



Understanding Strengths

Jonathan Manz, Graduate Assistant
Office of the Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

*Responsibility * Arranger * Harmony * Includer * Connectedness*



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Agenda

Historical Context

Overview of a Strengths Approach

Four Domains of
Leadership Strength

The Next Step





Strengths Beginnings

- The Gallup Organization
- Don Clifton, Nebraska Faculty turned CEO
- 250,000 interviews
of high achieving
individuals





Gallup's Research on High Achievers



- Spend most of their time in areas of strength
- Have learned to delegate or partner with someone to tackle areas that are not strengths
- Apply their strengths to overcome obstacles
- Invent ways of capitalizing on their strengths in new situations



The 34 Themes of Talent Measured by StrengthsFinder®

Top 5 Talent Themes (a theme is a group of similar talents)



278,256
possible unique combinations.

33,390,720
different permutations with unique order.



A strengths
orientation is
about a
perspective, not
a tool.



What is a strengths perspective?

Two basic premises:

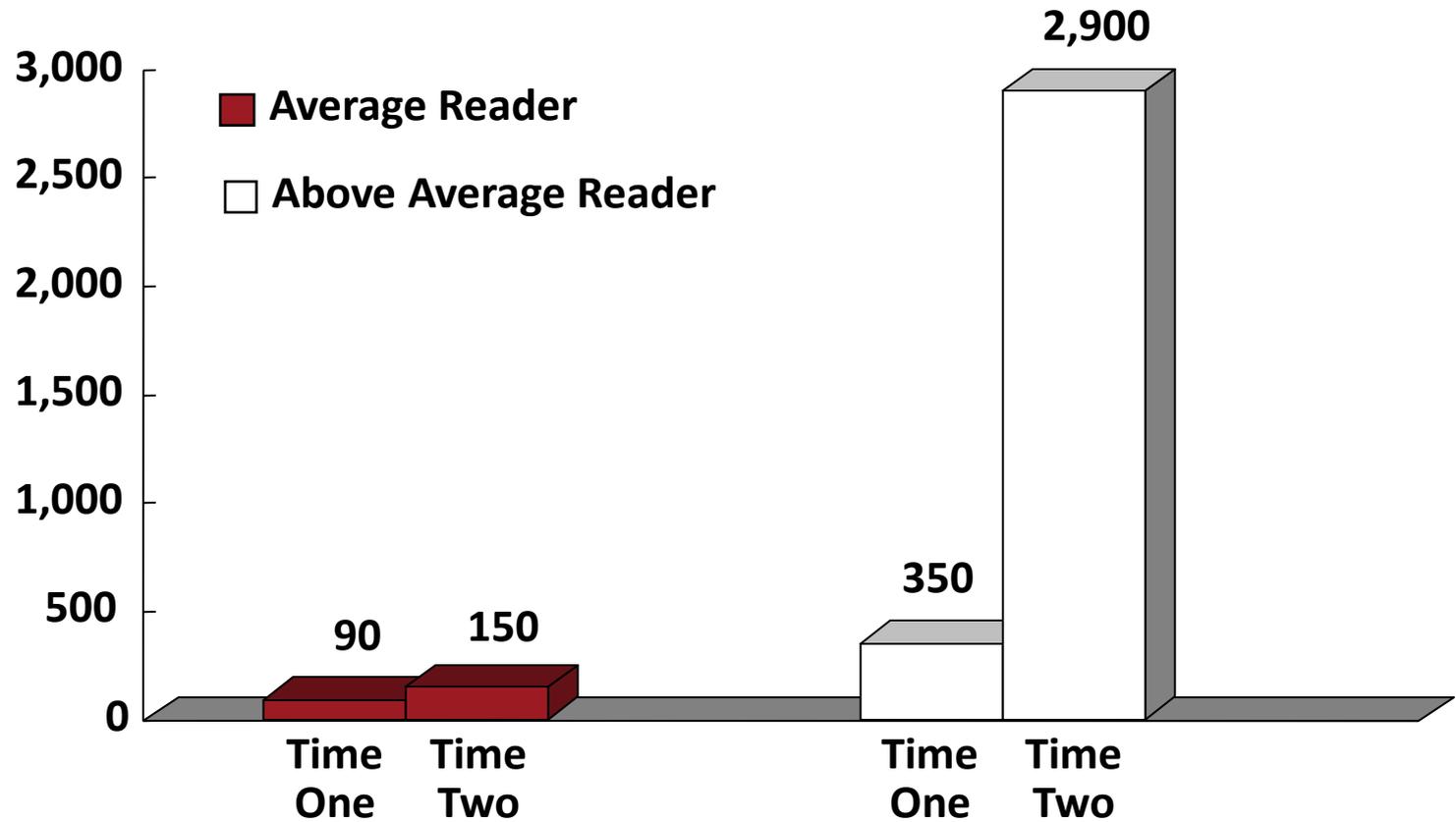
Individuals already have within themselves what they need to succeed.

