

Teaching with StrengthsQuest

LeaRN Brown Bag Session

March 23, 2010

Rationale for Using StrengthsQuest in Course and Student Services Development

- Successful people achieve in vastly different ways (Anderson)¹
- Strengths focus leads to greater improvement than deficit-model remediation
 - Higher education favors a “one-size fits all” approach to success, focused almost exclusively on achiever habits and motivations: status or grade-motivated, and receptive to behavior based avenues to better performance
- Students predominantly struggle in college because of disillusionment, discouragement, or reduced motivation (Noel, Levitz)
- Exploring strengths allows individuals to adapt and thrive in challenging academic and social situations

UW Students’ Strengths Summary

- Honors students’ top strengths include achiever, input, learner, responsibility, and adaptability
- Underprepared students’ (conditionally-admitted) top strengths include adaptability, woo, positivity, includer, and empathy
- All other incoming students’ top strengths include adaptability, includer, restorative, achiever, and positivity

Some Implications

- Incoming UW students are highly adaptable, which can mean that they may improvise moment-to-moment rather than practice good planning. Students can benefit from guidance in learning to plan focused time for studies as well as in adopting strategies for study efficiency.
- Many first-year students with restorative and includer strengths will learn most effectively through problem-based curriculum that features teamwork and clear implications for the relevant issues at stake.
- Honors students are predominantly “learners” and thrive when they are challenged and have opportunities for original approaches to assignments. An “achiever” challenge for them may center on over-committing.
- Underprepared students respond best to course and program approaches that favor social approaches to learning (woo, includer) and dramatic foregrounding of the “why” behind curriculum and assignments (empathetic or human element).

¹ Clifton, Donald O., Edward Anderson, Laurie Schreiner. *StrengthsQuest: Discover and Develop Your Strengths in Academics, Career, and Beyond*. New York: Gallup, 2006.

Tips for Using StrengthsQuest in Class

- As part of an ice-breaker or first-week activity, ask students to write briefly about their own strengths and how these strengths “jive” with the syllabus and assignments. Ask them to identify how their strengths might help them with particular elements of the course as well as challenges they may face in your class.
- Share your own strengths with students and explain how your strengths are reflected in your teaching style, approaches to the course, and your own research or professional activities. Advise students on ways to best approach you and interpret characteristic qualities in your approaches to the course.
- As an introduction to team-based projects, share with students the 34 strengths and ask project groups to share strengths within the group and reflect on how the mix of strengths may serve them well in the project as well as possible struggles. Students might also designate roles within the group based on the most suited qualities (communicator, time worrier, etc.).
- Gather the students’ strengths in your class (either by asking students to submit their strengths or by contacting Michelle Schutt). Share with the class the dominant strengths and brainstorm ways that these strengths can be used to best help students in the class.

**For more tips on using StrengthsQuest with students, visit the main website at <https://www.strengthsquest.com/> and after logging in click the “Developer” tab.

Applying Achiever Talents in Academics

These insights and action ideas can help you apply Achiever talents to achieve in various aspects of your academic life.

General Academic Life

- Set at least one clearly defined and measurable goal for each of your courses at the beginning of the term. Document your progress toward every objective in an academic-achievement journal.
- Identify the most important fact, philosophy, concept, or law you learn in each class each week. Notice recurring patterns. Pinpoint discoveries.
- Set one or two “stretch” targets, such as earning a specific grade-point average, winning honors status, or being named to the dean’s list.
- Ask to review papers, projects, research studies, or tests of several students who consistently earn higher grades in a class than you do. Try to equal or surpass one or two things they do.
- Seek opportunities to apply several of the ideas and concepts you have learned. Address groups and conduct demonstrations so others can benefit from what you know.
- Ask each of your professors to clarify their expectations for your performance. Emphasize that you intend to exceed the minimum course requirements.

