

StrengthsQuest™ Activity Workbook



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Section 1:

Awareness and Discovery

After completing this section, students will be able to:

- Define talent, theme, and strength.
- Discuss the role that talent and strength play in the success of top achievers.
- Identify and define, in basic terms, their own themes of talent.
- Discuss their themes of talent with significant others.
- Define, in basic terms, the 34 themes of talent.
- Recognize the unique, but different, talents of others.

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1:1 At My Best

Learning Outcome:

- Introduce students to each other.
- Evaluate your own understanding about what you do best.
- Recognize the unique, but different, talents of others.
- Introduce the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.

Activity Description:

Part 1: At My Best

This activity can be used as an icebreaker, or it can be used anywhere in the curriculum to facilitate discussion about talent and strengths. The purpose of this activity is to get students to think about what they do well and how people use their strengths in order to be successful.

This activity can also be used when discussing the difference between a “strengths” paradigm and a “weakness-fixing” paradigm.

⌚ Approximately 45 minutes

Allow students 10-15 minutes to reflect on their answers. Then, break the students into small groups to share their answers and discuss. Allow 30 minutes for discussion.

Part 2: Introducing the Clifton StrengthsFinder

You have a couple of options when it comes to administering the StrengthsFinder assessment.

1. Group Activity: Campus Computer Lab:

With adequate resources, you can have your students all take the assessment at the same time in a campus computer lab. Be prepared for the fact that some students may be less computer savvy than others and will require more assistance. We recommend that you have several proctors on hand to answer questions and offer assistance.

2. Homework Assignment:

Students can take the assessment at their own pace. This allows students with disabilities to seek the accommodation they require (instructions are provided that describe how to contact Gallup and ask for the 20-second timer to be turned off).

Provide students with a copy of the handout entitled “Navigating the StrengthsQuest Web Site.” The handout is available on the Web at <https://www.strengthsquest.com/library/documents/SQWebNavigationStudentFlier.pdf>.

At My Best

Complete the following statements, then in groups, share your responses with your classmates.

A time when I was at my best was . . .

The best thing about me is . . .

What I enjoy doing the most is . . .

The best time in my life was . . .

My most fulfilling experience was . . .

I earn my best grades when I . . .

The best job or project I ever had was . . .

The things I like best about myself are . . .

Activity 1:1 At My Best Worksheet

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 1.A: Reporting Signature Themes

Learning Outcome:

- Share Signature Themes with an instructor.
- Invite conversation about talents and strengths.

Activity Description:

Instruct students that upon completing the StrengthsFinder assessment, they should e-mail you their results. Students can complete this activity two ways.

1. The StrengthsQuest Web site has a function that allows students to e-mail their Signature Themes report to others.

[Direction: Click *Strengths* from the home page, then *E-Mail a Friend*.]

2. Students can send a list of their Signature Themes via their personal e-mail account.

[Note: This may also help first-year students familiarize themselves with e-mailing and gain comfort with e-mailing their instructors.]

Upon receiving these e-mails, it is imperative that the instructor provide some feedback to the student. Research has demonstrated that students who benefit most from StrengthsQuest are those invited into conversations about their talents and strengths. E-mail is just one tool that can be used to facilitate these conversations.

In your response, validate the student's themes, and, if possible, make some comments about how a theme or themes will contribute to their success in your class or college in general. In addition, you might speak to the theme dynamics (e.g., how the student's Signature Themes work together).

Reporting Signature Themes

-----Original Message-----

From: Laura [mail to:]
Sent: September 02, 2008 11:10 AM
To: john.doe@university.edu
Subject: StrengthsFinder Results

My strengths are Competition, Individualization, Activator, Relator, and Strategic.

Laura

-----Original Message-----

From: John Doe [mail to: john.doe@university.edu]
Sent: September 02, 2007 11:34 AM
To:
Subject: RE: StrengthsFinder Results

Laura...

Thanks for sending me your themes. The combination of Strategic and Activator is a very powerful one. The ability to see the whole picture and make things happen will serve you well in whatever you choose to do. You have a very diverse combination of talents. That is very exciting.

These will serve you well during your years at the university and in the years to come.

John

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.2: At First Glance

Learning Outcome:

- Reflect upon and begin to analyze the Signature Themes Report.

🕒 Approximately 15-20 minutes

Activity Description:

When you discover your greatest talents, you discover your greatest opportunity for strength.

But how do we do that? What clues help you identify your talents or the talents of others?

This activity helps students analyze the content presented in their Signature Theme Report. One of the qualities that separates StrengthsFinder from other personality-type indicators is its accessible and value-added language. With few exceptions, students will be able to look at their Signature Themes and begin to find meaning in them. However, if it's apparent that a student has misconstrued what a theme is about, this is a good opportunity to re-direct their thoughts.

One way for students to identify their talents is for them to pay attention to the moments of greatness that make them ask, "How did I do that?" Glimpses of excellence are flashes of outstanding performance that you or others have observed. In these moments, the task at hand has tapped some of your greatest talents and directly displayed your potential for strength.

Activity Description:

To encourage additional discovery and discussion, you may want to have students share some of their discoveries with each other. Break students into small groups and ask them to share:

1. Each of their Signature Themes
2. Their favorite talent theme from their Signature Theme report
3. One word or phrase from that theme definition that best describes themselves

At First Glance

The Clifton StrengthsFinder is comprised of 34 themes. These themes emerged in Gallup's study of successful people over decades of research. Each theme contains several talents. These talents are natural, recurring patterns of thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. The talents found in your Signature Themes are things you do naturally — like breathing. You can't not do them. You actually do them without even trying.

Read through the long descriptions for each of your Signature Themes. Highlight the words and/or sentences that best describe you. Then, answer the following questions:

What is your first reaction to these terms? What do they mean to you at this point?

Does anything in the report surprise you?

How well do you feel your Signature Themes describe the ways in which you most naturally, think, feel, and behave as a unique individual?

With whom will you share your results?

Activity 1.2: At First Glance

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 1.B: Name Tags/Name Tents

Learning Outcome:

- Share Signature Themes with fellow students.
- Create opportunity for strengths-based discussions.

⌚ Approximately 15 minutes

Resources

- Paper
- Colored markers
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- String

Activity Description:

Ask students to create name tags or name tents to use throughout your sessions. On the name tags or tents, ask students to print their names and their five Signature Themes. You can use the following template or provide your students with the materials (paper, markers, magazines, scissors, and string) and have them create the name tags themselves. Encourage students to be creative and personalize their name tags or tents.

Hello!

My Name is:

My Five Signature Themes Are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Supplemental Activity 1.B: Name Tags/Name Tents

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.3: StrengthsFinder Reflection

Learning Outcome:

- Analyze the Signature Themes Report.

⌚ Approximately 15-20 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity helps students analyze the content presented in their Signature Theme Report.

There are two options for conducting this exercise:

Option 1: In-Class Activity

Ask students to use their Signature Theme Report and use the questions to analyze their results.

To generate conversation, use the pair-share-compare strategy. Have students work in groups of two (or three) and share their responses to each of the questions. Once students have had the opportunity to share their responses in the small group, come back together as a large group, and ask each group to report on their discussion.

Option 2: Journalizing *J*

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this and other activities. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Upon returning to class, you can ask students to turn in their responses and/or facilitate a discussion regarding their reactions to the StrengthsFinder assessment.

Look for this symbol *J* throughout the workbook for activities that are recommended journal entries.

StrengthsFinder Reflection

After reading your Signature Themes Report, complete the following questions:

Which of your Signature Themes describe you best?

Which of your Signature Themes do you use most frequently?

Were you surprised by anything in the report?

Which of your Signature Themes do you anticipate using most in college?

Activity 1.3: StrengthsFinder Reflection

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.4 Talent, Theme, and Strength

Learning Outcome:

- Define talent, theme, and strength.

⌚ Approximately 5-10 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity helps students understand and develop a common language in which they can discuss natural talents and the development and application of strength.

Debrief this activity by asking students to volunteer an answer for each statement, one at a time. Provide the correct answers and discuss as appropriate to ensure clear understanding.

Answer Key

1. A similar group of talents:

Talent Theme Strength

2. A naturally recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior:

Talent Theme Strength

3. Combined with knowledge and skill to create strength:

Talent Theme Strength

4. Measured by the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment:

Talent Theme Strength

5. Represents a capacity to do something:

Talent Theme Strength

6. The ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity:

Talent Theme Strength

7. When fully developed and applied, it is the basis for achievement and excellence:

Talent Theme Strength

8. "Diamonds in the rough":

Talent Theme Strength

Talent, Theme, and Strength

Which is it? Consider the terms talent, theme, and strength. For each statement below, identify the term that most clearly describes it:

1. A similar group of talents:

Talent Theme Strength

2. A naturally recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior:

Talent Theme Strength

3. Combined with knowledge and skill to create strength:

Talent Theme Strength

4. Measured by the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment:

Talent Theme Strength

5. Represents a capacity to do something:

Talent Theme Strength

6. The ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity:

Talent Theme Strength

7. When fully developed and applied, it is the basis for achievement and excellence:

Talent Theme Strength

8. “Diamonds in the rough”:

Talent Theme Strength

Activity 1.4: Talent, Theme, and Strength

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.5 Writing Challenge

Learning Outcome:

- Discuss the role talent and strength play in the success of top achievers.

🕒 Approximately 5-10 minutes

Activity Description:

Ask students to complete the following exercise. First, have your students sign their name five times on the lines provided. Second, ask your students to sign their name five more times, but this time using their non-dominant hand.

Debrief this exercise by discussing the following questions:

What did it feel like to sign your name five times?

On the other hand, what words describe the feelings associated with signing your name with your non-dominant hand?

Several students will comment that writing with their dominant hand was “fluid and easy.” Others will describe it as “mindless.” Both descriptions are valid. Reinforce for students that because talents are natural, they are a part of our ordinary lives, not ordinary in and of themselves.

On the other hand, students will describe the experience of writing with their non-dominant hand as “awkward and clumsy.” We have a propensity to focus on weakness. If writing with your non-dominant hand is like a weakness, does it feel awkward and clumsy when we are asked to approach a task from a place of weakness? Draw this analogy to school. Do we sometimes want to quit (or do we quit) an academic task when forced to approach it from a place of weakness?

You can also ask students if their signature got better over the course of writing their name five times with their non-dominant hand. Some will say yes, others no. Could we get better if we practiced writing with our non-dominant hand? Of course, but how much effort would be required to get our signature to look like it does with our dominant hand? Alternatively, look at the signatures with our dominant hand. Are they different? Likely, the answer is no. That’s because coming from a place of strength, we provided “consistent, near-perfect performance.”

Writing Challenge

In the spaces provided below, sign your name five times.

Now, switch hands. In the spaces below, sign your name five times with your non-dominant hand.

What did it feel like to sign your name five times?

On the other hand, what words describe the feelings associated with signing your name with your non-dominant hand?

Activity 1.5: Writing Challenge

Facilitation Notes: 34 Themes of Talent

In this section, we have provided the list of 34 themes and their short descriptors. It is not intended that you spend time in class at this point going through all 34 themes in one sitting. Research demonstrates that college students have an attention span of no more than 15-20 minutes, the time it would take to go through 5-10 themes at most. Save this activity for later sessions, taking time to discuss only a few themes at a time. Suggestions for facilitating this activity are provided later.

Clifton StrengthsFinder® Themes

Achiever®	People who are especially talented in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.
Activator®	People who are especially talented in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.
Adaptability®	People who are especially talented in the Adaptability theme prefer to “go with the flow.” They tend to be “now” people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.
Analytical®	People who are especially talented in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.
Arranger™	People who are especially talented in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.
Belief®	People who are especially talented in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.
Command®	People who are especially talented in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.
Communication®	People who are especially talented in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.
Competition®	People who are especially talented in the Competition theme measure their progress against the performance of others. They strive to win first place and revel in contests.
Connectedness®	People who are especially talented in the Connectedness theme have faith in the links between all things. They believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has a reason.
Consistency®	People who are especially talented in the Consistency theme are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same. They try to treat everyone in the world with consistency by setting up clear rules and adhering to them.
Context®	People who are especially talented in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.
Deliberative®	People who are especially talented in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.
Developer®	People who are especially talented in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.
Discipline™	People who are especially talented in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.
Empathy™	People who are especially talented in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others’ lives or others’ situations.
Focus™	People who are especially talented in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, then act.

continued

NOTES

Clifton StrengthsFinder® Themes (continued)

Futuristic®	People who are especially talented in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.
Harmony®	People who are especially talented in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.
Ideation®	People who are especially talented in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.
Includer®	People who are especially talented in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.
Individualization®	People who are especially talented in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.
Input®	People who are especially talented in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.
Intellection®	People who are especially talented in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.
Learner®	People who are especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.
Maximizer®	People who are especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.
Positivity®	People who are especially talented in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.
Relator®	People who are especially talented in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.
Responsibility®	People who are especially talented in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.
Restorative®	People who are especially talented in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.
Self-Assurance®	People who are especially talented in the Self-Assurance theme feel confident in their ability to manage their own lives. They possess an inner compass that gives them confidence that their decisions are right.
Significance®	People who are especially talented in the Significance theme want to be very important in the eyes of others. They are independent and want to be recognized.
Strategic™	People who are especially talented in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.
Woo®	People who are especially talented in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.6: Best of the Best

Learning Outcome:

- Discuss the role talent and strength play in the success of top achievers.

⌚ Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity allows students to talk about individuals they identify as successful and to see that those qualities that make them successful are ones they themselves already possess. Success comes from strength, and strength comes from talent.

Individually, ask students to think of a person who they think is successful. Then, ask them to think about the characteristics that make this person successful. Then, ask them to write down three to five qualities that they feel that person used to achieve excellence.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. Ask each small group to record the characteristics on a white board or a large piece of poster paper that can be affixed to the wall.

Then, compile a full list with the rest of the class.

Supplemental Activity 1.C: Success Quote

To get students thinking about success, ask each student to locate a quotation that speaks to the concepts of excellence or success. Compile the list and distribute it to the class. Ask students to choose the quote that resonates with them as their motivational quote for the semester.

To build upon this activity, reflect on these quotes throughout the training. Help your students evaluate whether any of the quotes are reflective of a specific Clifton StrengthsFinder theme. Alternatively, you can open each class session with one of their success quotes.

Continued

Best of the Best

Think of a person who you think is successful. In your own words, describe the characteristics that person possesses that make them successful? Below, write the qualities you feel that person used to achieve excellence.

Which is it? Consider the terms talent, theme, and strength. For each statement below, identify the term that most clearly describes it.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Activity 1.6: Best of the Best

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.6 Best of the Best (Continued)

Supplemental Activity 1.D: Talent Line Up

During this activity, students are presented with a situation and two extreme reactions to this situation. Students are then asked to line up based upon their reaction to the situations. Students need not remain in a single file line; they can “bunch up” if necessary. This value line activity can be done whether the students have completed the Clifton StrengthsFinder or not.

Read each situation and reaction, one at a time. Then instruct the students to line up end-to-end according to their reaction. When all the students have found their place, pick people in various places throughout the line to discuss why they are where they are.

Individuals at either end of the line will often clearly exhibit a certain theme (for example, in the first example below, those who respond “Oh boy!” often have Woo as one of their Signature Themes). Be careful not to assign themes to students based on this exercise alone. Students who find themselves in the middle may end up there for a variety of reasons. The motivation for their behavior varies as their talents vary.

Below are a few situations and extreme reactions. Consider creating your own situations.

You are invited to a party with people you do not know.

Oh Boy! _____ Oh No!

You are asked to participate in a competition.

Let's start now! _____ Do we have to?

You are required to work on a complex project.

Details . . . Yes! _____ Ideas . . . Yes!

You have to find your way to a place you have never been before.

No problem! _____ No way!

NOTES

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.7: Verifying My Signature Themes J

Learning Outcome:

- Discuss their themes of talents with significant others.

🕒 Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity helps students examine how their Signature Themes are manifested in their daily activities and how their Signature Themes are seen through the eyes of others.

J Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Upon returning to class, you can ask them to turn in their responses and/or facilitate a discussion regarding their reactions to this activity. Consider using the following questions to facilitate discussion:

- How did it feel to ask others about your talents?
- Did some people see your themes differently than you did? How so?
- Were you surprised by anything that the other person said?
- What did you learn as a result of completing this exercise?

Verifying My Signature Themes

Share your Signature Themes Report with someone close to you (e.g., a parent, sibling, spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, or friend). Ask them to read through the report, and then ask them the following questions. Record his/her answers.

Which parts of the report really describe me?

What surprises you?

Which of the five themes have you noticed in me the most?

Give me an example of when and how you've seen this theme or these themes in me?

Things to Reflect Upon

How did it feel to ask others about your talents?

Did some people see your themes differently than you did? How so?

Were you surprised by anything that the other person said?

Describe one thing you learned as a result of completing this exercise.

Activity 1.7 Verifying My Signature Themes

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.8: Exploring My Signature Themes J

Learning Outcome:

- Validate and affirm the students' Signature Themes.

⌚ Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity is designed to help students gain a greater understanding of their individual talents, providing a basis as students continue their StrengthsQuest. Students are asked to define each of their Signature Themes using their own words and phrases, and then share these definitions in small groups.

Encourage students to highlight the words, sentences, and phrases from their Signature Theme Report that best fit them. Then ask them to identify one short phrase or a sentence that is the essence of the theme for them. So, someone with Context might write, "The blueprints from the past guide the future." Someone with Learner might write, "I am energized by the journey from ignorance to competence." And someone with Strategic might write, "What if? That says it all for me!"

Then ask students to write a few notes about a time when this theme was put into action.

A vital part of this activity is the small-group discussion. Ask students to share what they have written within groups of three or four, or ask them to move around the room and connect with three other people to share what they have written.

This is a good reminder for the person as to his or her unique talents, and it will help them begin to think about how they can leverage these talents during their college life.

To facilitate additional discussion, you may want to ask your students the following questions after they have completed this activity:

- Who met someone who had one of the same Signature Themes?
- How were your stories similar or different in terms of how you apply your talent within college life?
- Share one new discovery you made about someone in the class.

J Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, and make an entry.

Continued

Exploring My Signature Themes

In the spaces provided below, identify each of your themes and write what each of your themes means to you at this point in your StrengthsQuest.

SIGNATURE THEME	DEFINITION OF THE THEME IN YOUR OWN WORDS

In a small group, share your themes and the definitions you created. Discuss how that theme might help someone excel in college life.

