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From Perfectionism to Purpose: Integrating CliftonStrengths into Computing Capstone Courses to Foster Reflective and Career-Ready Engineers

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Abstract

Engineering and computing graduates are expected to enter the workforce with strong technical skills alongside the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate in teams, and articulate their strengths and limitations in professional contexts. Yet many students struggle to describe their capabilities in ways that move beyond generic or socially safe language, particularly in interviews and industry-facing team environments. This paper presents a concise strengths-based pedagogical intervention embedded within an industry-sponsored Computer Science and Computer Engineering capstone course designed to support professional self-articulation and adaptive teamwork communication. The intervention reframes the CliftonStrengths framework as a professional communication tool rather than a personality assessment and is implemented through two structured assignments: *Name It, Claim It, Aim It* and *Managing Your Team*. Using qualitative thematic analysis of 136 student-authored artifacts from a bounded single-semester cohort (73 students enrolled; 67 and 69 submissions across the two assignments), this study examines how students translate strengths awareness into industry-aligned professional behaviors. Findings indicate consistent thematic patterns across artifacts: students articulated strengths and contextual limitations using professional language; translated strengths insight into adaptive collaboration strategies; established explicit communication norms and feedback preferences; and connected strengths reflection to interview preparation and career positioning. These patterns emerged within a limited instructional structure, suggesting that bounded strengths-based reflection can function as a practical scaffold for professional communication within technically intensive capstone courses. This work contributes a scalable model for integrating career-relevant articulation and teamwork development into industry-facing capstone experiences and offers implications for strengthening college–industry partnerships through structured professional reflection.

Introduction

Preparing students for professional engineering practice is a central goal of undergraduate computing and engineering education, reflected in accreditation expectations and disciplinary learning outcomes that emphasize both technical and professional competencies [1, 2]. In addition to technical proficiency, graduates are expected to communicate clearly, collaborate effectively in teams, and articulate their skills and limitations in professional settings [3, 4]. These expectations are especially pronounced in industry-sponsored capstone courses, where students must interact with external stakeholders, navigate ambiguity, and demonstrate professional readiness alongside technical competence [5, 6]. Despite the emphasis on professional skills, research

consistently shows that many students struggle to describe their strengths, working styles, and growth areas in ways that resonate with industry audiences [2, 4]. When asked to discuss their strengths or weaknesses in interviews, students often default to generic or defensive responses that fail to convey meaningful self-awareness or professional maturity [3]. Similarly, within team-based projects, students may have difficulty articulating communication preferences, feedback needs, or collaboration strategies, leading to misalignment and avoidable conflict [7, 8]. Educators have responded to these challenges by embedding professional skills training within capstone courses through reflective writing, teamwork contracts, and communication workshops [9, 10]. While these approaches can be effective, they often require substantial instructional time or are perceived by students—particularly those in computing and engineering disciplines—as disconnected from professional practice [10]. There remains a need for concise, scalable interventions that support professional self-articulation and teamwork communication without displacing technical content.

Strengths-based frameworks offer one potential avenue for addressing this gap. In this study, strengths-based frameworks refer to approaches that emphasize identifying and leveraging individuals' recurring patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior as assets for performance, learning, and collaboration [11, 12]. In professional and organizational contexts, such approaches are widely used to support leadership development, teamwork, and career advancement [13]. However, when introduced in academic settings, strengths-based tools are sometimes received skeptically by engineering and computing students, particularly when framed as personality assessments rather than practical tools for professional action [10]. This paper presents a strengths-based pedagogical intervention designed to bridge this divide by reframing CliftonStrengths as a shared professional language for industry-facing communication. Embedded within a senior Computer Science and Computer Engineering capstone course, the intervention emphasizes practical application rather than introspection and is implemented through two structured assignments that guide students from individual self-awareness to adaptive team practice.