Study Techniques

- Review your goals-achievement log. Look for evidence that you are progressing toward your objectives. Outline the steps you took to acquire one particular skill or master one key concept.
- Pay close attention to your body clock. Decide when your mind is most alert. Use this insight to your advantage when scheduling time to study.
- Decide whether your productivity, efficiency, and ability to retain essential information increases when you study with a tutor, a classmate, a group, or alone.

- Observe classmates to discover who shares your commitment to hard work. Form a study group composed of individuals who invest time, effort, and energy in scholarly pursuits.
- Reach consensus as a study group about attendance, starting and ending times of meetings, strategies to eliminate distractions, and the sharing of class notes.
- List everything you must do to prepare for a test, complete a project, conduct research, or finish an assignment. Prioritize activities. Set a deadline for each one. Then methodically carry out your plan.

Relationships

- Intentionally nurture friendships with people who are as driven as you are.
- Talk to students taking advanced-level courses in your major field. Ask them to describe the choices they made in the past that contribute to their success today.
- Realize that your natural inclination to study for as long as it takes inspires other achievers. Learn the names of these individuals. Add them to your study buddy network.
- Seek opportunities to work with professors on research projects, laboratory experiments, and writing for publications.

Class Selection

- Choose challenging, effective classes taught by instructors who have reputations for helping students reach their educational goals.
- Sequence the order in which you take classes. Each term, enroll in one course that is more demanding than any you have ever taken. Repeat this process each semester.
- Recruit diligent, serious, and earnest students to register for the same demanding classes you are taking. Realize that you will challenge one another to excel.

Applying Woo Talents in Academics

These insights and action ideas can help you apply Woo talents to achieve in various aspects of your academic life.

General Academic Life

- Make classroom discussions fun by using words that catch the attention of others.

- Meet and greet the people in your classes.

- Use your charm when asking difficult questions in class.

Study Techniques

- Study in places where there are many people, like the library or an off-campus bookstore.

- Block off time for studying and reading with others.

- Connect reading material to people you have met. This helps you

get involved in the reading and not become bored, and you will better remember what you read and generate more insights.

- Create a study group of people you do not know yet.

Relationships

- Schedule a time (at least twice a quarter) to visit your professors during office hours. Have them get to know you by name.

- Start a conversation with your classmates to identify students with whom you can work, learn, and study.

- Use your networking strengths every way you can. Prepare for class, exams, discussions, and papers with other people.

- Join social groups and study groups.

Class Selection

- Try to meet the professors before choosing classes.

- Choose classes that offer opportunities to meet lots of people.

- Ask fellow students for their opinions about classes you are considering.

Extracurricular Activities

- Get involved in an activity or group that gives you the opportunity to connect with different people.

- Balance your academics with extracurricular activities to keep yourself involved with people.

- Run for an elected office. A person with exceptional Woo talents can quickly connect with people and create positive reactions.

- Chair large social events. Turn on your charm to engage others.

Using Your Adaptability Talents as the Foundation of Strengths

Your Adaptability talents hold potential for strength, which is the key to excellence. These statements provide interesting insights and tips that can help you use your talents as the foundation of strengths.

- Your ability to take things in stride means that you can be a calm and reassuring influence to people who don't handle change well. Use your exceptional ability to deal with stress by making yourself available to those who need your perspective.
- You enjoy the journey as much as you enjoy the destination. Help others find enjoyment along the way by encouraging them to see what's happening in the moment. You will enjoy the journey even more when there are others to share it with you.
- Sharpen your Adaptability talents by listening to your body. Just as you learn when to shift gears in a car as the RPMs get higher, you can learn to "shift gears" in your academic and work life by paying attention to when the pressure is mounting. By doing this, you can stay healthy and achieve even more.
- Your spontaneity can help others realize how many valuable experiences might be missed if they don't seize the moment.
- Because you live in the moment, you might find yourself easily distracted by new things that come along. You might be particularly likely to drop everything when your friends want you to go out with them. Connect your Adaptability talents with some of the talents in your other Signature Themes to help you remember the importance of what you're doing, so you'll be more likely to stay on task when necessary.
- Your natural ability to "go with the flow" enables you to make adjustments easily, but partnering with someone who has powerful Discipline, Consistency, or Arranger talents may give you added perspective on how to organize your schedule or be more efficient when the pressure hits.
- To others, things seem to just "fall into place" for you. Help them recognize that it isn't luck. You have a talent for adjusting to changing circumstances.

