

Identifying Our Strengths

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Estimated time:	45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [25 minutes] Activity #1• [20 minutes] Assignment
Group or individual activity:	Group
Ages:	12-18 years old
Grades:	Grades 7-12
Online / offline elements:	This learning experience includes an offline activity and assignment.
Areas:	Main area: Digital Economy Additional areas: Identity Exploration and Formation
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Learning Goal

Participants will identify three types of skills that they possess — transferable, knowledge / domain, and personal trait skills — and consider how they may combine these skills and apply them towards opportunities in the future.

Materials

- [One per participant] Handout: [Assessing Your \(Verb, Noun, and Adjective\) Skills!](#)
- [One per participant] Paper
- [One per participant] Pens or pencils

Resources

- Blog post: [How to Get into Stanford with B's on Your Transcript: Failed Simulations and the Surprising Psychology of Impressiveness](#) - by Cal Newport
- Article: [Skills as Verbs, Nouns or Adjectives](#) - by Dick Bolles

Activity #1: What Can You Uniquely Offer?

SAY:

- Today, let's focus on exploring our skills and strengths and how we can use these skills to pursue opportunities we're excited about.
- Sometimes, it can be difficult to figure out how to translate your interests and hobbies into skills that you can showcase for different opportunities — whether that might be a volunteering opportunity, an internship, a university, or a career pathway. However, with some practice, doing so is within reach!
- As a first step, it is important to identify the skills you have developed in and out of school.

[Pass out the Assessing Your (Verb, Noun, and Adjective) Skills! Handout and pens or pencils.]

SAY:

- On your handout, there are lists of two different types of skills: 1) transferable skills, and 2) knowledge or domain skills. You can think of **transferable skills** as those skills that you could easily transfer from one opportunity to the next. For example, adapting to new situations and collaborating with others can help you thrive no matter where you are — in school, or whatever career you ultimately choose, from being a nurse to a school teacher, or a computer programmer. You

can also think of these skills as verbs — like “researching,” “planning,” or “negotiating.” **Knowledge or domain skills** are those skills that are specific to a certain knowledge area, like visual arts (e.g., graphic design) or science (e.g., chemistry). Some examples of these skills could be knowing how to create a web page, creating fun infographics for papers, or conducting a chemistry experiment in a lab. You may have learned these skills in school, in an afterschool program, from books, a mentor, or simply on your own. You can think of these skills as nouns, like “biology,” “theatre,” or “statistics.”

- The handout also includes a column for skills that you feel describe how you go about doing things in your day-to-day life. These skills are called **personal trait skills** and can be thought of as adjectives. For example, you may be very creative in how you approach an issue and enjoy thinking outside the box. Or you might be very caring towards others and always try hard to make situations as inclusive and equitable as possible. Or you may be strong-minded, which can help you persevere even as you hit obstacles.
- Looking at your Assessing Your (Verb, Noun, and Adjective) Skills! Handout, I want you to take the next 10 minutes to rate how good you think you are for each transferable and knowledge / domain skill. For now, ignore the last column — the personal trait skills.
- For some knowledge / domain skills, you may want to be more specific. For instance, under “performing arts,” you may be really great at playing the piano. Under the “sub-area” column, feel free to write the specific sub-area of knowledge you’re skilled in!
- There are also a few blank rows at the bottom of the knowledge / domain skill list — if you don’t see some skill areas on the list that you’re really passionate about, go ahead and add them!

[Give participants 10 minutes to fill out their ratings for the “Transferable Skill” and “Knowledge / Domain Skill” columns of the handout.]

SAY:

- Now, pick at least five skills (across both the transferable and knowledge / domain skills) that you rated highly in (i.e., marked as a four or five). Consider *how* you engage in those skills. Maybe it’s “kindly,” or “creatively,” or perhaps “flexibly” — your personal trait skills. To identify these skills, you might consider, “How do your family or friends describe you?” and “How do you approach new tasks or activities?” Take a few minutes to write down some adjectives under the “Personal Trait Skill / Adjective” column on your handout.

[Give participants five minutes to write down a few personal trait skills on the handout.]

SAY:

- Hopefully, this exercise gave you a sense of some of your strengths, which can be thought of as a mixture of [nouns, verbs, and adjectives](#).
- Remember, when you're thinking about future opportunities that you're excited about, what makes you unique is not having several nouns or verbs or adjectives in isolation. It's how you ultimately *bring them together* that can help you understand what you uniquely offer to the world!

Assignment

[Pass out a piece of paper to each participant.]

SAY:

- After completing the handout, write down the 10 skills that you rated most highly. Try to pick a mixture of transferable skills and knowledge / domain skills (and add in a few personal trait skills you wrote down) — that is, verb, noun, and adjective skills.
- For each of the 10 skills, provide a SPECIFIC example of a time when you used this ability.
- Finally, from your list, choose at least five and think about how you could combine these skills to pursue and succeed in opportunities you're excited about. Explain how you would combine these skills in a paragraph below your list.
- For example, let's say I'm a student who wants to be a mental health counselor one day. I'm doing really well in my psychology and art classes (i.e., knowledge / domain skills), and I'm also really good at planning group meetings and public speaking (i.e., transferable skills). Additionally, I feel that I approach new projects in a very creative way (i.e., a personal trait skill). I could use these skills in the future, after I get my counseling license, to hold group-based art therapy sessions, bringing my imagination to creative and therapeutic activities that I organize each week for group members.

Assessing Your (Verb, Noun, and Adjective) Skills!

Understanding the skills you offer to the world is a key step in deciding what opportunities you may want to pursue, and what skills you might like to develop further. For the skills below, rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 = Very Strong, 1 = No Ability). After this, you'll be given a few minutes to add some personal trait skills that you feel apply to your transferable skills and knowledge / domain skills.

Transferable Skill / Verb	How Good Are You at This Skill?					Personal Trait Skill / Adjective
Managing time	1	2	3	4	5	
Planning and organizing	1	2	3	4	5	
Resolving conflicts	1	2	3	4	5	
Persuading	1	2	3	4	5	
Negotiating	1	2	3	4	5	
Communicating (written)	1	2	3	4	5	
Communicating (interpersonal)	1	2	3	4	5	
Public speaking	1	2	3	4	5	
Collaborating	1	2	3	4	5	
Mentoring / coaching	1	2	3	4	5	
Speaking / reading / writing two or more languages	1	2	3	4	5	
Researching	1	2	3	4	5	
Analyzing	1	2	3	4	5	
Thinking creatively	1	2	3	4	5	
Adapting to new situations	1	2	3	4	5	
Using social media (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat)	1	2	3	4	5	
Using Adobe Suite (e.g., Photoshop, InDesign)	1	2	3	4	5	
Using Microsoft Office (e.g., Word, Excel)	1	2	3	4	5	

