

The Invisible Students in the Classroom:  
How to Include the Introverts Without Excluding the Extroverts

by

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For Dad and Mom

*You find peace not by rearranging the circumstances of your life, but by realizing who you are at the deepest level.*

– Eckhart Tolle

## **Abstract**

This paper focuses mainly on the introverted and extroverted temperaments and how that affects an adolescent's learning in school and their interaction in the world. There are many cultural misconceptions of introversion which are unknowingly perpetuated by school personnel, who are often extroverts. This argument also includes the fact that America praises the extrovert while diminishing the introvert, thusly preventing the introverted students from full academic achievement as well as restricting connection to their community. There is evidence in American history that the extroverted ideal was developed over time and originated from Dr. Carl Jung's research on personality and the theory of introversion and extroversion. Research from modern scientists of psychology, temperaments, and personality are utilized including: Dr. Elaine Aron, Dr. Marti Olsen Laney, and Dr. Laurie Helgoe as well as contemporary authors Jonathan Rauch, Aneli Rufus, Susan Cain, and Sophia Dembling.

**Key words:** education, adolescents, high school English education, introvert, extrovert, temperament, personality, misconceptions of, extrovert ideal in American culture, empathy, sympathy, prosocial behavior, building classroom community

# Table of Contents

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

<i>Problem Statement and Significance of Problem</i> .....	1
<i>Purpose</i> .....	5
<i>Rationale</i> .....	5
<i>Discussion and Definitions of Terms</i> .....	7
<i>Summary Statement</i> .....	12

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

<i>Section One: Introverts and Extroverts</i> .....	13
Qualities and Behaviors of Introversion and Extroversion .....	17
Misconceptions .....	22
Jung and Personality .....	30
How the Extrovert Became the Ideal Personality in America .....	35
<i>Section Two: Learning Information and Processing Stimulus</i> .....	39
How to Effectively Educate Knowing About Introverts and Extroverts ...	44
<i>Section Three: Working with Prosocial Behavior to Create a Community     of Compassionate Learners</i> .....	50

## **Chapter III: Solutions** .....

<i>Section One: Solutions for Students</i> .....	57
<i>Section Two: Solutions for Educators</i> .....	65
<i>Section Three: Building Community</i> .....	73

## **Chapter IV: Conclusions** .....

Reference .....	87
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## Chapter I: Introduction

### *Problem Statement*

There is a marked difference in how introverts and extroverts<sup>1</sup> process information and organize outside stimulus which influences how they learn and how they are perceived by others. An educator who idealizes one trait over another will risk alienation and stigmatization of students as well as prohibition of their success. It is crucial then for educators to genuinely understand the differences, recognize the behavior patterns of introverts and extroverts (without pigeon-holing students, diminishing/celebrating either type with prejudice, or using it as a weapon against or excuse for a student), differentiate their classroom community to enable both /types to equally share space and attention, and help students learn to recognize, adapt, and include the other type in their everyday lives.

### *Significance of the Problem*

Walk into any classroom. Immediately, there will be two or three students that capture your attention: they may make others laugh, they may respond to a question with an insightful answer, or they may misbehave. These extroverts usually commandeer the educator's focus for their constant movement, continuous talk, or relentless need for attention. These are the children educators may consider most when structuring their day-to-day activities purely to keep them engaged and less likely to stray off-task. Yet, at

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Jung used the spelling "extravert", but social convention has changed the spelling to "extrovert". In academia and research, especially in psychology, the "a" spelling is more accepted and is used in this paper as in the original source when quoted. Otherwise, the "o" spelling is used by this author.

the end of the day there are several more students that may have stayed on task, completed all or most of their work, and/or followed all of the directions without ever speaking a word or otherwise drawing attention to themselves. These students may be the introverts and they are invisible and devalued in the classroom as well as the outside world.