Using Your Analytical Talents as the Foundation of Strengths

Your Analytical talents hold potential for strength, which is the key to excellence. These statements provide interesting insights and tips that can help you use your talents as the foundation of strengths.

- You are at your best when you have well-researched sources of information and data to support your logic. Take the time to identify credible sources you can rely on. Determine the most helpful books, Web sites, or other sources that can serve as references.
- Take academic courses that will capitalize on your Analytical talents. Experimental psychology, chemistry, comparative religion, political science, statistics — all these areas can add knowledge and skills to your repertoire.
- Sharpen your Analytical talents by spending time talking to professors who research an area that interests you. Ask them to recommend books with which you can further explore their research.
- You naturally tend to dissect ideas and examine them carefully. While this process is almost instantaneous for you, it can be helpful to others if you explain what you are doing along the way. This explanation will help them buy into your conclusions at the end.
- You naturally simplify and connect related concepts. Look for people who are particularly talented in the Communication, Relator, or Positivity themes. They can help you clearly articulate what you see so naturally.
- Your natural skepticism and need to see the evidence can lead you into lively debates that are part of your process of becoming convinced. However, other people don't always enjoy debating issues as much as you do. Partner with people exceptionally talented in Relator, Empathy, or Communication, for instance, so that others understand you are critiquing ideas and not the people who have the ideas.
- Sometimes you may experience "analysis paralysis" — a continual need to gather more evidence and keep weighing the pros and cons before making a decision. Partner with Activator or Achiever talents to know when it's time to stop analyzing.

Applying Adaptability Talents in Academics

These insights and action ideas can help you apply Adaptability talents to achieve in various aspects of your academic life.

General Academic Life

- Live in the moment. Calm yourself before an exam with positive self-talk. Recall your personal history of dealing with surprises on tests.
- Leverage your ability not to feel overwhelmed by multifaceted assignments. Document three to five instances during the day when you successfully juggled competing tasks.
- Understand that you can balance academic demands with social commitments, extracurricular activities, and part-time jobs. Describe how you managed to make progress on all fronts last week.
- Challenge yourself by taking courses that involve experiments. Compare your flexibility to that of various classmates. Notice how you make adjustments to produce desired outcomes.

Study Techniques

- Analyze your study habits. Do you plan and then improvise as circumstances change? Or do you improvise minute by minute rather than plan?
- Choose study partners who are serious yet share your easy-going, relaxed work style. Avoid individuals who are tense and anxious. Make a list of potential study buddies.
- Look for irony, humor, and the unexpected in your studies. Stimulate your own and others' thinking by discussing the relevance of each discovery.
- Make notes about how your study habits vary depending on the situation. Ask yourself these questions: Do I need the pressure of a test or deadline to force me to study? When am I most likely to ignore intriguing distractions? Least likely?

- Designate places to which you can retreat when you need to give your full attention to your studies. Choose venues where the potential for interruptions and extraneous noise is significantly reduced.

Relationships

- Surround yourself with individuals who, like you, pause to take in the world's loveliness as it appears. Identify people who automatically put aside what they are doing to watch a sunset, listen to rustling leaves, or enjoy the arts.
- Help classmates, coworkers, and friends overcome difficulties that stymie their progress. Capitalize on your ability to take things as they are rather than rail against life's surprises.
- Encourage some people to turn to you when plans must be modified or altogether scrapped. List the people who realize you are approachable and responsive.
- Invite one or two highly organized and time-conscious people to become your study buddies. Discuss ahead of time how they can help you be more efficient. Explain how you can infuse fun into their studies.