“Individuals gain more when they build on their talents, than when they make comparable efforts to improve their areas of weakness.”

Clifton & Harter, 2003, p. 112



Greatness Comes from Building on Natural Talents





Writing Challenge





What is a Talent?

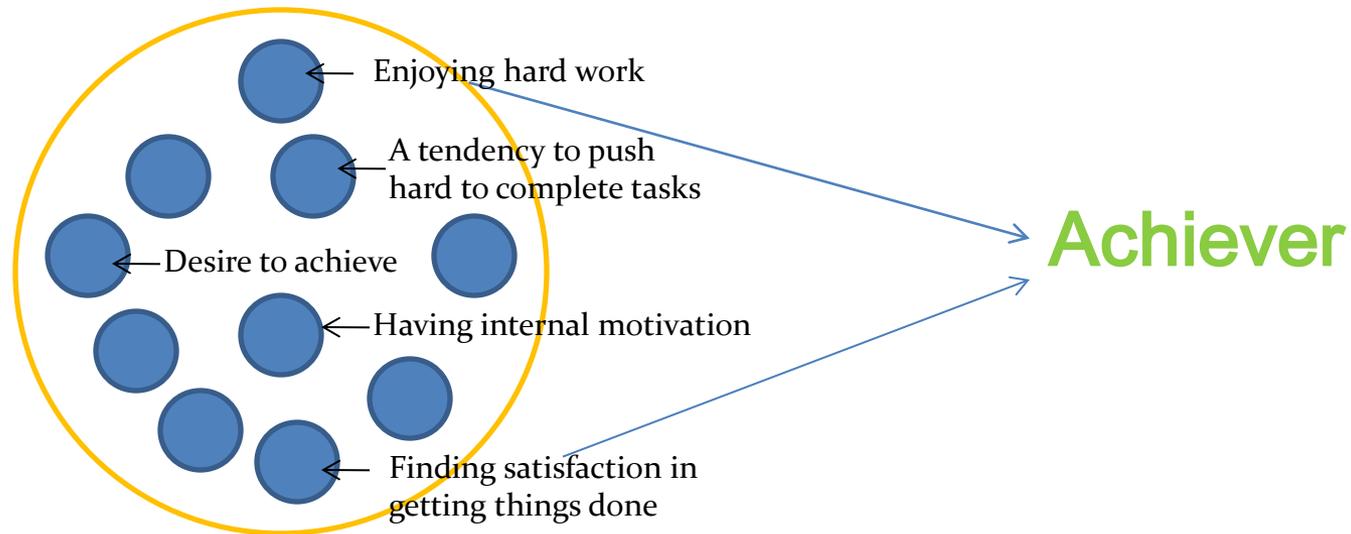
“A talent is a naturally reoccurring pattern of thought, feeling or behavior that can be productively applied.”





What is a Talent?