“Depending on which study you consult, one third to one half of [all] Americans are introverts – in other words, *one out of every two or three people you know*. If you’re not an introvert, you are surely raising, managing, married to, or coupled with one” (Cain, 2012). American author, journalist and self-proclaimed introvert, Jonathan Rauch wrote, “I performed exhaustive research on [the question of how many people are introverts and how many are extroverts], in the form of a quick Google search. The answer: about 25 percent [;] or: just under half [;] or – my favorite – ‘a minority in the regular population but a majority in the gifted population.’” There are some studies that claim that *over half* of the population are introverted (Wier, 2006). Not having a finite answer does indeed make sense as many introverts are private and do not feel the need to share their inner workings with others. In fact, author Devora Zack, validates this theory in her 2010 book, *Networking for People Who Hate Networking*. In response to why the numbers for introverts seemed to have jumped in the last decade or so, Zack replied, “the previous disparity in numbers reflected the facts that introverts didn’t respond to surveys about personality.” Trying to empirically categorize a population is always problematic, especially when the categories are misunderstood, have been corrupted, and are grossly undervalued. Labeling also raises many other issues: How does one know their own proclivity? What does it mean to be introverted or extroverted? Is it even worth

examination or is it akin to knowing your astrological sign? Once determined, how do you utilize that information to your advantage without dismissing the value of the other? In truth, having an understanding of how your brain works best enables you to maximize your surroundings for efficiency, productivity, and success. Educators should be equipped to help students discover their own strengths, identify and improve their weaknesses, and offer opportunities to practice with new and unfamiliar skills. While educators focus on assisting students to understand their learning styles, I argue that it is also worthwhile to help them understand their temperament and personality type. Properly defining the terms and helping students understand whether they tend introverted or extroverted will also prevent them from labeling themselves or others negatively. Since the qualities of a cross-section of a population are considered disadvantages (the introverts), there is a flaw in the system. Introverted qualities are more often viewed as negatives – a loner, too quiet, very slow – which can result in students feeling inadequate in their school community. This is not the road to developing excellent societal citizenship.

In modern classrooms, students that are the most vocal will receive the most attention, praise, and assistance. Even extroverted educators will be praised for their enthusiastic contributions in meetings, dynamic style in front of a class, and seemingly unending high energy towards the profession. Introverted students and educators, meanwhile, will quietly and diligently work on lessons, react more slowly to changes, and produce well-researched, thoughtful, and rich projects that may not be noticed. They will not be remembered in the same fashion because the society as a whole grants those that are forceful, brash, and loud with more worth. The quieter personality traits –

providing thoughtful responses over time, wanting to spend time alone, or appearing shy – are perceived as detriments. Many extroverted people feel the need to “fix” introverted people, which will create resentment, prejudice, and low self-esteem. If an educator tells an introverted student that they need to “come out of their shell and participate more in class”, this underscores the notion that there is something wrong with the student’s innate temperament. My argument is not to allow quieter students the freedom to avoid challenges, but it is that *all* students should venture out of their comfort zones to practice skills that are not inherent. Learning to recognize, appreciate, and coordinate with other types of people is essential in any workplace. Our high school students will move on to college and/or work where they must effectively collaborate with others. They may find themselves in an authoritative position when they will need to be able to individualize the value others can bring to a community. This prosocial behavior unites a group of people whether in a classroom or boardroom.

Our classrooms are also reflecting the increasing diversity of our population with the addition of foreign students, students with physical, emotional, and developmental disabilities, and even students in major life transitions (e.g. students coming out of incarceration or rehab). This is another advantageous reason to help students develop an awareness of introversion and extroversion: empathy and sympathy for other cultures and situations. One afternoon in a co-taught 11<sup>th</sup> grade English class I heard my partner educator tell an English Language Learner from Bhutan “to come out of her shell” whose culture specifically taught her to be the opposite. It led me to wonder how extroversion became the standard. I started to question whether it was worthy of being the standard and if so, where did this notion of superior personality traits come from and is it

acceptable to allow it to continue? The more I considered it and paid closer attention to how other educators and I interacted with students, I realized that recognizing the difference between introverted and extroverted students could potentially help them be more successful in school and in life. Schools should not be an assembly line producing the same person at graduation; our diverse population deserves more than that. Our community needs empathetic citizens that understand themselves and others. Helping young people change their perspective from “might makes right” to a motto that is more inclusive enables more powerful communication, more effective productivity, and a more satisfied contentment with life.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this project is to differentiate the definitions of “introvert” and “extrovert” as well as describe the behavior patterns of both types. This project will also articulate the misconceptions and prejudices towards each type and provide ways for educators to improve their perspectives towards students of the introverted type. Also, solutions will be provided for helping students understand the two types and how educators can use the information for planning and implementing lessons. Finally, the project will explain how a community can be built using these tools and how that will create successful students.