Class Selection

- Follow your interests when choosing classes. Keep your options for a major open until you have explored several disciplines. Partner with an advisor who can help you accelerate your decision-making process to avoid additional tuition costs.
- Register for more classes than you intend to take. After the first week of class, drop elective courses you find uninteresting.
- Transfer out of classes taught by instructors whose teaching style bores you. Transfer into the classes of professors who stimulate students' thinking.
- Take advantage of the drop-add period. Note the date by which you must complete this process without risking a failing grade or loss of money.



ACHIEVER	People 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 especially talented in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.
ADAPTABILITY	People 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 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 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 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 especially talented in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.
COMMUNICATION	People especially talented in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.
COMPETITION	People 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 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 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 especially talented in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.
DELIBERATIVE	People 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 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 especially talented in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.
EMPATHY	People especially talented in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others’ lives or others’ situations.

FOCUS	People 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.
FUTURISTIC	People 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 especially talented in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.
IDEATION	People especially talented in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.
INCLUDER	People 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 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 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 especially talented in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.
LEARNER	People 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 especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something especially talented into something superb.
POSITIVITY	People 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 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 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 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 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 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 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.

60 in 60! Creating Moments That Matter: 60 Seconds or 60 Minutes!

Tips and Tools for Teaching and Student Success With Strengths

Written by
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The following 60 strengths teaching and learning strategies can be done in 60 seconds or 60 minutes. Each strategy provides an opportunity for you and your students to use strengths every day and to create “Moments That Matter” around strengths in the classroom.

These strengths teaching and learning strategies are organized as opportunities for engagement, creative applications, assessments, and recognition. Have fun. Add your own favorites and share them with us!

Engagement:

1. **Front Porch.** Welcome students in the hallway before class. Create a “front porch” for your classroom. Visit on the “front porch” about strengths — yours and theirs. This welcoming start to class will create a warm and accepting classroom environment.
2. **Strengths Deck.** Ask students to fill out a 3x5 card with their name (as they would like to be called in the class) on one side of the card. Ask students to include their Signature Themes (or strengths) on the other side of the card. Ask students to note the strength(s) they think will serve them most during your class. This activity does several things. First, it provides a classroom name and strengths deck for you. Second, it requires students to know and link their strengths to your class. And finally, it provides opportunities for future conversations as students’ understanding of their strengths and class content evolve.
3. **Dear Teacher Letter.** Ask students in your class to write you a “Dear Teacher” letter, detailing their understanding, questions, celebrations, and

confusions about their strengths, as well as how to apply them in class and in a future career.

4. **Strengths Notes.** Use the Name-Strengths Deck to get to know something special about each student. Note this positive attribution with the student’s strengths so that you will have ready access to your notes when you return papers with comments or write notes or winners cards for your students.
5. **Connecting Through Strengths.** Start each class period with five minutes of talking with students about strengths. Connecting seems to help students relax and feel more comfortable talking with others during class discussions, volunteering during question and answer periods of the lecture, and presenting projects in front of the class.
6. **Good News.** Begin a ritual of starting class by tossing a koosh ball around among students. When a student gets the Koosh Ball they can tell a “good news” story about a way they have recently used their strengths.
7. **Question of the Day.** Invite students to write a question on the board about strengths — before you arrive in the classroom. Start class with a “Question for the Day” discussion-and-answer conversation.
8. **Capture Students’ Interest.** Do strengths activities or exercises at the beginning of class, before getting into the academic content instead of afterward. Doing it this way captures students’ interest and focuses them in on their strengths in relationship to the lesson. The experience will

help students want to understand how to use their strengths in pursuit of educational goals. Doing it first also makes strengths conversations a priority.

