



FLAGSTAFF JUNIOR ACADEMY

"A Montessori-Based Charter School"

Primary 3-6 Years
Elementary 1st - 6th Grade

Middle School 7th & 8th Grade

To Whom It May Concern:

12/6/06

I am a certified teacher at Flagstaff Jr. Academy, and have been working here for 7 years. During this time Mindy DeGraff started a program at our school named Odyssey of the Mind, which is now named Master Mind. To begin with I was somewhat skeptical about using my classroom time for "another" curriculum idea, so I opted out the first year. However once I saw the skills other students at our school were developing I quickly jumped on board.

I have now been participating in Master Mind for 4 years with Mindy, and **I can't sing the praises loud enough for this program.**

My students have improved in so many areas associated with group learning and critical thinking, but the two primary areas that I have seen the greatest improvement in is with group / social skills, and looking for creative, "out of the box" solutions to solve problems.

They have learned how to get along with other students they would not normally work with, and try to solve problems. Master Mind creates a very conducive atmosphere for students to have to work together, not just put up with each other, but actually work together.

It is also wonderful to see the students try to contemplate solutions, no matter how outrageous, to solve their problem for that day. Some students who would normally be left out of a group for being a little different are often embraced because they think of extremely creative solutions. This then encourages other students to piggyback off their ideas until the group has a consensus of how to solve the challenge of the day. This creates a bonding situation that is hard to duplicate in the classroom.

I would encourage any classroom to try Master Mind, and see the improvements their students make.

Sincerely,

Mark Despain

306 W. Cedar Avenue
Flagstaff, Az. 86001
928.774.6007
928.774.7268 fax

www.fjademy.com
fja@unedspeed.net

2301 N. 4th Street
Flagstaff, Az. 86004
928.214.7317
928.214.7320 fax