Activity 1.8: Exploring My Signature Themes

Facilitation Notes: Activity 1.8: Exploring My Signature Themes J (Continued)

Supplemental Activity 1.E: Online Discussion

The StrengthsQuest Web site has two functions that allow for online discussion among students, forum, and community. The forum allows students throughout the world to participate in an online discussion regarding their experience with StrengthsQuest. Communities are more focused. Anyone with access to the StrengthsQuest Web site can create a community. As an instructor, you may want to create a community and then provide your students the unique access code that allows them to participate in the community's discussion. Both are excellent ways to extend the conversations regarding strengths outside the classroom.

Supplemental Activity 1.F: Theme Jumble I

Theme Jumble Answer Key:

LEARNER

BELIEF

POSITIVITY

RESTORATIVE

“The best of the nest.”

Theme Jumble I

Unscramble the jumbled words to create the names of four Signature Themes.

NALREER

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

LEFIEB

--	--	--	--	--	--

VOTYIIPITS

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ROISTVERTAE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Now, unscramble the letters in the circle to answer the riddle.

The bird who recognized her talents and built those talents into strengths was . . .

The “□□□□ □□ the □□□□.”

Activity 1.G: Supplemental Activity 1.G: Theme Jumble I

NOTES

Section 2:

Development and Integration

After completing this section, students will be able to:

- Describe, in greater detail, their themes of talent.
- Identify the difficulties associated with affirming one's themes of talent.
- Recognize evidence of and discuss the role of their themes of talent in their personal behavior.
- Identify examples of how their themes of talent have contributed to past success.
- Recognize the personal difficulties associated with affirming their own themes of talent.
- Evaluate behavior in light of themes of talent.
- Describe how their themes of talent work together.
- Value their themes of talent and the role they play in their lives.
- Examine their self concept and the role past successes and failures have had on it.
- Recognize the role of talent and strength in the behavior of others.
- Compare and contrast themes of talent, including those other than their own.
- Differentiate between talent, knowledge, and skill.
- Identify knowledge and skill beneficial to transforming their talents into strengths.
- Identify and demonstrate new ways in which their talents can help them achieve success.
- Apply theme-specific strategies toward the goal of developing their talents into strengths.

"Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's the sundial in the shade?"

— Benjamin Franklin

Facilitation Notes

Development and Integration

The goal of this section is to get students to “own” their talents and the concept of strengths, as well as work on developing their talents into strengths. For most, if not all students, this is a process that will take far longer than the activities included in this section. Development and integration is a process that takes place even after students move into the next three sections of material and beyond. You can use the supplemental activities throughout the students’ StrengthsQuest experience.

NOTES

Affirming My Talents

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.1 The Great Wall of Talent (Themes)

Learning Outcome:

- Validate and affirm the students' Signature Themes.

🕒 Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

Part One: Affirming Talents

Ask students to complete the following exercise. First, on five separate sheets of paper, write your name and each of your five Signature Themes. Then, on the back of each sheet, write the adjectives you use to describe yourself and this theme — define each of your Signature Themes using your own words and phrases.

You can use index cards or scratch paper for this exercise. Alternatively, you could use different colored paper for each student or each theme.

Note: You may want to refer students back to the definitions they created for each theme in the Activity 1.8.

Part Two: Building the Great Wall of Talent

Ask your students to then hang their pieces of paper on the wall, grouping them by Signature Themes.

According to astronauts who looked down at the Earth from the moon, of all projects built by man, the Great Wall of China is the most visible from space. Make a “Great Wall of Talent” the most conspicuous in your classroom. What can be a more profound statement? As an institution, you are proclaiming that every student has the potential to perform with strength. When we discover a student's greatest talents, we discover their greatest opportunities for success. A Great Wall of Talent (Themes) can represent your commitment to be a strengths-based classroom and institution.

Debrief this exercise by discussing the following questions:

- What new discovery have you made about yourself?
- How do you intentionally use this theme of talent in your daily tasks or activities?
- Have you shared your Signature Themes report with anyone? What was their reaction?

Take a picture of the wall of talent once it is completed, or if possible, leave it up on a bulletin board for the duration of the course.

Wall of Talent

Name: _____

Signature Theme: _____

Adjectives I use to describe myself and this theme:



Wall of Talent

Name: _____

Signature Theme: _____

Adjectives I use to describe myself and this theme:

Activity 2.1 The Great Wall of Talent (Themes)

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.2 The Challenge of Affirming My Strengths J

Learning Outcome:

- Identify the difficulties associated with affirming one's themes of talent.

🕒 Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity not only helps students affirm their Signature Themes, but also asks them to examine some of the challenges we all face when attempting to affirm our natural selves. There are challenges. These challenges require intentional thought and action to overcome. Otherwise, we can be caught in the trap of focusing on our weaknesses rather than building our natural strengths.

Ask students to complete the following exercise. First, read each challenge. If you have experienced this feeling before, record the theme or themes associated with those feelings in the second column of the table. Then, briefly describe the situation. You may not fill in every box. An example is provided for you.

[Note: It may be helpful in this exercise to provide examples from your own experience about times when you had difficulty affirming your own talents.]

Debrief this exercise by asking students to share some of their findings. Then, facilitate a brief discussion on the necessity for intentional development of our natural talents. To facilitate this discussion, you may want to use the following questions:

- Can you think of other challenges or roadblocks we face when attempting to affirm our talents?
- Do our strengths take care of them?
- Do your talents need development?
- How do you think we develop our talents?
- How do we exercise our talents?

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click Journal from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

The Challenge of Affirming My Talents

A quick look around shows us that there are a lot of things that challenge our ability to affirm our natural talents. Listed below are a few of the difficulties we encounter when attempting to affirm our natural talents. Read each one. If you have experienced this feeling before, record the theme or themes associated with those feelings, and briefly describe the situation. You may not fill in every box. An example is provided for you.

DIFFICULTY	THEME	SITUATION
I was blind to my talents.	Example: Adaptability	Example: I have always been adaptable and never considered it to be special. I took for granted my ability to move from one task to another.
My talents threatened others.		
I was in a position or role that didn't fit my talents.		
I was fearful of being proud or arrogant.		
I didn't see how my talents would help me reach my goals.		

Activity 2.2: The Challenge of Affirming My Strengths

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.A: Circle of Strengths

Learning Outcome:

- Recognize evidence of and discuss the role of their themes of talent in their personal behavior.

⌚ Approximately 30 minutes (dependent upon the number of students participating in the activity)

Activity Description:

This activity can be used in groups where the students know each other well or have had adequate opportunities to interact and bond.

Ask the students to sit in a circle.

One student begins this activity by telling the group his or her five Signature Themes. (Alternatively, if students have name tags or name tents, the other students could see the themes by looking.) This student is to remain silent as the other student's share their observations about this student's Signature Themes. Specifically, students should share the following observations:

- How has this theme been exhibited in this student's behavior?
- How has this observed talent contributed to this student's success?

Remind students not to interrupt one another and limit their comments so each student receives approximately an equal number of affirmations. If students have difficulty affirming a particular classmate, as the instructor, you should provide affirmation.

Circle of Strengths

HOW HAS THIS OBSERVED TALENT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STUDENT'S SUCCESS?					
HOW HAS THIS THEME BEEN EXHIBITED IN THIS STUDENT'S BEHAVIOR?					
SIGNATURE THEME					

Supplemental Activity 2.A: Circle of Strengths

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.3: Secret of My Success

Learning Outcome:

- Identify examples of how their themes of talent have contributed to past success.

⌚ Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

“Individuals are always stronger when they have their successes and strengths clearly in mind.”

–Donald O. Clifton, *Soar With Your Strengths*, Dell Publishing, 1992

Excellence is an intuitive performance. This activity helps students affirm their Signature Themes by relating their Signature Themes to past personal success. This process will help students begin to develop a model of what success looks like and how they got there.

Optional Activity — What Is the Definition of Success?

In small groups, ask students to develop their own definition of success. Debrief, by asking each group to present their definition. You may want to present your own definition of success.

success (s&k-ses') *n.* the progressive measurable achievement of a goal. You cannot figure out excellence in performance by studying the average. Success and failure are not opposites. We cannot learn what contributes to success by studying failure. Success does not mean zero mistakes. It is more than that.

Ask students to identify what they believe to be their greatest success in life. They may draw on any aspect of their life, including athletics, academics, employment, family, personal, etc. Then, ask them to review the affirming statements for each of their five Signature Themes. Then, ask them to identify the themes, and qualities of those themes, that allowed them to achieve that success.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Secret of My Success

Identify what you believe to be your greatest success in life. You may draw on any aspect of your life, including athletics, academics, employment, family, personal, etc. Then, review the affirming statements for each of your five Signature Themes. Identify the themes and qualities of those themes that allowed you to achieve that success.

THEME		My Greatest Success
THEME		
THEME		

Activity 2.3: Secret of My Success

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.B: Degrees° of Talent/Owning My Talents

Learning Outcome:

- Recognize the personal difficulties associated with affirming their own themes of talent.

⌚ Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

Activity Introduction

Your Signature Themes are a collection of related talents.

From a distance, a talent is a talent. Self discipline is self discipline. That's it.

A positive outlook is a positive outlook. That's all.

The ability to produce ideas is the ability to produce ideas. End of story.

A talent is a talent. Either you have it or you don't. Right?

Wrong. That's not the way it is. When you take a closer look at your talents, you see that they exist in varying degrees.

Do you have any self discipline? Sure you do — but how much?

Do you have at least some positivity? Yes — but how positive are you?

Do you sometimes have ideas? Of course you do — but when? How often?

Simply put, you're not only talented in areas; you're also talented in degrees.

The description of each theme contains a list of the various talents associated with that theme. Some talents are so naturally powerful that they are dominant. We all share the same talents; the difference is the degree to which we have those talents. Those talents that are the most dominant are not only the most natural, but also have the most potential and are the most powerful.

Activity Instructions

Some people may question one of their themes because of one or more statements in the description. While these people may not possess that single talent, they possess other related talents and, as a result, have that theme of talent.

To help students affirm their themes, but acknowledge those talents they feel they don't possess, have them read through the long description of their theme. Have students highlight those statements that they feel are highly representative of them, and have them cross out those that they feel do not apply.

Degrees° of Talent

Your Signature Themes are a collection of related talents. The description of each theme contains a list of the various talents associated with that theme. Some talents are so naturally powerful that they are dominant. No matter where you are or what you are doing, your **dominant talents** show up.

If the tendency to smile when you see another person is one of your dominant talents, you nearly always smile when you see another person. That talent is so natural in you that you practically can't turn it off. And in that smile — that talent — you have the power to light up the room.

You also have talents that can contribute but don't come quite as naturally. Rather than dominate, your **supporting talents** show up only when their support is needed, and because they aren't as natural, they aren't as powerful.

Perhaps you can smile pretty easily when the situation calls for it, but it's not going to happen every time. And it's probably not going to be that light-up-the-room smile you'd get from someone in whom this talent is extremely natural. In you, this is a supporting talent.

And, of course, we all have our own **lesser talents** — ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that don't come to us very naturally at all.

If the tendency to smile when you see another person is one of your lesser talents, it rarely shows up. And when it does appear, it might be forced. It's not that you're unhappy. You can smile when you see another person, but it's not likely to be a light-up-the-room smile, and you'd really rather not be in a situation where that's expected. Why?

Your most natural talents — your greatest power and potential — lie elsewhere.

Owning My Own Talents

With a highlighter in hand, read through the descriptions for each of your five Signature Themes, and highlight those lines that you feel are highly representative of you. Then, crossout those that you feel do not apply. You do not need to highlight or crossout every word.

Sample:

You are inquisitive. You collect things. You might collect information — words, facts, books, and quotations—or you might collect tangible objects such as butterflies, baseball cards, porcelain dolls, or sepia photographs. Whatever you collect, you collect it because it interests you. And yours is the kind of mind that finds so many things interesting. The world is exciting precisely because of its infinite variety and complexity. If you read a great deal, it is not necessarily to refine your theories but, rather, to add more information to your archives. If you like to travel, it is because each new location offers novel artifacts and facts. These can be acquired and then stored away. Why are they worth storing? At the time of storing, it is often hard to say exactly when or why you might need them, but who knows when they might become useful? With all those possible uses in mind, you really don't feel comfortable throwing anything away. So you keep acquiring and compiling and filing stuff away. It's interesting. It keeps your mind fresh. And perhaps one day some of it will prove valuable.

Supplemental Activity 2.B: Degrees of Talent/Owning My Talents

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.4: Scavenger Hunt

Learning Outcome:

- Identify examples of how their themes of talent have intrinsic value.

⌚ Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity is designed to get people up and moving around to learn more about each other. Each person should identify one of his or her top five Clifton StrengthsFinder themes to share during this activity. He or she should be prepared to talk about “one benefit of this theme.”

This activity prompts dialogue and discovery of individual Clifton StrengthsFinder Top 5 Theme Results and interaction.

After gathering as much information as possible in the designated amount of time, these questions might be appropriate to debrief this activity:

- Who will share something new he or she learned about someone on this team?
- Which theme or themes did you gain a greater appreciation for as a result of talking to your classmates?
- Were there some students who had themes that you could benefit from if you worked with them?
- What did you learn about yourself as a result of this activity?
- What does it (or could it) feel like to have an opportunity to share your unique contribution to others?

Scavenger Hunt

Talk to 10 other classmates who have at least one Signature Theme different than your own. Record the name of each person you talked to, the theme you discussed, and at least one benefit of that theme.

NAME	THEME	ONE BENEFIT OF THE THEME

When you have completed the exercise, answer the following questions:

Which theme or themes did you gain a greater appreciation for as a result of talking to your classmates?

Were there some students who had themes that you could benefit from if you worked with them?

What did you learn about yourself as a result of this activity?

Activity 2.4: Scavenger Hunt

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activities 2.C, 2.D, and 2.E: Theme Discovery

Learning Outcome:

- Validate and affirm the students' Signature Themes.

⌚ Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity can be used to further affirm students' themes, as well as provide an opportunity to discuss strengths, even if for only a few minutes during a class session.

Choose three to five themes. (You can go in alphabetical order if you like.)

Ask all the students in the room who have that theme to stand up. Then ask a variety of those students to define what the theme means. To facilitate this, you may want to ask the following questions:

- What does this theme mean to you?
- How do you purposefully use this theme as a student?
- What value does this theme have for you as a student?

You may want to ask other students to describe instances in which this person positively leveraged this theme in class.

Be sure that over the course of the semester, you address each theme, giving all the students the opportunity to be recognized for each of their five themes.

To provide visual reinforcement, use the StrengthsFinder Theme Posters or Strengths Journal created by Gallup, or create a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation that includes the name of each theme and a picture representative of that theme.

Supplemental Activity 2.D: Theme for the Day

Each day, assign a theme for the day. As a visual reminder of the theme, display the corresponding quote card or cards from the theme deck in your classroom or office. Take a few minutes to discuss the theme with students, including what it is about and what it allows individuals to do well.

Supplemental Activity 2.E: Signature Themes in Common

Ask students to walk around the room and find someone with a Signature Theme in common. Then ask the pairs to sit down and have a conversation about their experiences with that theme, using the Theme Discovery worksheet as a guide. Have each student fill in each of the answers before moving on to find another student with a common theme. Give students two to three opportunities to talk with classmates with themes in common.

Theme Discovery

THEME	CLASSMATE(S) WITH THIS THEME IN THEIR "TOP FIVE"	VALUE AS A COLLEGE STUDENT

Achiever **Activator** ADAPTABILITY Analytical Arranger Belief
 COMMAND Communication **Competition** Connectedness **Consistency**
 Context **Deliberative** Developer DISCIPLINE Empathy Focus
 FUTURISTIC Harmony Ideation Includer Individualization Input
 Intellection Learner Maximizer Positivity RELATOR Responsibility
 Restorative SELF-ASSURANCE Significance **Strategic** Woo

Supplemental Activity Theme Discovery

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.F: Reflections on the Movies

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate behavior in light of themes of talent.

⌚ Variable

Activity Description:

Films powerfully communicate points about poignant moments in life. This activity asks students to view and evaluate movies with a discerning eye and discover the stories of talents and strengths that are evident through film.

Show a film in class that depicts the use of talents. Following the film, you can either discuss the film in class or ask students to write an essay answering the following questions.

Suggested movie clips and their reflective moment:

MOVIE	REFLECTIVE MOMENT
<i>Forrest Gump</i> (1994)	Followers running behind Forrest as he runs blindly across the country.
<i>The Matrix</i> (1999)	Neo learns kung fu from Morpheus. Morpheus challenges Neo to battle.
<i>The Pursuit of Happiness</i> (2006)	Although he has no college training, Chris Gardner's math skills allow him to solve a Rubik's Cube puzzle in a short amount of time. Impressed, the person in charge of the intern hiring process arranges an interview for Chris.
<i>Dead Poets Society</i> (1989)	Mr. Keating helps Todd Anderson create a poem in class after students say he is not capable. Mr. Keating inspires the boys to "seize the day."
<i>Good Will Hunting</i> (1997)	Will Hunting breaks the code while mopping the floor.
<i>Shrek</i> (2001)	Ogres are like onions. Shrek lets his masculine facade fall and brings Donkey into his thoughts, his world. He tries to show Donkey (using the example of the onion) that he is more than just a strong, big, masculine ogre . . . that he has other sides that no one even tries to get to know. Everyone is a unique individual with unique talents and strengths. We should get to know each person on an individual level and appreciate the differences in character and personality that is there that many do not take the time to see.

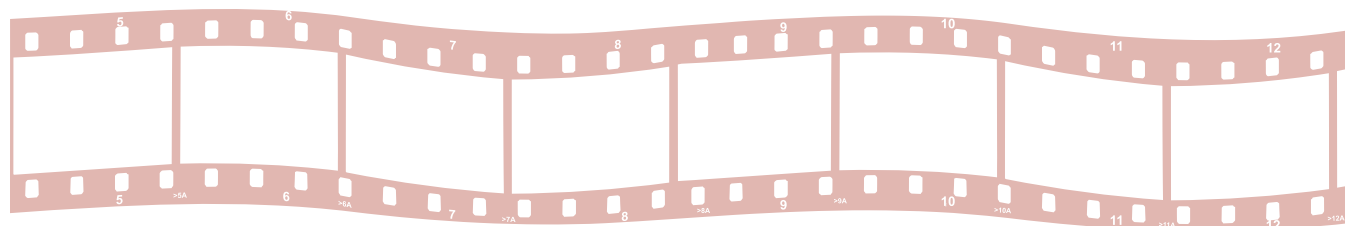
Additional movie suggestions: *October Sky*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Hoosiers*, *Babe*, *Remember the Titans*, and *A Beautiful Mind*.