The purpose of this study is to examine how a concise strengths-based intervention supports computing students' articulation of professional identity, collaboration strategies, and communication expectations in ways aligned with industry practice. Using qualitative thematic analysis of 136 student-authored artifacts from a bounded single-semester capstone cohort, this work explores how students translate strengths awareness into actionable professional behaviors. By situating strengths-based reflection within an industry-sponsored capstone context, this study contributes a practical model for strengthening college–industry partnerships and preparing students for professional engineering practice. The findings offer implications for educators seeking to integrate career readiness and teamwork development into technically intensive courses with minimal instructional overhead.

Related Work

This work builds on three intersecting bodies of scholarship: (1) professional skills and career readiness in engineering education, (2) strengths-based and reflective pedagogical

approaches, and (3) teamwork and communication in industry-facing capstone experiences. Together, these areas highlight a persistent challenge in engineering education: helping technically proficient students translate self-awareness into actionable professional behaviors in authentic contexts.

Professional Skills and Career Readiness in Engineering Education

Preparing students for professional practice is a long-standing priority in engineering education, reflected in accreditation frameworks and competency models that emphasize communication, teamwork, and professional responsibility [1, 2]. Beyond technical expertise, studies of engineering practice highlight the central role of coordination, information exchange, and collaborative problem solving in real-world work [4].

Despite these expectations, a consistent finding across engineering education research is that students often struggle to articulate their skills, communicate effectively across roles, and navigate professional expectations when transitioning to industry [2, 3]. This gap between technical preparation and professional self-articulation has been identified as a persistent barrier to early-career effectiveness [14].

Capstone design courses are frequently positioned as the primary venue for developing these competencies, particularly in programs with strong college–industry partnerships. Prior studies highlight persistent challenges in student communication with industry sponsors, alignment of expectations, and team coordination under real-world constraints [5, 6]. Consequently, educators have explored instructional interventions that embed professional skills development directly within capstone experiences, including structured reflection, professional communication training, and career preparation activities [3, 9].

This study extends that work by examining whether professional self-articulation and teamwork communication can be supported through a concise, strengths-based intervention embedded within an industry-sponsored capstone course.

Strengths-Based and Reflective Pedagogies

Strengths-based approaches emphasize leveraging individuals' existing capabilities rather than focusing solely on deficits, aligning with positive psychology perspectives on learning and development [11, 12]. In higher education contexts, strengths-based practices have been associated with increased engagement, self-efficacy, and academic persistence [15]. The CliftonStrengths framework, originally developed within organizational psychology, has been widely adopted in leadership development and professional contexts as a tool for understanding patterns of performance and collaboration [13].

Reflective practice has likewise been extensively studied as a mechanism for supporting professional identity formation, metacognition, and lifelong learning in engineering education [9, 16]. However, prior work notes that engineering and computing students may resist reflective or personality-oriented activities when their relevance to professional practice is unclear or perceived as disconnected from technical work [10]. Research across disciplines suggests that reflective interventions are most effective when embedded within authentic tasks and linked to actionable outcomes [17].

The present study contributes to this literature by reframing CliftonStrengths not as a personality assessment but as a professional communication tool. By situating strengths reflection within industry-facing capstone assignments and explicitly linking insights to teamwork, interviews, and leadership behaviors, the intervention aligns reflective practice with students' career-oriented motivations.

Teamwork, Communication, and Capstone Design

Teamwork is a defining feature of capstone design courses and a critical component of effective college–industry partnerships. Research on engineering student teams documents recurring challenges related to role ambiguity, conflict management, uneven workload distribution, and communication breakdowns [7, 8]. These challenges often mirror those observed in professional engineering environments, where coordination and interpersonal processes significantly influence project outcomes [18].

To address these issues, educators have implemented interventions such as team contracts, peer evaluation systems, and structured role assignments aimed at improving collaboration processes [10]. More recent scholarship emphasizes the importance of helping students understand and articulate individual work preferences and collaboration styles as a foundation for effective teamwork and psychological safety [18].

