

Character Strengths

Synoptic Table of Activities

Title	Objectives	Overview	Evaluation & Reflection
Positive Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Self-presentation <p><u>Level of Difficulty:</u> Beginner</p>	This is Group Activity which encourages students to present themselves accenting their character strengths.	By the end of the activity students will realize, that everyone has strengths and those strengths need to be recognized, celebrated, enhanced and put into good use when an opportunity arises.
Inventory of strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • <u>Level of Difficulty:</u> Beginner 	This is Homework Activity that helps students to discover their top-strengths, which are also called signature strengths.	By the end of this activity, students will learn what they are good at, and how they can use their signature strengths and the skills that they accompany them in everyday life and in job search.
You are ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • <u>Level of Difficulty:</u> Beginner 	This is an Individual Activity which prompts students on how to identify others strengths and communicate them by paying compliments to each other.	Students will learn to enrich the potentials and strengths of others and themselves by receiving feedback from others.

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Title of the Activity:	Positive Introduction
Duration:	(45 minutes)
Type of Activity:	Group
Level of Difficulty:	Beginner
Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students develop <i>self-presentation</i> skills • Encourage them to talk about their character strengths • It will help students to develop their <i>self-awareness</i>.
Instructions:	<p>Material: N/A</p> <p>Implementation Procedure: Ask students to tell a story about an event in their lives that showed them at their very best, not in terms of an athletic or academic achievement, but as a moral being. Encourage students to mention their character strengths.</p> <p>In a class of twenty students, these introductions can take several hours and may even stretch over a few sessions, but it is always time well spent.</p>
Evaluation & Reflection:	<p>Some of the skills which are expected to be mentioned during the implementation of the activity are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • courage: <i>not</i> shrinking from threat, challenge or difficulty • curiosity: taking an interest in all of ongoing experience • active listening • creativity (thinking of innovative and productive ways to do things). <p>Need to tell students about appreciative listening, how to listen carefully to what is said and then to respond in a way that builds on what has been conveyed as opposed to disagreeing with it, dismissing it, or ignoring it out of discomfort.</p>

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By the end of the activity students will realize, that everyone has strengths and strengths need to be recognized, celebrated, strengthened, and used.

These introductions frame how students think about one another for the rest of the semester and thereafter.

Reference:

Idea from: Park, N. & Peterson, Ch. (2009). Character Strengths: Research and Practice, *Journal of College and Character*, 10:4, DOI: 10.2202/1940-1639.1042

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Title of the Activity: Duration:	Inventory of Strengths (45 minutes)
Type of Activity:	Homework
Level of Difficulty:	Beginner
Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students to develop their <i>self - awareness</i>, revealing their top-strengths, which are called signature strengths. • Create a strengths vocabulary that will help students to describe their own strengths. • Encourage participants to use identified signature strengths in everyday life and in job search.
Instructions:	<p><u>Material:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VIA Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) is a self-report survey suitable for adults aged 18 or above, that comprehensively assesses the 24-character strengths. • For children and youth aged 10-17, the VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA-Youth) is suitable. • Both of those surveys are available online at no cost (www.authentichappiness.org or www.viastrengths.org). The inventory is presented in different languages • For students who do not have possibility to read in English, give them a copy of VIA Classification of Strengths (Appendix). <p><u>Implementation Procedure:</u></p> <p>Signature or character strengths are personal traits or characteristics that a person feels they own, celebrate, and frequently exercise. The VIA-IS is a comprehensive classification and measurement system of 24 ubiquitous</p>

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character strengths (positive traits reflected in thoughts, feelings, and behaviours), organized under six broad virtues, each of which is morally valued in its own right. According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), people possess five ‘signature’ or ‘top five’ strengths out of 24. The use of them is fulfilling and linked to an individual’s sense of self, identity, and authenticity and therefore arguably their well-being.

Ask students to complete *VIA-IS* or *Via-Youth* (depending on their age) online. Typically, it takes about 15 –minutes. Once individuals register on the website and complete the survey, feedback is given about their top strengths, which are called *signature strengths*.