Analyzing Strengths in Film

What do you believe are the Signature Themes of the main character(s) of the film? Why?

When in the film do the main character(s) use their strengths to achieve excellence?

Describe instances in the film where you saw evidence of the “shadow side” of a character’s themes of talent.



Supplemental Activity 2.F: Reflections on the Movies

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.5: The Talent Connection

Learning Outcome:

- Recognize evidence of and discuss the role of their themes of talent in their personal behavior.

 Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity is designed to help students gain a greater understanding of their individual talents.

You may want to encourage your students to review their Clifton StrengthsFinder reports and reflect on the words, sentences, and phrases that they previously highlighted.

Then, ask them to reflect on what those Signature Themes allow them to do. Someone with Context might write, “The blueprints from the past guide the future.” Someone with Learner might write, “I am energized by the journey from ignorance to competence.” And someone with Strategic might write, “What if? That says it all for me!”

Then ask the students to write a few notes about a time when this theme was put into action. Ask the students to share what they have written within groups of three or four, or ask them to move around the room and connect with three other people to share what they have written.

After people have shared what they have written, these questions might be appropriate.

- Who met someone who had one of the same top five Clifton StrengthsFinder themes?
- How were your stories similar or different in terms of how you apply your talent?
- Share one new discovery you made about someone in the class.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Supplemental Activity 2.G: Leveling the Playing Field

One of the benefits of using strengths in the classroom is that it levels the playing field between instructor and student. The students in your class, regardless of their past achievement, have talents that may be very similar to yours. For this activity, make copies of your Signature Themes report and distribute them to the class. Ask the students to read over the report, and invite them to ask you questions about it. Discuss how the talents are exhibited in yourself, how you leverage these talents, how you use them in the classroom, and how they have contributed to your success. Acknowledge the “shadow side” of your talents and how your talents work together. Talk about what you have consciously done to develop your talents into strengths. This exercise requires some willingness to be transparent, but your self-disclosure should build trust, allowing students to be more open to you in class and disclose more as a part of their written exercises.

The Talent Connection

Below, place your five Signature Themes in the first column. Then, think about what those Signature Themes allow you to do. Identify one specific example of when you have recently used each theme. An example is provided for you.

THEME	WHAT THIS THEME ALLOWS ME TO DO	WHEN/WHERE I RECENTLY USED THIS THEME
Example: Restorative	I listen well and can provide suggestions that help others solve their problems.	A friend was having a disagreement with her boyfriend. I was able to understand the situation and give her advice on how she should handle the situation.

Activity 2.5: The Talent Connection

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.6: A Fresh Perspective (Reframing)

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate behavior in light of themes of talent.

⌚ Variable

Activity Description:

“Talents are like muscles. If you use them, they will help you achieve them. Further, as you refine them, they will become even more capable of helping you achieve.”

– Donald O. Clifton, Edward “Chip” Anderson, Laurie Schreiner, *StrengthsQuest*

When confronted with difficulty or challenges, we should try to use our muscles (strengths) to respond to these challenges.

This activity helps students affirm their Signature Themes by relating the themes to past difficulties. This process will help students begin to develop a model of how they can *consciously* apply their talents to achieve success.

Ask students to identify a task in their life with which they have had difficulty. They may draw on any aspect of their life, including athletics, academics, employment, family, personal, etc. Then, ask them to review The Talent Connection Activity, paying particular attention to what they said each of their themes allows them to do. Then, ask them to consider how they could use their themes of talents to approach the difficulty. Ask them to identify three themes and the specific ways in which they could use those themes to deal with the situation or challenge.

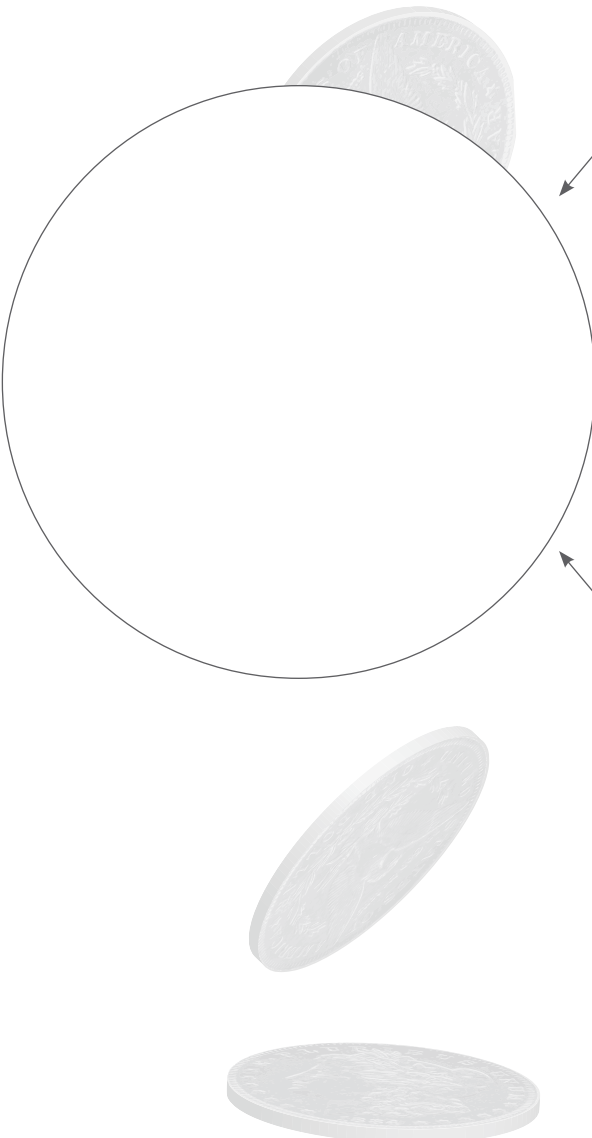
Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

This activity can be useful in one-on-one interactions with students. It provides a framework through which they can work through the difficulties they face as college students and generate solutions based on their themes of talent.

A Fresh Perspective

Identify a specific task in your life with which you have difficulty. The difficulty could be academic, a problem at work, or a challenge in your relationships. Then, look back at The Talent Connection Activity. Paying attention to what you said each of your themes allows you to do, think about how you could use your themes of talents to approach that difficulty in a different, more productive way. Identify three themes and specific ways in which you could use those themes to deal with this situation.

Difficulty



THEME

THEME

THEME

Activity 2.6: A Fresh Perspective (Reframing)

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.7: Theme Dynamics — Themes Working Together *J*

Learning Outcome:

- Describe how their themes of talent work together.

⌚ Variable

20-30 Minutes

Our talents do not work in isolation. Most strengths are rooted in not just one talent, but many. In this exercise, students are introduced to the concept of theme dynamics.

For students to begin to understand the meaning of their talents in combination, they should begin by focusing on two of their most powerful Signature Themes. Ask your students to consider the following questions:

- How do your talents within these themes interact with one another?
- What does that interaction tend to produce?

Walk the students through the example of “Emily” that is provided.

Ask your students to consider two of their top five themes and what theme dynamics exist because the two are a part of their top five. Briefly discuss the examples provided.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Theme Dynamics — Themes Working Together

Achieving excellence isn't easy. Most strengths are rooted in not just one talent, but two, three, or even more. Considering the dynamics that exist between and among your themes is key to maximizing your talents and gaining insights into the contribution you can make.

Emily

For instance, one of Emily's strongest talent themes is Achiever. She has an internal fire burning. It pushes her to do more, to achieve more. She also has strong Learner talents. She is eager to learn new skills that will make her more effective in her classwork. So, we might speculate that this person has learned to harness the power of the software she uses to produce reports and study aids. And if she has Strategic, she is always interested in knowing all the options the software provides so she can use the best features for each particular assignment.

Do you see how her themes begin to interact and overlap, allowing her to contribute her best to her role?

This interaction is called "theme dynamics."

Think about two of your top five themes, and write each below. Consider what theme dynamics exist because the two are part of your top five. Two examples are provided for you below using one person's Signature Themes.

THEME +	THEME =	THEME DYNAMIC
<i>Example</i> Achiever (can get a lot done)	Learner (likes to learn something new)	I consider learning something new that helps me get more done, faster, to be a great achievement. So when I get to attend a class that teaches a new skill, it's a great day!
<i>Example</i> Individualization (keen observer of people's strengths)	Maximizer (excellence is the measure)	I know that there is no perfect way to get a task done. But, it is possible to position people perfectly to use their strengths to get the task done. I can find the right fit for people when working on a group project. I'm all about excellence, and the key to it is people!

Activity 2.7: Theme Dynamics — Themes Working Together

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.8: Modeling Theme Dynamics

Learning Outcome:

- Describe how their themes of talent work together.

⌚ Variable

Activity Description:

This activity expands upon the previous exercise by asking students to consider how all five of their Signature Themes interact and work together.

Direct your students to build a visual model of the dynamic relationship of their top five talent themes. Tell your students to:

- Be creative.
- Consider using visual metaphors to represent the interrelationship of your talents.
- You can use any media you wish to build your model. Some ideas or suggestions:
 - Draw or sketch
 - Build a sculpture from clay, Tinkertoy, or Lego sets.
 - You might consider using a Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe Flash presentation of a three-dimensional model.
- Be prepared to share your visualization with your classmates.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their models with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Select a few students to present their model to the entire class.

Supplemental Activity 2.H: Personal Statement of Strengths

An alternative to this exercise is to have students create a verbal statement of strengths. Ask students to think about their five Signature Themes and write a paragraph, poem, story, or statement that reflects their perception of their talents and how they work together — what role they play in their lives.

Example:

Signature Themes: Input, Achiever, Learner, Intellection, Ideation

Talk to me. I like to listen. I can learn so much from what you say. What are you thinking? Making lists is only a runner-up to reading and acquiring new pieces of information. I have listened, I've read, but I am not yet ready to act — I need to think a little longer. Give me time to process and absorb everything I am taking in. Let me think through it in new ways and mull it around in my head. When I have time to think, it gives me the chance to let lightning strike me. Then, BAM! It comes together. I am now ready to act — to do something, make lists, and share all of my connections with others. Now, I need to do something concrete with the information in my head.

Modeling Theme Dynamics

Activity: Build a model of the dynamic relationship of your top five talent themes — how your top five talent themes work together.

- Be creative.
- Consider using visual metaphors to represent the interrelationship of your talents.
- You can use any media you wish to build your model. Some ideas or suggestions:
 - Draw or sketch
 - Build a sculpture from clay, Tinkertoy, or Lego sets.
 - You might consider using a Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe Flash presentation of a three-dimensional model.
- Be prepared to share your visualization with your classmates.

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.I: Group Dynamics and Talent Themes

Learning Outcome:

- Recognize the role of talent and strength in the behavior of others.

⌚ Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

Break students into small groups. Ask them to first individually, then as a group, rank what they believe to be the order in which the industries were viewed as reported by a Gallup Poll conducted in August 2006. Allow the students 15 minutes to complete this activity.

As groups finish this activity, ask them to consider how they came to the final group ranking, in light of their Signature Themes of talent.

Before presenting the actual results, debrief this activity by facilitating a brief discussion about the small group dynamic and how they came to the group ranking. To facilitate this discussion, you may want to ask the following questions:

- How did your themes influence your work in the group?
- How did you see others' talents displayed?
- Were there themes of talent you wish you had represented in the group?

Actual Gallup Poll Results

INDUSTRY	ACTUAL RANKING
Healthcare	13
Law	14
Airline Industry	9
Restaurant Industry	1
Education	8
Banking	5
Advertising	11
Real Estate	6

INDUSTRY	ACTUAL RANKING
Oil and Gas Industry	16
Computer Industry	2
Federal Government	15
Retail Industry	3
Farming and Agriculture	4
Automobile Industry	7
Movie Industry	10
Pharmaceutical Industry	12

Group Dynamics and Talent Themes

In August 2006, Gallup surveyed Americans about their overall perceptions of the industries listed below. First individually, then as a group, rank what you believe is the order in which the following industries are viewed, 1 being viewed the most positively and 16 the least positively.

INDUSTRY	INDIVIDUAL	GROUP
Healthcare		
Law		
Airline Industry		
Restaurant Industry		
Education		
Banking		
Advertising		
Real Estate		
Oil and Gas Industry		
Computer Industry		
Federal Government		
Retail Industry		
Farming and Agriculture		
Automobile Industry		
Movie Industry		
Pharmaceutical Industry		

Supplemental Activity 2.I: Group Dynamics and Talent Themes

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.J: Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II

Learning Outcome:

- Compare and contrast themes of talent, including those other than their own.

⌚ Approximately 25 minutes

Activity Description:

Break students into small groups, ask them to first individually, then as a group, rank what they believe to be the order, in importance, of each of the salvaged items. Allow the students 15 minutes to complete this activity.

As groups finish this activity, ask them to consider how they came to the final group ranking, in light of their Signature Themes of talent.

Before presenting the actual results, debrief this activity by facilitating a brief discussion about the small group dynamic and how they came to the group ranking. To facilitate this discussion, you may want to ask the following questions:

- How did your themes influence your work in the group?
- How did you see others' talents displayed?
- Were there themes of talent you wish you had represented in the group?

Present correct answers and rationale.

Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II

You and your companions have just survived the crash of a small plane. Both the pilot and copilot were killed in the crash. It is mid-January, and you are in Northern Canada. The daily temperature is 25 below zero, and the nighttime temperature is 40 below zero. There is snow on the ground, and the countryside is wooded with several creeks in the area. The nearest town is 20 miles away. You are all dressed in city clothes appropriate for a business meeting. Your group of survivors managed to salvage some items from the wreckage. First individually, then as a group, rank the following item in order of importance to your survival.

ITEM	INDIVIDUAL	GROUP
A ball of steel wool		
A small ax		
A loaded .45-caliber pistol		
Can of Crisco shortening		
Newspapers (one per person)		
Cigarette lighter (without fluid)		
Extra shirt and pants for each survivor		
20 x 20 foot piece of heavy-duty canvas		
A sectional air map made of plastic		
One quart of 100-proof whiskey		
A compass		
Family-size chocolate bars (one per person)		

Supplemental Activity 2.J: Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II

NOTES

Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II — Correct Answers and Rationale:

Mid-January is the coldest time of year in Northern Canada. The first problem the survivors face is the preservation of body heat and the protection against its loss. This problem can be solved by building a fire, minimizing movement and exertion, using as much insulation as possible, and constructing a shelter.

Before taking off, a pilot has to file a flight plan, which contains vital information such as the course, speed, estimated time of arrival, type of aircraft, and number of passengers. Search-and-rescue operations begin shortly after the failure of a plane to appear at its destination at the estimated time of arrival.

The 20 miles to the nearest town is a long walk under even ideal conditions, particularly if one is not used to walking such distances. In this situation, the walk is even more difficult due to shock, snow, dress, and water barriers. It would mean almost certain death from freezing and exhaustion. At temperatures of minus 25 to minus 40, the loss of body heat through exertion is a very serious matter.

Once the survivors have found ways to keep warm, their next task is to attract the attention of search planes. Thus, all the items the group has salvaged must be assessed for their value in signaling the group's whereabouts.

The following ranking of the items was made by a former Army instructor in survival training.

1. Cigarette lighter (without fluid)
The gravest danger facing the group is exposure to cold. The greatest need is for a source of warmth, and the second greatest need is for signaling devices. This makes building a fire the first order of business. Without matches, something is needed to produce sparks, and even without fluid, a cigarette lighter can do that.
2. Ball of steel wool
In order to make a fire, the survivors need a means of catching the sparks made by the cigarette lighter. This is the best substance for catching a spark and supporting a flame, even if the steel wool is a little wet.
3. Extra shirt and pants for each survivor
Besides adding warmth to the body, clothes can also be used for shelter, signaling, bedding, bandages, string (when unraveled), and fuel for the fire.
4. Can of Crisco shortening
A can of shortening has many uses. A mirror-like signaling device can be made from the lid. After shining the lid with steel wool, it will reflect sunlight and generate 5 to 7 million candlepower. This is bright enough to be seen beyond the horizon. While this could be limited somewhat by the trees, a member of the group could climb a tree and use the mirrored lid to signal search planes. If they had no other means of signaling than this, they would have a better than 80% chance of being rescued within the first day. There are other uses for this item. It can be rubbed on exposed skin for protection against the cold. When melted into oil, the shortening is helpful as fuel. When soaked into a piece of cloth, melted shortening will act like a candle. The empty can is useful in melting snow for drinking water. It is much safer to drink warmed water than to eat snow, since warm water will help retain body heat. Water is important because dehydration will affect decision making. The can is also useful as a cup.

Supplemental Activity 2.J: Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II

NOTES

Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II — Correct Answers and Rationale:

(Continued)

5. 20 x 20 foot piece of canvas
The cold makes shelter necessary, and canvas would protect against wind and snow. (Canvas is used in making tent.) Spread on a frame made of trees; it could be used as a tent or a wind screen. It might also be used as a ground cover to keep the survivors dry. Its shape, when contrasted with the surrounding terrain, makes it a signaling device.
6. Small ax
Survivors needs a constant supply of wood in order to maintain the fire. The ax could be used for this as well as for clearing a sheltered campsite, cutting tree branches for ground insulation, and constructing a frame for the canvas tent.
7. Family size chocolate bars (one per person)
Chocolate will provide some food energy. Since it contains mostly carbohydrates, it supplies the energy without making digestive demands on the body.
8. Newspapers (one per person)
These are useful in starting a fire. They can also be used as insulation under clothing when rolled up and placed around a person's arms and legs. A newspaper can also be used as a verbal signaling device when rolled up in a megaphone shape. It could also provide reading material for recreation.
9. Loaded .45-caliber pistol
The pistol provides a sound-signaling device. (The international distress signal is 3 shots fired in rapid succession.) There have been numerous cases of survivors going undetected because they were too weak to make a loud enough noise to attract attention. The butt of the pistol could be used as a hammer, and the powder from the shells will assist in fire building. By placing a small bit of cloth in a cartridge emptied of its bullet, one can start a fire by firing the gun at dry wood on the ground. The pistol also has some serious disadvantages. Anger, frustration, impatience, irritability, and lapses of rationality may increase as the group awaits rescue. The availability of a lethal weapon is a danger to the group under these conditions. Although a pistol could be used in hunting, it would take an expert marksman to kill an animal with it. Then the animal would have to be transported to the crash site, which could prove difficult to impossible depending on its size.
10. Quart of 100 proof whiskey
The only uses of whiskey are as an aid in fire building and as a fuel for a torch (made by soaking a piece of clothing in the whiskey and attaching it to a tree branch). The empty bottle could be used for storing water. The danger of whiskey is that someone might drink it, thinking it would bring warmth. Alcohol takes on the temperature it is exposed to, and a drink of minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit whiskey would freeze a person's esophagus and stomach. Alcohol also dilates the blood vessels in the skin, resulting in chilled blood being carried back to the heart, resulting in a rapid loss of body heat. Thus, a person who is drunk is more likely to get hypothermia than a sober person is.

