

The following strengths-based teaching and learning activities are examples of opportunities for you and your students to use strengths in the classroom. The following provides high-level considerations as well as activities that can be implemented with no materials, followed by activities that use the additional resources provided.

- Add your CliftonStrengths to your syllabus. Engage your students by sharing how you show up each day as a faculty or staff member, and how that connects to your particular strengths.
- Start each class period with five minutes of talking with students about strengths. Connecting on low-stakes content can 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.
- 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 to understand how to use their strengths in pursuit of educational goals. Doing it first also makes strengths conversations a priority.
- Use multiple strategies for learning in your class. Delivering material through lecture, group discussion, activities, role play, problem-based learning, and team learning all contribute to teaching opportunities that will meet the unique talents and strengths of students in your class. Implement an in-class 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.
- Provide experiential-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 to link strengths with “real-world” opportunities.
- 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.
- Incorporate CliftonStrengths using relevant “pop” culture references in class. Ask students to reflect on a television show or movie and analyze the strengths they see evident or developed in the pop culture example. (You can tailor this to your area of study!)

In-Class Activities (no materials required)

- 1. IceBreaker Questions.** Select one or two questions from the Strengths Ice Breakers handout and have students answer prior to being coursework.
- 2. Good News.** Begin class by popcorning around the room and have students tell a “good news” story about a way they have recently used their strengths.
- 3. 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.
- 4. 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.
- 5. 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.
- 6. Top Five Takeaways.** Close the term by asking students to create a Top Five List of main points they are going to take away from your class discussion on strengths.
- 7. 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.
- 8. Theme Discovery.** Choose three-five themes then ask those with that theme to stand up or raise their hand. Then ask a variety of those students to define what that theme means to them. This helps to show how themes show up differently across people. Be sure to go through all 34 themes over the course of the semester.

In-Class Activities (materials required)

9. **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 Top Five CliftonStrengths 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.
10. **Envelope 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 three-four questions at the end of each class and engage students in a brief discussion about the questions.
11. **How I Use My Strengths.** Utilize the “My Strengths & How I Use Them” worksheet and have students share with a partner.
12. **Strengths Slogans.** Have students create slogans about their strengths. Ask students to create posters on flip charts with their strengths slogans.
13. **Strengths Poster.** Organize students into teams of four-five. Give teams paper, flip charts, markers, or other resources, and ask them to demonstrate a strengths concept through illustration with words or pictures.
14. **Talent and Performance.** Ask students to draw a circle on a piece of paper. Ask them to draw four-five 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.
15. **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 four-five 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.
16. **Scavenger Hunt.** Utilize the “Scavenger Hunt” worksheet and facilitate the activity.
17. **The Great Wall of Talent.** Utilize the “The Great Wall of Talent” handout and facilitate activity.