This study builds on that body of work by demonstrating how strengths-based reflection can support individualized collaboration strategies. Rather than prescribing uniform teamwork processes, the approach encourages students to adapt communication and leadership behaviors to teammates' strengths and preferences, mirroring expectations in contemporary engineering teams.

Positioning of the Present Study

Taken together, prior research underscores the importance of professional skills, reflective practice, and teamwork development in engineering education. However, much of this work either focuses on extended reflective curricula, intensive coaching models, or broad professional skills frameworks that can be difficult to implement within time-constrained capstone courses.

Fewer studies examine concise, scalable interventions that explicitly bridge self-awareness and industry-facing communication within authentic project environments. This study addresses that gap by presenting a bounded strengths-based framework designed to support professional articulation and adaptive teamwork with minimal instructional overhead.

By situating strengths-based reflection within the context of college–industry partnerships, this work contributes a practical model for educators seeking to strengthen students' readiness for professional practice while maintaining the technical rigor of capstone design experiences.

Methods and Data Selection

Course Context

This study draws on student work from a senior-level Computer Science and Computer Engineering capstone course at a large public research university. Capstone courses are widely recognized as culminating experiences that integrate technical knowledge with professional practice, often through industry-sponsored projects [5, 6].

In this course, student teams collaborated with external stakeholders, managed evolving requirements, and delivered professional-quality outcomes typical of industry-facing project environments. In addition to technical objectives, the course explicitly emphasized teamwork, professional communication, and preparation for industry practice, aligning with commonly identified learning goals for engineering capstone experiences [2, 3].

Strengths-Based Instructional Framework

As part of the course, students completed a structured strengths-based instructional intervention grounded in the CliftonStrengths framework, a strengths-development approach widely used in leadership and professional development contexts [11, 13]. The intervention reframed CliftonStrengths not as a personality classification tool but as a shared professional language for understanding work preferences, collaboration styles, and career-relevant self-articulation.

Instruction included a brief lecture contextualizing strengths language for computing and engineering practice, followed by two written assignments designed to support transfer from individual reflection to team-based professional communication.

The first assignment, *Name It, Claim It, Aim It*, guided students through interpreting their CliftonStrengths results, identifying how strengths manifest in day-to-day work, and articulating how strengths and contextual limitations relate to career goals and professional scenarios such as interviews.

The second assignment, *Managing Your Team*, required students to apply strengths-based insights to real team interactions. Students described preferred management approaches, strategies for adapting communication to teammates with different strengths, and reflections on how team dynamics might shift when strengths language is made explicit. Together, these assignments operationalized strengths reflection as an applied professional practice rather than a purely introspective activity.

Data Selection

To maintain analytic clarity and avoid confounding effects from extended or iterative reflection cycles, this study focuses on a bounded dataset from a single semester in which students completed the two core strengths-based assignments. Bounded case designs are commonly used in qualitative educational research to enable focused examination of processes within a specific instructional context [19].

The dataset consists of anonymized written artifacts from a cohort of 73 students enrolled in the capstone course. Of these, 67 students completed the *Name It, Claim It, Aim It*

assignment and 69 students completed the *Managing Your Team* assignment, resulting in 136 total artifacts. Seventy-one unique students were represented across the two assignments; 65 students completed both assignments, while six completed only one. Because participation varied slightly by assignment, analysis was conducted at the artifact level rather than as matched individual trajectories.

Although similar strengths-based assignments have been implemented across multiple semesters, only one semester is analyzed here to preserve analytic focus on instructional application rather than longitudinal development. The broader multi-semester dataset is reserved for future work examining variation across cohorts and instructional iterations. This study was reviewed and determined to be exempt by the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board (IRB ID: STUDY2026-0094).

