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Self-Reflection Paper on Strengths

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During the journey of discovering myself in class, I have noticed that I do have a lot of strengths that I did not realize have helped me come as far as I have in my personal, professional, and academic endeavors. I know my experiences, and some of the amazing opportunities that I have been offered in my life, are the reasons in which have helped me develop a lot of the strengths that I have, including: organization and planning, problem-solving, self-discipline/direction, being a team player, communication, and persistence.

I know one opportunity in particular that I have had that has helped me recognize and develop my strengths is being a part of the Environmental and Spatial Technology (EAST) program. I started that program when I was in sixth grade and that is what pushed me to start developing the skills and strengths that I have.

I remember the first EAST project that I did was exploring and developing the software Solid Edge. That project was what helped me learn how to problem solve, because I was discovering a software I never messed with before and had to give a presentation about how to use it. Discovering the tools and trying to figure something out that was brand new to me helped me learn how to solve problems on my own--which lead me to learning self-direction. I completed that project, even though it was difficult to learn how to use it at first, but I stuck with it.

My other strengths are due to my personality. I am person who likes structure and organization, I love to talk and be around people, and I never quit when things get hard. Because of all of the strengths that I posses, I have been able to do things that no one has succeeded to do, like make an EAST program for Homeschool and Private School students.

This EAST program is my current EAST project and it is requiring me to put all of my strengths to use. The knowledge and skills that I have learned because I am an EAST student have come out, along with the strengths that come from my personality. Organizing and managing a classroom of 10-15 year olds requires a lot of planning. To get the program started, I had to develop a program outline, write a curriculum, and design a schedule. The program is going on now, and it takes planning and organizational skills to make sure that all of the students know what steps to take to successfully complete their project. There are also little things like making labels for their Chromebooks so it is easier for them to keep up with which one is their's, or making folders on Google Drive so they know where to find files.

Along with organization and planning; problem-solving, teamwork, and self-direction come into play a lot, too. Since no one has ever done an EAST program like this, there is no one for me and my team to ask questions to. We have to rely on each other and develop everything on our own, and we run into a lot of issues that need to be resolved. Parents and students have many questions that need answers, and most of the time they are hard questions that need a lot of time to think about and we have to regroup and test things out.

Communication is a big strength that I posses, and need, and I have seen how my communication skills have strengthened due to this project. Not only do I have to communicate in a nice, gentle way for my students to understand, I have to effectively communicate with

adults too. I believe that I do a great job at it, because in my field of study--Middle Childhood Education--I will have to learn how to talk to students and parents alike.

I also need to communicate effectively as a project manager, which I do quite well. I listen to everyone's ideas and assign tasks as needed. I do not talk to my project team like they are inferior to me, but I treat them as an equal. It is great that I have a strength in communication because I am able to talk to a wider range of people--whether they are a colleague or a client.

Running an EAST program can be very difficult, but because I possess the strength of persistence, I never get tired of running the program or dealing with my team, my students, or their parents. I push through and it is because I know that it is rewarding and it is helping these students grow and learn, like it is for me and my team.

My strengths have allowed me to do many amazing things, mostly centered around the EAST organization, but that is what helped me build my strengths up. I am incredibly thankful that I have had the opportunity to be a part of it. Also, the soft skills portion of the IT Minor program has also been helping me grow as a professional. I know if I continue to learn, and want to learn, how to improve upon my strengths (and my weaknesses, too), then I know that I will be able to accomplish anything out in the world.