### *Rationale*

Personality and temperament cannot easily be distilled into just introvert and extrovert. There are too many nuances to simplify it so artlessly, but educators should be able at least to recognize that what may be perceived as shyness, reticence, or anxiety

could in fact be introversion. Understanding the proper definition of the temperaments of introverts and extroverts eliminates most negative connotation. It vastly expands one's perspective in how to teach lessons so that all may learn and all may benefit.

Firstly, I intend to properly define the variations between introverts and extroverts. In order to properly describe each temperament, qualities of each will need to be examined. This will include how the brain works differently for each, how they react to stimulus and learning, and how classroom environment can be improved so that one temperament is not monopolizing the other. All of these factors are especially constructive for educators to understand as it will facilitate better curriculum planning and more effective instruction. Exploring the history of the study of personality by noted German psychoanalyst Carl Jung as well as the how extroversion became the superior personality type in America is especially interesting as it leads us to understand how extroversion became accepted as the superior temperament. A most dangerous result of this paper would be if educators took away only these elements. Strict adherence to a label is the unguarded doorway to prejudice. It would be too easy to misinterpret the information found within this paper and immediately begin making extensive changes in a classroom. This would not only be a mistake, it would also be irresponsible. Careful consideration must be made before making any major change in a classroom. Also, an educator *cannot* tell a student that they are an introvert or extrovert. Placing opinionated labels on any person is unjust, prejudiced, and restrictive and all people should strive to avoid such action. Students should be able to discover for themselves whether they are introverted or extroverted and should not feel the pressure to reveal their results to others unless they are comfortable. I am hoping that educators will first contemplate for

themselves whether they are offering enough for all types of temperaments in their curriculum, their classroom, and within their conversations with students.

In the final portion of this paper, there is a section discussing ways educators can balance the environment of the classroom so that all may benefit. Building community in a classroom is the crucial foundation for individual student success and educators should design an inclusive and inviting environment. When a classroom is working towards a common goal and has learned that all the participants must work together to achieve that goal, sympathy and empathy are developed. With encouragement and practice, students then gain a better understanding of how to work with others, how they work best, and how to help others achieve. When a classroom of students grasp this concept, the attention-seeking behavior diminishes, the breadth and depth of learning increases and individuals gain self-confidence, mastery of skills, and life-long knowledge.

### *Discussion and Definitions of Terms*

#### **Community** – *noun*

**Def. 2:** “Common character; quality in common; commonness, agreement, identity... identity of interest, interests in common” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 3:** “Social intercourse; fellowship, communion” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 5. a.:** “Commonness, ordinary occurrence” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 7. d.:** “*The community*: the people of a country (or district) as a whole; the general body to which all alike belong, the public” (OED, 1989).

**Classroom Community** – *noun*: Inside an American high school classroom during the time allotted for a scheduled class, the people therein create a community of “common interest” and “agreement” (Def. 2) that is not unlike the greater community of the outside world (Def. 7. d.). Perhaps the ideal communal

classroom environment is one where “social discourse and fellowship” (Def. 3) become an “ordinary occurrence” (Def. 5. a.).

**Empathy** – *verb*: “the power of projecting one’s personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation” (OED, 1989).

**English Language Learners (ELLs)**<sup>2</sup> – refers to students acquiring English for their education; they are between the ages of three- to twenty-one-years-old, are enrolled or preparing to enroll in elementary or secondary school, and were not born in the United States or whose native language is other than English. Also known as English as a Second Language (ESOL), however this term is losing favor as some students know more than one other language prior to learning English.

**Extrovert**<sup>3</sup> – natural temperament where physic energy is turned outward, towards the outer world.

**Introvert** – natural temperament where the physic energy is turned inwards, towards the internal world.

**Personality** – *noun*

**Def. 2. a.:** “That quality or assemblage of qualities which makes a person what he is, as distinct from other persons; distinctive personal or individual character, esp. when of a marked or notable kind” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 2. c.:** “The unique combination of psychophysical qualities or traits, inherent and acquired, that make up each person as observable in his reactions to the environment or to the social group; also the psychological study

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<sup>2</sup> Portions of this definition were retrieved from the Federal Definition of ELLs: <http://ell.pccs.k12.mi.us/sites/ell.pccs.k12.mi.us/files/shared/2011-2012/Federal%20Definition%20of%20ELL.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> The terms “Introvert”, “Extrovert” and “Shy” and more fully defined within Chapter II.

concerned with such aspects of the person, and with the similarities and differences that exist between persons” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 3. b.:** “A person who stands out from others either by virtue of strong or unusual character or because his position makes him a focus for some form of public interest” (OED, 1989).

