

## Educating the Whole Child: A Look at the Multiple Intelligences

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Most of the recent reporting which I have done on the educational program at Fay has focused on the how we are at-

tempting to more carefully design, implement, and measure our curricula in each area of the school. As we prepare to improve upon our current work, we are headed toward an analysis of our recently articulated desired student outcomes, skill sets, and curricula in relation to a more comprehensive picture of "intelligence." As a school, we have focused all of our efforts to support our stated mission, that being that Fay is "...committed to educating the whole child to his/her fullest potential in preparation for a productive and fulfilled life." (Fay School mission statement, 1997)

Howard Gardner, noted educational specialist and author of numerous books and journal articles articulating his theory of multiple intelligences, designates seven intelligences in his 1991 publication, *The Unschooled Mind*. As we work with youths, Gardner warns that we must be aware of developing and accessing more than the first two of these, the *linguistic* and *logical-mathematical*, on which much of traditional education and standardized testing has been focused. In addition he maintains, we must design program and

curriculum to allow students to develop the remaining five intelligences: *spatial*, *musical*, *bodily kinesthetic*, *interpersonal*, and *intrapersonal*.

Six years ago, Fay School began a project in the upper school which tapped into two of these "other" intelligences, the *spatial* and *intrapersonal*, when we developed the original "FinderBinder" for use in our sixth grade in collaboration with parent and CEO of Productive Environments, David Schwartz. Today we continue to enjoy the relationship with David, who has come to numerous faculty meetings to train our sixth and seventh grade faculty in the application of this notebook technology. The evolution of this work has seen us use duct-taped, homemade folders in the project's infancy to today being able to purchase these products, in their evolved state, from a major paper product manufacturer.

This is a unique story of how we are truly making the effort to give our students the tools necessary to lead "productive and fulfilled adult lives." This development is one of the most easily defined examples of what is "value-added" in the Fay educational experience. Gardner defines *spatial intelligence* as "...the ability to form a mental model of a spatial world and to be able to maneuver and operate using that model." Organizational skills, as this form of education has been labeled traditionally, have failed to be articulated in a more effective and well defined form than the Workbook Organizer™ currently being learned by the Fay students.

By having the support of a trained and invested faculty, this

system has created relevant learning experiences for our students, not only in the area of *spatial intelligence*, but also in the *intrapersonal intelligence*, as the students learn ultimately to customize their personal organizational systems. The power of this system, which is uniform in function and appearance in our sixth and seventh grades, is due to the fact that this uniformity ensures precise communication between the teacher and student regarding classroom instruction and filing processes. In addition, the careful designing of the system in the Fay School "lab" over the past five years has created an intuitive feel of the system and its intended purpose to our students—the effective storage, management, and retrieval of information to facilitate the learning process at Fay.

Certainly there are many other curricular and co-curricular examples of how Fay addresses the areas of intelligence as outlined by Gardner, and indeed many of these have been in place going well back into Fay's history. As our generation of faculty looks to the future, it is most important that our professional development focus on such educational opportunities as one in which **Bill Claire**, **Joanna Wishart** and **Dorothy Koffel** are scheduled to address their colleagues on how to identify and better integrate the multiple intelligences in curriculum. It is this continued attention to collegial self-improvement, development, and education, combined with such events as our full faculty school visitation day, scheduled to occur on February 8th, which will continue to keep our ideas and pedagogy fluid and current.