

The Introvert Teacher

Remus Zhong
Black Card Books 2017
ISBN: 978-1-77204-154-5

The classroom is a very public place, yet it is also a place where our personal feelings, motivations and personalities are ever present. How dare we teach? This is often somewhere at the back of our mind. What gives us the right to be standing there educating, training, guiding? Introverts will certainly be ready to question themselves in this more than extroverts.

Wherever in the world, there is no preponderant type of teacher/trainer personality. The introvert teacher with a personality that is not outward may cower inwardly at their own temerity in presuming to be a teacher. This book, however, is of interest to all teachers because there is an introversion-extroversion spectrum, a continuum in teacher personalities that encompasses us all. A teacher is rarely at an extreme of introversion or extroversion. We are where we are but our behaviour can be consciously shifted within the spectrum, depending on circumstances.

The book will resonate with all who are interested in teaching and with all teachers/trainers. It has highly valuable insights for all educators, whether introvert or extrovert or somewhere between the two. The contents of the book have been born of an Asian teaching environment and refer significantly to the Asian teaching situation but they are valid and have real value for teachers anywhere.

The teacher who is more aligned to introversion is not an exception and does not carry a burden of social inadequacy or disadvantage. Teaching, after all, has a special attraction to deeper thinkers, to steadfast and tenacious personalities, to those who ponder and plod rather than those who loudly race to goals. Introverts are well represented among the myriad of personality types working in the teaching profession.

This book avoids the commonly met theory-practice divide, for example the divide between pedagogical theory and practical teaching, between applied linguistics and the teaching of English. The book is set out in six sections containing 41 chapters, beginning with the nature of introversion and extroversion, then examining issues arising from personality types and educator-learner interactions, going on to relevant practicalities and techniques for our lessons and their delivery.

The author shows us that introversion empowers for the teaching situation and brings us helpful insights and thought-provoking knowledge.

To an introvert teacher it is all the more satisfying on achieving good learner outcomes.

Introvert teachers can feel happy in their personalities and teaching styles. They can possess confidence in abilities that are reinforced by the reflection, contemplation, awareness of self, observation and carefully considered thinking. The introvert may have duties in teaching and counselling learners, also interacting with course enquirers and teachers as perhaps academic director, when introversion readily gives way to more extroversion and it is then that the continuum that the author describes is evident. The introvert can be secure in the knowledge, whether in one-to-one situations or teaching in the classroom, that a high pace and intensity does not define them and exhaustion and a sudden energy slump, part of the cost of being a more extrovert teacher, would not be a price to pay.

Remus has researched these issues so well for this book. His thoughts on teacher types and introversion-extroversion began when he was studying for the London Teacher Training College Diploma in TESOL, when I had the privilege of being his course tutor.

A celebration of introversion, almost a contradiction in terms, is what Remus has laudably conceived and successfully achieved.

The TESOL College library is stocking *The Introvert Teacher* and the College thoroughly recommends it for teachers/trainers anywhere and for the library of any teaching/training institution.

Dr Alan Richardson
The TESOL College