Supplemental Activity 2.J: Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II

NOTES

Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II — Correct Answers and Rationale:

(Continued)

11. Compass

A compass might encourage someone to try to walk to the nearest town; it is a dangerous item. Its only redeeming feature is that it could be used as a reflector of sunlight (due to its glass top).

12. Sectional air map made of plastic

This is also among the least desirable of the items because it will encourage individuals to try to walk to the nearest town. Its only useful feature is as a ground cover to keep someone dry.

Supplemental Activity 2.J: Group Dynamics and Talent Themes II

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.9: Talent, Knowledge, or Skill?

Learning Outcome:

- Differentiate between talent, knowledge, and skill.

⌚ Approximately 15 minutes

Activity Description:

In this activity, students learn that there are three things that contribute to the development of a strength.

- Knowledge: what you know
- Skill: the basic ability to move through the fundamental steps of a task
- Talent: a natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving

Ask students to complete the Talent, Knowledge, and Skills activity. This can be done individually, or if you have enough time, in small groups.

Answers:

1. Talent
2. Knowledge
3. Skill
4. Knowledge
5. Skill
6. Talent

Explanation:

Maybe you've heard someone describe a great basketball player by saying, "He has skills."

And perhaps you've heard a world-class computer programmer described with the compliment, "She really knows what she's doing."

Well, both of those comments would be true. Any basketball player has skills. Any programmer has knowledge. But greatness requires more than skill and more than knowledge. In fact, strength — the greatness that consistently delivers a positive outcome through near-perfect performance — requires something more important and powerful than skill and knowledge combined.

Strength requires talent. Sure, skills are crucial. Without skill — the basic ability to move through the fundamental steps of a task — a basketball player wouldn't be able to go through the essential motions of shooting a basket. And knowledge is vital. A computer programmer couldn't even begin without knowledge of the general rules of programming.

But with training and education, pretty much anyone can go through those fundamental steps or possess that basic knowledge. Great basketball players, average basketball players, and even bad basketball players go through the same fundamental motions while shooting the ball. And whether they are good, average, or bad, all computer programmers have knowledge of the general rules of programming.

The very best, however, have an edge — a big edge. They have discovered the power of following their unique natures. They recognize the tremendous potential of building upon their greatest talents — the ways in which they most naturally think, feel, and behave.

The best of the best know that to finish with strength, you must start with talent.

Talent, Knowledge, or Skill?

Talents, knowledge, and skills are components of strength. Consider the example of a successful basketball player. For each of the following, circle whether the quality that makes them successful is a talent, knowledge, or skill.

1. An innate desire to outperform the competition.

TALENT

KNOWLEDGE

SKILL

2. A familiarity with the basic rules of the game.

TALENT

KNOWLEDGE

SKILL

3. The ability to dribble the basketball.

TALENT

KNOWLEDGE

SKILL

4. Knowing the basic plays the team uses during the game.

TALENT

KNOWLEDGE

SKILL

5. The aptitude of rebounding the basketball.

TALENT

KNOWLEDGE

SKILL

6. The power to focus on the basket when shooting free throws.

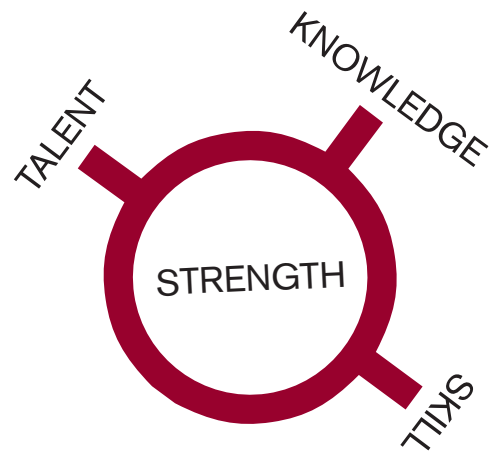
TALENT

KNOWLEDGE

SKILL

Sure, skills are important. And knowledge is vital.

But strength requires something more important and powerful than skill and knowledge combined.



Activity 2.9: Talent, Knowledge, or Skill?

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.10: Realizing My Potential J

Learning Outcome:

- Identify knowledge and skill beneficial to transforming their talents into strengths.

⌚ Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

The development of strength, like the development of muscle, takes effort.

This activity helps students integrate the elements of strength development: talent, skills, and knowledge. Specifically, students identify what talents, skills, and knowledge are required to complete three tasks. This process will help students begin to develop a model of how they can *consciously* apply their talents to develop strength.

Ask students to identify three tasks that they have to complete in the next few weeks. These tasks can be at home, school, or work. Then, identify the talents, skills, and knowledge that they will need to leverage in order to accomplish each task.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Realizing My Potential

Think about your life at school, work, and home. Identify three tasks that you have to complete within the next few weeks. Then, identify the themes of talent, knowledge, and skills that will be necessary in order to complete the task successfully.

An example is provided for you.

TASK	THEME(S)		KNOWLEDGE		SKILL
Example: Collect research for paper due in psychology.	Responsibility, Input	+	Knowledge of psychological theories I am discussing	+	Library and Internet research skills
		+		+	
		+		+	
		+		+	



Talent (a natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving)

Investment (time spent practicing, developing your skills, and building your knowledge base)



Strength (the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance)

Activity 2.10: Realizing My Potential

Facilitation Notes: Activity 2.11: Talent Development J

Learning Outcome:

- Differentiate between talent, knowledge, and skill.

⌚ Approximately 15 minutes

Activity Description:

In this activity, students are asked to consciously create a strategy to develop one of their Signature Themes. It is imperative that the instructor provide students with timely feedback concerning their efforts to develop their talents. Send an e-mail back to them congratulating them for their work toward this goal.

Ask your students to select one of their Signature Themes and read through the “Developing” Action Items checklist for this Theme in the *StrengthsQuest* textbook. Ask them to select one strategy to commit to and apply during the next week. Next, ask them to develop a strategy or identify a specific way in which they can make that strategy a reality. Then, ask them to answer the questions on the worksheet.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Talent Development

Choose one of your Signature Themes. Read through the “Developing” Action Items checklist in your *StrengthsQuest* textbook, and identify one strategy you will commit to during the next week. Identify a specific way in which you can make that strategy a reality. Then, answer the following questions.

Which theme did you choose to focus on?

What was the strategy that you chose to act upon?

What specifically did you do to make that strategy a reality?

What was the result of your actions?

In the weeks to come, commit to doing this activity anew each week. You may choose the same theme and a different strategy or, if you prefer, a strategy from a different theme altogether.

Activity 2.11: Talent Development

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.K: Intensify Strength J

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies toward the goal of developing their talents into strengths.

🕒 Approximately 15 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity will help students begin to actively develop their talent.

Ask students to choose a talent theme that they would like to develop further. Ask the students to develop talent-based actions to respond to each application touchpoint on the worksheet.

Although this activity instructs students to work with one theme at a time, this activity can be repeated at designated intervals for each of their five themes.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Intensify Strength

Choose a talent theme that you would like to use more fully. Look at each application touchpoint in the left-hand column below, and identify actions that you can take that would allow you to more fully develop that theme.

An example is provided for you.

Talent Theme: _____

APPLICATION TOUCHPOINT FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS I CAN TAKE TO DEVELOP MY TALENTS INTO STRENGTHS
Classes	Example: I am going to take an elective history class next semester (Context)
Student organizations	
Books and other reading	
Teachers	
Web sites	
Artistic opportunities	
Sports and recreation	
Community service	
Special workshops	
Work and internships	
Interactions with family and friends	
Other	

Supplemental Activity 2.K: Intensify Strength

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.L: Theme Jumble

Theme Jumble Answer Key:

STRATEGIC

SIGNIFICANCE

CONNECTEDNESS

CONSISTENCY

DELIBERATIVE

ACHIEVER

“Strengths-colored grasses”

Theme Jumble II

Unscramble the jumbled words to create the names of six Signature Themes:

GRETTICAS

○		○				○		○
---	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	---

ANIFGCENCIS

○		○						○			○
---	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	---

DOSSCECNENENT

	○		○					○			○	
--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	---	--

YONCSNETSIC

	○		○		○	○	○			
--	---	--	---	--	---	---	---	--	--	--

BRADIEVILETE

	○	○				○		○			
--	---	---	--	--	--	---	--	---	--	--	--

VERICHAE

		○				○	○
--	--	---	--	--	--	---	---

Now, unscramble the letters in the circle to answer the riddle.

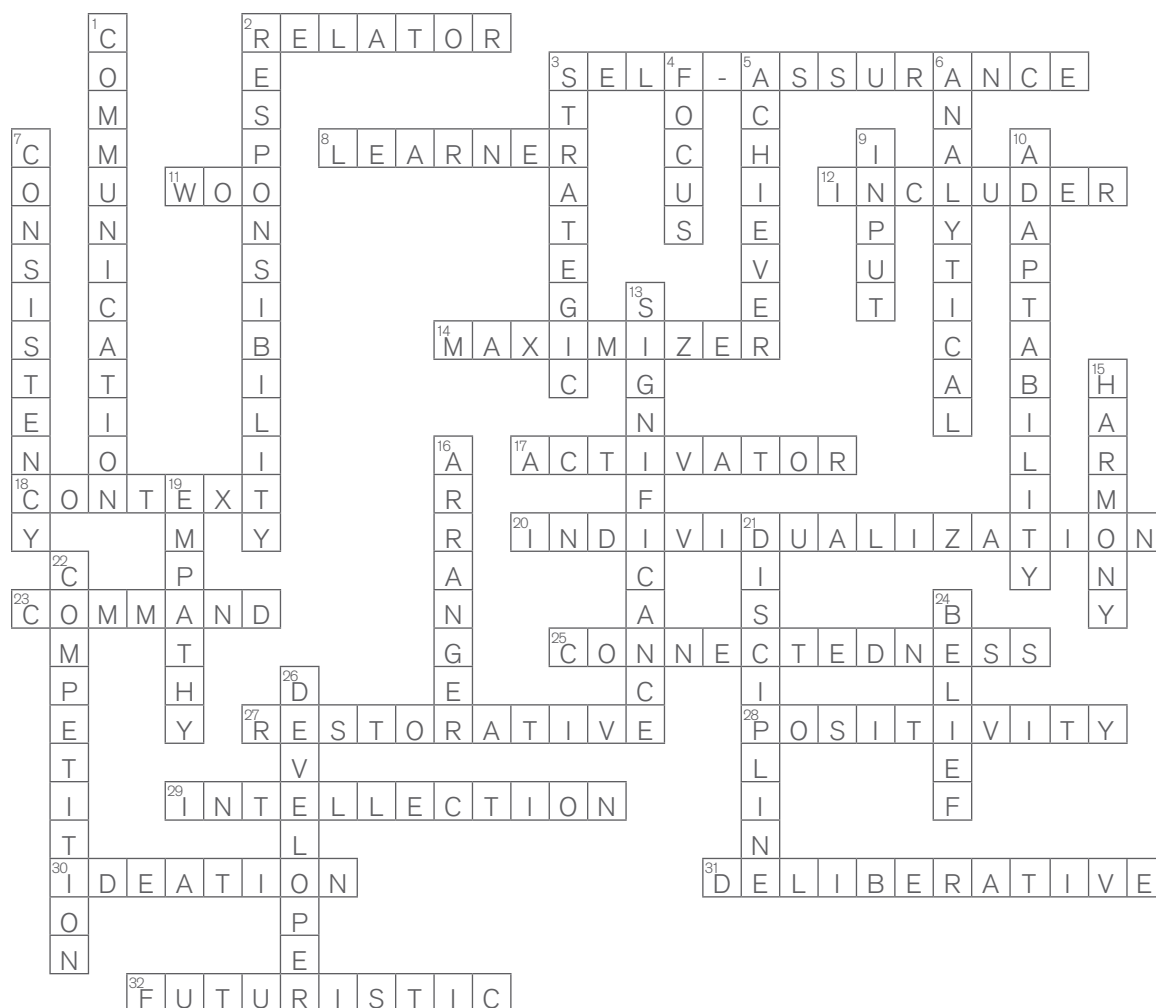
What the talented gardener grew:

“□□□□□□□□ – □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□”

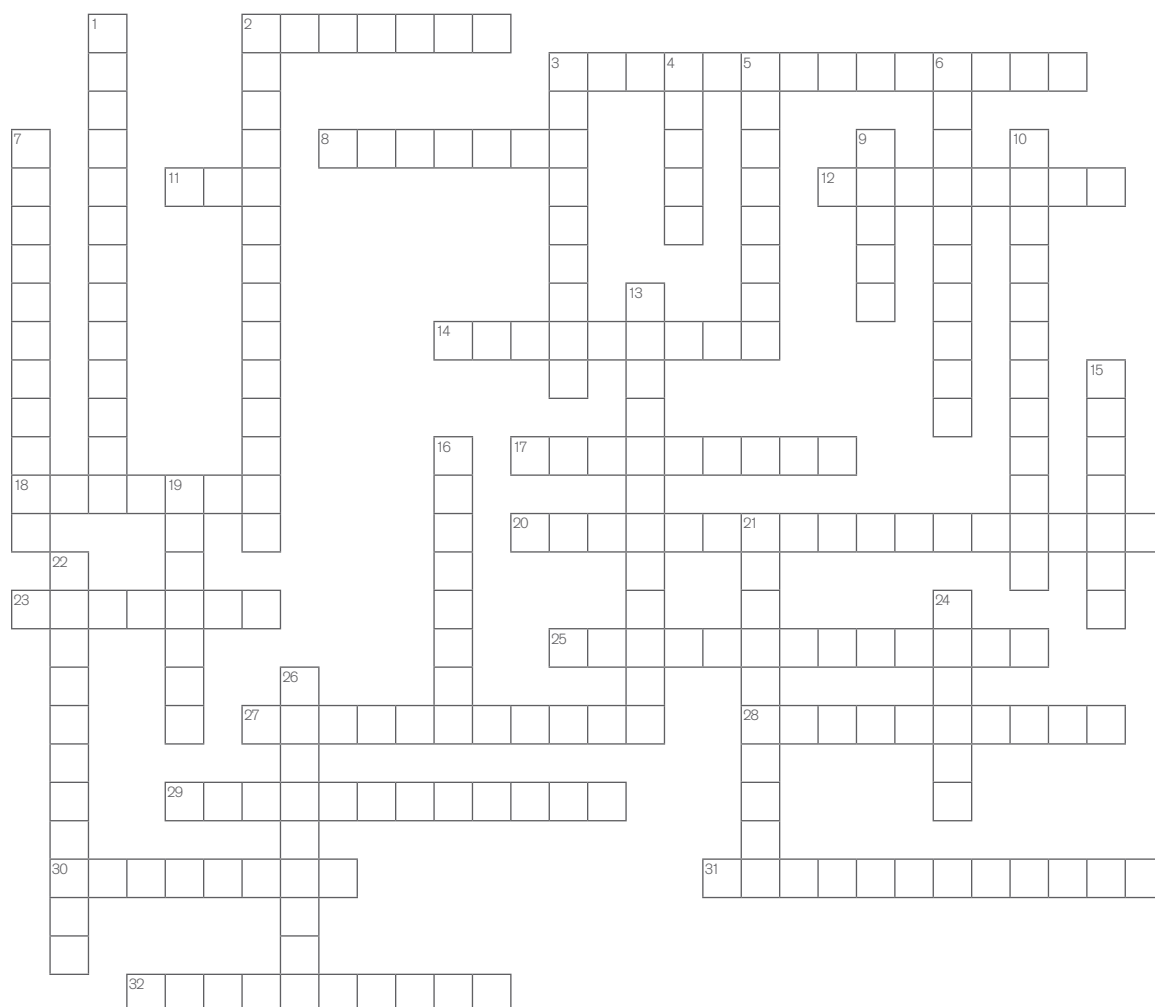
Supplemental Activity 2.L: Theme Jumble II

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.M: Theme Crossword Puzzle

Theme Crossword Puzzle Answer Key:



Theme Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 2 Is often sought out by friends who trust them
- 3 Feels confident and in control of their life
- 8 Having the opportunity to learn new things is important
- 11 Is thrilled about the excitement and challenge of meeting new people
- 12 Works hard to ensure everyone is brought into the team
- 14 Seeing strengths rather than weakness is natural to this person
- 17 Is an ambitious person who likes to start new tasks and get things moving
- 18 Likes to look into background of people of situations

- 20 Keenly observes differences in the people around them
- 23 Can sometimes intimidate others by what they say and how they say it
- 25 Believes there are no coincidences
- 27 Zeroing in on the root of the problem to solve it is exciting
- 28 Is full of zest and life and can infect others with their enthusiasm
- 29 Enjoys spending time pondering and reflecting
- 30 Can think of new ways of doing things
- 31 Is careful when making decisions
- 32 Can be considered a visionary who inspires people

Down

- 1 Can tell a good story and get others to listen
- 2 Is absolute in their adherence to commitments no matter what the obstacle
- 3 Can see possible alternatives and select the best one
- 4 Is intent on accomplishing the task set before them
- 5 Prefers to be busy and working toward accomplishing a goal
- 6 Likes to think about facts and data
- 7 Believes all people should be given the same opportunities
- 9 Enjoys collecting information or other things as resources

- 10 Is fine with adjusting their schedule to demands of the day
- 13 Wants to be seen as credible, professional, and successful
- 15 Tries to work things out before there is conflict
- 16 Has the ability to orchestrate work that needs to get done
- 19 When they say, "I know how you feel," others believe it
- 21 Is a natural planner and enjoys a structured environment
- 22 Is never fully satisfied until they are the top performer
- 24 Makes decisions and acts based on moral values
- 26 Is viewed by others as being concerned and interested in their growth, so others seek them

Supplemental Activity 2.M: Theme Crossword Puzzle

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.N: Theme Matching I

Theme Matching Answer Key:

1. j
2. p
3. d
4. q
5. e
6. c
7. k
8. f
9. b
10. o
11. n
12. g
13. l
14. a
15. h
16. i
17. m

Theme Matching I

Match each of the Signature Themes with the word or phrase that best describes it.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____1. Achiever | a. Potential grower |
| _____2. Activator | b. Number one |
| _____3. Adaptability | c. Core values |
| _____4. Analytical | d. Flexible |
| _____5. Arranger | e. Juggler |
| _____6. Belief | f. Storyteller |
| _____7. Command | g. History |
| _____8. Communication | h. Order and structure |
| _____9. Competition | i. Aware of others' feelings |
| _____10. Connectedness | j. Motivated and driven |
| _____11. Consistency | k. Confrontational |
| _____12. Context | l. Cautious and careful |
| _____13. Deliberative | m. "Stick-to-it-iveness" |
| _____14. Developer | n. Equal treatment |
| _____15. Discipline | o. No coincidences |
| _____16. Empathy | p. "Just do it." |
| _____17. Focus | q. "Prove it!" |

Supplemental Activity 2.N: Theme Matching I

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.O: Theme Matching II

Theme Matching Answer Key:

Answers:

1. q
2. k
3. n
4. c
5. o
6. d
7. l
8. f
9. m
10. h
11. b
12. j
13. e
14. p
15. i
16. g
17. a

Theme Matching II

Match each of the Signature Themes with the word or phrase that best describes it.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____1. Futuristic | a. No one is a stranger |
| _____2. Harmony | b. Genuine and intimate |
| _____3. Ideation | c. “Widen the circle” |
| _____4. Includer | d. “A collector” |
| _____5. Individualization | e. Problem solver |
| _____6. Input | f. Loves the process of learning |
| _____7. Intellection | g. Sorts and decides |
| _____8. Learner | h. Work should be fun |
| _____9. Maximizer | i. Admiration is needed |
| _____10. Positivity | j. Utterly dependable |
| _____11. Relator | k. Common ground |
| _____12. Responsibility | l. Thinker |
| _____13. Restorative | m. Place talent where it can thrive |
| _____14. Self-Assurance | n. Loves ideas |
| _____15. Significance | o. Each person is unique |
| _____16. Strategic | p. Self-confident |
| _____17. Woo | q. Vision |

Supplemental Activity 2.O: Theme Matching II

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 2.P: Strengths Bingo

This activity can be used as an icebreaker or energizer.