In case students do not have possibility to read in English, give them a VIA Classification of Strengths asking to find 5 strengths, which are the most suitable for them.

Ask students to think, how they can use identified signature strengths in career planning or job finding.

Evaluation & Reflection:

Some of the skills which are expected to be mentioned during the implementation of the activity are:

- Honesty (speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way)
- Creativity (thinking of innovative and productive ways to do things).
- Responsibility (do what you have to do in the right way)

The facilitator needs to encourage students to be honest when evaluating their character strengths.

After all students completed the instrument, the facilitator is called to explain, that signature strengths show what they are good at, and that they can use it to improve their personal and professional life etc. Moreover, character strengths can help participants on how identify jobs that may be

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suitable to them.

Reference:

Know and Celebrate the Real You. <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/CharacterStrengths>

Character strengths Fact sheets. <https://www.viacharacter.org/www/Reports-Courses-Resources/Resources/Character-Strength-Fact-Sheets>

Additional Resources:

Appendix: VIA Classification of Character Strengths

APPENDIX

VIA Classification of Character Strengths

Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence: Awe and wonder for beauty, admiration for skill, excellence, elevation for moral beauty.

Gratitude: Thankful for the good, expressing thanks, feeling blessed

Hope: Optimism, positive future-mindedness, expecting the best & working to achieve it

Humour: Playfulness, bringing smiles to others, light-hearted – seeing the lighter side

Spirituality: Connecting with the sacred, purpose, meaning, faith, religiousness

Bravery: Valour, not shrinking from threat or challenge, facing fears, speaking up for what's right

Perseverance: Persistence, industry, finishing what one starts, overcoming obstacles

Honesty: Authenticity, being true to oneself, sincerity without pretence, integrity

Creativity: Original, adaptive, ingenuity, seeing and doing things in different ways

Curiosity: Interest, novelty-seeking, exploration, openness to experience

Judgment: Critical thinking, thinking through all sides, not jumping to conclusions

Forgiveness: Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings, giving people a second chance, letting go of hurt when wronged.

Humility: Modesty, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves

Prudence: Careful about one's choices, cautious, not taking undue risks

Self-Regulation: Self-control, disciplined, managing impulses, emotions, and vices

Love of Learning: Mastering new skills & topics, systematically adding to knowledge

Perspective: Wisdom, providing wise counsel, taking the big picture view

Love: Both loving and being loved, valuing close relations with others, genuine warmth

Kindness: Generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruism, doing for others

Social Intelligence: Emotional intelligence, aware of the motives/feelings of self/others, knowing what makes other people tick

Teamwork: Citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty, contributing to a group effort

Fairness: Adhering to principles of justice, not letting feelings bias decisions, equal opportunity for all

Leadership: Organizing group activities to get things done, positively influencing others

Zest: Vitality, enthusiasm for life, vigour, energy, not doing things half-heartedly

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Title of the Activity:	You Are...
Duration:	(45 minutes)
Type of Activity:	Individual
Level of Difficulty:	Beginner
Objectives (including skills which are expected to be enhanced):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to identify and communicate character strengths. • Enrich the potentials and strengths of students by receiving feedback from others.
Instructions:	<p>Material:</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Implementation Procedure:</p> <p>Students are asked to pay compliments to each other. To do that students have to remember their friends in different situations – school environment, leisure time, communication etc. Compliments mean good things, character strengths. Students are asked to avoid such sentences as “Be more...”. Compliments have to start with the words “You are...” Answering to compliments students has to avoid to say “No”, “I am not...” Students have to acknowledge received compliments (smiling, saying thanks).</p> <p>Individual work: Students are asked to make a list of compliments, which they received, and then to answer the questions: Were some compliments very new for you? Did these compliments exchange your self-image?</p> <p>If they want, they can include some compliments, which they received, to their signature strengths list.</p>
Evaluation & Reflection:	<p>Remind students, that informal assessment strategies (like compliments) can help to identify personal character strengths.</p> <p>The ability to identify and communicate character strengths is a sophisticated skill.</p> <p>Students will learn to enrich the potentials and strengths of others and themselves by receiving feedback from others.</p>