

Teaching Through a Growth Lens

Asset-Based Instruction in Action

Asset-Based vs. Deficit-Based Models of Instruction

The asset-based approach takes a holistic view of instruction, focusing on student capacities, skills, and strengths. Meanwhile, the deficit model simply asks, “what’s wrong?” One model assumes “not yet,” while the other presupposes “can’t.”

For teachers and leaders, the asset model is the quintessence of the growth mindset, which means not categorizing students as those who can and those who can’t.

Asset Model	Deficit Model
Asset-driven	Needs-driven
Opportunity focus	Problem focus
What is present that we can build upon?	What is missing that we must go find?
May lead to new, unexpected responses to community wishes	May lead to a downward spiral of burnout, depression, or dysfunction

Who Benefits From an Asset-Based Model?

The quick answer: Everyone. When you look through an asset-based lens, you learn to collaborate with students to expand everyone’s knowledge, drawing upon their strengths along the way.

Who Benefits?	How an Asset-based Approach Supports Them
Multilingual Students	Students’ heritage languages and backgrounds are respected and appreciated instead of viewed as impediments. Teachers leverage multilingual learners’ demonstrated advantages in communication skills, memory, decision-making, and analytical skills.
Students with Learning Disabilities	When students with dyslexia or other learning disabilities perform tasks they enjoy and at which they excel, they are, in fact, especially advantaged and appear without disability (Eide & Eide, 2024). Emphasizing their strengths helps students reach their full potential.
Students Experiencing Poverty	Teachers build strong, trusting relationships when they get to know students experiencing poverty as individuals possessing valuable cultural, linguistic, and practical knowledge that can contribute to their academic success.

Three Steps to Integrating an Asset-Based Approach into Teaching*

1. Begin with a diagnostic learning activity that provides information about what students know and can do.
2. Provide different learning pathways so that all students have an opportunity to meet high expectations.
3. Give feedback to students that identifies what they can do well, and offer strategies for using their strengths to address areas of need.

**Di Michele Lalor, 2020*

Lexia’s Asset-Based Value

Lexia’s approach to literacy and language development is deeply rooted in an asset-based model, building upon the diverse skills, cultural backgrounds, and cognitive assets students bring to the classroom. Through adaptive, research-based technology, Lexia supports personalized learning that empowers students to grow at their own pace. To discover our full suite of resources, training, and tools to help you amplify student strengths, explore [Lexia’s product page](#).

Learn more about Lexia