

CLIFTON YOUTH
STRENGTHSEXPLORER**EDUCATOR/LEADER ACTIVITY BOOK**

The Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer is an instrument based on **40 years of science**. The Gallup Organization has conducted thousands of studies on the talents of individuals. From that rich history of research, this instrument was created to help youths, ages 10-14, **discover and develop the unique talents within them**.

Here's what this can help you do:

- Learn more about each student's unique talents.
- Help each student use his or her natural patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior and apply them to activities within and outside of school.
- Make an even **more positive impact on each student's life**.
- Influence each student's achievement.
- Better match each student to developmental experiences that **foster leaps in growth**.

This workbook was created to help educators and group leaders be part of the discovery and growth process. As adults, we seek to understand and communicate with our students. Sometimes we connect with them. Sometimes we misunderstand each other and have to try again to achieve understanding. Sometimes words have one meaning to us and a different meaning to our students. A common language facilitates understanding. The Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer introduces a language that is intended to help you better understand your students' talents by **helping define what makes them wonderfully unique**.

We're all different – we respond to the world in our own way from the time we are born. The age span of 10-14 years includes a tremendous range of development, behavior, maturity, and thinking. Youth perceptions of the world are naturally different from those of adults. Each student's report is specifically about his or her unique talents – and this activity book will help you help your students by exploring aspects of their talent in greater detail.

This guide contains individual activities that allow you to focus on one student at a time, as well as group activities that involve everyone. A toolbox of activities and ideas is included to print or copy for use with your students. Keep in mind that you and your students have access to the *Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer Workbook*, which is also full of activities to help develop your students' talents. This *Educator/Leader Activity Book* is designed to give you the confidence, language, and activities to help your students excel and thrive in their areas of talent.



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CONCEPT:

UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: YOURS AND THEIRS

It is important to remember that people see the world through their own personal filters. Our culture, upbringing, extended families, education, what we read, work experiences, travel, our adult friends, and so on influence our filters. Our filters cause us to make judgments about things we see and hear. For instance, one person's filters and labels might look something like this:

- An act of caring might be labeled as good.
- Telling a joke during school might be labeled as bad.
- Thinking about the future might be labeled as valuable.
- Getting upset about losing a baseball game might be considered overreacting.

Another person who looks at the same situation with his or her unique filter might say it's a social talent to tell a joke at school, or it's a natural part of competitiveness to get upset about losing a game. We have different filters.

Our students have their own filters, too.

Each Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer theme is a filter. A child with a great sense of humor will seize a moment to tell a joke. A child with a strong desire to learn may go back on the Internet, even after a project is finished, to find out more. A child with Relating talent will take

the initiative to meet the "new kid in school" even if his or her close friends don't. A child who is competitive will naturally be emotional about losing. A child who loves to organize may rearrange her room more often than a parent thinks necessary. Through the theme filter, these behaviors can be seen as examples of talent in the Presence, Discoverer, Relating, Competing, and Organizer themes.

As the Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer report helps you better understand your students' filters, you can also understand how different those filters may be from your own and from those of their parents, siblings, and peers.

As educators, it's important for us to be our students' advocates — the people in their lives who help them see and focus on the best in them. There will always be plenty of people around children who see their weaknesses and label their behaviors in less-than-positive ways. You can be one of the people in each student's life who helps him or her see life from a strengths perspective. This effort should not be considered an exercise or a course. It should be viewed as an ongoing, living, growing part of a student's life.

Try to see various situations through one of your student's themes. How does it change your perspective? How can it help you more positively influence your student's development?

RECOGNIZING AND SHARING



There are many ways — big and small — to demonstrate your awareness of talent and start those positive echoes in a student's life. Below are some ideas to start you thinking about how you can keep your students' talents top of mind, encourage them in their areas of talent, and be an advocate for them by sharing their talents with others.