A talent theme is a group of similar talents

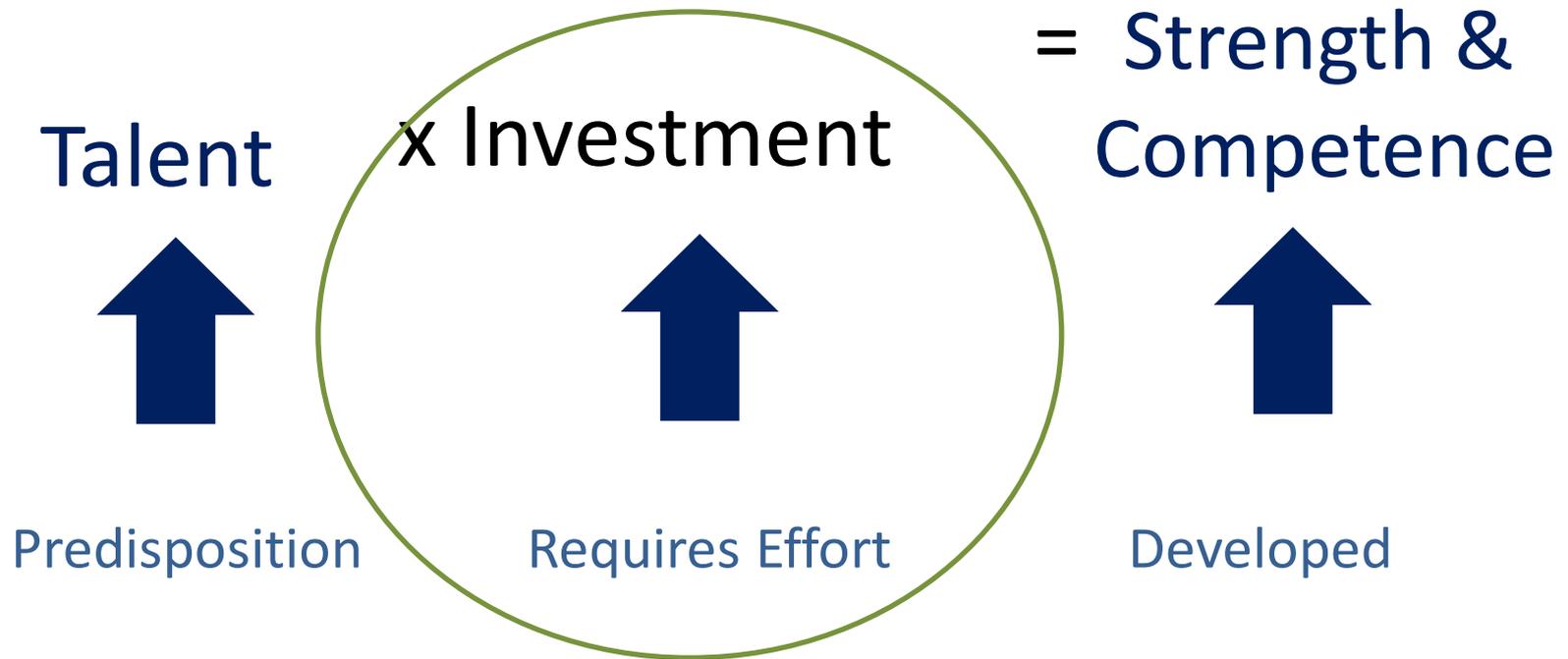


Raise Your Hand if You...

- talk to people on elevators & airplanes
- *hate it* when people talk to you on elevators & airplanes...
- push the elevator button to “remind the elevator” you are there
- ask too many questions
- get uncomfortable when people ask you too many questions
- clean your room before you can relax
- like to relax by avoiding cleaning your room
- hang items of clothing in your closet according to season
- occasionally take the time to hang up items of clothing in your closet



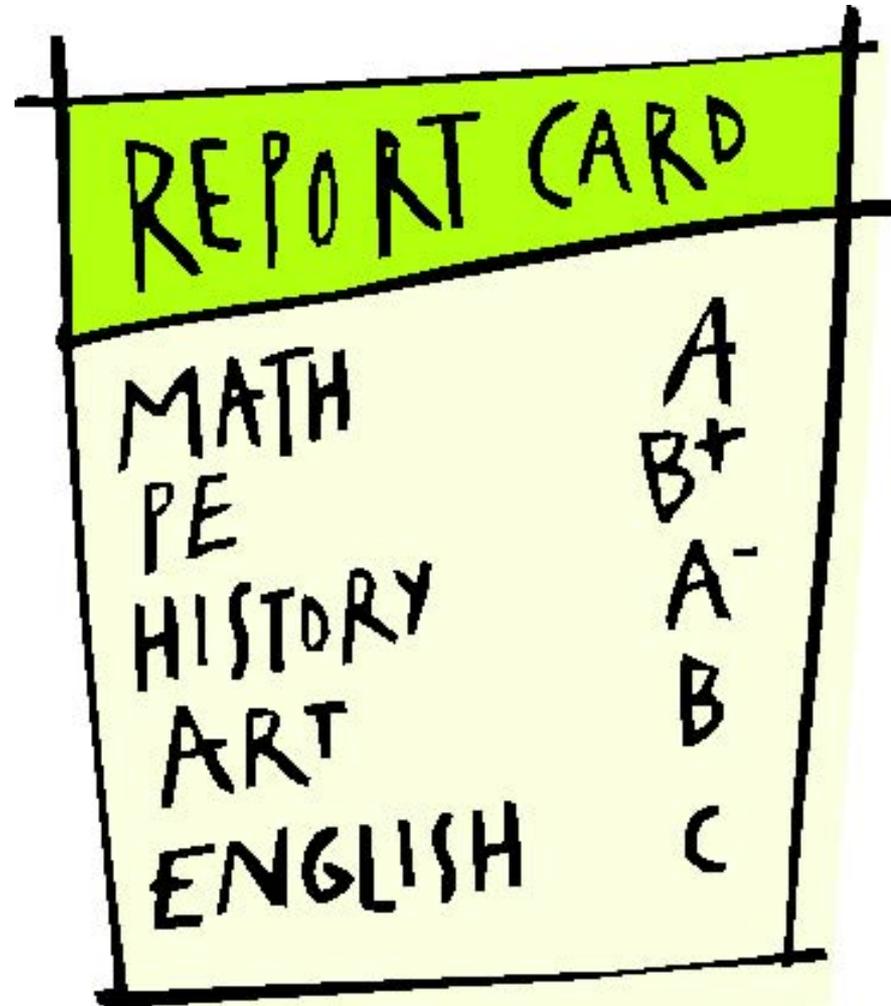
Competence & Strengths



Investment is a MULTIPLIER of talent!

