



chapter one SELF-AWARENESS

Students who are self-aware:

- Refer to themselves as "learning disabled"
- Are open about their difficulties
- Describe life events in terms of their learning disabilities, yet are not overly defined by their difficulties
- Are able to compartmentalize their disability as only one aspect of self
- Accept their learning disability
- Use appropriate services to overcome difficulties when possible
- Have a clear picture of their individual strengths and weaknesses
- Recognize and accept talents along with limitations

Introduction to Self-Awareness

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Introductory lesson
Suggested Grade Levels	Grades 3 to 12
Objectives	To define and identify concepts related to self-awareness
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student Pens and pencils Chalkboard or display board for teacher notes
Approximate Time	50 minutes
Directions to Implement the Activity	<p>Explain that the class will be working with the Success Attributes; may want to explain the research (see the Introduction to this book)</p> <p>Define <i>self-awareness, strengths and weaknesses, interests, passions, and compartmentalization</i></p> <p>Ask students to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses (domains might include physical, academic, social, emotional, arts)</p> <p>Discuss the importance of knowing strengths and weaknesses to help select a career, work with groups, help make correct choices, being honest with self; may involve others' perceptions of individuals</p> <p>Ask students to summarize on the worksheet, individually, in pairs, or as a class, what was discussed in class</p>
Suggested Modifications	<p>Assist students with writing notes:</p> <p>May need to discuss with student individually to check for understanding</p> <p>If the class works well together, spend time defining confidentiality for group:</p> <p>What is discussed or identified as a strength or weakness by an individual stays in this room</p> <p>If the group has difficulty supporting one another, introduce the concepts of strengths and weaknesses in general without asking for volunteers:</p> <p>Use a predetermined list of strengths and weaknesses</p>

Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	<p>Students and/or parents can have difficulty accepting the disability, so preteaching (or a letter sent home—or both) may be needed)</p> <p>May need to inform parents before this project begins; may have to work with students individually</p> <p>May need to modify lesson to focus on strengths and weaknesses without discussing disabilities</p> <p>If discussion of disabilities is included, spending time defining disability categories for each student and discussing confidentiality among students is important</p>
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Name: _____ Date: _____

Introduction to Self-Awareness

Directions: Please take notes during the class discussion on self-awareness about what is important.

1. The Success Attributes are:
2. Define in your own words:

a. *strengths*

b. *weaknesses*

c. *interests*

d. *passions*
3. List some areas to consider when thinking about strengths and weaknesses.
4. List some reasons that it is important to know your strengths and weaknesses.
5. To be *self-aware* means:
6. *Compartmentalize* means:
7. Summarize what was discussed in class.

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Rating Yourself

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Introductory lesson Can be used as a pretest or posttest to determine changes over the year
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 3 to 12
Objective(s)	To recognize and accept talents along with limitations
Materials Needed	Rating worksheet for each student Pencils, ruler, or highlighters (to assist with tracking)
Approximate Time	40 minutes
Directions to Implement the Activity	Introduce or review concept of self-awareness: Successful people understand what they can do well, when they need help, why they do some things poorly Understanding self is important for determining what to do in life, to select and accomplish goals Ask students to circle the number by each skill that best represents their estimation of how well they do in that area; define ratings, if needed Monitor room when students are working to assist with reading, defining terms When students have completed their individual ratings, they are paired with a classmate in order to share their findings
Suggested Modifications	Students may need help reading the skill areas Using rulers will help students mark their answers on the correct line
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	Teacher may want to review topics represented to check for individual sensitivity issues Students may need training in asking clarifying questions and providing supportive remarks Teacher might want to broadly define specific areas to prevent limiting students' thinking Provide example; ask students for another example to clarify possible misinterpretations Sharing with another student might be ill advised if students are unfamiliar or sensitive about receiving feedback



Directions: Circle the number for each item that best describes you.