- The last page of each student's report is a certificate listing his or her top three themes. How could students enhance, decorate, or display those certificates in your classroom? What other media might help students share their themes?
- Make it a goal to say three things you like about each student over the course of a week. Include moments when you observed their talents in action.
- Creating a checklist may help you track your interactions with students and meet your goal of giving each student three encouraging comments per week. You might simply reproduce the classroom map on the next page to remind you of themes you can reinforce.
- Write a note to each student to recognize the positive actions you've observed.
- Start a teacher-student journal about talents. Set expectations for yourself and students about how often you'll make entries to share with each other.
- Share your positive theme language with other adults who interact with your students.
- Parent-teacher interactions and conferences are great opportunities for recognizing and sharing a student's talents. What if you started every parent-teacher conference with observations you've made about a student's talents in action?
- Sending postcards home with positive comments can reinforce what's best about each student. These could be printed with a heading like "Good News From Aldrich Elementary."
- Start a "Talent Box" where students deposit positive notes about one another for you to distribute.
- Make talent books. Throughout the course of a year, have all members of the class create an entry for every student's book. Each page should be an illustrated note about a moment when that student's talent made a difference or what classmates like, value, and/or appreciate about him or her. At the end of the year, put these pages together, and present each student with his or her own talent book.

MY STUDENTS' THEMES

The next page lets you see your students' themes individually, while at the same time seeing the group's themes as a whole. Each student's theme box has room for you to write his or her name and top three themes.

Example

CLASSROOM MAP

<u>Mike</u> Dependability Competing Achieving	<u>Ian</u> Competing Dependability Future Thinker	<u>Ruby</u> Confidence Presence Achieving
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MY STUDENTS' THEMES

● CLASSROOM TALENT MAP

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CLIFTON YOUTH STRENGTH EXPLORER

THEME DESCRIPTIONS

BRIEF THEME DESCRIPTIONS

ACHIEVING	You have more energy and more goals than other people. You love a sense of accomplishment.
CARING	In your heart, helping other people is very important. You want to make the world better by helping people in small ways or big ways.
COMPETING	You see many things in life as a game, and you feel great joy when you win. You truly hate to lose because you are always striving for first place.
CONFIDENCE	You believe in yourself and what you can do. This helps you take on challenges because you feel sure you can succeed.
DEPENDABILITY	Trust is important to you, and you care about being seen as responsible and trustworthy. People count on you to do what you say you will do. When you make a promise, you mean to keep it.
DISCOVERER	A thinker and learner, you are excited about exploring ideas and making connections. You like to ask the questions “How?” and “Why?”
FUTURE THINKER	Your mind loves to think and dream about the future. You are a person who thinks about what is possible, not what is impossible.
ORGANIZER	Scheduling, planning, and organizing your world makes life better. People count on you to get the details right and pull a plan together.
PRESENCE	You were born to be at the front of the room telling stories and taking the lead. Other people watch you and listen to you.
RELATING	You like to start friendships and keep them for a long time — maybe even your whole life. You widen the circle of friends for yourself and others.



EDUCATOR/LEADER TOOL KIT

The next several pages contain activities that you may copy and use with your students who take the Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer. Ideally, these ideas will serve as a catalyst to spark more creative activities you can do with students to nurture and develop their unique talents.

FOCUS ON YOU INSTRUCTIONS

Focus on You will help you get to know each other better. Ask each person to complete the row for himself or herself. Then let each student share one at a time. While one student is talking, the others can record the answers in the space provided. Use the next page, or create a chart of your own. Adapt the columns as you see fit. Additional items for Focus on You might include:

- a success and how one of your themes contributed
- three words to describe your school year
- one way you used a theme this week
- one thing that is very important to you
- what you can do in the future using this theme

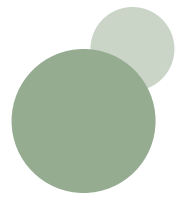
POINTERS FOR USING FOCUS ON YOU:

You may want to let the students suggest items that could be included. Change the items around and make Focus on You a weekly activity. It can be a great way to get students focused in the morning, after lunch and recess, or at the beginning of a class.

Example

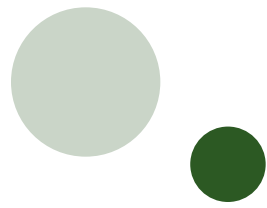
Name	What I Like to Do (Interests, Hobbies)	My Three Themes	One Theme and How I Have Used It or Would Like to Use It
Sam	swim eat read books	Dependability Discoverer Achieving	Discoverer: I love to read about people and adventures.
Maria	talk on the phone play flute babysit	Caring Confidence Relating	Caring: I like to help my friends and take care of little kids.