**Prosocial Behavior** – *adjective*: “Of, relating to, or designating something, esp.

behaviour, which is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship; (*Social Psychol.*) relating to or designating behaviour which adheres, sometimes in a rigid or conventional manner, to the moral standards accepted by the established social group (contrasted with *asocial* or *antisocial* behaviours or responses). (OED, 1989).

**Shy** – *adjective*: being reserved or having/showing nervousness/timidity in the company of other people.

**Sympathy** – *intr. verb*

“To have ‘sympathy’ or affinity; to agree in nature or qualities (*with* something)” (OED, 1989).

**Sympathy** – *noun*

**Def. 1. a.:** “A (real or supposed) affinity between certain things, by virtue of which they are similarly or correspondingly affected by the same influence, affect or influence one another... or attract or tend towards each other” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 3:** “Agreement, accord, harmony, consonance, concord; agreement in qualities, likeness, conformity, correspondence” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 3. a.:** “Conformity of feelings, inclinations, or temperament, which makes persons agreeable to each other; community of feeling; harmony of disposition” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 3. b.:** “The quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other; the fact or capacity

of entering into or sharing the feelings of another or others; fellow-feeling; Also, a feeling or frame of mind evoked by and responsive to some external influence. Const. *with* (a person, etc., or a feeling)” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 3. c.:** “The quality or state of being thus affected by the suffering or sorrow of another; a feeling of compassion or commiseration” (OED, 1989).

**Temperament** – *noun*

**Def. 7:** “constitution or habit of mind, esp. as depending upon or connected with physical constitution; natural disposition = TEMPER”; “a person's or animal's nature, esp. as it permanently affects their behavior” (OED, 1989).

**Thoughtful** – *adjective*

**Def. 1.:** “Given to, disposed to, or engaged in thinking; absorbed in thought, meditative, contemplative; pensive, musing; full of thoughts, preoccupied in mind” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 1. b.:** “Disposed to think about or consider matters; prudent; reflective; also characterized by reflection; manifesting thought or consideration” (OED, 1989);

**Def. 1. c.:** “Thinking about or meditating on something; mindful” (OED, 1989).

*A Note on the Difference Between Temperament and Personality*

Introversion and extroversion directly stem from natural temperament. Though personality can change, temperament does not. There are aspects of a person's basic behavior and needs that will not change fundamentally throughout life, though they may be enhanced and/or deemphasized over time. This is due to changes in self-confidence, intelligence, and experience. Though an introvert may behave like an extrovert or vice versa, an individual's core instincts will not change. "Temperament refers to inborn, biologically based behavioral and emotional patterns that are observable in infancy and early childhood; personality is the complex brew that emerges after cultural influence and personal experience are thrown into the mix. Some say that temperament is the foundation, and personality is the building" (Cain, 2012).

*A Note on the Autism Spectrum*

People diagnosed to be on the Autism Spectrum or with Asperger's disease should not to be confused with introverts. Both of these cognitive disorders affect how a person interacts and communicates with others. With those that have been diagnosed as autistic, there are often limited speech skills and with those that have been diagnosed with Asperger's, there is impaired nonverbal communication. People with these disorders suffer most acutely from an inability to understand or utilize social cues. These must stand separately from introverts. Though some of the behaviors appear similar and some of the suggestions mentioned herein may be effective, educating children with Autism or Asperger's disease require further study and is beyond this project.

*Summary Statement*

Truly, there is nothing wrong with being either an introvert or an extrovert. In truth, most people are a combination of both with tendencies towards one more than the other. In fact, Carl Jung did argue that, “every individual possesses both mechanisms – extroversion as well as introversion, and the only relative predominance of the one over the other determines the personality type<sup>4</sup>” (O’Connor, 1985). Educators are the leaders of the classroom and must remember that leaders need not be always energetic, expressive, and flashy. A great leader can also be soft-spoken, gentle, and passive. This “soft power” (Cain, 2012) can be deeply moving and is being neglected as a strength in the classroom. The students in the classroom that may become the next Mahatma Gandhi or Rosa Parks need educators to be sympathetic, nurturing, and just a little less loud.