Table 1. Data Overview of Student Artifacts

Dataset Component	**Count**
Total enrolled students	73
Unique students represented in artifacts	71
Name It submissions	67
Managing Your Team submissions	69
Students completing both assignments	65
Students completing only one assignment	6
Students completing neither	2

Analytic Approach

A qualitative thematic analysis was conducted across all 136 student artifacts to identify patterns in how students translated strengths awareness into professional articulation and teamwork behaviors. Thematic analysis is an established method for systematically identifying and interpreting patterns across qualitative datasets [20].

Analysis followed a hybrid inductive–deductive approach. Initial deductive codes were derived from the instructional objectives of the intervention—professional self-articulation, teamwork communication, and career preparation—while inductive coding allowed additional subthemes to emerge from the data.

Coding was conducted iteratively across multiple passes through the full artifact set to refine theme definitions and ensure close alignment between codes and textual evidence. Themes were retained only when supported by multiple artifacts and evident across both assignments, ensuring that findings reflected consistent patterns rather than isolated reflections.

Consistent with qualitative analytic practice, the goal of analysis was interpretive rather than frequency-based [20]. The analysis emphasizes thematic consistency and representative evidence rather than quantification of theme prevalence.

Trustworthiness and Researcher Reflexivity

To enhance analytic rigor, strategies were employed to support credibility, dependability, and confirmability [21].

Credibility was supported through iterative coding and repeated engagement with the full artifact set, allowing themes to be refined and compared across assignments. The requirement that themes appear across both assignments further strengthened confidence that interpretations reflected stable patterns rather than assignment-specific artifacts.

Dependability was addressed by maintaining documented code definitions, analytic memos, and refinement notes, creating an audit trail of analytic decisions.

Confirmability was supported by grounding findings in representative excerpts from student artifacts and documenting how interpretations were derived from textual evidence rather than prior assumptions.

Because the researcher served as both course instructor and analyst, reflexivity was an important consideration. To mitigate potential bias, analysis focused on cross-artifact patterns rather than individual student trajectories, and interpretive claims were consistently anchored in observable textual evidence. The dual role also provided contextual insight into instructional design and implementation, supporting interpretation of findings within the educational setting.

Findings

Findings synthesize themes observed across the full set of 136 student-authored artifacts (67 *Name It, Claim It, Aim It* submissions and 69 *Managing Your Team* submissions) representing 71 students. Because participation varied slightly by assignment, analysis was conducted at the artifact level rather than as paired individual trajectories.

Across both assignments, consistent thematic patterns emerged indicating that the strengths-based intervention supported professional self-articulation, adaptive teamwork framing, and industry-aligned communication behaviors. Four primary findings are presented below. These findings synthesize six underlying thematic categories identified during analysis (see Appendix Tables A1–A4).

Finding 1: Students articulated strengths and limitations using professional, evidence-based language

Across artifacts, students moved beyond generic self-descriptions toward concrete, work-relevant articulation of how they function within teams and professional environments. Rather than relying on socially safe or vague interview tropes, students described strengths as observable behavioral tendencies and acknowledged contextual tradeoffs associated with overuse.

Students frequently connected strengths to:

- Decision-making approaches

- Information-processing preferences
- Productivity and workflow strategies
- Communication styles and boundaries

Importantly, limitations were often framed not as deficits but as context-dependent overextensions of strengths. This articulation reflects professional self-description appropriate for interviews, onboarding conversations, and industry-facing team contexts.

Finding 2: Students translated strengths awareness into actionable teamwork strategies

Artifacts from both assignments—particularly *Managing Your Team*—demonstrated that students translated strengths language into applied collaboration strategies. Rather than focusing solely on personal insight, students described how they would adjust communication, task framing, and expectations to align with teammates' documented strengths.

Common strategies included:

- Adjusting levels of technical detail for analytically oriented teammates
- Framing disagreement constructively for harmony-oriented collaborators
- Providing structure and milestone clarity for achievement-driven teammates
- Creating space for ideation or reflection depending on working style

These patterns indicate applied perspective-taking and behavioral adaptation consistent with professional engineering team environments.