Investment includes time spent practicing, developing skills, & building knowledge

What do you notice first?



A hand-drawn report card with a green header and a yellow body. The header contains the text "REPORT CARD". The body contains a list of subjects and their corresponding grades:

REPORT CARD	
MATH	A
PE	B+
HISTORY	A-
ART	B
ENGLISH	C



Strengths Perspective is Counter Cultural

Current paradigm is deficit-based:

- Supervisors spend most of their time working with the weakest performers and zeroing in on mistakes.
- Parents and teachers focus on students' lower grades rather than on their highest.
- **Weakness fixing prevents failure – strengths building promotes success**



Strengths Drives Engagement



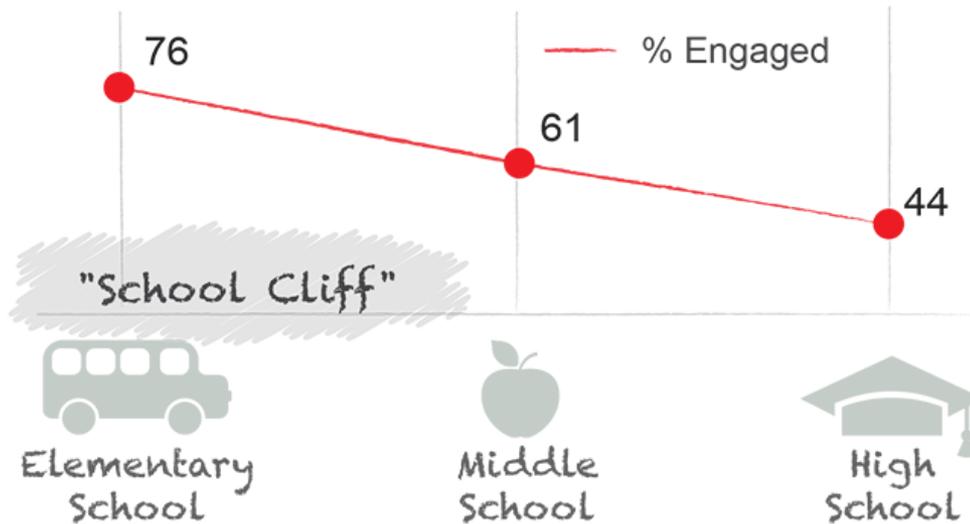
Actively Disengaged



Strengths Drives Engagement

Meanwhile, our students get
LESS ENGAGED each year

The Gallup Student Poll, 2012



Our strengths affect the way we:

process information

experience others

view time and structure

accommodate change

communicate



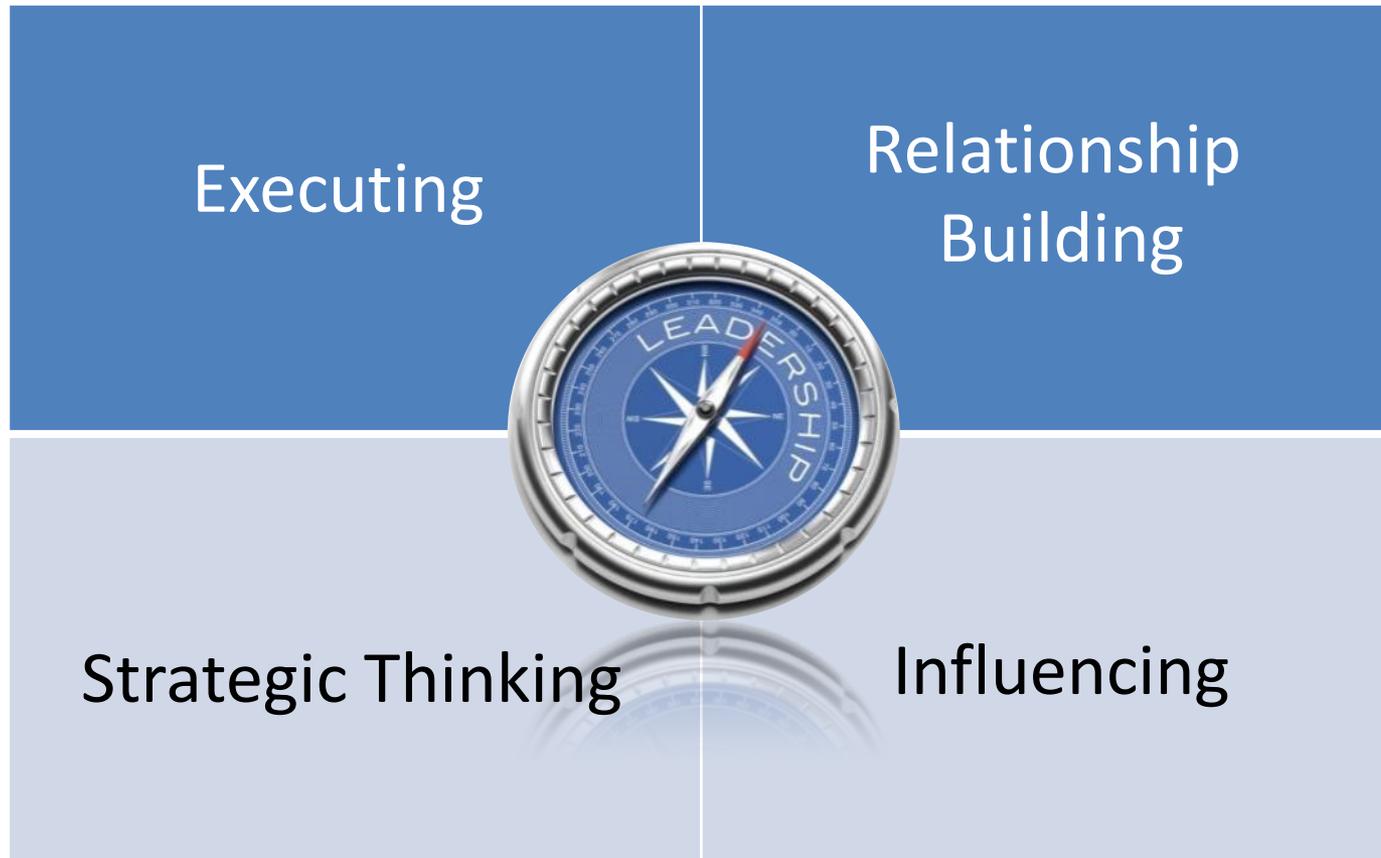


Find someone who has a strength that you don't understand.

Ask them to describe how that strength works for them.



Four Domains of Leadership Strength



Executing

Knowing how to make things happen

Achiever

Consistency

Focus

Arranger

Deliberative

Responsibility

Belief

Discipline

Restorative

Rath & Conchie, 2009



Relationship Building

The glue that holds the team together



Adaptability

Developer

Connectedness

Empathy

Harmony

Includer

Individualization

Positivity

Relator

Rath & Conchie, 2009

Strategic Thinking

Keeping us focused on what could be

Analytical	Input
Context	Intellection
Futuristic	Learner
Ideation	Strategic

Rath & Conchie, 2009



Influencing

Reaching a broader audience

Activator

Communication

Command

Competition

Maximizer

Self-Assurance

Significance

Woo



Rath & Conchie, 2009

Practical Next Steps

E-mail your Top 5 report to a family member, friend, and to a colleague

Create a team talent map for your organization

Create a plan to develop one of your talents

Take advantage of the VT Gallup site to help take these steps



New Site

StrengthsQuest

- HOME
- ACTION PLANS
- GROUPS
- RESOURCES
- USERS

JONATHAN'S TOP 5

RANK	STRENGTH	OVERVIEW	click row to expand
1	Arranger	...figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged	
2	Responsibility	...take psychological ownership of what they say they will do	
3	Harmony	...look for consensus	
4	Includer	...accepting of others	
5	Connectedness	...have faith in the links between all things	