9. **Strengths Chat.** Ask students to partner with a classmate and share a story about a time when they were successful. Ask students to link their strengths to their success. You can do this activity in small groups or with the larger class, but starting with dyads builds trust and confidence in strengths chats.
10. **Envelop Please.** At the beginning of each class, ask students to write one question about using their strengths in class. Collect the questions. Put them in an envelope. Randomly select 3-4 questions at the end of each class, and engage students in a brief discussion about the questions.
11. **Silly Questions.** During the first few weeks of school, as a method of more firmly associating a name with a face and getting to know the students' strengths, have them write their names on a pass-around sheet and then answer a silly question, such as "Would you rather be an astronaut or an oceanographer?" "Do you like red-blue-yellow or green-purple-orange better?" See if they can incorporate their strengths into their answer. "One of my strengths is Achiever. If I have to choose, I would choose astronaut because they have a list to check off." Or, "With Woo in my strengths, it's definitely a red-blue-yellow world for me!"

Creative Applications:

12. **Creative Strengths.** Take tinker toys, pins, straws, marshmallows, and toothpicks to class. Ask students to create a tower, bridge, or "masterpiece" using the objects. After the creative exercise, discuss the processes that went on during the experience. Tie the process to students' strengths.

13. **How I Use My Strengths.** At various times throughout the term, have students write short essays on the way they see and use their strengths — nonthreatening, in-class credit, 10 points for anything handed in. These short pieces can be done at any time — sometimes unplanned is best!

14. **Strengths Bio-Sketch.** Ask students to write a biographical sketch about themselves, a beloved family member, or famous person. Ask students to consider how strengths have served them, their family member, or the famous person in life achievements.

15. **Strengths Learning Teams.** Organize learning teams at the beginning of the term based on diversity of strengths. Encourage students to share their strengths as they form the team. Encourage students to recognize and play to their strengths and the strengths of others on the team during group projects and presentations.

16. **Understanding Strengths in Context.** Ask students to write comments or questions about strengths and hand them in anonymously at the end of class. Begin the next class discussing the questions. Or, if appropriate, ask students to work through the questions on teams of 4-5 as an active learning assignment at the beginning of the next class. This might be a good strategy for anonymously managing issues related to classroom team behavior, roommate issues, etc.

17. **Walk the Halls Slowly.** In the halls, cafeterias, or stores, take time to greet students. Talk with students informally about their strengths (and yours).

18. **Book Bag Strengths.** Promote resiliency and get to know each other by asking each student to share something from their wallet, handbag, or book bag that gives them strength.

19. **Strengths Slogans.** Have students create slogans about their strengths. Ask student to create posters on flip charts with their strengths slogans. Add fun by asking students to create a Strengths Flag Post.
20. **Strengths Skit.** Ask students to create a skit about their strengths. The skit can be a humorous way to integrate strengths into unique combinations for achievement.
21. **Strengths Poster.** Organize students onto teams of 4-5. Give teams paper, flip charts, markers, or other resources, and ask them to demonstrate a strengths concept through illustration with words or pictures.
22. **Graffiti Brainstorming.** Write key components for strengths discovery or study on separate pages of flip chart paper. Ideas might include: Dynamics of Strengths, Avoiding Barrier Language, Theme Interaction, Strengths and Performance, or Critical Activities and Strengths. Assign students to groups of 4-5 and ask them to move in a Gallery Walk around the room to each of the flip charts. Ask student teams to add "Graffiti" ideas to the charts. End the activity when the original group returns to their first poster. Ask each group to share a Graffiti Poster with the class. Lead a brief discussion.
23. **Talent and Performance.** Ask student to draw a circle on a piece of paper. Ask them to draw 4-5 arrows pointing in toward the center of the poster. Encourage students to think of a performance challenge or goal that they are currently facing. Examples might include: studying for an exam, completing a paper, or working effectively on a team project. Ask students to write that challenge or goal in the center of the circle on their paper. Now, ask students to use the arrows to identify the strengths they can use in pursuit of the challenge or goal. Ask them to write the strength on the line created by the arrow. Encourage them to write the specific talents (or behaviors) of the strength under the arrow line. Model one on a challenge or goal you are facing. Invite a discussion.
24. **Muddiest Point.** Ask students to write a one-page narrative on the "Muddiest Point" about strengths — theirs or others. Ask students to bring their Muddiest Points to class. Begin class with a discussion of the Muddy Points.
25. **Clean Up!** Begin class by asking students to exchange their Muddy Points. Ask students to "clean up" the Muddy Point of their classmate. Invite dyadic and large-group discussion after the clean up.
26. **Muddy Mess.** Ask students to join a team of 4-5 students. Encourage them to read and share their Muddy Points. Ask them to create a "Muddy Mess" of questions and concerns from their Muddiest Points. Ask teams to trade Muddy Messes. Each team works to find answers and then shares their work with the class. This is a fun pro-academic way to add team competition to the class. While our focus should be on the benefits and celebrations of strengths, students will have questions and concerns. Articulating those questions and finding answers in community with classmates is a powerful way to demonstrate the value of strengths.
27. **Problem Box.** Create a Problem Box for issues related to strengths. While our primary focus will be on strengths celebration and learning, students will inevitably begin to see issues around themes, i.e., barrier language and how to avoid it, blind spots to strengths, leveraging and maximizing for the most benefit from their strengths, productive application of strengths in specific or critical activities, and strengths and interview. Ask students to place their "problems" in the box. Select a few problems at the beginning of class