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<sup>4</sup> More on personality types in Chapter II, Section One entitled “Jung and Personality”.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### *Section One: Introverts and Extroverts*

Some many feel that serious discourse about personality and temperament is about as important as arranging classroom seating charts according to hair color. My counterargument is anecdotal, but no less valuable. Students in my classroom when identifying with either extroversion or introversion became better students. In this I mean, once it was discussed in class on a general level and students were given an opportunity to examine and discuss the different temperaments, they felt more comfortable asserting their tendencies and advocating for their needs. Rambunctious and troublesome students who decided that they were extroverted became less likely to misbehave during instruction. Introspective and thoughtful students were empowered to advocate for themselves and utilize their resources effectively. Holistically, our classroom became a more organized place where community was built and young people cooperated in learning. This sounds hokey maybe, but it did happen. At first, I was not able to decipher the course of events that led to such harmony, but I came to think that perhaps it had been initiated by a simple lesson I conducted near the beginning of the school year. I had asked students to complete an informational worksheet that included questions about how they studied at home, what kind of environment they enjoyed in school, how they conducted work for large projects, when they felt they were most successful in an academic setting, if they considered themselves organized or “in need of improvement”, and so on. I collected the questionnaires and gathered the data.

The second day of class, I asked students to share their responses with someone nearby them. The Think-Pair-Share activity is common in many classrooms, but my focus was more on the behavior of the students rather than granting them an opportunity to talk in class. In this instance, I specifically provided a time limit and asked them to remain seated. Always one or two students disregard this rule and I am aware of who may be the Vehement Extroverts. There are also usually one or two students that remain mostly silent and then I know who may be the Deepest Introverts. It is necessary to iterate that labeling students is analogous to putting them in a cage; therefore this is where educators must tread lightly. At the time, I did not categorize students in this manner, but instead as the “loudest” and the “quietest”, truly an unfair and reductive categorization. This simple activity provided me with my limitations for lesson planning. For example, my Vehement Extroverts would most enjoy lessons of performance, group work, and activity whereas my Deepest Introverts would enjoy the long projects, silent independent research, and lecture. Every time I planned that semester, I kept these particular students in mind as my yardstick. I asked: “Will the Vehement Extroverts take this activity and do something special with it?” as well as “Will the Deepest Introverts find this activity stimulating without being overwhelming?” Measuring each lesson this way took some time, but it forced my attention towards how often our classroom environment catered towards one or the other. In this way, I was able to balance my own tendencies and help generate a more equitable classroom. Criticisms from the Vehement Extroverts concerning activities that were “too boring” or from the Deepest Introverts that they were “too much” offered opportunities to point out that everyday cannot be perfect and that, as a community, we sometimes must compromise. Eventually they

appreciated this line of logic as an effective way of going about business in an environment that is mixed of different types of people and needs. That was a memorable and successful semester for both the students and me. I was never sure why such luck had come my way. I spent every day pondering what had happened and, more importantly, how might I be able to do it again?

It was at the end of the course, when I unearthed a possible reason for such a banner semester. I ask students to evaluate me as an educator; this provides for me the most valuable information for my own progression. After a year of evaluating each other, themselves, and lessons, students are able to articulate specifically what they enjoyed, disliked, and found lacking. (Students are made fully aware of my motivation for this activity. I have a student collect these evaluations into a sealed envelope, then deliver it to my supervisor, who is not allowed to hand it to me until my grades have been submitted for the course. I am hoping this provides them the opportunity to be honest about my instructional abilities without worrying if the response will harm their final grades.) Due to our success as a community, the entire class felt confident about taking the New York State Comprehensive exam, the two-day, six-hour test that all 11<sup>th</sup> graders had to pass in New York State at the time. They did not know then when they completed their evaluations of the course that most of them would pass that exam quite easily. They just knew we had learned a lot together and our community was soon to be dissolved. They were already disappointed the semester was ending.

In the final evaluations, it was not just one student or even two, but almost the entire class had commented on our community. There was a consensus that our classroom community had been the reason for their success. The stand-out comment that made me

re-evaluate the curriculum was so simple, yet it made me stop reading evaluations and wander around my classroom awhile in bewilderment. It said: "I'm so glad that you helped me understand that I am an introvert and I need quiet to work. No one ever taught me that before." It seems to be a fairly benign comment and perhaps not important enough for further reflection, but it stood out to me at the time because I did not remember teaching that to anyone. Why then, did this student believe that I had? When had I told someone that they were an introvert? What does that mean exactly and had I ruined this student forever? I went through my syllabus, even rereading some material, but remained entirely confused.