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Check for Understanding Self-Awareness

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness	
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Intermediate lesson Follow up to initial discussion of self-awareness and related concepts	
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 3 to 12	
Objective(s)	To define and understand self-awareness	
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each group Poster paper or boards Markers Scissors Wide variety of magazines	Selection of stories or videos about individuals with disabilities (see Appendix A for suggested media)
Approximate Time	1 hour Additional time may be needed to read books, watch videos	
Directions to Implement the Activity	<p>Explain that this is a follow-up activity to the discussion of self-awareness</p> <p>Students will assemble a collage as a group:</p> <p>Collage will represent group's ideas about the strengths and weaknesses of a real or fictitious person (key character)</p> <p>Review key self-awareness terms</p> <p>Review rules for working cooperatively</p> <p>Assign students to groups</p> <p>As whole class or in small groups, students will read or watch a video about a real or fictitious person with a disability or other challenge who was successful (referred to as the <i>key character</i>)</p> <p>Ask students to answer questions on worksheets about that key person:</p> <p>Encourage creating ideas based on evidence from the story</p> <p>When worksheets are complete, explain how to assemble a collage:</p> <p>Select pictures that represent idea</p> <p>Have enough pictures to fill the page; overlapping is allowed; little or no empty space should be left</p> <p>Remove pictures from magazines by cutting or ripping</p> <p>Remind students about sharing magazines and other supplies</p> <p>Have designated procedures for taking and returning supplies</p> <p>Establish limits of talking and sharing among students</p>	

	<p>Assign students a role assembling the collage or finding, cutting, or gluing pictures</p> <p>Monitor group's progress assembling the collage</p> <p>When complete, students may explain their creation, relating it to the key character</p>
Suggested Modifications	<p>Assign roles for each student in group, based on strengths (ability to find good pictures quickly, ability to tear out or cut usable pictures, ability to add words or drawings as needed)</p> <p>May want to have precut pictures available ahead of time</p>
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	<p>Some students may be unfamiliar with their disabilities</p> <p>Other students may disclose information about themselves that cause others to question them</p> <p>Moderating comments or asking students to record a question or thought for later may be necessary</p>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Check for Understanding Self-Awareness

Directions: Answer each of the questions in your own words.

Self-awareness is:

1. What were the key character’s strengths?

2. What were the key character’s weaknesses?

3. How might the key character’s strengths have helped make him or her important?

4. How did the key character’s weaknesses help make him or her important?

Describing Self

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness	
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Intermediate lesson	
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 1 to 12	
Objective(s)	To gain awareness of feelings, opinions, and personal values and how they relate to those of other individuals	
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student Various magazines that can be cut Glue, glue sticks, tape	Scissors or rulers to help remove pictures from magazines Markers
Approximate Time	1 hour	
Directions to Implement the Activity	<p>Indicate that the class will begin exploring ways to describe themselves to other people for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Get to know each other better so the students can help each otherMay use ideas if meeting someone for the first timeMay be interviewed for a jobGet to know each other so class is a more comfortable place for learning <p>Explain procedures to make a collage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Select pictures that represent ideaHave enough pictures to fill the page; overlapping is allowed; little or no empty space leftRemove pictures from magazines by cutting or rippingRemind students about sharing magazines and other suppliesHave designated procedures for taking and returning suppliesEstablish limits of talking and sharing among students <p>Monitor students as they find pictures and assemble collages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Remind them of the time allowance <p>After responding to the question at the bottom of the worksheet, students should explain their collage to either the entire class or a small group of other students</p> <p>All collages should be displayed in the room for a time and then saved for follow-up in several weeks</p> <p>As self-awareness activities continue, students may refer to the first collages to determine their changes and growth over the year</p>	

Suggested Modifications	<p>Assist student with finding graphics by questioning the individual about interests, likes</p> <p>Present one or two pictures at a time to the student to seek clarification about individual wants</p> <p>May ask other students to formulate questions to help student assemble a list of possible pictures</p> <p>Either assign small groups or pairs to work together, or allow conversation and sharing of ideas as the project happens</p> <p>As pictures are selected, ask student to explain the selections</p> <p>Before student presents collage to the class, rehearse the presentation by selecting or grouping pictures for the discussion</p> <p>As a follow-up activity, students may be asked to write an essay explaining the meaning of their collage</p>
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	<p>Have wide selection of magazines and pictures available so students' reports are not skewed by limited graphics</p> <p>Monitor students as they select pictures</p> <p>Query students' selections to determine the possibility of disclosure issues. Students may make sensitive personal information public. Other group members may have difficulty accepting that information, so the teacher may need to discuss acceptance with all students /or monitor behavior that might occur later.</p> <p>Ensure that students are willing to share their collage to small groups or the entire class</p> <p>Check that students understand collages will be displayed</p>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Describing Self

Directions: Create your collage here.

