

What Your Colleagues Are Saying . . .

Too many of us perseverate on “fixing” our students and ourselves. Focusing instead on the strengths students bring to the classroom and redirecting the effective practices we already employ, Kobett and Karp turn this thinking on its head. By leveraging their tools and protocols we can confront and unpack our beliefs, transform our instruction, and create the positive and supportive learning environments our students deserve. This is an indispensable resource for educators committed to ensuring that each and every student experiences joy, wonder, and success in mathematics!

Matt Larson

Past President,

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Rarely does one find a text that provides both the aspirational vision and inspirational mission to transform both the striving mathematics educator *and* the student mathematician. Educators will be moved to embrace, then promote change through their work with Drs. Kobett and Karp’s innovative strengths-based approach to teaching and learning mathematics. Kobett and Karp invite all math stakeholders to discover their own strengths from which to build a stronger foundation in the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Richard Cox, Jr.

Math Coordinator

STEAM Lab Facilitator

Bullitt County Public Schools, Kentucky

I love this book! More and more people are talking about the need to build on student strengths instead of focusing on their deficits, but doing this can seem unrealistic to a teacher. The authors not only elaborate what it means to build on student strengths, they offer concrete strategies for how to do it. Starting with the necessary step of looking at one’s own teaching strengths, they offer practical guidelines and examples that lay out a path teachers can use to turn around their teaching and their students’ learning.

Cathy Seeley

Mathematics Educator, Speaker, and Writer

Past President of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Austin, TX

This book is a must-read for every stakeholder in the education system! The authors challenge us to acknowledge the damaging impact of deficit-based beliefs and provide concrete ways to leverage strengths in ourselves and in our students to create mathematics classrooms where students flourish.

Delise Andrews

Math Coordinator

Lincoln Public Schools, NE

This book provides teachers with a wealth of resources for uncovering and nurturing students' mathematical strengths. By focusing on recognizing and building on students' strengths rather than identifying their deficiencies, the authors have mapped out a pathway for creating instructional experiences that support the learning and identity development of each and every student. This is a must-have for all elementary teachers!

Margaret (Peg) Smith

Author of *The Five Practices for Orchestrating Mathematical Discussion*

This book provides a clear, rich, strong rebuttal to “my kids can’t.” Kobett and Karp help us focus on our students’ unique perspectives, talents, and strengths as well as our students’ capabilities with mathematics practices and content. More important, they help us take stock of who we are. They help us identify aspects of our practice that are strong and those that are ready for a turnaround. They teach us about these turnarounds and describe how we can realize them effectively. This is a must-have for transforming “they can’t” into “they can.”

John SanGiovanni

**Coordinator, Mathematics
Howard County Public School System, MD**

Where do beliefs and pedagogy meet? In a world in which we are often asked to find flaws and weaknesses, this book is a breath of fresh air and reminds us that the best way to teach is to build from our strengths. Filled with research-based ideas, practical strategies, and tools, this book provides a comprehensive approach to creating asset-based learning environments by identifying and leveraging the strengths of students, teachers, schools, and caretakers.

Cathery Yeh

**Assistant Professor, Mathematics Education
Chapman University, Orange, CA**

This well-written book is a game changer! *Strengths-Based Teaching and Learning in Mathematics: Five Teaching Turnarounds for Grades K–6* goes beyond simply providing information by sharing a pathway for changing practice. The authors start with reflective activities allowing teachers to examine their beliefs and explore their teaching strengths. Using the Teaching Turnarounds will transform classrooms. Focusing on our students’ strengths should be routine and can be lost in the day-to-day teaching demands. A teacher using these approaches can change the trajectory of students’ lives forever. All teachers need this resource!

Connie S. Schrock

**Emporia State University, KS
National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics President, 2017–2019**

Drs. Kobett and Karp offer teachers a positive and practical way of using Appreciative Inquiry to put spotlight on teachers’ instructional practices to celebrate their strength and support teachers to dream, design and deliver innovative ways to bring more equitable teaching practices to the forefront. By reimagining instruction focused on strengths-based teaching that leverage and put spotlight on students’ abilities to use representations and reasoning, the authors unpack rich tasks by delving into the development of learning progressions in important mathematics as well

as situate mathematics within contexts that students can relate to while bridging mathematics closer to students' lived experiences.

Jennifer Suh

**Professor, Mathematics Education
George Mason University, Fairfax, VA**

Strengths-Based Teaching and Learning in Mathematics: Five Teaching Turnarounds for Grades K–6 forces the reader to become extremely reflective about their own individual identity in mathematics and implementation of effective teaching practices/strategies. How many students have we lost or have allowed to feel defeated in learning mathematics because we didn't teach by harnessing the power of their strengths? This book intersperses time for this type of reflection as one identifies your own strengths, your individual math identity, as well as the inclusion of the numerous "spotlights on practices" to support successful implementation in the classroom. As one considers how to help students develop a growth mindset in mathematics, this book must become an essential resource. There are concrete examples to illustrate how this becomes visible in the classroom—all with the goal of helping students develop their identity, authority, and agency in mathematics. We lose too many students in mathematics; too many students hear that they have gaps, are deficit, or are stigmatized by having to endure endless intervention programs in mathematics. Instead this book uses subtleties, helps you focus on yourself as a teacher of mathematics, and provides explicit examples to harnesses the strengths of all students in mathematics. This will do a lot to change negative student self-images. I love this book!

Denise Walston

**Director of Mathematics
Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, DC**

Finally the book that good teachers have been waiting for: a book that focuses not on what students cannot do, but on what they *can*. This needed book offers teachers a positive, productive way to rethink teaching and learning in mathematics and would be ideal for a school- or districtwide book study.

Jeff Shih

**Associate Professor of Elementary Mathematics
University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

Anytime you purchase a resource book in mathematics, you hope that it does an inspirational delivery of its title. In *Strengths-Based Teaching and Learning in Mathematics: Five Teaching Turnarounds for Grades K–6*, the authors have gone above and beyond the book's high expectations. Kobett and Karp have masterfully tapped into the zeitgeist of contemporary math education and written a book that oozes with not just empathy, reflection, and candor but with clear and motivating practicality that will transform any math classroom into a place of community, hope, and unbridled strength.

Sunil Singh

**Author of *Pi of Life: The Hidden Happiness of Mathematics* and
*Math Recess: Playful Learning in an Age of Disruption***