It was a few days later, when packing my classroom for the summer, that a short and simple article caught my attention. I had used it in an early lesson to practice identifying voice and style, but apparently what this student took away went beyond literary elements. The article was Jonathan Rauch's treatise (of sorts) entitled "How to Care for Your Introvert" published March 1, 2003 online on *The Atlantic*. I had used it because Rauch demonstrates rhetorical question, research, anecdote, and personal narrative to great success. The lesson was meant to focus attention on how Rauch constructed the article in order to engage and inform his reader. We broke it down into little pieces and discussed Rauch's choices and whether he accomplished his intended goal. The amount of time we spent discussing introversion and extroversion was notable only for its brevity; yet, somehow, this student had attached meaning to her personality and/or temperament and gave me credit for the discovery. So, my discomfort aside, I considered the possibility as to whether or not that had been a pivotal reason for our lovely community. However unintentionally, perhaps the article had validated their

tendencies for them. Perhaps they had learned that maybe the common practice of studying while wearing headphones and watching television in a crowded and noisy room is *not* appropriate for everyone nor should they keep trying to make it work for them. I never spoke to this class again as a group, so it is difficult to determine for certain; but since this revelation, I have used this article in the same way and witnessed students transform into better students, more compassionate helpers, excellent colleagues, and steadfast community builders. I still hesitate to accord credit to Rauch's article, at least not wholly, because I harbor trepidations towards helping students label themselves into corners. Nevertheless, I have noticed positive changes in student behaviors, in both "the quiet" and "the loudest", which have inevitably lead to higher student success. However, I am most grateful for the opportunity to consider the issue of introversion and extroversion much more seriously than I would have a few years ago, which is when I would have counted myself in the camp of "this-is-about-as-important-as-hair-color". Yet the recent influx of books on the subject, research conducted by scientists and corporations, as well as what I have witnessed with adolescents has proven to me that this is worth attention and discussion by educators.

### *Qualities and Behaviors of Introversion and Extroversion*

It is necessary to examine the definitive differences between the two orientations in order to better understand how these types act on a daily basis. Recognizing and accepting that introverts and extroverts are not superior to one another nor can neither be fundamentally changed is an important first step in better interactions with both orientations. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines introversion (v.) as "to turn (the

mind, thought, etc.) inwards upon itself; to direct (one's thinking or effort) to that which is internal or spiritual” (Def. 1) and extroversion (v.) as “to give an outward direction to (thought)” (Def. 1). This can be demonstrated in how people exchange thoughts. An extrovert may need to talk through her ideas while an introvert needs to quietly contemplate, often in isolation, and over a longer period of time than what is traditional provided in a classroom. Introverts are also often not keen on working in groups instead choosing to work alone or with one other person because the stimulation is easier to manage. Extroverts greatly enjoy working in somebody's company because it provides people and stimulation with which to interact. Introverts sometimes get distracted by people just sitting nearby them and may get frustrated in a group. This is not to say that introverts *always* want to work alone and extroverts *always* want to work in a group, but it is the tendency. An extrovert needs other people to bounce ideas around with them whereas an introvert needs space and quiet time to think about the idea before being presented with a new one.

It is not fair and far too reductive to distill introverts into the quiet ones and extroverts into the loud ones, though it may appear that way. Introverts can speak with rapid-fire precision given the topic is one in which they are interested and have acquired some knowledge prior to the conversation. Extroverts can also be quiet, though most research suggests that this is only the case for a short period of time. Once an extrovert finds a companion who is willing to chat, their interest is piqued again. Extroverts may be supremely quiet in a classroom where they feel discouragement or frustration, when they feel their voice is not heard by an educator, or where they are unfamiliar with other students. Extroverts can also be shy (more on this later), but they often mask their

shyness with gregariousness questions, comedic anecdotes, or commentary on small topics, like the weather. In this way, they are taking control of their fear by disguising it. On the other hand, shy introverts are even less likely to speak in a class because their focus is on their thoughts, in addition to being burdened with the nervousness of speaking in front of others. They may not acquiesce to the social conventions of conversation and remain silent though others are expecting them to speak, which can lead to negative labels and misconceptions.