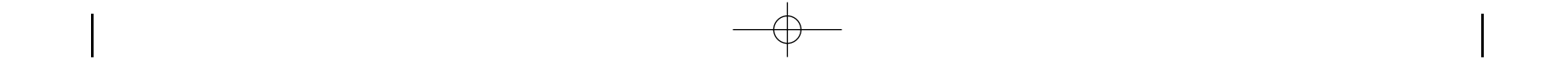
(title)

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How does your collage describe you?_____

Describing Likes and Dislikes

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Beginning
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 1 to 12
Objective(s)	To develop awareness of strengths, weaknesses, and talents in various contexts
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student Pens and pencils Materials to make or display a graph
Approximate Time	45 minutes
Directions to Implement the Activity	Follow-up to the previous collage exercise to gain further knowledge of themselves Explain that many times strengths are something a person likes to do, and weaknesses are something a person dislikes Distribute worksheets, pens and pencils, rulers (for tracking) Direct students to complete worksheets, independently giving each student an ID number so data can be collected anonymously Collect worksheets and either immediately or at a later time have students (some or all) assemble the data in a bar graph or some other graphic presentation Discuss findings as a group or ask students to write a small conclusion
Suggested Modifications	Assist student by reading individual items Clarify that students understand the concepts of likes and dislikes
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	Student answer may be significantly different and known to group, so monitor for possible bullying. If a student’s answer might be viewed as odd or abnormal or uncool by the other members of the group, monitor the students for possible bullying.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Describing Likes and Dislikes

Directions: How good are you at each of the following things? Put a check under either **Likes** or **Dislikes**.

At School	Likes	Dislikes
Reading	_____	_____
Math	_____	_____
Listening to directions	_____	_____
Asking for help	_____	_____
Art	_____	_____
Playing with friends	_____	_____
Games	_____	_____
Sports	_____	_____
At Home		
Chores (taking care of pets, making bed)	_____	_____
Listening to parents	_____	_____
Doing homework	_____	_____
Playing with friends	_____	_____
Playing with brothers or sisters	_____	_____

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Compare and Contrast Success Attributes

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness, Proactivity, Perseverance
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Intermediate lesson Completed after students have been introduced to at least the three success attributes of self-awareness, proactivity, and perseverance Students must have some knowledge; may serve as an assessment of how much knowledge they have gained at the point
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 4 to 12
Objective(s)	To define and differentiate among the success attributes
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each group of no more than four students Large sheets of paper Glue Markers Variety of magazines with pictures
Approximate Time	1 hour
Directions to Implement the Activity	Explain that this is a check of the students' knowledge of some of the success attributes Assign one of the three success attributes to each group Explain that they will develop a collage based on that attribute and its synonyms Encourage each group to give pictures to other groups that work for them (for instance, a member of the perseverance groups finds a picture that will work for the proactivity group) Group work rules should be reviewed: Words and drawings are allowed Respect others' contributions Pictures can be cut or torn Division of tasks is clear (who and when will cut, tear, glue, and so forth) Posters are made while the teacher observes, questions When posters are completed and the room is clean, each group explains their poster
Suggested Modifications	Check magazines for appropriateness and enough variety
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	Assign students who are supportive of one another's contributions May want to assign based on understanding of a particular attribute

Name: _____ Date: _____

Compare and Contrast Success Attributes

Names of group members:

Our Success Attribute: _____

Dictionary definition of our Success Attribute:

Definition of our Success Attribute in our group’s words:

Synonyms for our Success Attribute:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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I See Me, You See Me

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Introductory lesson
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 1 to 12
Objective(s)	To develop awareness of others' views
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student Overhead of worksheet Pens and pencils
Approximate Time	60 minutes (may split activity over four or five days)
Directions to Implement the Activity	Brainstorm with class to list people's strengths, emphasizing how varied the strengths might be (social, physical, emotional, social, academic, problem solving) Ask that students think about their own strengths, and have students list those under the question on the worksheet Hypothesize how others might see them, and have students list those under the question Ask for volunteers to share, and, if appropriate, ask students for their reasoning behind their choices Ask students to describe what they learned from this exercise
Suggested Modifications	Draw pictures or icons to represent characteristics as a substitute for writing If students have difficulty hypothesizing how other see them, suggest possible people (parents, grandparents); may need to provide circumstance ("When you get a good grade, how do your parents see you?")
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	Monitor closely for students' reactions to others' reports of themselves May need to monitor during transition or free time for possible bullying or others' attention to individual student's characteristics Emphasize classroom rules about acceptance, listening, and support

Name: _____ Date: _____

I See Me, You See Me

How do you see your strengths?

