

Identifying personal strengths

Year Learning Activity

Description

Students explore things they are good at and identify these as their strengths, and explore how these can change over time.

Learning focus

Identifying personal strengths and abilities.

Key understandings

- Everybody is good at something.
- People are good at different activities and skills because they have different strengths.
- It is okay for people to have different strengths.
- Our strengths change over time.
- Participating in activities that we are good at and that we enjoy makes us feel happy.

Materials

1. Student Activity Sheet: *My strengths* [one per student]

Teaching and Learning Activities

Before you get started

- The purpose of this activity is to assist students to identify their personal ability strengths, not to highlight their intellectual limitations. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory suggests intelligence has specific components rather than a single general ability. Gardner opposes the idea of labelling learners to a specific intelligence, rather that each individual possesses a unique blend of all the intelligences.
- Resilience and emotional wellbeing are important concepts to teach in the early childhood years as this is when younger students may need support to identify their own personal strengths. Identifying and describing their own strengths and achievements, and those of others, form the basis of persistence, understanding change and the transition and change in identity. See the Guide: [Resilience and life skills](#) for more information.

Whole Class

This activity helps students to identify their own strengths and recognise that personal strengths can change over time.

1. Explain that knowing your strengths is a clever skill to help people stay happy and positive and bounce back from setbacks. When you know your strengths you can use them to help you achieve goals. Stress that our strengths can change over time.

Ask the students:

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- **Words:** *Who likes reading stories and writing words?*
- **Logic/Maths:** *Who likes playing card games or adding up numbers?*
- **Space/Vision:** *Who is good at remembering things they have seen?*
- **Body movement:** *Who likes running and jumping?*
- **Music:** *Who likes singing or dancing to music?*
- **Nature:** *Who likes watching nature shows on TV or collecting insects?*
- **People:** *Who like organising games to play with your friends?*
- **Self:** *Who likes setting a goal like saving up pocket money to buy something you really want?*

2. Ask:

- *What are some ways that you can work out what your strengths are? (listening to feedback from others; looking at what you really like doing; comparing yourself to others in this area)*
- *Do you think everyone is good at something?*
- *Why do you think people are good at different activities and skills? (because they have different strengths)*
- *Is it okay for people to have different strengths? (yes, if we get to know people who are different to us, it's good to include them in games and conversation)*
- *Does knowing what we are good at help us cope when times are unhappy for a while? (yes, often doing activities that involve these strengths help us 'be in the zone' and forget about unhappy things for a while. We also learn things more quickly when we are using these skills so this gives us more meaning and purpose)*

3. Explain that what we are good at (or our strengths) change over time. Conduct a [thumbs up, thumbs down](#) vote using the following questions:

- *Can you read more words now than when you were 3 or 4?*
- *Can you count better now than when you were 3 or 4?*
- *Can you run faster now than when you were 3 or 4?*
- *Can you ride a bike better now than when you were 3 or 4?*
- *Can you sing more songs now than when you were 3 or 4?*

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- *Can you catch a ball better now than when you were 3 or 4?*
- *Are you braver now than when you were 3 or 4?*

4. Ask:

- *Why are we mostly better at these things now than when we were 3 or 4? (practice, persistence, we stuck to a plan, our bodies grew, friends and family helped us along the way, etc.)*
- *Do you think you might continue to discover new things you are good at (or strengths) as you get older?*
- *What might these things be?*

Independent or Small Group

This activity invites the students to consider their personal ability strengths and how they can change over time.

1. Explain that our ability strengths fall into 8 different groups and that we all have different strengths and that these may change over time.
2. Using the Student Activity Sheet: *My strengths*, explain the different types of ability strengths represented on the activity sheet.
 - Have students complete the activity sheet and share their results with a partner.
 - Using a show of hands, record the number of students who identified their best strengths as Word Smart, Maths Smart, Music Smart etc. and discuss the results and the impact this might have on the things they like to do in class and at home.
3. Ask students to fold a piece of paper in half and make a [T-chart](#). Label one column 'Now' and one column 'When I am 8'.
 - Have students choose a skill they have coloured green in the activity sheet and draw or write an example of that skill under the NOW column and then draw or write an example of this type of skill that they would like to achieve by the time they are 8 years old. For example: MATH SMART: NOW - I know my 2 times table; WHEN I AM 8 – Want to know up to 5 times table.
 - Repeat this process 2-3 times and have students share their goals with a partner.

Reflection

1. Ask some students to show their work to the class and explain their responses.

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2. Discuss, as a whole class, the students' responses of what they would like their strengths to be in the future.
3. Highlight words such as happy, enjoyment, fun, good at, strength, persistence, practise, set-backs, getting help.
4. Send T-charts home with students to share with their family.

Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

Teaching Resources

[My strengths](#)

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