Finding 3: Students articulated communication norms and boundaries in direct, professional terms

Across artifacts, students used clear, assertive language to describe expectations for feedback, conflict handling, and collaboration processes. Notably, these expectations were framed around behaviors and structures rather than emotions or personal preferences.

Examples included:

- Requests for specific, candid feedback
- Preferences for private and direct conflict resolution
- Expectations regarding communication timing, response cadence, and decision-making structure

Such articulation mirrors norms commonly expected in professional engineering teams and reflects developing professional agency in naming collaboration needs explicitly.

Finding 4: Students connected strengths reflection to career preparation and industry contexts

Across both assignments, students explicitly linked strengths awareness to career-facing scenarios, including interview preparation, role alignment, leadership positioning, and long-term professional goals.

Even when expressing initial skepticism toward strengths assessments, students described the framework as useful for organizing professional narratives and communicating capabilities in structured, industry-relevant ways. Strengths language was frequently applied to:

- Framing interview responses
- Explaining leadership tendencies
- Identifying suitable project roles
- Articulating growth trajectories

These connections suggest potential transfer beyond the classroom into career-oriented professional contexts relevant to college–industry partnerships.

Summary of Findings

Across 136 artifacts, findings indicate that a concise, two-assignment strengths-based intervention can support computing students' ability to articulate professional identities, translate self-awareness into collaborative strategies, and communicate expectations in industry-aligned ways.

Importantly, these outcomes were observed without extended or iterative reflection cycles. The thematic consistency across both assignments and across paired and unpaired artifacts underscores the practicality of the approach for industry-facing capstone courses operating under time and instructional constraints.

Discussion and Implications

Discussion

This study demonstrates that a concise strengths-based intervention embedded within an industry-facing capstone course can support computing students' professional self-articulation and teamwork communication. Across 136 student-authored artifacts, consistent thematic patterns indicate that meaningful translation from strengths awareness to professionally relevant communication and collaboration behaviors can occur without extensive or repeated reflection activities. Even with only two structured assignments, students articulated strengths and growth edges in behavioral terms and connected those insights to interviews, collaboration practices, and leadership roles within team-based engineering environments.

One notable outcome is students' movement away from generic or socially safe self-descriptions toward evidence-based articulation of strengths and contextual limitations.

Prior research has documented that engineering students often struggle to describe their competencies in professionally meaningful ways, particularly during transitions to industry [2, 3]. Rather than framing weaknesses defensively, students in this study frequently described tradeoffs associated with strengths and identified strategies for managing overuse. This reframing—from fixed weakness to context-dependent overextension—aligns with expectations that early-career engineers demonstrate self-awareness, adaptability, and reflective capacity during interviews and onboarding [4, 14]. The ability to articulate both strengths and limits using professional language represents a meaningful readiness marker for transition into workplace environments.

The findings also highlight the role of strengths-based reflection in supporting adaptive teamwork framing. Students did not merely describe personal preferences; they demonstrated perspective-taking by adjusting communication style, task framing, and collaboration structures in response to teammates' documented strengths. Research on engineering teamwork emphasizes the importance of coordination, role clarity, and adaptive communication in effective team performance [7, 8]. Similarly, work on psychological safety and collaborative effectiveness suggests that recognizing diverse working styles contributes to more resilient and productive teams [17]. The individualized collaboration strategies observed in these artifacts align closely with these established characteristics of high-functioning engineering teams.

Additionally, students' explicit articulation of communication norms and boundaries suggests developing professional agency. Across artifacts, expectations for feedback, conflict handling, and collaboration timing were framed in behavioral and process-oriented terms rather than emotional language. Clear articulation of communication norms has been identified as a key feature of effective engineering communication and sponsor interaction in capstone settings [6]. The ability to name needs and expectations explicitly is particularly important in industry partnerships, where ambiguity in communication can undermine coordination and stakeholder trust.