DOMAIN: EXECUTING INFLUENCING RELATIONSHIP BUILDING STRATEGIC THINKING

*Jonathan - What makes you stand out?
Download your full Insight Report.*



YOUR ACTION PLANS

SUBJECT	STATUS	DETAILS
Create New Action Plan		

Strengths Beginnings

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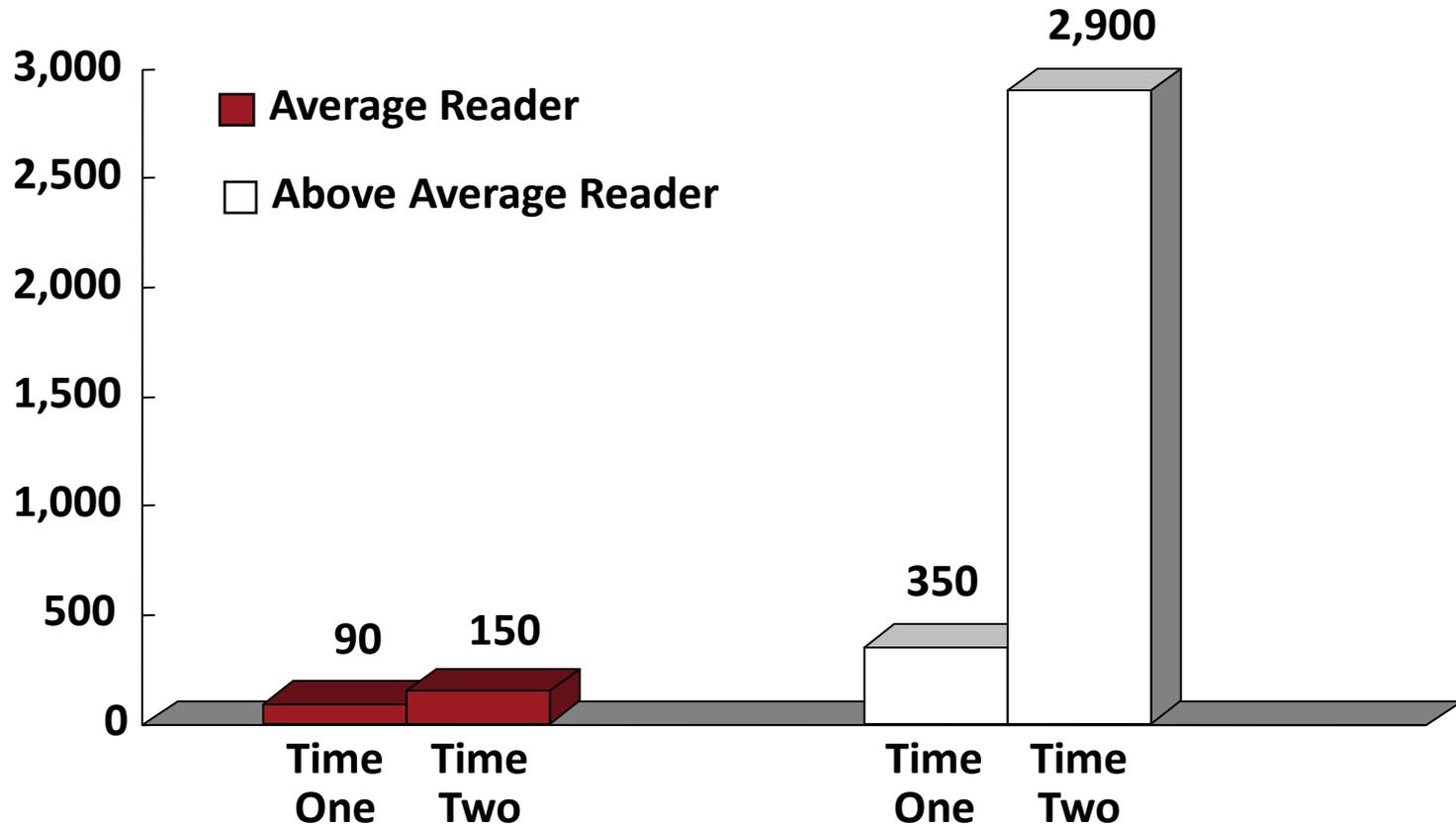
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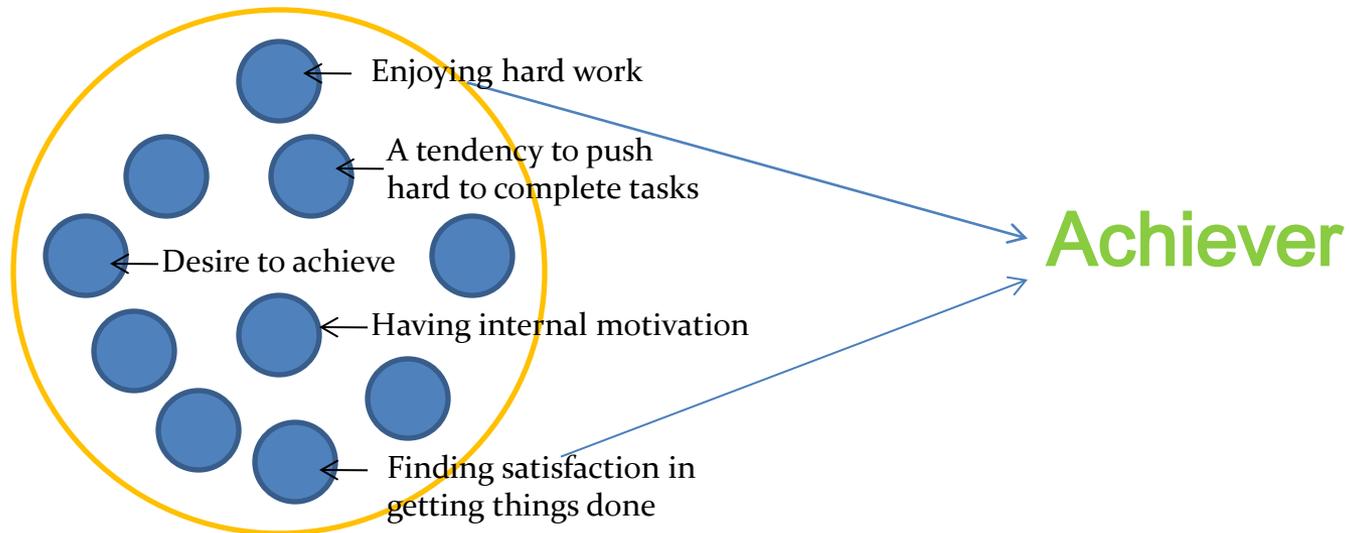
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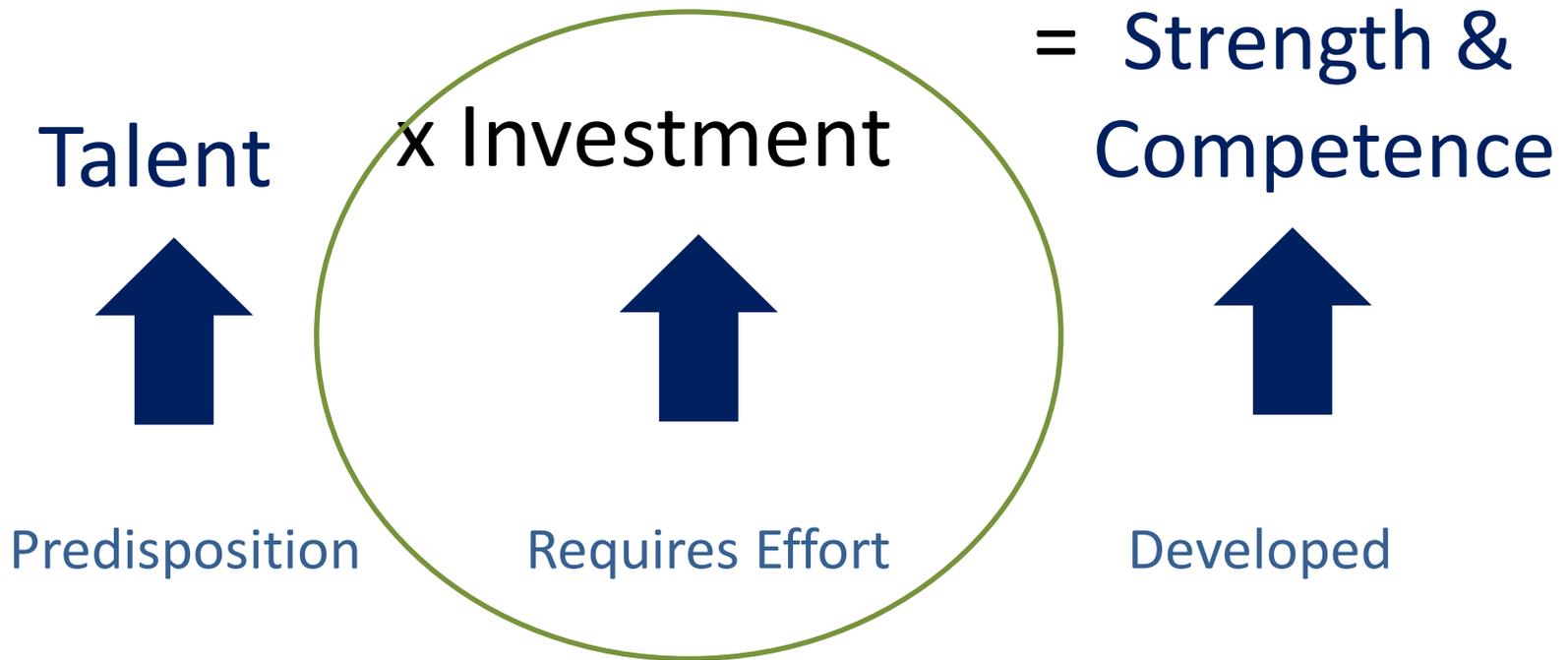