for a large- or small-group discussion. Take a few minutes at the end of the week and ask teams of students to come up with potential solutions to the problems in the Problem Box.

28. **Stump the Teacher.** Make the Problem Box a “stump the teacher” strategy by asking students to come up with complex issues or problems related to strengths. Let students stump you. Give teams the task of finding answers to the Problem Box as extra credit.
29. **Moments That Matter.** Create a Lessons Learned, Moments That Matter, and Light Bulb Moments Treasure Chest. Ask students to deposit comments, narratives, writings, and examples in the chest. Take a few examples out at the end of each week and celebrate the learning.
30. **Fish Bowl.** Create a Fish Bowl discussion. Ask a group of students to sit in the center of the class and role play or discuss an issue related to strengths, while the rest of the class sits in a circle around the group watching. Lead a class discussion on the Fish Bowl issue or role play.
31. **Teach to Strengths.** Use multiple strategies for adult learning in your class. Delivering material through lecture, group discussion, activities, role-play, problem-based learning, team learning . . . all contribute to teaching opportunities that will meet the unique talents and strengths of student in your class. Invite a classroom assessment paper at the end of the second week of class asking students to identify the teaching strategies that best suit their strengths. Use this feedback to enhance your class delivery methods.
32. **Pop Culture.** Use relevant “pop” culture references in class. Ask students to reflect on a television show, movie, or CD and analyze the strengths they see evident or developed in the pop culture example.
33. **Popular Media.** Use a short clip from a popular movie to explain a strength or strengths concept.

Almost any popular media will do. Films like *Billy Elliot* or re-runs of the T.V. show *Friends* are quite engaging.

34. **Traveling Files.** Create Traveling Files using common file folders. Develop brief questions about strengths or strengths concepts, and put one question in each file folder. Organize class into problem-solving teams of 4-5 students each. Give each team a Traveling File, ask each team to discuss and respond in writing to the question, and then pass the file on to the next team for continued discussion, elaboration, and writing. When the files have been to three or four teams, have the finishing team read and discuss the response.
35. **Four Corners.** Organize students into four large teams. Using the Four Corners of the classroom, ask students to join a team in the corner and work together on a specific topic related to strengths. Examples of Four Corners discussions might include avoiding barrier language and blind spots; dynamics and interaction of strengths; application of strengths to critical activities; and recognition strategies for specific strengths. You might also use selected reading on strengths in each of the Four Corners. Check with each team to make sure they are on track with the material they are discussing. After about 10 minutes, ask each Corner team to share with the entire class.
36. **Strengths Cards.** Strengths Cards are a 3x5 note card with a Signature Theme on one side of the card and a brief description of the strengths in the theme on the other side. Pass out the cards randomly as students arrive for class. Ask students to read the card and then turn to a partner and discuss the strength. Encourage students to share with their partner the benefits of the strength. Ask students to identify strengths that they use. Ask students to discuss ways they might partner with a person with the strength on the Strengths Card. After a brief discussion, ask a few Strengths Card

pairs to share their conversation with the entire class.