Distribute strengths bingo cards. You can use the same card or create a variety of cards with different themes. Instruct students to move throughout the room and find other students who have that theme in their top five, covering a square when they do.

To make the game more challenging, play different versions, including four corners, postage stamp, magic 7, or coverall. Laminate the cards, and you can use them over and over again.

Strengths Bingo

INCLUDER	EMPATHY	ACTIVATOR	FOCUS	WOO
IDEATION	COMMAND	BELIEF	POSITIVITY	LEARNER
SIGNIFICANCE	DELIBERATIVE	MAXIMIZER	INPUT	CONSISTENCY
ARRANGER	STRATEGIC	CONTEXT	RELATOR	FUTURISTIC
DEVELOPER	HARMONY	ACHIEVER	RESTORATIVE	DISCIPLINE

Supplemental Activity 2.P: Strengths Bingo

NOTES

Section 3:

Application (Academics)

After completing this section, students will be able to:

- Define excellence in their academic lives.
- Discuss how their strengths can be applied to achieve academic success.
- Evaluate their general academic goals in light of their talents and strengths, as well as other personal qualities and external considerations.
- Apply theme-specific strategies to achieve academic success.
- Evaluate academic and cocurricular opportunities in light of their talents and strengths.
- Apply knowledge of their talents and strengths to decision making.
- Appreciate the role their talents and strengths play in making them their own best educator and learner.

Facilitation Notes

Applying Your Talents in Academics

The goal of this section is to help students begin to apply the StrengthsQuest approach to their academic pursuits. We are never so strong as we are when we have our successes clearly in mind. Personal excellence should always be at the forefront of your mind when you're creating an education plan. Each and every step in the educational planning process should lead to higher levels of personal achievement.

Integration is a process that takes place even after students move into the next sections of material and beyond.

NOTES

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.1: Envisioning Excellence J

Learning Outcome:

- Define excellence in their academic lives.

⌚ Approximately 15 minutes

Activity Description:

Excellence requires that you have a clear idea about what excellence is, what it looks like, what it sounds like, and what is required to reach it.

There is a linkage between high achievement and clear expectations. High achievement takes place within the framework of clear expectations. To maximize individual performance, students must not only know the desired outcomes, but also have the critical focal points, providing a picture of good and great performance.

Ask students to reflect and then answer the two questions on the Envisioning Excellence Worksheet.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Envisioning Excellence

Excellence in academics is often measured in terms of grades, with an “A” grade representing the highest achievement. First individually, then in small groups, answer the following two questions.

What makes someone an “A” student?

What qualities does “A” work possess?

Activity 3.1: Envisioning Excellence

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.2: Setting Your Academic Course J

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate their general academic goals in light of their talents and strengths, as well as other personal qualities and external considerations.

🕒 Approximately 45-60 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity requires thoughtful reflection.

Ask your students to read each of the questions and then carefully consider and write their responses to each.

In some cases, it may be helpful for students to ask the advice of others, including their academic advisor, as they answer each question.

You can assign each set of questions as one assignment, or break them up into individual sections.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Setting Your Academic Course

This activity requires thoughtful reflection. Carefully read, consider, and write down your responses to each of the following questions. If you are unsure of an answer, write down what you think is true. It may also be helpful to ask the advice of others, including your academic advisor, as you answer each question. [These questions also appear at the end of Chapter VI of your *StrengthsQuest* textbook.]

Self-Assessment of Talents

Which of your Signature Themes describe you best?

Which of your Signature Themes hold the talents you use most frequently?

In which of your Signature Themes are your talents most highly refined?

Which talents do you want to maximize the most in college?

Activity 3.2: Setting Your Academic Course: Part 1

NOTES

Setting Your Academic Course (Continued)

Motivations, Dreams, and Desires About College

What are you hoping will happen while you are in college?

What do you want to be able to do as a result of going to college?

Imagine that you have graduated from college, and you feel great. What would make you feel so great about your experience?

Which of your talents do you believe will be most instrumental in helping you fulfill your dreams and desires for college?

Which of your talents will you plan to develop through classes and extracurricular activities?

What images come to your mind when you think about fully maximizing your talents through strength development?

Activity 3.2: Setting Your Academic Course: Part 2

NOTES

Setting Your Academic Course (Continued)

Self-Assessment of Intellectual Interest and Curiosities

What do you seem to learn with the greatest ease?

What do your teachers compliment you about?

What do you have a burning desire to know and understand?

Vocational, Career, and Graduate School Aspirations

To date, what experiences have been your most fulfilling?

Which careers seem most interesting and attractive to you?

In what career would you be able to best use your greatest talents?

Given your general career interests and vocation, what types of graduate-school training will you need?

Which courses and college opportunities can help you best prepare for your vocation, career, and graduate school?

Activity 3.2: Setting Your Academic Course: Part 3

NOTES

Setting Your Academic Course (Continued)

Time and Energy Demands

What are your family responsibilities, and how much time will they require each week?

How many hours per week must you work to meet your financial responsibilities?

To achieve highly in each of your classes, how much time will be required each week?

Which of your most natural talents can you count on to make your efforts time- and energy-efficient?

Activity 3.2: Setting Your Academic Course: Part 4

NOTES

Setting Your Academic Course (Continued)

Self-Assessment of Academic Abilities

In what areas do you have the greatest academic abilities?

On what types of tests do you score highest?

What has been your favorite type of assignment?

What subjects do you most enjoy studying?

How have your greatest talents helped you succeed in the past?

What academic tasks employ your most powerful talents?

In which academic tasks would you like to discover how to better apply your greatest talents?

Activity 3.2: Setting Your Academic Course: Part 5

NOTES

Setting Your Academic Course (Continued)

Degree Structure and Requirements

What courses must you take to graduate?

Where do you have flexibility in fulfilling your graduation requirements?

What are the graduate-school entrance requirements for the programs you are considering?

What classes will best prepare you to enter the career or graduate schools you are considering?

Activity 3.2: Setting Your Academic Course: Part 6

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.3: Five Clues to Academic Talent J

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate their general academic goals in light of their talents and strengths, as well as other personal qualities and external considerations.

🕒 Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

When students develop a learning or developmental strategy, unearthing their own talents and strengths and those of others is one of the most valuable discoveries. Their Signature Themes provide tremendous clues to their greatest talents and is an excellent foundation to build on as they choose their academic direction.

But there are other clues students should use as well. Everyday life is filled with many other revealing clues. Students should consider their yearnings, instances of rapid learning, satisfaction, ease and timelessness, and glimpses of excellence.

In this activity, students are asked to consider five questions designed to unearth revealing clues.

Ask your students to read each of the questions and then carefully consider and write their responses to each.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Five Clues to Academic Talent

Reflect on your experiences in school up to this point in your life. Then answer the following questions.

To what kind of activities in school are you naturally drawn?

What kind of activities in school do you seem to pick up quickly?

When in school, did the “steps” just come to you automatically?

When in school, have you had moments of subconscious excellence when you thought, “How did I do that?”

What activities in school did you finish and then ask, “When can I do that again?”

Activity 3.3: Five Clues to Academic Talent

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.4: I Do it With Ease

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies to achieve academic success.

⌚ Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

In this activity, students begin to move from reflection and evaluation to application.

Ask students to first identify three academic tasks that they do with ease. And then, identify which of their Signature Themes allow them to complete these tasks and how.

Then, ask students to identify two academic tasks with which they tend to struggle. From the themes they previously listed, ask them to choose one or two that they could apply in this situation to help them complete the task with greater success. Students should describe specifically how they could use the theme in each situation.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

I Do it With Ease

In the space below, identify three academic tasks that you do with ease. Then, identify which themes allow you to complete these tasks and how.

ACADEMIC TASK I DO WITH EASE	SIGNATURE THEME AND HOW

I Tend to Struggle

Now, identify two academic tasks with which you struggle. From the themes you listed above, choose one or two that you could apply in this situation to help achieve the task with greater success. Describe specifically how you could use the theme in each situation.

ACADEMIC TASK WITH WHICH I STRUGGLE	SIGNATURE THEME AND HOW

Activity 3.4: I Do it With Ease

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.5: Academic Action Items J

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies to achieve academic success.

🕒 Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

In this activity, students continue to move from reflection and evaluation to application.

Ask students to read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” (*StrengthsQuest*, Chapter 7) for each of their five Signature Themes. Ask students to pay particular attention to the first two categories in each list: “General Academic Life” and “Study Techniques.”

Then, ask each student to identify one strategy they will commit to, and then have them answer the questions on the Achieving Academic Success Through Strengths Worksheet.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Supplemental Activity 3.A: Strengths in Action

This activity is best done using the StrengthsQuest Web site, although the hard copy checklists in the text could be used as well.

Ask your students to review the action items for applying talents in academics and check off those that they are already doing.

Debrief this activity by asking students why they think there are things they have already done. Discuss the concept of personal empowerment and of becoming your own best educator and learner (discussed in *StrengthsQuest*, Chapter IX, in the text).

Achieving Academic Success Through Strengths

To help you determine how you can best apply your talents to achieve academic success, read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” for each of your five Signature Themes in your *StrengthsQuest* textbook. Specifically, look at the first two categories in each list, “General Academic Life” and “Study Techniques.” Identify one strategy you will commit to, and then answer the following questions.

Which theme did you choose to focus on?

What was the strategy that you chose to act upon?

What specifically did you do to make that strategy a reality?

What was the result of your actions?

In the weeks to come, commit to doing this activity anew each week. You may choose the same theme and a different strategy or, if you prefer, a strategy from a different theme altogether.

Activity 3.5: Academic Action Items

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 3.B: Academic Action Items II ¶

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies to achieve academic success.

🕒 Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity can be used in place of Activities 3.5-3.8. It asks student to look at all the academic action items rather than focusing on the specific sections. You might use this exercise if you have less time to cover this section of material or if it is a less significant learning outcome.

Ask students to read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” (*StrengthsQuest*, Chapter 7) for each of their five Signature Themes.

Then, ask each student to identify one strategy they will commit to, and then have them answer the questions on the Achieving Academic Success Through Strengths Worksheet.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Achieving Academic Success Through Strengths II

To help you determine how you can best apply your talents to achieve academic success, read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” for each of your five Signature Themes in your *StrengthsQuest* textbook. Identify one strategy you will commit to, and then answer the following questions.

Which theme did you choose to focus on?

What was the strategy that you chose to act upon?

What specifically did you do to make that strategy a reality?

What was the result of your actions?

In the weeks to come, commit to doing this activity anew each week. You may choose the same theme and a different strategy or, if you prefer, a strategy from a different theme altogether.

Supplemental Activity 3.B: Academic Action Items II

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 3.C: Talent-Based Studying J

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies to achieve academic success.
- Appreciate the role their talents and strengths play in making them their own best educator and learner.

🕒 Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

In this activity, students continue to move from reflection and evaluation to application.

Walk your students through the exercise as it is laid out on the Talent-Based Studying Worksheet.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Supplemental Activity 3.D: Learning Portfolio

As is reinforced in the text, talents and strengths are just one part of what makes an individual successful. Knowledge, skills, and practice are also important parts of the strengths equation.



Talent (a natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving)

Investment (time spent practicing, developing your skills, and building your knowledge base)



Strength (the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance)

Ask your students to create a learning portfolio, the goal of which is to give them a full picture of themselves. In addition to their Clifton StrengthsFinder results, have students include a personalized action items checklist created from the StrengthsQuest Web site. Require students to take other assessments, including a VARK Learning Preference Inventory, Kolb Learning Style Inventory, Goleman's assessment of Emotional Intelligence, or informal assessment of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. (There is no official assessment associated with Multiple Intelligences.) In addition to the results, students should include academic success strategies specific to each style or type. As well, ask student to write an academic autobiography in which they detail their history as a learner. Ask students to identify past learning experiences, both positive and negative; the people, places, and things that have and will continue to shape them as learners; and their attitudes and beliefs associated with learning. The portfolio could also include copies of their academic transcripts, a student educational plan, academic goals, a statement of values, etc.

Talent-Based Studying

To help you determine how you can best apply your talents to achieve academic success, read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” for each of your five Signature Themes in your *StrengthsQuest* textbook. Specifically, look at the second category: “Study Techniques.” Identify one strategy you can use on a specific assignment that you have due in the next week or two.

Which theme did you choose to focus on?

What was the strategy that you chose to use and on what assignment?

What specifically do you plan to do in order to enact this suggestion?

Before you complete the assignment, talk to your instructor. Show them the plan you have created by answering the questions above. Describe your Signature Theme to them, and ask if they have any additional suggestions or direction to help you successfully complete the assignment.

What did your instructor say? Did he/she provide additional suggestions on how you could apply your talents to successfully complete the assignment?

Now, complete the assignment. When you have completed it and received feedback from your instructor, answer the following questions.

What was the result of having completed this assignment using this strategy?

How would the result have been different had you not used this strategy?

Supplemental Activity 3.C: Talent-Based Studying

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.6: Establishing a New Relationship *J*

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies to achieve academic success.

🕒 Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

Strengths develop only in relation to another human being. Relationship helps us to define who we are and what we can become. Most of us can trace our successes to pivotal relationships.

Ask students to read the “Relationships” section of the “Applying Your Talents in Academics” action items (*StrengthsQuest*, Chapter 7) for each of their five Signature Themes. Students should read through the checklists, and identify one strategy that will enable them to establish and build a new relationship with an individual who can positively contribute to their ability to achieve academic success. This person can be a classmate, teacher, or professional, but should be with someone with whom they currently do not have a close relationship.

Students should then answer the questions on the Establishing a New Relationship Worksheet. Ask your students to read each of the questions, and then have them carefully consider and write their responses to each.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Activity 3.6: Establishing a New Relationship

To help you determine how you can best apply your talents to achieve academic success, read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics.” Specifically examine the “Relationships” section for each of your five Signature Themes in your *StrengthsQuest* textbook. Read through the checklists, and identify one strategy that will enable you to establish and build a new relationship with an individual who can positively contribute to your goal of becoming a successful student. This person can be a classmate, teacher, or professional, but should be with someone with whom you don’t already have a close relationship. Then answer the following questions.

Which theme did you choose to focus on?

What was the strategy that you chose to act upon?

Who did you choose to interact with?

What specifically did you do to go about building a relationship with this person?

What was the result of your actions?

“The fabric of our lives is constructed person by person. As our relationships increase, we benefit geometrically. Our lives become richer, and we expand our strengths through others.”

– Donald O. Clifton, *Soar With Your Strengths*, Dell Publishing, 1992

Activity 3.6: Establishing a New Relationship

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.7: Class Selection

Learning Outcome:

- Apply knowledge of their talents and strengths to decision making.

⌚ Approximately one hour

Activity Description:

Ask students to read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” (*StrengthsQuest*, Chapter 7) for each of their five Signature Themes, specifically looking at the fourth category in each list, “Class Selection.” Keeping these strategies in mind, ask your students to identify 10 possible classes that they might enroll in next semester. These courses can be part of their general education program, classes in their major, or exploratory classes or electives.

Then, ask each student to use the resources that are available to them and investigate these classes. These resources might include the college catalog, information from the academic department, syllabi, and interviews with instructors and students who have taken the class, as well as conversations with their academic advisor. They should pay particular attention to both the content of the class and the instructors who frequently teach the course.

Students can use the Class Selection Worksheet as a tool.

Class Selection Worksheet

CLASS	WHEN IS THE CLASS TYPICALLY OFFERED (E.G., ONE SECTION OR MULTIPLE SECTIONS; DAY OR EVENING)?	HOW DOES THE CLASS FIT INTO YOUR ACADEMIC PLAN (E.G., REQUIRED OR ELECTIVE; GE, MAJOR, EXPLORATORY)?	WHAT CONTENT DOES THE COURSE COVER?	WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS LIKE IN THIS CLASS?	WHAT INSTRUCTOR(S) TYPICALLY TEACHES THE CLASS?	WHAT IS THE TEACHING STYLE OF THE INSTRUCTOR(S)?	HOW DO I ANTICIPATE BEING ABLE TO USE MY SIGNATURE THEMES TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS?

Activity 3.7: Class Selection

Facilitation Notes: Activity 3.8: Join the Club //

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate academic and cocurricular opportunities in light of their talents and strengths.

🕒 Approximately one hour

Activity Description:

Ask students to read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” (*StrengthsQuest*, Chapter 7) for each of their five Signature Themes, specifically looking at the fifth category in each list, “Extracurricular Activities.”