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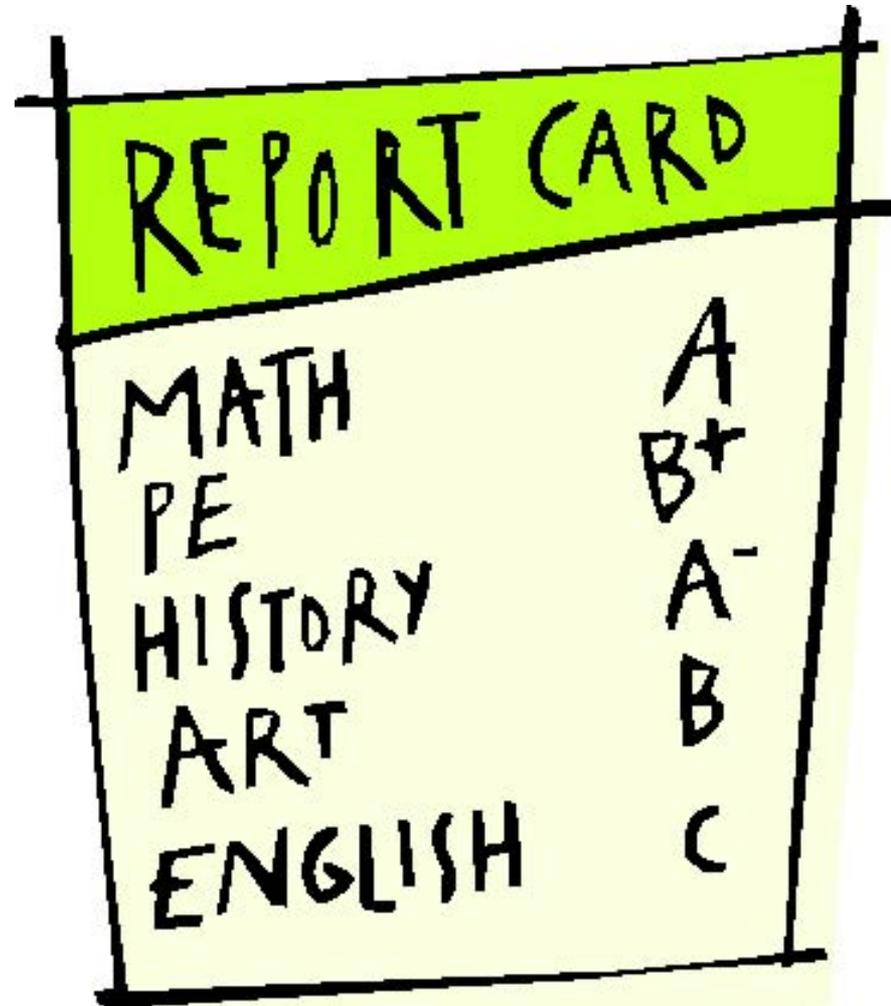
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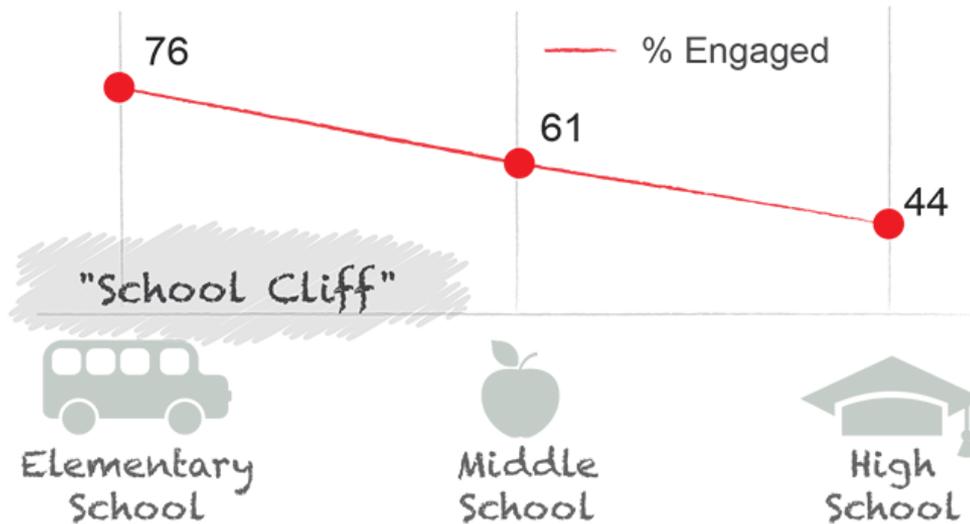
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Relationship
Building



Strategic Thinking

Influencing

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[Create New Action Plan](#)