37. **Pop Quiz.** Have a Strengths Pop Quiz just for fun. Prepare a quiz with students' names and strengths. Use this as an engaging and energizing start to class. Give students 5 minutes to answer the Pop Quiz. Open discussion is encouraged!
38. **Scavenger Hunt.** Have a Strengths Scavenger Hunt. Provide a worksheet with 10 lines and three columns. The lines are for students to use as they find 10 students who have strengths that are different than their own. The columns are to write the name of the student, name of the strength, and brief description of the way the student is using the strength in class. After about 10 minutes, invite students to share lessons learned about strengths.
39. **Turn-to-a-Partner.** Use a Turn-to-a-Partner discussion strategy to break up the lecture. Regardless of the content you are teaching, make the partner discussion focus on strengths. Examples might be: "How are you using your strengths to understand the content of this lesson." In what ways does the content of this lesson align with your strengths?" If the content of this lesson becomes part of your career, how will you use your strengths to maximize your success?" After a brief discussion, ask a couple of pairs to share and continue on with the content of the class. This "lecture break" is an excellent way to re-energize class and link strengths to the specific lesson.
40. **Mission Possible.** Offer Mission Possible goals for additional assignments. Ask students to watch for Moments That Matter with their strengths. Those moments might be in class or outside of class. Provide the opportunity for students to write a one-page narrative about the Mission Possible through strengths narrative. Give bonus points to this assignment.
41. **Minute Paper.** Ask students to come to class with a Strengths Minute Paper. A Minute Paper is a short narrative that takes a minute or so to write: ½ page, handwritten. Ask students to be mindful and watch for applications of the strengths in their daily interactions. Encourage them to record this interaction with a Minute Paper. Ask students to gather on teams of 4-5 at the beginning of class to share their Minute Papers. Collect the papers and use them for participation points for the day.
42. **Focused Listing.** Ask students to create a Strengths Focused Listing of the talents in their strengths. Encourage them to add to the list as they discover more about the talents they bring to class, college, and their relationships. After a couple of weeks, invite student to share their Strengths Focused Listing with a partner. Lead a brief discussion of talents embedded in strengths.
43. **Top 10 List.** Close the term by asking student to create a Top 10 List, Top 5 List, Take Home Message, or Moments that Matter List of main points they are going to take away from your class discussion on strengths.
44. **Five on Friday.** Take five minutes at the end of the last class period of the week (even if it is not Friday). Ask students to reflect back on the week and identify five ways they have used their strengths in pursuit and achievement of class, college, or personal goals. Provide a few minutes of reflection time. Ask five volunteers to share so that you end the week with Five on Friday.
45. **Office Chats.** Encourage students to visit you during your office hours. Ask students to come for a strengths chat. Use this time to ask students about their strengths and ways they are linking their strengths to the content and work in your class. This individualized strengths conversation can be very powerful as students learn to link their class success and future careers. This interpersonal connection with students is also a powerful motivation and source of great inspiration.
46. **Invited Guests.** Invite guests to the classroom. While the guests are invited to discuss content, careers, and learning goals, use this opportunity for students to learn about the strengths of others. You might ask the guest to complete the Clifton

StrengthsFinder prior to visiting your class. Or, you could simply ask the guest to tell about a time when they were at their best in their career, and then ask students to think about the strengths that might be the underpinning of that success.