Taken together, these findings suggest that strengths-based frameworks, when intentionally framed as professional communication tools rather than personality labels, can serve as a practical mechanism for bridging technical education and workplace readiness within capstone environments. This aligns with prior scholarship emphasizing that reflective practices are most effective when embedded within authentic, professionally relevant contexts [9, 17].

Implications for College–Industry Partnerships

For educators working in industry-sponsored capstone courses, this study offers several actionable implications.

First, strengths-based reflection can function as a shared professional language among students, faculty, and industry partners. Misalignment between academic preparation and industry expectations has been widely documented [2, 14]. By equipping students with a vocabulary to describe how they work, collaborate, and respond to challenges, instructors may reduce ambiguity in sponsor interactions and clarify expectations early in project

lifecycles.

Second, the findings suggest that depth of reflection may matter more than duration. The thematic consistency observed across artifacts did not depend on prolonged or iterative reflection cycles. Research on reflective practice indicates that structured, contextually embedded reflection can be effective even when limited in duration, particularly when directly tied to authentic tasks [9, 17]. A bounded, two-assignment structure may therefore provide a feasible model for capstone courses with limited instructional bandwidth.

Third, the intervention supports career readiness without requiring direct employer evaluation. While employer feedback and hiring outcomes are valuable, they are often difficult to collect systematically. Competency frameworks for early-career engineers emphasize communication, teamwork, and self-awareness as critical indicators of readiness [3, 14]. Structured strengths-based reflection aligned with interviews, leadership framing, and collaboration norms can prepare students to articulate these competencies clearly, even in the absence of external assessment data.

Finally, strengths-based assignments may enhance the quality of student–industry interactions by encouraging early articulation of communication preferences, feedback norms, and collaboration strategies. Prior research on capstone sponsor relationships highlights the importance of clear communication structures and expectation-setting in successful projects [6]. When students can clearly express how they work best—and how they adapt to others—industry sponsors may experience smoother onboarding and more effective team coordination.

Implications for Computing Education

For computing and engineering educators more broadly, this work demonstrates that analytically oriented students can engage productively with reflective practices when those practices are framed in terms of professional utility. Resistance to reflective or identity-focused exercises in engineering education has been documented, particularly when such activities are perceived as disconnected from technical relevance [10]. However, research also suggests that reflection becomes more effective when directly tied to professional contexts and actionable outcomes [9, 17]. The present findings support this distinction: students who initially expressed skepticism nonetheless leveraged strengths language to structure interview narratives and professional positioning.

Additionally, the scaffolded progression from individual articulation (*Name It, Claim It, Aim It*) to interpersonal application (*Managing Your Team*) provides a replicable instructional model for integrating professional communication into technically intensive courses. This progression reflects established understandings of engineering competence as involving both individual technical skill and collaborative capacity [4, 7]. The approach therefore supports both self-awareness and adaptive collaboration—core competencies for contemporary computing careers operating within multidisciplinary and industry-facing contexts.

Limitations and Future Work

This study analyzes a bounded dataset from a single semester within one computing capstone context and emphasizes thematic patterns across artifacts rather than longitudinal change. Because participation varied slightly by assignment, analysis was conducted at the artifact level rather than as paired individual trajectories. As such, findings reflect cross-artifact thematic consistency rather than developmental progression or causal impact.

Consistent with qualitative interpretive research traditions [20, 21], the goal of this study is analytic transferability rather than statistical generalizability. While similar strengths-based assignments have been implemented across multiple semesters, broader trend analysis and cohort comparison are beyond the scope of this paper. Future work will leverage the larger multi-semester dataset to examine potential variation across cohorts, instructional iterations, and institutional contexts.

Additionally, this study relies exclusively on student-authored coursework artifacts. While these artifacts provide insight into students' articulated professional reasoning, they do not constitute direct evidence of workplace behavior or sponsor evaluation. Prior research in engineering education has noted the distinction between demonstrated articulation of competence and externally validated performance outcomes [2, 3]. Future research may therefore incorporate complementary measures, such as sponsor feedback, peer evaluation, or early-career follow-up studies, to explore how strengths-based articulation relates to professional effectiveness over time.

