

A student's strength and weakness



Context

Helping learners to understand their strengths and weaknesses can have a positive impact on their learning process. Indeed, learners unaware of their own capabilities might not employ the best techniques suite for them. Knowing your strength and weaknesses can help to know yourself better (see 'metacognition'), improve your performance and self-awareness, as well as teach you how you function, how you approach stressful and challenging situation and more.

For students with specific learning disorders, this is especially relevant, as they do not have to be defined by what they 'cannot' accomplished but rather by what they are good at. Self-advocacy can help them communicate their needs to get help to meet their goals. It also includes an awareness of their rights. Research has shown that the development of self-advocacy skills, which is related to self-determination, is of utmost importance to the successful transition of students with disabilities from school into adult life.



Types of strengths and weaknesses

A strength is an activity that makes the learner feel powerful. It is not just something that they are good at. That's a skill.

Some type of common strength and weaknesses observed in classrooms:

Academic Strengths:

- Ability to learn from mistakes
- Self Discipline
- Problem Solving
- Leadership skills
- Being Kind and friendly
- Honesty
- Creativity
- Critical thinking

- Ability to Listen
- Open-mindedness
- Planning skills
- Dealing with criticism
- Collaboration
- Time Management
- Socialization
- ...

Academic weaknesses:

- Procrastination
- Stubbornness
- Impatience
- Intolerance
- Aggressiveness
- Bluntness
- Talkative
- ...



How to identify your strength?

Recognizing one's strength:

Learners can identify their strength by first knowing what strengths are:

- You have a sense of energy and engagement; this is called flow.
- You often lose your sense of time because you are so engrossed in the task.
- You rapidly learn new information and approaches.
- You show high levels of performance.
- You want to do things that use your strengths, even when you are tired or stressed.



Ask yourself the right questions:



- What are my hobbies?
- What do I love to do?
- What tasks do I perform for hours and not feel tired?
- What tasks do I do that leave me drained and exhausted?
- What do people compliment me on?
- What did I enjoy doing that people appreciated ?



Strength of Students with Dys

Dys students tend to have lower self-esteem and self-confidence in their own strength. First, to help them develop their strength, think of engaging in activities such as:

“Demystify” the diagnosis by clarifying and correcting any misinformation (i.e., that they are “stupid”). It is important to not just use the diagnostic terms (i.e. “You have a Learning Disability”) but to also explain what the disability entails.

Emphasize strengths so that the weaknesses/challenges do not become the prime focus.

Let the student know that she can learn; she will just learn differently.

When discussing strengths, give concrete examples and avoid false praise.

Discuss at the student’s pace. It does not all have to be discussed in one sitting but rather may come up spontaneously.

Work with the student to develop a list of strengths and weaknesses along with special talents or interests. This should not just be related to academics.

Have those conversation in a positive and open way. Be sure the student knows that they has a support system available to help them succeed.

Work with the student to develop a list of strengths and weaknesses along with special talents or interests. This should not just be related to academics.

Use multisensory learning into your practice to level the playing fields.

Allow other forms of reading.

Use graphic organizers, outlines, concept maps and more.

In turn, try to recognize Dys student's common strength such as:

**High levels of creativity,
Stronger comprehension skills,
Stronger reasoning skills,
Enhanced visual processing,
Vivid imagination, and more.**



Resources

Use a pre-made lesson plan to help your students identify their strength: Confidence

- Building Module: Lesson 2 - Identifying strength.
<https://www.overcomingobstacles.org>
- We for She Next Gen: <http://weforshenextgen.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D-Know-Your-Strengths.-Own-Your-Strengths.pdf>