47. **Service Learning.** Provide service learning opportunities through internships, clinical settings, and visits to business and industry. Include strengths observations as a part of the experience in addition to the content and career observations. Ask students to integrate strengths observations into their service learning narratives as a way to link strengths with “real-world” opportunities.
48. **Issue Bank.** Create a Strengths Issue Bank on a flip chart. Post it in your class every day. As issues arise inside, or outside, of class about strengths, ask students to record the issue on the Strengths Issue Bank. Arrange time at the end of each week to address the comments, questions, or issues listed on the Strengths Issue Bank. Assign students to answer issue bank questions as appropriate.
49. **Study Groups.** Encourage students to form study groups based on diversity of strengths. Much research demonstrates the importance of out-of-class groups as beneficial for student engagement, retention, and achievement. By forming groups based on diversity of strengths, you are adding the mutual benefit of learning to work and partner with others with different strengths. This benefit will serve students well as they move into their careers and jobs.

Assessments:

50. **Assignment Alignment.** Develop assessments and testing strategies to provide for a range of learning styles and strengths. Make sure to ask student to not only complete the assignment using their strengths, but also be prepared to tell why the choices they made in doing the assignment aligned with their strengths.
51. **Strengths Choice.** On a quiz or test, allow a two-part test. Each part would have a 40-point Part

A or a 40-point Part B. Students can answer one question on Part A and move on to the next page OR answer Part B, which includes four questions worth 10 points each. This allows a student a choice when taking a test. Multiple choice or short answer essay by choice. The choice will be one way they can demonstrate their learning through their strengths.

52. **Your Own Question.** Provide a space at the end of the test for students to write and answer their own question. Use a statement like: “If there is something you studied that was NOT on the test, use this space to write and answer your own test question.” This test question gets bonus points if the student can identify why having this option links to their strengths.
53. **Exam Cover.** Create a cover sheet for your exams asking students to identify any questions on the exam that were misleading, confusing, or needed clarifying. Ask students to reword the question and answer it. Give bonus points to students who can link their strengths to why they took or did not take this option.
54. **Play to Your Strengths.** When students have a choice of assignments, encourage them to use their strengths as a way to analyze assessment options. Encourage students to link their strengths to assessments.
55. **Strengths Samples.** Create examples (collect examples) of well-written test responses, creative projects, or other assignments. Link these examples to the student strengths represented. Share examples as you make the assignment. Attach the examples of written test responses to the course outline or syllabus.

Recognition:

56. **Winner’s Cards.** Don’t wait until the end of the term to write Winner’s Cards. Winner’s Cards are short notes to students explicitly tying strengths to achievements and success. Write winners cards for each of your students at three weeks into the

term or at mid-term. Our orientation might be to wait until the end of the term. Writing a brief card or note earlier about your observations of the student's strengths will provide powerful interpersonal motivation for the student to succeed (using their strengths) for the rest of the term. Write them at the end of the semester too.

57. **Strengths Treasure Chest.** Ask students to watch for times when they or others in the class use their strengths to the benefit of the class culture, energy, learning, achievement, etc. Ask students write a note about the experience and drop it in a box designated as the Strengths Treasure Chest. Use this as a recognition strategy several times a month to get students excited about being "talent scouts" and watching for strengths.
58. **Drop Zone.** After sharing the ideas from *How Full Is Your Bucket?*, use wall space outside your office or create a one-day opportunity in class for students to share "Positive Drops." (Templates for drops are available at www.bucketbook.com.)
59. **Personal Assessment and Development Plan.** Ask students to complete a Strengths Personal Assessment and Development Plan. Ask students to list and briefly discuss three strengths they use to complete the critical activities of your class. Ask students to link these strengths to what they believe will be essential to their continued success in college and beyond. Next, ask students to write a paragraph description for each of these strengths. Encourage students to discuss their choices and narratives with a classmate.
60. **Legacy Letter.** Have students write a legacy letter at the end of the term telling new students who will take the class the following semester how they used their strengths in the class. Faculty can use the letters in subsequent terms to help students understand how to use their strengths in pursuit of class outcomes.