Then, ask each student to identify one strategy they would like to use to find an extracurricular activity in which to become involved.

Encourage your students to take the time to learn about the club, organization, and activity from those who are already involved.

Ask your students to read each of the questions and then carefully consider and write their responses to each.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Join the Club

Read over the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Academics” for each of your five Signature Themes, specifically looking at the fifth category in each list, “Extracurricular Activities.” Reading through the checklists, identify one strategy you would like to employ to find an extracurricular activity in which to become involved.

Take the time to learn about the club, organization, and activity from those who are already involved. Then answer the following questions:

Which theme did you choose to focus on?

What was the strategy that you chose to act upon?

What club, organization, or other extracurricular activity did you look into?

What did you find out about this activity? What do they do?

How could you use your talents and strengths as a part of this activity?

Did you decide to join this club, organization, or activity? Why or why not?

Activity 3.8: Join the Club

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 3.E: Theme Jumble III

Theme Jumble Answer Key:

FOCUS

RESPONSIBILITY

COMMUNICATION

ARRANGER

HARMONY

ACHIEVER

“Bachelor of Science”

Theme Jumble III

Unscramble the jumbled words to create the names of six Signature Themes.

SUCOF

○	○			○
---	---	--	--	---

YPSILENTBIROSI

	○							○	○		○			
--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	---	--	---	--	--	--

CANOMICNOUMIT

○					○							
---	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

RARGAREN

○							○
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	---

ANYROHM

○				○		
---	--	--	--	---	--	--

VAHREECI

	○			○		○	
--	---	--	--	---	--	---	--

Now, unscramble the letters in the circle to answer the riddle.

The student who applied his talents to academics earned a B.S., a...

“

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

” degree.

Supplemental Activity 3.E: Theme Jumble III

NOTES

Section 4:

Application (Career)

After completing this section, students will be able to:

- Describe the concept of person-environment fit/calling as it pertains to career planning.
- Evaluate their career goals in light of their talents and strengths, as well as other personal qualities and external considerations.
- Apply theme-specific strategies as a part of the career exploration process.

Facilitation Notes

Applying Your Talents in Career Exploration and Development

The goal of this section is to help students begin to apply the StrengthsQuest approach to their exploration of careers. Our studies of top achievers in most careers and professions indicate that they “invent” ways to apply their greatest talents and strengths as they work. If they can’t, they move on until they find a career in which they can. Unfortunately, most people don’t tap into their greatest talents and strengths and then apply them to their career. As Oliver Wendell Holmes observed, “Most people go to their graves with their music still inside them.”

The very best have an edge — a big edge. They have discovered the power of following their unique natures. They recognize the tremendous potential of building upon their greatest talents — the ways in which they most naturally think, feel, and behave. Students should consider their natural talents and strengths when exploring their career options and identify potential areas of “best fit.”

NOTES

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.1: One Key Question

Learning Outcome:

- Describe the concept of person-environment fit/calling as it pertains to career planning.

⌚ Approximately 25 minutes

Activity Description:

A strengths-based approach to career planning and development starts with self-knowledge and awareness. This means understanding what we do best and what we want most in the place where we work.

Part One: What I Do Best

Ask students to go through the list of “What I do best” items on the worksheet. Ask them to identify the five statements that would best describe the tasks they would like to spend most of their time doing in a job or a career.

Tip

You may want to suggest that students start by selecting 10, and then narrow their choice to five. To expand on this activity, you may want to facilitate a discussion about how students narrowed their choices from 10 to five.

Part Two: What I Want Most

When developing a career plan, it is not only important to consider talent alignment to role and tasks, but it is also important for students to consider how their natural talents and strengths align to the culture or an organization or manager. Important considerations might include questions such as:

- How do they measure success?
- How do they attempt to solve problems?
- What are their business strategies?
- What are their people strategies?
- How do employees gain executive sponsorship?
- Do the answers to these questions align well with your natural talents?

This activity is continued ...

One Key Question

Part One: What I Do Best

Read through the following list of “What I Do Best” tasks or activities, and identify five statements that would best describe the tasks or activities you would like to spend most of your time doing in a job or career.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ volunteer for causes I believe in | ☐ inspire people about what could be |
| ☐ collect and archive all kinds of information | ☐ examine the unique qualities of each person |
| ☐ talk with those going through difficult situations | ☐ be in the “public eye” |
| ☐ establish routines and processes | ☐ feel connected with all of life |
| ☐ think and study | ☐ compare my performance to others |
| ☐ create order and safety in my life | ☐ act according to my beliefs |
| ☐ control my life | ☐ include people who feel left out |
| ☐ check people out carefully before revealing confidential information | ☐ let others know, without words, that I know how they feel |
| ☐ associate with people who appreciate my strengths | ☐ coach |
| ☐ work hard | ☐ discuss history and its lessons |
| ☐ do things right | ☐ help others explain their thoughts |
| ☐ live for the present | ☐ meet new people |
| ☐ help people solve their problems | ☐ use history to explain my position |
| ☐ be busy all the time | ☐ treat all people the same |
| ☐ find a new way to do things | ☐ concentrate until the job gets done |
| ☐ learn as much as I can about the people I meet | ☐ do what is expected of me each day |
| ☐ follow up on the details | ☐ discover patterns of data |
| ☐ take on challenges | ☐ be persuasive |
| ☐ follow through on my commitments | ☐ keep track of several things at one time |
| ☐ participate in intellectual and philosophical discussions | ☐ figure out how different people can work together productively |
| ☐ give praise | ☐ plan new programs |
| ☐ have clear rules that everyone follows | ☐ discover new information |
| ☐ prove myself successful | ☐ create future pictures and plans |
| ☐ overcome obstacles | ☐ take on significant goals and challenges |
| ☐ win the approval of others | ☐ search for the reasons and causes |
| ☐ strive to know more | ☐ tell stories |
| ☐ envision the things I want and desire | ☐ push things to action |
| ☐ selectively distribute praise and recognition | ☐ accept people as they are |
| ☐ organize a big event or celebration | ☐ teach people |
| ☐ join brainstorming sessions | ☐ find experts to help |
| ☐ get people committed | ☐ stay in contact with my friends |
| ☐ help others see their strengths | ☐ choose the best alternatives |
| ☐ make work fun | ☐ build bridges between people of different cultures or experience |

Activity 4.1: One Key Question: Part 1

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.1: One Key Question (Continued)

Ask your students to read through the list of workplace attributes, and identify five statements that best describe the attributes that they would like to find in a workplace. Tell students that they can add additional attributes to the list if there are additional considerations that may be important to them when considering a place of employment.

Then, ask your students to rank their choices in order of importance.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Gallup's research has identified 12 items that measure employee engagement and link powerfully to relevant business outcomes, including retention, productivity, profitability, customer engagement, shrinkage, absenteeism, and safety. These items — the Q¹² — measure dimensions that leaders, managers, and employees can influence.

Gallup set out to identify factors that were common to higher-performing units or workgroups. To identify these common factors, Gallup posed thousands of different questions to more than 1 million people.

The third element, “At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day,” emerged from the ability of a straightforward statement to predict the performance of a given worker and entire teams: With a front-row seat on their own thoughts and feelings, workers have no trouble assessing this element in their own work lives. But the simplicity of the statement belies the complexity within it. The reasons why this element is so powerful go to the heart of the most recent discoveries about human nature and touch on debates about individuality that stretch back for centuries.

What makes someone succeed where others fail? Is it something innate, something she learned, or is she just trying harder? Can excellence in a certain role be learned? How fast and how much can people change? Can a job candidate be molded to fit the needs of the position, or is what you see during that first interview what you get?

To get the most from her job or career, each employee should mold his job around the way he works most naturally, maximizing the frequency of optimal experiences in which he loses himself in the work, is internally motivated, and finds himself naturally gifted. Acknowledging one's greatest natural talents and weaknesses does not mean accepting a narrow set of career possibilities. Rather, it means each employee will succeed in a relatively unique way, applying his own style to the accomplishment. What is important is identifying organizations where those opportunities exist.

One Key Question (Continued)

Part Two: What I Want Most

Now, read through the following list of “What I Want Most in the Place I Work” needs or attributes, and identify five statements that would best describe the attributes that you would like to find in the place you work. Feel free to add additional attributes that may be important to you when considering a place of employment.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ step-by-step training at work | ☐ family-friendly environment |
| ☐ work either on virtual teams or with few people | ☐ have strong work relationships |
| ☐ have a supervisor or manager who cares about me | ☐ working in a company with a large number of people I deal with each day |
| ☐ recognized for work I do well | ☐ clear career path within the organization |
| ☐ have a set schedule | ☐ there is someone always guiding my work |
| ☐ flexible environment that allows me some freedom | ☐ have the opportunity to always be working with people |
| ☐ be my own boss | ☐ work alone most of the time |
| ☐ my opinion counts | ☐ on-call position |
| ☐ have to figure out things on my own | ☐ have a place where I believe in the mission of the company |
| ☐ | ☐ |
| ☐ | ☐ |
| ☐ | ☐ |
| ☐ | ☐ |

Now, rank your choices in order of importance, starting with the most important and continuing to the least important.

What I Do Best

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What I Want Most in a Place I Work

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Activity 4.1: One Key Question: Part 2

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.2: Values Clarification

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate the relationship between talent themes and personal values.

⌚ Approximately 25 minutes

Activity Description:

This exercise provides a basis to have a discussion regarding how values inform all behavior, including our careers. Students will most certainly have different values and in differing order. This particular exercise asks students to evaluate values through the lens of their themes. However, students will also bring values to this discussion from their past experience, including culture and upbringing.

Define the notion of values. *A value is an abstract judgment of what a person considers good, right, or worthwhile. Understanding what you value is an important step in self exploration.*

Ask your student to identify one of their Signature Themes. Then, have them read through the list of values and place a check mark next to those that they value as a result of having that particular talent theme. Ask the students to do this for each of their Signature Themes.

Debrief this activity by facilitating a discussion about the relationship between values and behavior. During this discussion, it will be valuable to discuss how the values of others affect our decision making. Some students may be following the advice of other significant others, including family and friends. This is also an opportunity to talk about the cost associated with pursuing certain careers and potentially conflicting values.

Values Clarification

A value is an abstract judgment of what a person considers good, right, or worthwhile. Understanding what you value is an important step in self exploration. Below, identify one of your Signature Themes. Then, read through the list of values, and place a check mark next to those that you feel you value as a result of having that theme. Repeat the exercise for each of your other four Signature Themes.

Theme:

_____ Accomplishment	_____ Enjoyment	_____ Organization
_____ Accuracy	_____ Equality	_____ Peace
_____ Adventure	_____ Excellence	_____ Popularity
_____ Ambition	_____ Fairness	_____ Power
_____ Appreciation	_____ Family	_____ Productivity
_____ Autonomy	_____ Freedom	_____ Recognition
_____ Beauty	_____ Friendship	_____ Risk Taking
_____ Companionship	_____ Forgiveness	_____ Romance
_____ Comfort	_____ Growth	_____ Security
_____ Commitment	_____ Happiness	_____ Self Respect
_____ Competence	_____ Hard Work	_____ Service
_____ Control	_____ Health	_____ Spirituality
_____ Courage	_____ Honesty	_____ Success
_____ Creativity	_____ Independence	_____ Tolerance
_____ Dignity	_____ Integrity	_____ Tradition
_____ Directness	_____ Justice	_____ Trust
_____ Education	_____ Leadership	_____ Wealth
_____ Empowerment	_____ Open Mindedness	_____ Wisdom

Activity 4.2: Values Clarification

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.3: Holland Codes Analysis *J*

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate their career goals in light of Holland Code type indicators.

⌚ Variable

Activity Description:

Ask your students to take the Self-Directed Search, Strong Interest Inventory, or another assessment that utilizes the Holland Code type indicators. The assessment is likely available at your college's career center. Alternatively, you can locate instruments on the Internet, which while not as reliable as the Self-Directed Search, can give you some indication as to which Holland Codes best represent you. One such instrument is available at www.careerpath.com.

After identifying their Holland codes, ask students to answer the activity questions.

Holland Codes Analysis

Which two Holland Codes did you score highest with?

What are some career fields or jobs associated with each of these Holland Codes that you may be interested in?

Can you exclude any career fields or jobs as a result of taking this assessment?

What relationship do you see between your Signature Themes and your Holland Codes?

Activity 4.3: Holland Codes Analysis

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.4: Career Action Items J

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies to career planning.

🕒 Approximately 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

Ask students to read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Careers” (*StrengthsQuest*, Chapter 10) for each of their five Signature Themes.

Then, ask each student to identify one strategy they will commit to, and then have them answer the questions on the Career Action Items worksheet.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Supplemental Activity 4.A: Career Center Visit

Ask your students to visit your campus’ career center. During their visit, assign them tasks to complete. These tasks might include taking a career inventory assessment offered in the center, locating career exploration materials, or speaking with a career counselor. Instruct the students to share their strategy or strategies from the exercises with the counselor and seek direction on how the career center can help make the strategy a reality. Upon returning to class, have students, either in writing or orally, report back on what they discovered during their visit to the career center.

Career Action Items

Read the action items for “Applying Your Talents in Careers” for each of your five Signature Themes. Then, identify one strategy you will commit to, and then answer the following questions.

Which theme did you choose to focus on?

What was the strategy that you chose to act upon?

List three specific steps you can take to implement this strategy.

Now take the time to implement your strategy, then answer the last question.

What did you learn about yourself and/or your areas of interest that you didn’t know before completing this activity?

In the weeks to come, commit to doing this activity again. You may choose the same theme and a different strategy or, if you prefer, a strategy from a different theme altogether.

Activity 4.4: Career Action Items

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.5: Themes in Professions

Learning Outcome:

- Relate talent themes to specific occupations.

⌚ Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

Have students choose three to five occupations from the following list (or add other occupations to the list; they may want to specify occupations in their particular field of study).

In small groups, ask students to discuss each of the professions. Ask them to consider what combination of themes they think would be most beneficial to an individual preparing for work in that field?

Pharmacist	Firefighter	Stockbroker
Critical care nurse	Disc jockey	Hair stylist
Medical equipment sales	Administrative assistant	Retail sales manager
Real estate agent	Air traffic controller	Physical therapist
Journalist	Kindergarten teacher	Small business entrepreneur
Computer programmer	Court reporter	Auto mechanic
Hotel front desk clerk	Chef	Concert promoter
Graphic designer	Personal trainer	Landscape architect
Accountant	Youth minister	Orchestra conductor
Construction worker	Telephone customer service representative	Football coach

Debrief this activity by asking each group to share their responses. To facilitate discussion, you may want to ask the following questions: Were the themes identified the same or different than those of other groups? What might account for the similarities and differences? Do you think there are optimal themes for each occupation? Why or why not?

Supplemental Activity 4.B: Chapter XI Activities

Chapter XI in the *StrengthsQuest* text includes activities that can be completed in class or assigned as homework for students. Some of these exercises would be appropriate for journalizing. These include:

- Sentence-completion exercises on pages 281-282.
- Identify and establish a relationship with a mentor. Have students report on who they would like to have mentor them and what steps they have taken to establish a relationship with that person.
- Values exercise on pages 282-283. This exercise can be used as a followup to Activity 4.2. This exercise asks students to consider their values when choosing a career. Any career choice that causes them to miss their “target” of important values will produce “value conflicts.” This should be a consideration or a part of their decision rule when selecting a career.
- Personifying two themes exercise on pages 283-285.
- Examining greatest success questions on page 286. This exercise is very similar to Supplemental Activity 4.D.

Themes in Professions

Occupation 1

Occupation 2

Occupation 3

Occupation 4

Occupation 5

Activity 4.5: Themes in Professions

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 4.C: Job Analysis

Learning Outcome:

- Relate talent themes to specific occupations.

⌚ Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

Helping students analyze opportunities based upon what they do best is a vital part of helping students utilize their talents. The purpose of this activity is to put some real positions in front of them to see how their talents and strengths may fit that role.

Collect two or three job descriptions, either from your own organization or a job board like monster.com. The descriptions should be fairly detailed in order to show the outcomes and the responsibilities of the position.

Then, ask your students to read through the descriptions one position at a time. For each of the outcomes or responsibilities listed for the job, ask them to look at their themes and write beside each of them the theme or themes that would help them achieve the success or outcome described for each statement. Make it clear that not all of the outcomes or responsibilities may fit them, so there will be statements for which they do not assign a theme.

After completing this activity, have students either individually or in a small group, answer the questions on the Job Analysis worksheet.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Job Analysis

Would most of my strengths be utilized in this role?

Are there some strengths that wouldn't get much use if I took a role like this? What are they, and how would that make me feel?

Are there some things in this position that would be difficult for me to do?

How well would this position fit me?

What parts of the role do not fit?

How would I feel in this type of a role?

Supplemental Activity 4.C: Job Analysis

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 4.D: Career Interview

Learning Outcome:

- Evaluate their career goals in light of their talents and strengths, as well as other personal qualities and external considerations.

🕒 Variable

Activity Description:

Ask your students to identify a job or career that they have an interest in.

Assign them the task of interviewing an individual currently working in the field by conducting a 20-minute career interview. Walk your students through the structure and content of the interview and explain its purpose: The goal of the interview is to learn more about their role and how their talents and strengths allow them to succeed in the position.

After completing the interview, ask your students to compare the information they gathered from the interview to their responses in Activity 4.1, looking for similarities and differences.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses and insights with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Career Interview

Identify a job or career you have an interest in. Contact an individual currently working in the field, and request an appointment for the purpose of a 20-minute interview. The goal of the interview is to learn more about their role and how their talents and strengths allow them to succeed in the position.

What is your name and position?

Tell me about this position.

What are the five most important aspects of your role?

What do you enjoy most about your job?

What do you enjoy the least?

What is the environment like in which you work?

Who do you partner with in your role?

What talents do they have?

How does this partnership help you be more effective?