There are some universal behavior patterns for both, but these are not absolute determiners. Introverts “are inner directed, need to energize alone, enjoy few stimuli, need concentration, focus on thoughts and ideas, value privacy, and prefer one-on-one discussion” (Zack, 2010). While extroverts “are outward directed, energize with others, enjoy simultaneous stimuli, need diversions, focus on people and events, prefer group discussion, and value public sharing” (Zack, 2010). For example, an introverted student may need to go to a library study room where the door can be closed in order to practice vocabulary words for a test. An extroverted student studying the same material may study in the lunchroom with their peers, enjoying the noise and commotion. Both students may earn the same grade on the test, but their methods of learning are different enough to be significant.

“Introverts focus on the meaning they make of the events swirling around them; extroverts plunge into the events themselves. Introverts recharge their batteries by being alone; extroverts need to recharge when they don’t socialize enough.” (Cain, 2012). This can be observed when students discuss a piece of literature. Introverts will emphasize the motivations of a character while extroverts may concentrate on the plot twists. Perhaps

Rauch said it best when he described the difference this way: introverts “tend to think before talking, whereas extroverts tend to think *by* talking” (2003). Again, when observing students in a discussion, it will be the extroverts that generate the conversation, while the introverts take notes, ask questions, or remain silent. The introverted student may demonstrate their engagement in that conversation later in a writing assignment. They may astound the educator with an intriguing insight because they absorbed the information provided and reflected on the many angles; yet it appeared that they were not interested in the discussion during class time.

“Extroverts tend to tackle assignments quickly. They make fast (sometimes rash) decisions, and are comfortable multitasking and risk-taking. They enjoy the ‘thrill of the chase’ for rewards like money and status. Introverts often work more slowly and deliberately. They like to focus on one task at a time and can have mighty powers of concentration. They’re relatively immune to the lures of wealth and fame” (Cain, 2012).

This may be seen in older adolescents in their career goals. Introverted students are focused on the academic pursuits of going to college and learning while the extroverted students are focused on getting out of school, so they can start a business and make money. It may be difficult to always separate students in this way because of societal pressures of excessive success, fame, and gaining the appearance of self-confidence. For example, students in the Rochester, NY city school district often harbor lofty goals of being an NBA star or famous rock star when their academic achievements have proven that they lack stamina when pursuing difficult tasks. This would make the rigors of these industries nearly impossible for them to overcome. In order to better

comprehend the nuances of an individual's temperament, it is always important for students to take into account when they feel most comfortable in a classroom or how they most successfully study new material in order to best understand their proclivities (Rufus, 2003). There may be occasions where they may be more extroverted than introverted.

Societal pressures play an enormous role in determining whether introversion or extroversion is valued. This will be discussed further when examining how the extrovert became the ideal, but it is important to articulate how much behavior and personality can be influenced in a negative fashion. In *Party of One: The Loners' Manifesto*, author Anneli Rufus recounts a story of a young man named Jan who had an artistic temperament but was discouraged by his parents. Though he greatly enjoyed and was very skilled in artistic endeavors, Jan's parents "ignored his awards" and "refused to pay for his education if he studied art" (2003). His career was disappointing and frustrating because he was forced to work in an unsatisfying and ill-suited environment for his temperament. He lost much of his passion for life as well as his love for a talent from which he drew strength. Rufus makes an important discovery with this anecdote by illustrating that suppressing one's temperament leads to apprehension, exasperation, and disenchantment with the outside world. She describes the moment an individual's heart breaks when he or she realizes

"...that other people exist, that other people do not see things as one does.

Sometimes it seems that other people all see things alike, and that however everyone else sees things it is not as one does. It startles [a person] at first...

[and] in time he realizes, Oh, I'm on my own with this. My visions can't be shared or discussed in mixed company. And if I try to talk about them, someone

might laugh or shake their head uncomprehendingly or try to make me stop.

Someone might hurt me” (Rufus, 2003).

Perhaps this sentiment tugs at your heartstrings for the injustice of the situation and the sympathy you may feel; yet we allow this to happen today. We have consented to this kind of dream-quashing through lack of prosocial behavior. Since extroversion is the ideal in American society, introverts are forced to assimilate often abandoning their own temperaments in order to fit in with their peers, to appease authority figures central to their maturation, and to “just get by” comfortably in life. How did we decide that one type is better than the other? As a society, we have misunderstood how introversion and extroversion are fundamentally defined and essentially expressed. We have also inadvertently nurtured an oppressive approach when instructing young people that one is better than the other.