Because assignments were completed within a graded academic context, responses may also reflect elements of performance framing or social desirability. However, reflective writing embedded within authentic professional scenarios has been shown to support meaningful articulation of professional identity and practice [9, 17]. Further research could investigate how strengths-based reflection operates in ungraded or workplace-based environments.

Finally, this study does not compare strengths-based reflection to alternative professional development interventions. While thematic evidence suggests utility, future experimental or quasi-experimental designs may help clarify comparative impact relative to other communication or teamwork scaffolds commonly used in capstone education.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that a concise, strengths-based pedagogical intervention embedded within an industry-facing computing capstone can support students' professional self-articulation and collaboration framing. Across 136 student-authored artifacts, consistent thematic patterns indicate that students translated strengths awareness into behavioral language relevant to interviews, teamwork, and communication in professional engineering contexts.

By equipping students with a structured vocabulary for articulating strengths, contextual limitations, and adaptive collaboration strategies, instructors can provide a practical scaffold for career-facing communication without displacing technical instruction. The findings suggest that strengths-based reflection, when intentionally framed as a professional

tool rather than a personality exercise, may serve as a feasible mechanism for strengthening alignment between academic preparation and industry expectations.

Within college–industry partnership contexts, even bounded reflective interventions can contribute to clearer communication norms, improved expectation-setting, and more effective onboarding into sponsor-driven workflows. While further research is needed to examine longitudinal and workplace outcomes, the present results indicate that strengths-based reflection offers a scalable and instructionally efficient approach to integrating professional development into computing capstone environments.

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Appendix

Table A1. Thematic Structure

Theme Category	Description	Context
Strengths Sensemaking	Interpretation of strengths beyond labels	Both assignments
Traits to Tactics	Translation of strengths into behavioral strategies	Both assignments
Adaptive Teamwork	Adjustment to teammates' strengths	Primarily Managing Your Team
Communication & Conflict Framing	Clarification of boundaries and expectations	Both
Professional Identity Articulation	Interview and career framing	Primarily Name It
Growth Edge Articulation	Framing weaknesses as strengths-in-context	Both

Table A2. Data Pairing Structure

Pairing Status	Count
Students with both assignments	65
Students with only Name It	2
Students with only Managing Your Team	4
Total unique students	71

TABLE A3. Theme Definitions and Indicators

Theme	**Definition**	**Observable Indicators (Examples)**
Strengths sensemaking	Evaluation of assessment meaning and perceived accuracy	Surprise, skepticism, validation, reinterpretation
Traits to tactics	Translation of strengths into actionable behaviors	Delegation, pacing, role alignment, productivity strategies
Adaptive teamwork	Tailoring interaction strategies to teammates	Adjusted communication style, empathy, collaboration shifts
Communication & conflict framing	Articulation of norms, boundaries, and feedback preferences	Feedback modality preferences, conflict handling strategies
Professional identity articulation	Career-facing articulation of strengths	Interview framing, job roles, leadership positioning
Growth edge articulation	Recognition of overuse or contextual limitations of strengths	Tradeoffs, restraint, balance, recalibration

TABLE A4. Representative Evidence by Theme

Theme	**Primary Assignment Context**	**Representative Evidence (Paraphrased)**
Professional identity articulation	Name It	Strengths used to frame interview responses and career goals
Traits to tactics	Both	Strengths mapped to Agile workflows and productivity approaches
Adaptive teamwork	Managing Your Team	Communication strategies adjusted based on teammates' strengths
Communication & conflict framing	Managing Your Team	Explicit requests for direct, private, or structured feedback
Growth edge articulation	Name It	Recognition of strength overuse (e.g., Harmony limiting necessary conflict)