Supplemental Activity 4.D: Career Interview, page 1 of 2

NOTES

Career Interview (Continued)

Look at the following list of “What I Do Best.” Which 10 statements best describe what you spend most of your time doing?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ volunteer for causes I believe in | ☐ inspire people about what could be |
| ☐ collect and archive all kinds of information | ☐ examine the unique qualities of each person |
| ☐ talk with those going through difficult situations | ☐ be in the “public eye” |
| ☐ establish routines and processes | ☐ feel connected with all of life |
| ☐ think and study | ☐ compare my performance to others |
| ☐ create order and safety in my life | ☐ act according to my beliefs |
| ☐ control my life | ☐ include people who feel left out |
| ☐ check people out carefully before revealing confidential information | ☐ let others know, without words, that I know how they feel |
| ☐ associate with people who appreciate my strengths | ☐ coach |
| ☐ work hard | ☐ discuss history and its lessons |
| ☐ do things right | ☐ help others explain their thoughts |
| ☐ live for the present | ☐ meet new people |
| ☐ help people solve their problems | ☐ use history to explain my position |
| ☐ be busy all the time | ☐ treat all people the same |
| ☐ find a new way to do things | ☐ concentrate until the job gets done |
| ☐ learn as much as I can about the people I meet | ☐ do what is expected of me each day |
| ☐ follow up on the details | ☐ discover patterns of data |
| ☐ take on challenges | ☐ be persuasive |
| ☐ follow through on my commitments | ☐ keep track of several things at one time |
| ☐ participate in intellectual and philosophical discussions | ☐ figure out how different people can work together productively |
| ☐ give praise | ☐ plan new programs |
| ☐ have clear rules that everyone follows | ☐ discover new information |
| ☐ prove myself successful | ☐ create future pictures and plans |
| ☐ overcome obstacles | ☐ take on significant goals and challenges |
| ☐ win the approval of others | ☐ search for the reasons and causes |
| ☐ strive to know more | ☐ tell stories |
| ☐ envision the things I want and desire | ☐ push things to action |
| ☐ selectively distribute praise and recognition | ☐ accept people as they are |
| ☐ organize a big event or celebration | ☐ teach people |
| ☐ join brainstorming sessions | ☐ find experts to help |
| ☐ get people committed | ☐ stay in contact with my friends |
| ☐ help others see their strengths | ☐ choose the best alternatives |
| ☐ make work fun | ☐ build bridges between people of different cultures or experience |

If you knew someone was coming into your role, what talents would they need to have in order to be effective?

Supplemental Activity 4.D: Career Interview, page 2 of 2

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.6: Interviewing From a Strengths Perspective J

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies as a part of the career-exploration process.

🕒 Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

In this activity students, prepare to take job interviews from a strengths-based perspective. Remember, we are never so strong as we are when we have our strengths and successes clearly in mind.

Ask your students to identify their Signature Themes, and then answer the questions keeping these themes in mind.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

After your students have completed this exercise, have them role play with one another. One student should ask the questions and the other student answer, and then they should switch. Have them repeat their answers numerous times (even immediately) so as to rehearse and improve on their responses.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses and insights with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Supplemental Activity 4.E: Meaningful Roles

Instruct your students to list three of the most meaningful and important jobs, leadership roles, or volunteer positions they have held. For each, have them identify five responsibilities or outcomes they achieved in those roles. Then, for each outcome, ask them to write the Signature Theme or Themes that they utilized to help them be successful in achieving the outcome.

Break students into small groups. Then, ask the students to first discuss their findings. You may want to provide your own example so they can understand how their strengths can relate to their own successes. Then, ask each student to take one of their outcomes and identify a specific example of how they achieved that success, using each of the themes they listed.

This activity, like Activity 4.6, will help students prepare for interview situations by providing them the opportunity to create answers to frequently asked interview questions.

Interviewing From a Strengths Perspective

A job interview can be a very stressful experience. However, by taking the opportunity to develop and rehearse your responses to frequently asked interview questions, you can eliminate much of that stress and perform more successfully in an interview. First, list your five themes. Then consider each of the following frequently asked interview questions. As you answer each question, compose a response to each question, using your talents and strengths as a basis for your answers.

What are your Signature Themes?

Keeping in mind these themes, how would you respond to the following questions?

Tell me about yourself.

What strengths do you bring to us?

What is your greatest weakness and why?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Activity 4.6: Interviewing From a Strengths Perspective

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.7: Strengths-Based Cover Letter

Learning Outcome:

- Apply theme-specific strategies as a part of the career-exploration process.

⌚ Variable

Activity Description:

When it comes to applying for a job, many students first think of creating a resume. However, an often-overlooked part of applying for any job is constructing a well-written cover letter. Whereas a resume is intended to highlight an individual's education, experience, skills, and strengths, a cover letter should connect those qualities to the particular position in which they are applying.

Ask students to investigate and identify the components of an effective cover letter.

Then, ask your students to compose a cover letter to a potential employer that demonstrates why they are qualified for the position. Instruct students not to make up details regarding their experience, rather, ask them to focus on their talents and strengths. They should make themselves look like an attractive candidate for the position, based upon their natural talents and acquired strengths.

Note: It is beneficial to provide students with instructions regarding cover letters and sample cover letters as they work on completing this assignment.

Strengths-Based Cover Letter

An often overlooked part of applying for any job is constructing a well-written cover letter. Whereas a resume is intended to highlight your education, experience, skills, and strengths, a cover letter should connect those qualities to the particular position you are applying for.

Begin this activity by searching the Internet for information regarding components of and suggestions for writing an effective cover letter.

Now, choose an occupation that you have an interest in and research the requirements of the position. Identify the qualities, skills, and experience that are required of someone in this field. Visit your campus' career center or library in your search. You may also want to consult the Internet or find job announcements for similar positions in the newspaper or on employment Web sites.

Once you have a clear idea of what the position requires, imagine that you are applying for a position in this field. Write a cover letter to a potential employer that demonstrates why you are qualified for the position. Do not make up details regarding your experience. Instead, focus on your talents and strengths. How do they, coupled with the knowledge and skills you already possess, make you an attractive candidate for this position?

Activity 4.7: Strengths-Based Cover Letter

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 4.F: Theme Jumble IV

Theme Jumble Answer Key:

INPUT

FUTURISTIC

ARRANGER

EMPATHY

“Right Fit”

Theme Jumble IV

Unscramble the four jumbled words to create the names of four talent themes.

PITUN

○				○
---	--	--	--	---

TRUISTFUCI

○								○	
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--

AGRRRNAE

	○				○		
--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--

MAPHEYT

				○	○	
--	--	--	--	---	---	--

Now, unscramble the letters in the circles to answer the riddle.

When looking for a new job, the tailor was looking for the “□□□□□ □□□.”

Supplemental Activity 4.F: Theme Jumble IV

NOTES

Section 5:

Application (Relationships)

After completing this section, students will be able to:

- Build relationships with others mindful of their talents and strengths and the talents and strengths of others.
- Communicate more effectively with others in light of their own talents and the talents of others.
- Work effectively by partnering with others with complementary themes of talent.
- Manage conflict effectively by employing knowledge of their talents and strengths and the talents and strengths of others.

Facilitation Notes

Applying Your Talents in Your Relationships

When you ask people what makes life meaningful, most people mention satisfying relationships before anything else. The quality of our lives is directly related to quality of our relationships. Relationships help us to define who we are and what we might become. The famous English author Charles Lamb told of a quick interchange that took place between him and a friend while walking down a street in his hometown:

“I don’t like that man.”

“You don’t even know that man,” Lamb replied.

“That’s why I don’t like that man.”

The goal of this section is to help students begin to apply the StrengthsQuest approach to their relationships with others.

One of the things we hear from students again and again is that the discovery and application of their natural talents and strengths positively affect their relationships with others. Students tell us that as a result of focusing on their talents, they see themselves and others differently. Behaviors that used to annoy and impede relationship growth are now seen from a different perspective and recognized as talents and potential areas of strength.

NOTES

Facilitation Notes: Activity 5.1: Apply Your Talents to Become a Better Listener *J*

Learning Outcome:

- Describe the concept of person-environment fit/calling as it pertains to career planning.

⌚ Approximately 20 minutes

Activity Description:

Part 1: Connect

In class, have students go back and discuss the results of Activity 3.5 in which they were asked to connect with a new individual in the context of their academic lives. Ask them to compare their experience with what the authors talk about on pages 81-82 in the text.

Part 2: Apply Your Talents to Become a Better Listener

In one of Shakespeare's most famous plays, *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony calls on his fellow Romans to "lend me your ears." With these four words, Mark Antony called for the crowd to switch gears, not only to hear his remarks but to listen carefully to his words. The acts of hearing and listening are not the same thing. Hearing is an automatic reaction of the senses and nervous system. Listening is a voluntary activity that involves the reception and the interpretation of sound. Listening decodes sound into meaning.

Listening can be divided into two main categories: passive and active. Passive listening is little more than hearing. It occurs when the Receiver has little motivation to listen carefully. Active listening involves listening with a purpose. It may be to gain information, obtain directions, solve problems, share interest, seek information on how another person feels, show support, or any number of different reasons. It requires that the listener attends to the words and feelings of the Sender for understanding.

According to the International Listening Association, listening is "the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages." With this definition in mind, ask your students to complete the chart, listing their five Signature Themes and then describing how each theme allows them to be an effective listener.

There are a number of listening exercises available on the Web. Consider having students complete such an exercise before and/or after this activity so that they can experience the benefit of listening through their strengths.

Alternatively, you can ask students to use the journaling function of the StrengthsQuest Web site to complete this activity. Click *Journal* from the homepage, and follow the directions to add, sort, print, or make an entry.

Apply Your Talents to Become a Better Listener

According to the International Listening Association, listening is “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages.” With this definition in mind, complete the chart below. List your five Signature Themes, and then describe how each theme allows you to be an effective listener. An example is provided for you.

THEME	HOW THIS THEME ENABLES ME TO LISTEN
<i>Example:</i> Focus	Focus allows me to tune out distractions and focus intently on the speaker and receive their message completely.

Activity 5.1: Apply Your Talents to Become a Better Listener

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 5.A: Verify Your Signature Themes, Revisited

Learning Outcome:

- Discuss themes of talent with significant others.

⌚ Approximately 30 minutes

Activity Description:

One of the effective communication strategies described in Chapter IV is self disclosure. This is an excellent opportunity to ask students to revisit Activity 1.7. Ask students to again share their Signature Themes Report with someone close to them (e.g., a parent, sibling, spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, or friend) who they have not previously talked to about their strengths. As before, tell students to ask the other person to read through the report, and then ask them the provided questions.

Upon returning to class, you can ask them to turn in their responses and/or facilitate a discussion regarding their reactions to this activity. Consider using the following questions to facilitate discussion:

- How did it feel to ask others about your talents?
- Did some people see your themes differently than you did? How so?
- Were you surprised by anything that the other person said?
- What did you learn as a result of completing this exercise?

Verify Your Signature Themes

Share your Signature Themes Report with someone close to you (e.g., a parent, sibling, spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, or friend). Ask them to read through the report, and then ask them the following questions. Record his/her answers.

Which parts of the report really describe me?

What surprises you?

Which of the five themes have you noticed in me the most?

Give me an example of when and how you've seen this theme or themes in me?

Things to Reflect Upon

How did it feel to ask others about your talents?

Did some people see your themes differently than you did? How so?

Were you surprised by anything that the other person said?

Describe one thing you learned as a result of completing this exercise.

Supplemental Activity 5.A: Verify Your Signature Themes, Revisited

Facilitation Notes: Activity 5.2: Recognizing the Talents of Others

Learning Outcome:

- Build relationships with others mindful of their talents and strengths and the talents and strengths of others.
- Communicate more effectively with others in light of their own talents and the talents of others.

 Variable

Activity Description:

Relationships help us to define who we are and what we can become. Most of us can trace our successes to one or more of our relationships.

There is a power in the awareness of another person and his/her awareness of that awareness. In this activity, students are asked to sharpen their eyes to identify the dominant talents of others, and then share their talent observations with them.

First, ask your students to identify five people whose relationship with them has been a significant part of their success as a college student. Then, ask them to identify their dominant themes of talent, specifically those talents that have helped them to succeed.

It may be helpful for students to review the descriptions of each of the 35 Themes of Talent.

Upon completing this activity, task your students to hold a brief one-on-one time session with each person that they selected. During this session, share your observations of their talents with them. It is important for the students to share what they have observed and why their talents have been meaningful to them.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their experiences with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Recognizing the Talents of Others

Relationships help us to define who we are and what we can become. Most of us can trace our successes to one or more of our relationships. Below, identify five people whose relationship with you has been a significant part of your success as a college student. Then, try to identify their dominant themes of talent. To do this, it may be helpful to review the descriptions of each of the 34 Themes of Talent.

NAME	TALENT THEMES

Upon completing this activity, arrange some one-on-one time with each person. Share your observations of their talents with them. To do this, tell them what you have observed and why their talents are meaningful to you.

Activity 5.2: Recognizing the Talents of Others

Facilitation Notes: Activity 5.3: Complementary Partner

Learning Outcome:

- Work effectively by partnering with others with complementary themes of talent.

⌚ 20 minutes

Activity Description:

Partnerships are forming all around us every day. They are formed for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons include:

1. To “make up” for a lesser talent. For instance, if a person has a lesser pattern in the Strategic theme, he or she may want to partner with someone with intense talent in this area when it comes time to create a strategy for achieving a specific objective on a short timeline. In this way, one person leverages the talents of another to accomplish the objective.
2. To “take over” where one person leaves off. For instance, in a car dealership, one person might help you decide which car to buy, and another person will write up the purchase agreement. Both people contribute something unique and important to the purchase of your car.
3. To “enhance” what one person already possesses. For example, a person high in Focus might partner with someone high in Achiever when it is crunch time on a specific project. In doing so, both people bring the best of who they are and the results can be extraordinary.

In short, one of the main reasons we form partnerships is to achieve something greater together that we could not achieve apart.

Ask your students if they have ever thought about why people seek them out to form a complementary partnership? Ask them: With whom are you a partner? What do you contribute? What makes the partnership valuable to you and to each other?

Walk your students through the instructions. Debrief this activity by asking students to share their examples with the class.

Be Creative and Expand This Activity.

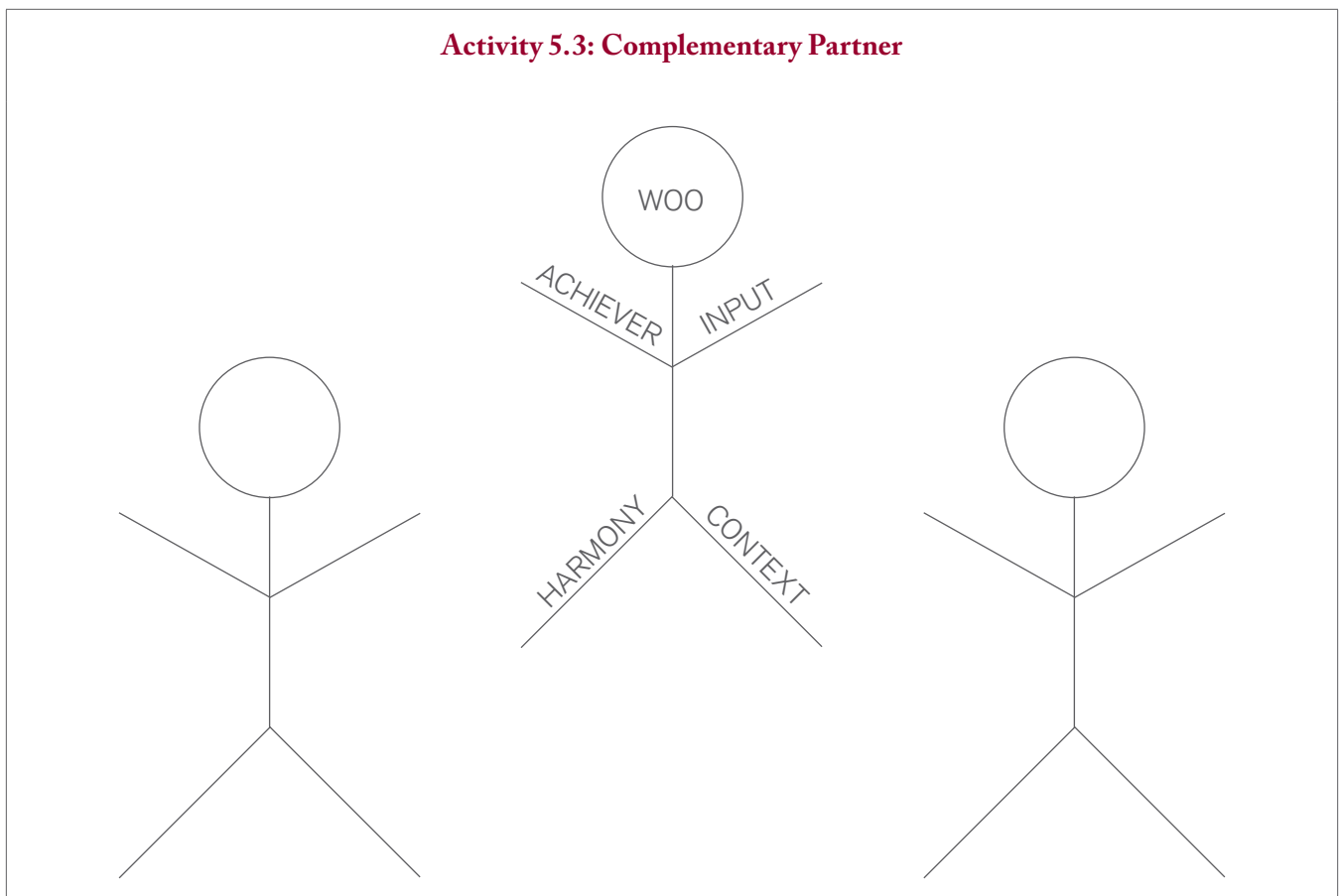
Use your own creativity to make this activity engaging. One option might be to have students create posters using art materials or magazine clippings to create their complementary partners. Have them present their work in class, allowing them to see who would benefit from connecting with one another. It is highly unlikely there will be one student in the class with all five themes each student identifies, but help students make connections on the basis of one or more themes.

Complementary Partners

Complementary partnerships are formed when two or more people come together to achieve something greater than what they could have achieved apart. Some of the best partnerships are formed when we consciously think about our talents and the talents that may complement our own.

Think about the talents you might want or need in a collaboration partner. Write your Signature Themes on the figure on the left. An example is provided. Then, identify five talent themes you would most like to have in a collaboration partner. Place these themes on the figure to the right.

Activity 5.3: Complementary Partner



Why did you choose these five themes?

Activity 5.3: Complementary Partner

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 5.B: The Uniqueness of Others

Learning Outcome:

- Work effectively by partnering with others with complementary themes of talent.

🕒 30 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity expands upon the previous one by asking students to consider the formation of a partnership team. Students are asked to consider the theme dynamics of a multiple person partnership team.

Ask your students to find two potential partners. The first person should be someone who has at least one Signature Theme in common with them. The second person should be someone who has no Signature Themes in common with them. Then, ask your students to interview them both, using the questions on the worksheet.