How do you think others see your strengths?

What did you learn?

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Check Out Sparktop.org

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness, Emotional Coping Strategies
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Introductory lesson
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 5 to 10
Objective(s)	To develop an understanding of learning disabilities
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student Computer with Internet access Pencils Optional: projection system for teacher explanation and modeling
Approximate Time	50 minutes
Directions to Implement the Activity	Explain to students that they will be examining a Web site designed for them that will allow them to explore ideas related to learning disabilities: Much of the Web site contains contributions from students their age Explain that the purpose of this exercise is to familiarize them with the components of the Web site Once students have completed their individual explorations, they may want to discuss their likes and dislikes, possible future uses
Suggested Modifications	Headphones while using the computer will allow minimal distraction Younger students may be paired with slightly older students so that the worksheet might be completed as a team Might use older students who are familiar with the Web site to demonstrate parts to students who might struggle with distractibility If projection system is available, initially modeling how to navigate parts of the site might be helpful to some students
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	The Web site addresses students using the terms <i>learning disabilities</i> and <i>ADD/ADHD</i> , which may need further teacher explanation or elaboration If students struggle with their challenges or are not diagnosed, the Web site might be helpful, but some discussion prior to using it might make it more student-friendly

Name: _____ Date: _____

Check Out Sparktop.org

Directions: Go to the Internet, type in www.sparktop.org, and log on as a GUEST.
This is a site for kids (and teens) with learning disabilities or attention problems, or both. There is information about learning disabilities (LD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and Hyperactivity (ADHD). It has lots to do—for example:

- Games to play
- Teen mentors to ask questions of
- Art projects to try
- Hints about coping with LD
- Getting organized
- Famous people with LD
- E-mail pen pals to hook up with

What I liked in EXPLORE:

What I tried in CREATE:

What I played in GAMES:

How I used CONNECT:

I RECOMMEND trying on Sparktop.org:

Here is what I learned about my strengths and weaknesses:

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Identify Favorite Activities

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Intermediate lesson
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 1 to 12
Objective(s)	To recognize and accept talents along with limitations
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student Pens and pencils Overhead of worksheet for teacher's explanations
Approximate Time	45 minutes
Directions to Implement the Activity	Review of concepts related to self-awareness Focus on strengths; one way to identify strengths is to examine activities during and after school. If students can state their activity preference or report excitement about participating in an activity or if they can give rationales about why they like an activity, they may be developing ways to find their strengths. Reinforce the importance of personal preference and accepting others' responses that might disagree May (or not) share responses with small group or entire class Check responses for clarity, readable spelling Put completed worksheets with other self-awareness activities; will be referenced in later exercises
Suggested Modifications	Students may need to be paired with a peer or an adult for reading and recording answers May need to prompt or encourage students to complete worksheet May need to discuss what <i>favorite</i> means (use food, music as examples for student to clarify concept) May need to develop a list of choices; however, that may limit students' responses
Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	Monitor students' responses for possible quirky answers that might generate a negative response from other students Reinforce students who make supportive comments or ask questions of others

