

Learning Profile Cards

This is a great strategy for collecting perceptual data about students' strengths in subjects and approaches to learning. Students self-evaluate so that their perspective is recorded about themselves as learners. Once completed, teachers can add annotated information about the students that further informs them on team formations that can lead to success with Global Competencies and learning standards.

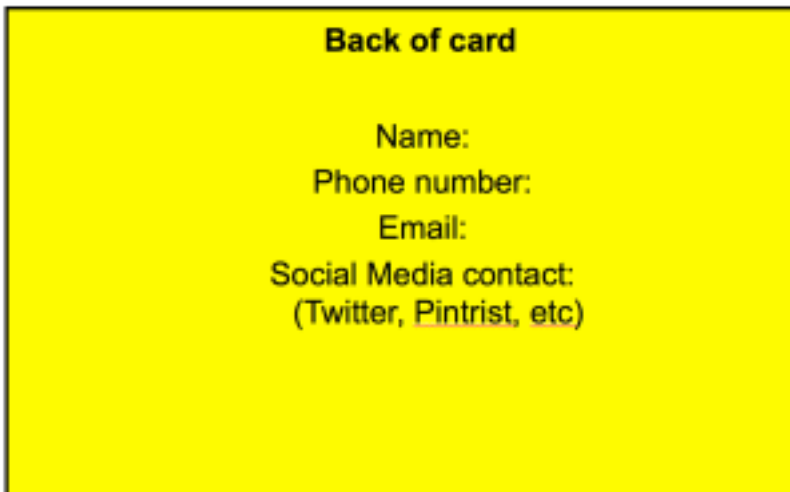
Considerations

- Target Grades: All
- Applicable: Differentiated Instruction, Project Based Learning, and Team Formation
- Activity Time: 15-20 minutes
- Materials: index cards and a pen or pencil (one per student)

Activity Steps

1. After passing out the index cards to each student, have them write on the back of the card their contact information. At a minimum, this would include their name and personal phone number.

Figure 1: Back of the Card



Sometimes the phone number the student provides is not the one on file with the school, and is usually a more reliable connection. The purpose of this information is for when student teams need to contact an absent member about work that needs to be submitted. Since it appears that students use email far less, having other means of contact is important within Social Media.

Figure 2: Front of the Card

2. The next steps will occur on the front of the card. **In the center**, students list 3 to 4 interests that they have outside of school. This could range from recording themselves as they play video games to talking or texting with friends. This information helps for showing context of subject matter to things that matter to students. Also, when designing projects and lessons, I've created learning experiences around the interests of 1-2 students in the class. There are those "Triage Patients" who if we do not make learning meaningful, they will fall further and further behind, until they eventually lose faith in the education system and stop trying.
3. In the **top left corner**, students list the subjects and skills. For each, rate them from a 4--I'm great at this skill/subject and I love it--to a 1--I'm not very good at this skill/subject and I do not like it. Some teachers use a wider range such as an 8 pt or 10 pt scale. That's fine so long as the range is an even number. Otherwise, students tend to choose the middle number such as 3 out of 5, or 5 out of 9. It's also important to note that the score is far less important than if the student rated themselves in the top half or bottom half. This speaks volumes about their perception of themselves, which we'll see repeated with the other categories to follow. When I learned that some of my students rated themselves low in my content area, that indicated that I would need to mediate their self-perception of their skills if I hoped for them to make a strong effort.

Saving the best for last, this information informs on what academic strengths students may have. A student who struggles in Science or Math, but is average to good at writing, becomes the Writing Editor. Their job is not to write the papers or scripts. It is to facilitate the reflection and revision process that each person must do on their own work. Someone who knows social media or video recording becomes the Media Editor. Their job, through facilitation, is to help teammates evaluate how messaging is being effectively done of content to media. As you can see, each role has an academic responsibility. Their role is one of facilitation--monitoring and tracking their team's work using the academic criteria list and/or guidelines (ex. rubric).

4. The other corners are for tracking learning styles and personality inventories. Students use the 4 pt scale to self assess for each category. Teachers can choose any style/inventory that they find to best meet the learning needs of their students. It's important to track at least two. This helps to avoid typecasting students into one learning container. Such as, John is a Visual learner. Well...that probably depends on the situation. More importantly, how would John rate himself. For each learning styles/inventory categories used, the teacher needs to describe them in terms that relates to students. For example, if I asked for directions to the nearest coffee shop, a visual learner would give directions as they saw themselves making the trip.

I strongly recommend using the Internal and External reflection styles listed in the **bottom right corner**. Some people need to process their thinking along before they are ready to share or act. While others need to think aloud their ideas as means to make connections. The team make-up between these two styles can have positive implications when deliberately included in formation decisions.

Once the students complete their card, the teacher collects them to use for making teams and differentiating lessons and projects. Because the students completed them, teachers may add or update information on the cards based on observations.

For early elementary students, teachers might bring in parents or student buddies from an upper grade level who acts as the younger students' secretaries, and transcribe their answers. Thus saving time.