FOCUS ON YOU



Name	What I Like to Do (Interests, Hobbies)	My Three Themes	One Theme and How I Have Used It or Would Like to Use It

FOCUS ON YOU



Name			

THEMES IN ACTION

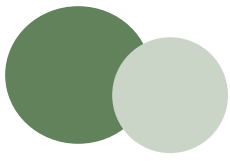
Instructions for Themes in Action activity:

Ask your students to write their top three themes in the three boxes. Then have them think about a recent time/instance/example of when they used that theme – in other words, when they saw their themes in action. This example could have happened at home, at school, with friends, or in any other setting.

After your students have completed the worksheet, go around the room and have them share one of their themes and how they have seen it in action recently. Depending on the size of the group, you could have them share one theme in action or all three.

Additional ideas:

- Copy the Themes in Action sheet for your students to take home. Ask them to interview parents, teachers, coaches, counselors, or friends. How have these people seen your students' themes in action?
- Make this a monthly exercise – keep your students thinking often about ways they spontaneously use their talents.



THEMES IN ACTION

List your three themes. Then share a *specific* example of a time when you used this theme at school, at home, or with friends.

Theme Name	Theme in Action

SCAVENGER HUNT

INSTRUCTIONS

SCAVENGER HUNT #1

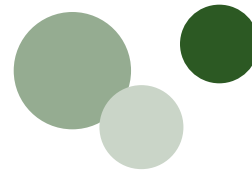
- For this activity, students will need to wear name tags with their top three themes on them. You may want to let students design the name tags themselves, or you could use the certificate on the last page of the report to make name tags. You may even want to laminate the certificate so it can be used again and again. Copy the following page, Scavenger Hunt #1, for all of your students. Instruct them to find five people who have a different theme from any of their own top three, and find out what they like best about that theme. After students complete the activity, have them discuss and share what they learned about a new theme. You might list each theme on the board, along with all the words used to describe it underneath.
- If other educators/adults who interact with students have taken the Clifton StrengthsFinder, students could complete a Scavenger Hunt with them, too.

SCAVENGER HUNT #2

- For this version of Scavenger Hunt, students will again need name tags with their names and top three themes. This time, they are on the lookout for other students who have the *same* themes as theirs. The themes don't have to be in the same order. After they have found three other students and interviewed them about what they like best about the themes, have them report what they've discovered as additional positive or helpful aspects of their top three themes.



SCAVENGER HUNT #1



Find five different people who have a top-three theme that is different from any of your own top three. Write the person's name, the theme name, and what he or she likes best about the theme.

Name	Theme Name	What does this person like best about this theme?

SCAVENGER HUNT #2

Find two people who have your first theme. They don't have to have it first; it just needs to be one of their top three. Ask these people what they like best about the theme. Then find two people who have your second theme. Then find two who have your third theme.

FIRST THEME NAME _____

Name	What does this person like best about this theme?

SECOND THEME NAME _____

Name	What does this person like best about this theme?

THIRD THEME NAME _____

Name	What does this person like best about this theme?

IDEAS FOR SUSTAINED LEARNING

Depending on the course and availability of media, here are some ideas for integrating Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer into your curriculum, your classroom, and your school.

- ❑ **SELF-PORTRAIT COLLAGE** — Using various art supplies and your students' creativity, have each create a self-portrait collage that highlights their three themes. Your students may want to include magazine headlines or pictures that show their themes in action or use photos of themselves or their own drawings as "evidence" of their themes in action.
- ❑ **POWERPOINT®** — Help each student prepare a PowerPoint presentation highlighting one theme or his or her top three themes. Connect them in an "endless loop," and have the presentation running before an assembly or as the crowd is gathering for a concert, new student orientation, all-school meeting, or parent-teacher conference.
- ❑ **NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE** — Have students create a magazine or newspaper that focuses on the Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer. Articles could include:
 - why focusing on talents is important
 - the 10 Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer themes
 - the students' top three themes
 - classmates' themes in action
- ❑ **ESSAY/JOURNAL** — Students could write essays or journal entries on one or more of the above topics.
- ❑ **VIDEO** — Using video cameras, students could work in small groups to create vignettes of the themes to show other members of the class.
- ❑ **NEWSLETTER** — Ask a student or small group of students to write an article about Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer, and include it in the weekly or monthly school newsletter.
- ❑ **PHOTO CAPTION** — If a student is featured in the school's weekly or monthly newsletter, include his or her top three themes in the photo caption or in the article.
- ❑ **STRENGTHS SPOTLIGHT** — Add a section to the school's newsletter, Web site, and/or yearbook that highlights the school's focus on talents. Highlight one student per week who demonstrated a theme in a positive and productive way.
- ❑ **SKITS** — Have a group of students produce skits that show each of the Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer themes. Have the audience name the themes when they "catch" them in the skit.
- ❑ **CARTOONS** — What cartoon characters best illustrate each of the 10 Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer themes? Get students sharing and discussing their cartoon "candidates" for each of the themes, too.
- ❑ **BULLETIN BOARD** — Create a bulletin board that features all the theme names. Ask students to place their name under the theme name they plan to focus on for that week. At the end of the week, ask questions about what they did, with whom, how it felt, and which action item they focused on. Do this for at least three weeks so students can learn about each of their top three themes.
- ❑ **OBSERVATION** — Place students in groups of three or four. Have them exchange theme names and write them down somewhere so that each student can keep track of the others' themes. Then at some point each day or once a week, ask students to share with each other when they saw one another's themes in action.
- ❑ **REPORT CARD** — On each student's quarterly report card, make one note about a time you saw a theme in action — a moment when the natural tendencies of the student were demonstrated in a positive and productive way. Make parents aware of their child's themes by making a place on the report card to list the student's top three themes.
- ❑ **SHARING** — Encourage students to share their themes, action items, or whole report with their parents.

