

Implementing Learning Strengths in Schools

Andrew Fuller

Imagine a school where the motto is “**Here Everyone Gets Smart**”. Not just some students. All students.

Imagine a school where every student knows their learning strengths and also knows how to use them to build up other areas of learning.

Imagine a school where every teacher knows their own learning strengths and knows how to differentiate and utilise the contribution of skilled students rather than feeling pressured to be an expert on everything. This process is called ‘**neuro-developmental differentiation.**’

Imagine a school where parent-teacher-student meetings are an opportunity for forward planning that involves identifying learning strengths and also an area to work to develop over the next term.

When students know their learning strengths, it sets them up for success. Learning strengths are based on research about how brains process information. This is *not* multiple intelligences or learning styles.

Over 20,000 students across the world have completed the analysis in the 5 months the website has been in operation.

1. Try it out for yourself first

Begin by completing the analysis for yourself. This will help you to determine if the information could be useful for your students.

Go to www.mylearningstrengths.com and complete the analysis. It is free.

Learning Strengths Analysis letter

Have students and their parents complete the learning strengths analysis at www.mylearningstrengths.com and bring their letter to school to discuss.

2. Learning Strengths Analysis letter + Personalised Learning Plan

Use the analysis and letter from www.mylearningstrengths.com as a basis for a scheduled parent-teacher-student meeting.

Ideally this creates a meeting that is focused on proactively planning what learning strengths to capitalize upon and how to use these to improve areas that are yet to develop.

Parents are actively engaged as co-educators and are asked to discuss and then take on developing some of the activities outlined in their child’s learning strengths areas as well as the area that has been identified as yet to develop

The Personalised Learning Plan specifies a student’s learning strengths in order of strengths, outlines strategies for improving each area and relates it to potential careers that utilize that learning strength. It costs \$10.

Two areas to develop are also specified with suggestions of what to do over the next term.

It is recommended that students repeat the learning strengths analysis once a term and the full personalised learning plan at least once a year.

3. Learning Strengths Analysis letter + Personalised Learning Plan + Differentiated Teaching

In addition to the actions mentioned above, teachers start to actively utilize the learning strengths of students to guide the types of activities and groupings of students for completing tasks.

The teacher may complete her/his own analysis at www.mylearningstrengths.com and consider what implicit biases that might

bring into his/her work. They can then ask an entire class to complete this.

Often this is best completed by students and their parents at home as it familiarises parents with the approach.

In the brief example below the teacher has tallied all of her students' letters from to provide the overview table below.

Learning Strengths Summary

| Name | Spatial | Percept-Motor | Concent-Memory | Planning & Seq | Thinking & Logic | People | Words | Numbers |
|----------|---------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------|-------|---------|
| Jim T. | High | | High | | Low | | | |
| Sarah H | | High | | | High | | | Low |
| Nitika I | Low | | | High | | | High | |
| Jackson | | Low | High | | | | | High |
| Larry B | High | Low | | | | | High | |
| Tyler T | High | Low | | | | | | High |

Overall the teacher can see the class has strengths in spatial reasoning, numbers and concentration and memory. Presenting information pictorially about numbers and using it to generate concentration and memory challenges is likely to engage most of the class.

The teacher can also see that Nitika is not so strong on spatial reasoning but has learning strengths in planning and sequencing and words. The teacher may choose to pair Nitika with a student who is strong in spatial reasoning or may use her to plan sequences and stories that will help the class to understand concepts.

Overall the class is relatively low in perceptual-motor. It is likely that they under utilize their bodies in learning. The teacher may gradually increase the use of gesturing and movements in her lessons. Sarah H. may be called upon to devise a way to remember that way we solve a mathematic problem using a stepping stone approach to logical problem solving.

Andrew's next book, "Neuro-developmental Differentiation" will be published by Hawker-Brownlow in early 2020.

Stay in touch with Andrew

On face book

[andrewfullerpsychologist](https://www.facebook.com/andrewfullerpsychologist)

The Learning Brain

On Linked-in and at

www.andrewfuller.com.au

www.mylearningstrengths.com