned applies in school. To maintain consistency, faculty have also been integrating Brainology terminology into their classroom curriculum.

"Additionally, we are coordinating the program into a sequenced plan that makes sense at every class level and builds upon each other so that the skills students are taught in sixth grade will continue to be reinforced throughout middle-and upper school," states Patterson.

Brainology was developed by one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation, Stanford University professor Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., and her colleague, Lisa Sorch Blackwell, Ph.D., based on the growth mindset research they have pursued for more than 20 years.

Editor's note: Friends Select School's mission is to provide a challenging, college-preparatory academic program to its diverse, coed student population, from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade. It values the rich diversity of its urban setting and the opportunities and challenges it provides for the education of its students. Friends Select School / 17th & Benjamin Franklin Parkway / Philadelphia, PA 19103-1284 / 215-561-5900 phone / www.friends-select.org

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