IDEAS FOR SUSTAINED LEARNING

(continued)



- ❑ **MUSIC/POETRY** — Have students find music, poetry, or art that illustrates the Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer themes.
- ❑ **SONGS** — Have a group of students compose music and write lyrics about their own top three themes or about all 10 themes.
- ❑ **SLOGANS** — Have your students find advertising slogans that relate to each of the 10 Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer themes.
- ❑ **FAMOUS FIGURES** — What famous people, living or dead, real or fictitious, exhibit these themes? Get students sharing and discussing their “candidates” for each of the themes. What themes are evident in the characters of the book students are reading in literature class? How about figures discussed in history class, current events, or civics class — what do students think their themes are?
- ❑ **GAMES** — Have students create a video game with talent as the subject and how talent influences and works in people’s lives — particularly at your school.
- ❑ **PUPPETS** — Have students create a puppet or marionette show about themes.
- ❑ **PLAY** — Have students create a play starring the 10 Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer themes. Ask them to write it down and act it out.



INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Student's Name _____

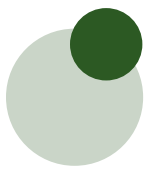
Ask the student if you can make a photocopy of his or her Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer report. Read and highlight the words, sentences, or phrases in the report that you have seen in action in this student.

POSITIVE WORD LIST:

Make a list of all the positive words you can think of to describe this student.	What connections can you find between your list and the words and phrases in your student's report? What words and phrases from the report expanded your thoughts about this student's talents?

NOTICING INDIVIDUAL TALENTS: Record *specific* times when you have seen this student's themes in action at school.

Theme Name:	Observation 1
	Observation 2
	Observation 3
Theme Name:	Observation 1
	Observation 2
	Observation 3
Theme Name:	Observation 1
	Observation 2
	Observation 3



INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

IN THE CLASSROOM: As you think about what you have planned for your students in class, write any ideas about how you could provide opportunities for this theme to shine.

Theme Name:	Opportunity 1
	Opportunity 2
	Opportunity 3
Theme Name:	Opportunity 1
	Opportunity 2
	Opportunity 3
Theme Name:	Opportunity 1
	Opportunity 2
	Opportunity 3

LOOKING FORWARD: Look into the future. How do you think this student might use one or more of these themes in high school, college, work, or life? Write about this below.

Theme Name:	Application 1
	Application 2
	Application 3
Theme Name:	Application 1
	Application 2
	Application 3
Theme Name:	Application 1
	Application 2
	Application 3

ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: Now that you have thought specifically about this individual, how can you put this into action to make a positive impact?

- Share it on paper. Write it down and give it to the student.
- Sit down and discuss your list with the student. Talk about all the positive words that come to mind when you think of him or her.
- Think about who else has positive perspectives on this student's talents. How could you share your positive perspectives with one another?

Remember, you can make a positive, lifelong impact by helping your students take advantage of their natural patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior — and showing them how important and valuable these talents really are.

So...

NOTICE them.

ENCOURAGE students to use them.

Help students **SHARE** them with others and the world.

CLIFTON YOUTH
STRENGTHS EXPLORER

EDUCATOR/LEADER ACTIVITY BOOK

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