Following the interview, students should reflect about the theme dynamics between themselves and the interviewees. For each person, ask them to consider what value this person's talents will bring to the partnership. Then, ask the students to reflect upon their own talents. Ask them to consider what their unique talents offer the others in the partnership?

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their examples with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

The Uniqueness of Others

Use the questions below to help you enhance your level of understanding of the people around you and to identify ways that you can leverage a complementary partnership. Find two people and ask them the following questions. The first person should be someone who has at least one Signature Theme in common with you. The second person should be someone who has no Signature Themes in common with you.

What are your five Signature Themes?

What themes do we have that are the same?

What themes do we have that are similar?

What themes do we have that are very different?

If we needed to work together, how would we help each other achieve our goal? What thing would each of us be best at, and how could we best collaborate? How would we approach things differently?

How would knowing each other's talents and strengths help us have a better relationship?

Supplemental Activity 5.B: The Uniqueness of Others

Facilitation Notes: Activity 5.4: Is There a Shadow Side to a Strengths-Based Perspective? J

Learning Outcome:

- Analyze the implication to applying your natural talents in a negative way.

⌚ 20-30 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity asks students to consider the implications to the application of talents in a negative way.

Ask students to read the *Gallup Management Journal* excerpt, and facilitate a brief discussion about the misapplication of talents. To facilitate this discussion, consider the following vital points:

- Review the definition of strength: The ability to consistently produce a nearly perfect positive outcome in a specific task. The key to this definition is the phrase: “produce a nearly perfect positive outcome.”
- The strengths-based approach helps people see themselves and others as they really are.
- When we maximize our innate talents, we can make powerful, positive contributions that can drive positive outcomes.
- If Susan’s Analytical talents lead her to wear people out with her persistent questioning, she is applying those talents in a negative way.
- When Susan channels her Analytical talents to ask questions that make her consulting firm more valuable to its clients (without driving her teammates nuts), her talents can contribute powerfully to the workplace and the firm’s objectives. When Susan does this, she is using her greatest talents to “produce a nearly perfect positive outcome,” and there is nothing bad, or dark, about that.
- A strengths-based approach does not magically change the way people feel, act, or behave. It does not make us perfect students or perfect in our jobs. Nor do we cease to have problems or struggles at school or work. A strengths-based approach, however, does allow us to begin to understand how we or others may be struggling. We can come to a new understanding to help us learn how to channel our talents and those of others to achieve real change — and real results.

After this discussion, ask your students to consider the shadow side of one of their Signature Themes and answer the questions below the story of Susan. Debrief this activity by asking students to share their answers with a small group.

This exercise can potentially be done with all five themes.

Is There a Shadow Side to a Strengths-Based Perspective?

Susan is a researcher at a consulting firm. Analytical is one of her top talent themes. Susan loves to probe problems and ask many questions. Her colleagues say that Susan continually peels back the onion. This is a tremendous asset to her organization, as her in-depth analyses add real value for the company's clients.

The downside is that she sometimes doesn't know when to quit, and she can drive her colleagues crazy with what they perceive as her endless questions. It also doesn't help that her e-mail messages, filled with data and analysis, can run many pages.

When thinking about Susan's talents from a strengths-based perspective, it's helpful to return to our original question: "Is there a bad side, or a dark side, to strengths? Again, if you look at Gallup's definition of strength — the ability to consistently produce a nearly perfect positive outcome in a specific task — the answer is no, because a strength is about producing "a nearly perfect positive outcome."

On the flip side, if you were to wonder whether Susan was applying her talents in a negative way, the answer is clearly yes. Again, Gallup's definition of talent — a natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving — helps clarify this. If Susan's Analytical talents lead her to wear people out with her persistent questioning, then she is applying those talents in a negative way.

– Brian Brim, "Probing the Dark Side of Employees' Strengths," *Gallup Management Journal*,
February 8, 2007

Identify one of your Signature Themes in which you see a "shadow side," and answer the following questions:

Which theme did you identify as having a potential shadow side?

How is the shadow side of this theme exhibited in your life?

What knowledge and skills do you need to acquire in order to develop this theme and employ it as strength?

Activity 5.4: Is There a Shadow Side to a Strengths-Based Perspective?

Facilitation Notes: Activity 5.5: Barrier Labels

Learning Outcome:

- Analyze common labels that lead people to discount talents and the potential strength of others.
- Work effectively by partnering with others with complementary themes of talent.

⌚ 20 minutes

Activity Description:

In the previous activity, students were asked to consider the implications to the application of talents in a negative way. In this activity, students are asked to consider if they discount talents and the potential strengths of others.

Introduce the concept of barrier labels. Ask students to consider the following vital points:

- Great talents are often hidden behind negative labels.
 - Have you ever mistaken a powerful talent for a weakness?
 - Has anyone used unflattering terms to describe the ways in which you most naturally think, feel, and behave — your greatest talents?
- A weakness-seeking mindset or simple unfamiliarity can easily lead a person to misidentify and undervalue exceptional talents.
 - Think about it: We all have known a person with great Learning talents who was brushed off by some as “just a bookworm.” It is also likely that we have all known a person with tremendous Positivity talents who was discounted as “naïve.”
 - Those are barrier labels — terms used when talent is mistakenly devalued and dismissed as weakness.
- These barrier labels can be a clue to great talent. Ask your students to complete the Barrier Labels Matching Activity.
- Debrief as a class.
 - If we want to maximize the effectiveness in our partnerships, it is important for us to appreciate the talents each of us bring to the partnership. When we don’t see each other for who we really are and our talents for the value they offer, we create barrier labels, and we lose opportunities to contribute and develop our most valuable talents.

Answer Key:

1. d/ii 2. e/iii 3. c/iv 4. b/i 5. a/v

Barrier Labels

barrier label (bărr'ēər lābəl) *n.* a term used when talent is mistakenly devalued and dismissed as weakness

Match each of the following barrier labels (middle column) with the corresponding Signature Theme (left) and the positive contribution that could be missed if the label is allowed to be a barrier rather than a clue to talent (right).

TALENT THEME	COMMON BARRIER LABEL	CLUE TO TALENT
a. Communication	1. Bossy	i. Is an optimistic, uplifting presence who finds the positive aspects in any situation.
b. Positivity	2. Pushover	ii. Is confident and a powerful advocate on behalf of others.
c. Achiever	3. Workaholic	iii. Invites the differing views of others and finds common ground.
d. Command	4. Unrealistic	iv. Is an exceptional producer who inspires others by setting high expectations.
e. Harmony	5. Chatterbox	v. Brings new ideas to life by telling stories that are energizing and vivid.

Activity 5.5: Barrier Labels

Facilitation Notes: Activity 5.6: Moving Beyond Barrier Labels

Learning Outcome:

- Analyze common labels that lead people to discount talents and the potential strengths of others.
- Work effectively by partnering with others with complementary themes of talent.

⌚ 30–45 minutes

Activity Description:

This activity is designed to help students think about how they can maximize the positive nature of talents by managing the barrier labels that people often place upon talents.

Introduce the activity. Students are asked to identify the barrier labels they or others might use to describe an individual with each talent theme. Then, they should identify alternative words or phrases that they could use to describe a person that honors that talent theme.

Ask your students to complete this activity in small groups. Ask each group to consider the following questions:

- What are the talents that make up each talent theme?
- What are some common misperceptions that may cloud recognition of the valuable talents this person has to offer?
- Can you think of anything that might be difficult about working with someone who has powerful talents in this theme?
- What might drive you crazy if you worked with that person?

Then, they should consider the positive presentation of each talent theme:

- What are the positive traits that a person who is especially talented in this theme might add to a partnership or team?
- What are some words or phrases that characterize the positive nature and potential of the talents that comprise this theme?
- What would be beneficial about working with someone who has powerful talents in this theme?

Debrief by bringing the whole group back together and asking: How do we sometimes create barriers that hide the value of our talents? How can we manage our talents so that they don't become a barrier? How can we create opportunities to use our greatest talents by presenting them in a positive way?

Note: Some potential answers are presented on the next few pages.

Moving Beyond Barrier Labels

Identify the barrier labels you or others might use to describe an individual with each talent theme. Then, identify alternative words or phrases that you could use to describe a person that honors that talent theme.

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS ...	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS ...
Achiever		
Activator		
Adaptability		
Analytical		
Arranger		
Belief		
Command		
Communication		

Activity 5.6: Moving Beyond Barrier Labels

Facilitation Notes: Theme Descriptors and Barrier Labels

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS ...	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS ...
Achiever	unbalanced, brown-noser, overcommitted, can't say no, burning the candle at both ends, too concentrated on work	tireless, strong work ethic, leads by example, go-getter, hungry
Activator	ready-fire-aim, loose cannon, speak before you think, in left field (because others haven't caught up)	self-starter, fire-starter, energy source, fearless
Adaptability	directionless, indecisive, sheep, inconclusive, whimsical	flexible, comfortable in times of change, easy to get along with, go with the flow
Analytical	rude, short, tough, never-satisfied with the answer, too many questions	well thought out, logical, deep, thorough, smart, comfortable with numbers, figures, and charts.
Arranger	lack of structure, too flexible, don't follow the existing rules or procedures, constantly changing priorities, lack of vision	flexible, organizer, juggler, aligning and realigning tasks to find the most productive configuration possible, efficient, conductor
Belief	stubborn, set in their ways, elitist, not accepting of other ideas, opinionated, goody-two-shoes	passionate, steadfast, know where they stand, altruistic, family-oriented, ethical, responsible
Command	bossy, know-it-all, domineering, rude, abrupt, short, strong-willed, inflexible, stubborn	charisma, direct, driven, inspirational, easy to follow, clear, concise
Communication	blabbermouth, poor listener, self-absorbed, show-off, always needs attention	storyteller, great presence, easy to talk to, energizer, entertaining, charismatic

Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (Continued)

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS . . .	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS . . .
Competition		
Connectedness		
Consistency		
Context		
Deliberative		
Developer		
Discipline		
Empathy		
Focus		

Activity 5.6: Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (continued)

Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (Continued)

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS ...	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS ...
Competition	sore loser, not a team player, puts down others, self-centered, confrontational	driven, motivated, number one, measurement-oriented, winner
Connectedness	passive, naïve, too idealistic, wishy- washy	spiritual, “doesn’t sweat the small stuff,” strong faith, always looking at the big picture, helps others see purpose
Consistency	“by the book,” inflexible, unwilling to customize/individualize	Just, problem-solver, policy maker
Context	slow to move and react to change, closed-minded, lives in the past	has a robust historical frame of reference, learns lessons from the past, knows how things came to be, can leverage knowledge of the past
Deliberative	standoffish, aloof, cautious, slow, introverted, afraid to act	good judgment, identifies risk, makes solid decisions, can plan for the unexpected
Developer	not an individual contributor, wastes time on low-potential people, spectator	grows talent in others, teacher, coach, enjoys helping others succeed, invests in others
Discipline	overbearing, rigid, mechanized, can’t handle change	high productivity and accuracy because of ability to structure, breaks down the complex into steps, great planners, promotes efficiency
Empathy	“soft,” moody, over-involved	creates trust, brings healing, knows just what to say/do, customizes approach to others
Focus	absorbed, tough to relax, intense, stressed	point person, disciplined, purposeful, laser- like precision, identifies important areas quickly, goal setter and goal getter

Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (Continued)

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS ...	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS ...
Futuristic		
Harmony		
Ideation		
Includer		
Individualization		
Input		
Intellection		
Learner		
Maximizer		

Activity 5.6: Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (continued)

Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (Continued)

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS ...	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS ...
Futuristic	dreamer, “Fantasy Island,” out in left field, lacks pragmatism	imaginative, creative, visionary, even prophetic, inspiring
Harmony	weak, indecisive, non-confrontational, avoids conflict	negotiator, can see both sides of a situation, great at asking questions, able to arrive at consensus, great facilitator
Ideation	serendipitous, lacks follow-through, creates more work	improves on the existing, learns quickly, agile mind
Includer	indiscriminate, unable to decide, generous to a fault	invites others in, caring, engages others, sensitive, takes up for others
Individualization	unable to synthesize when it comes to people, has difficulty placing group above individual, difficulty in making people decisions	sees the uniqueness in all individuals, intuitively knows that “one size doesn’t fit all,” appreciates the differences in others
Input	knows a lot of worthless information, packrat, cluttered house-cluttered mind, boring conversationalist	great resource, knowledgeable, excellent memory, mind for detail, collects interesting things, excellent conversationalist
Intellection	a loner, slow to act or wastes time thinking too much, isolated, doesn’t work well with others	excellent thinker, enjoys musing, capable of deep and philosophical thought, able to work alone
Learner	a know-it-all, lacks focus on results, learns a lot — produces little, bookish	always learning, catches on quickly, interested in many things, finds life intriguing
Maximizer	perfectionist, picky, never good enough, always reworking	mastery, success, excellence, working with the best

Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (Continued)

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS ...	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS ...
Positivity		
Relator		
Responsibility		
Restorative		
Self-Assurance		
Significance		
Strategic		
Woo		

Activity 5.6: Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (continued)

Moving Beyond Barrier Labels (Continued)

THEME	BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS ...	TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS ...
Positivity	insincere, naïve, superficial, Polly Anna	enthusiastic, lighthearted, energetic, generous with praise, optimistic
Relator	lives in a clique, crony, has an inner circle, plays favorites	caring, trusting, a great friend, forgiving, generous
Responsibility	micro-manager, obsessive, can't say "no," take on more than you can chew	committed, accountable, independent, trusted, conscientious
Restorative	focuses on weaknesses, punitive, negative, critical	problem solver, troubleshooter, finds improvements and solutions
Self-Assurance	arrogant, self-righteous, over confident, stubborn	self-confident, strong inner compass, risk-taker
Significance	recognition hungry, self-focused, needy	seeks outstanding performance, does things of importance, independent
Strategic	jumps to quick decisions, difficult to understand their thinking, closed-minded	anticipates alternatives, intuitive, sees different paths
Woo	fake, shallow, does not care about deep relationships	outgoing, people-oriented, networker, rapport-builder

NOTES

Facilitation Notes: Activity 5.7: Being of Service //

Learning Outcome:

- Develop a personal mission statement.
- Work effectively by partnering with others with complementary themes of talent.

🕒 Variable

Activity Description:

Relationships are living, growing organisms. They require constant nurturing to thrive, and without focused attention, they can die. This activity helps students become intentional about their relationships. As the *StrengthsQuest* text suggests, the word *commit* implies intentional and lasting action.

Ask your students to reflect and answer the questions on each part of the worksheet. This can be assigned as either one comprehensive journalizing activity or can be done in parts.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their thoughts and commitments with a small group.

Commit to Cultivate — Being of Service

When considering how to be of service, there are five important issues you must address.

1. What is your mission?
2. Whom will you serve?
3. What needs, problems, or concerns will you try to address?
4. What are some ways to serve in which you could use your strengths?
5. How will you be of service?

Part One: What Is Your Mission?

Having a mission refers to the difference you want to make — the effect you want to have. Forming a mission is a demanding task. You may want to revise or refocus your mission several times during your life, but you can begin the process now.

Ideally, you will have a lifestyle that works together with your sense of mission. You might choose to “live out” your mission in the context of your family life, career, or leisure time activities. Whatever the case may be, the questions below will help you focus your mission and think about the relationship between your life and your mission.

“Personal mission is rare, so rare that when we experience it, we refer to the person as having ‘It.’ The French even have a phrase for it, *je ne sais quoi*, or ‘that certain something.’”

– Don Clifton & Paula Nelson, *Soar With Your Strengths*, Dell Publishing, 1992

What social problems concern you most?

What kind of people (age, socioeconomic, ethnic-culture group, problematic conditions, etc.) are you most concerned about?

If you had the power to make a significant change in the lives of people, what would you change?

How do you want to be remembered? What will your lasting legacy be?

Begin your mission statement by filling in the following blanks:

I want to make a difference in the lives of ...

I want them to become ...

Activity 5.7: Being of Service: Part 1

NOTES

Commit to Cultivate — Being of Service (Continued)

Part Two: Whom Will You Serve?

Given your sense of mission, whom do you want to serve?

Part Three: What Needs, Problems, or Concerns Will You Try to Address?

Now that you have identified whom you will serve, the next issue involves the particular needs, problems, or concerns you will be addressing. So let's be specific. As you think about the individuals you want to serve, consider the following:

What are their needs?

What are their problems?

What are their concerns?

Activity 5.7: Being of Service: Parts 2 and 3

NOTES

Commit to Cultivate — Being of Service (Continued)

Part Four: Using Your Strengths to Serve

Review your talents in light of the needs, problems, and concerns you have identified above. Think about how your individual talents might be leveraged to address one or more of the needs, problems, and concerns you identified. Try to make some specific connections.

My strength in _____ could be used to
address _____.

My strength in _____ could be used to
address _____.

My strength in _____ could be used to
address _____.

My strength in _____ could be used to
address _____.

My strength in _____ could be used to
address _____.

Activity 5.7: Being of Service: Part 4

NOTES

Commit to Cultivate — Being of Service (Continued)

Part Five: How Will You Be of Service?

By using your strengths in response to the needs, problems, or concerns of those you are serving, you are not only fulfilling a sense of purpose, but you are also developing your strengths. As you answered the questions in parts 1-4, some ideas may have emerged. Think about the times when you know you have helped particular individuals. What did you do? How did you serve them? This simple process of reflection can give you considerable insight on how to serve in the present and the future.

“Mission, like exercise, is most effective when experienced as often as possible. A person exercising his or her strengths on a daily basis is both developing strengths and fulfilling a sense of purpose.”

– Don Clifton & Paula Nelson, *Soar With Your Strengths*, Dell Publishing, 1992

Your challenge: Help others become more aware of their natural talents. Then, encourage them to develop their talents into strengths. Encourage those you serve to apply their talents and strengths to the needs, problems, or concerns that they are confronting.

Facilitation Notes: Supplemental Activity 5.C: Theme Jumble V

Theme Jumble Answer Key:

INDIVIDUALIZATION

WOO

SELF ASSURANCE

EMPATHY

“Shadow side”

Theme Jumble V

Unscramble the four jumbled words to create the names of four talent themes.

ZITVUIANOILADIDIN

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OWO

○		
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CESS FLURESAAN

○				○		○							
---	--	--	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

PEMYHAT

○					○	
---	--	--	--	--	---	--

Now, unscramble the letters in the circle to answer the riddle.

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men who fail to develop their talents? Only the

“

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

” knows.

Supplemental Activity 5.C: Theme Jumble V

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StrengthsQuest Activity Workbook