Name: _____ Date: _____

Identify Favorite Activities

1. When you have free time at home, what do you do?

Favorites

Next favorites

Next favorites

2. When you have free time at school, what do you do?

Favorites

Next favorites

Next favorites

3. After-school activities you are in: (sports, music, art class, dance, scouts)

4. Favorite subjects in school:

5. Do you have hobbies? List them here:

6. If a teacher asked you to do a project, what would you choose to do?

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Freaky Friday

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness, Goal Setting, Perseverance, Social Support Systems
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Intermediate lesson
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 3 to 12
Objective(s)	To set realistic goals To develop an awareness of coping strategies to compensate for learning disabilities
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student Pens and pencils Magazines
Approximate Time	30 minutes
Directions to Implement the Activity	May want or need to show the movie or read the book <i>Freaky Friday</i> or set the scenario (child-parent trade bodies and have to live each other's lives for a time) Discuss what the students might do if they had to do a family member's job for a day Discuss what skills might be needed for a variety of jobs Review the terms <i>strengths</i> , <i>weaknesses</i> , and <i>interests</i> Examine and explain the parts of the worksheets that students should do independently Monitor students as they answer individual questions As a whole group, select a volunteer for one or two answers
Suggested Modifications	If students have limited familiarity with skills needed for a particular job, may do a preliminary assignment as homework: Ask students to interview several family members (extended family too) to find out one or more of the jobs they have had in their lives and the skills needed for each one Students could reference that information in the beginning stages of the discussion in class Have students work in pairs to complete the worksheet, or allow students to ask one another for assistance For students who complete their work earlier than the rest, ask them to find pictures in magazines that represent the jobs discussed in class for discussions in the future

Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	<p>May need to modify for specific family situations by having students select a family member's job</p> <p>Students may begin to come to some realization about the realism of career choice during this assignment, which may result in a need for an individual discussion with an adult</p> <p>Students may need to be reminded that life choices change and that nothing is final, so taking a risk in this assignment should be supported by others</p> <p>Students may be sensitive about a parent's job choice and may elect to discuss or use someone else during the discussion</p>
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Name: _____ Date: _____

Freaky Friday

Everything has changed! Now everyone has to get a job, INCLUDING KIDS AND TEENAGERS! Write your interests and talents. Then write down the job you *could* do, given what you know and can do TODAY!

My Interests	My Talents

_____	_____
_____	_____

One job I think I *could* do today:

How I think my interests and talents match the job I chose:

I Feel Good About Me

Success Attribute Covered	Self-Awareness	
Familiarity with Success Attributes	Advanced lesson	
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 1 to 12	
Objective(s)	To enhance general self-acceptance as well as acceptance of learning disability	
Materials Needed	Worksheet for each student	Highlighters
	Notebook of completed worksheets	Sticky notes
Approximate Time	2 hours (may want to break into two sessions)	
Directions to Implement the Activity	<p>Explain purpose of this work: sometimes it is necessary to explain your strengths and weaknesses to a person you might not know well or have just met (employers, teachers):</p> <p>Students need to know how to express this message clearly and briefly</p> <p>Sometimes a student might need to quickly state a strength or weakness without adding extra data (if the task does not require the student to read, describing struggles with reading is not necessary)</p> <p>Students need confidence understanding that if they express a concern about a weakness, they should conversely be able to state a related strength: "I don't read well, but I work hard, persevere, and problem-solve well."</p> <p>Distribute completed worksheets, notes, and materials from other classes to each student (if needed)</p> <p>Ask students to review their previous work and highlight information that is common throughout or seems key to the assignment sheet</p> <p>Explain that students should complete one to three of the worksheet sections as they relate to their personal strengths</p> <p>After checking for accuracy and completeness, students should practice delivering their information about strengths and weaknesses to two or three other students (and teacher, if needed) before presenting their reports to the whole class</p>	
Suggested Modifications	Review information to go into the blanks	
	Revise information as needed to address students' strengths	
	Some of the statements on the worksheets may need to be modified to fit specific individuals	

Caveats Regarding Possible Sensitivity of Topic	<div>May be difficult for some students to express their areas of strength:</div> <div>May need individual encouragement to express to another person</div> <div>Repeated practice with known supportive individuals may be necessary</div> <div>May be equally difficult for some students to identify their weaknesses</div>
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Name: _____ Date: _____

I Feel Good About Me

Directions: Fill in the blanks with answers that best describe who you are.

Physical

My best sport is _____, because I'm _____
I _____ for my health all the time.
I think my _____ looks about right.
My best physical feature is _____
One silly thing I can do with my body is _____
I struggle with _____

Creative

The last thing I did that was creative was _____
I like to _____
I am good at _____
I need encouragement to _____

Social

I know I am a good friend when I _____
The best thing about being my friend is _____
I help others by _____
To make other people laugh, I _____
To get over arguments, I _____
I need help to _____

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