### *Misconceptions*

This fact could be remedied by closely examining the misconceptions related to introversion and extroversion, “by sharpening the terminology, providing a language lesson, we could do a lot more justice all the way around” (Rufus, 2003). Along with a semantics lesson, looking closely at how introversion is presented in society can be revealing. To fully understand how they were developed, we must first look at where they originated. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung believed that humanity could benefit by examining the other – the shadow side – in order to better appreciate the whole Self. He called this Integration and it involved “more than a mere knowledge of the shadow’s qualities” (Jacobi, 1967). Jung argued that a shadow quality “can be integrated only when its

double aspect has become conscious and when it is grasped not merely intellectually but understood to its feeling value.’ Only then has he accepted [the shadow] so completely and integrated it as his own possession” (Jacobi, 1967). Jung argues that integration comes about when an individual understands and accepts the other side – the shadow – of ourselves. This is the only way to master both and become whole. Here lie the beginnings of Jung’s personality theory. He witnessed his individual patients struggle between their temperaments and societal expectations. At the time, the words introvert and extrovert were not yet part of the scientific or the popular lexicon, but Jung realized that an individual’s basic behavioral instincts and what society assumed to be functional were not always the same. He began to see that some temperaments preferred thoughtful reflection and peacefulness – like he preferred – while others sought out dialogue and excitement – like his colleague and mentor, Sigmund Freud.

Modern psychoanalysts and psychologists now understand this polarity as introverted and extroverted and only recently – within the last twenty years – have started to closely examine how much these temperaments affect our psyche’s well-being in addition to how we interact and view the world.

“As imperfect beings, we are always living only one-half of any polarity. For a while, we are introverted; then must become extraverted to balance it. For a while, we are strong; then we are weak and must rest. The world forces us to be one limited way at any particular time. ‘You can’t be both a cowboy and a fireman.’ Our limited body adds to the limits. All we can do is constantly try to get back into balance” (Aron, 1998).

It is nearly impossible – and psychologically damaging – for an individual to be all extrovert or all introvert. The modern world is organized in such a way that allows us to be both, though it does favor the extrovert over the introvert. Consider the amount of time you spend alone – in the car, at the office, at home – and compare that with how often you are involved with others. Then, consider when you feel the best and when you feel frustration. Recording this data for a week may lead to helpful insights for you and your students.

Through Jung’s lens, introverts and extroverts can practice being the other. This is not to suggest that one is superior to the other, but that each should learn how to appreciate when the time to be an introvert or extrovert is appropriate. In this way, extroverts can learn to curb excessive talking to let others speak and introverts can learn to assert themselves more often. Paying attention to social cues is not an easy task, especially for young people, but is part of the necessary process of learning personal identity and social transactions. The problems involved with introversion come from mistaken identifiers that are too often negative and too often perceived as anti-social, which is in direct contrast with the social mores of the modern world. The biggest misconception is that all introverts are shy which is entirely inaccurate.

The adjective form of “shy” is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “easily frightened away; difficult of approach owing to timidity, caution, or distrust; timidly or cautiously averse to encountering or having to do with some specified person or thing; suspicious, distrustful” (Def. 2) and further defined as “shrinking from self-assertion; sensitively timid; retiring or reserved from diffidence; bashful” (Def. 5. a.). Words like “easily frightened”, “distrustful”, “timid” have helped us acquire our mostly negative

connotations of shyness in which such a person is afraid, weak in fortitude, or non-assertive; thusly perceived as less worthy. For example, in his 2012 book *Better Than Normal: How What Makes You Different Can Make You Exceptional* by psychologist Dr. Dale Archer, shyness is equated with social anxiety disorder. In a chart labeled “Continuum Model: Shyness”, there are three sections: one side of the continuum is labeled as “social anxiety” and the other side as being “extroverted”. This stigmatizes a person that may have introverted tendencies to believe that they actually have a disorder that needs to be fixed. The fact that “introverted” is not even on that continuum aligns this orientation with something that is non-existent, not worth mentioning, and not valuable, which is wholly unfair. Beyond this, Archer does not list the word “introvert” in the index, though I did find one instance where the word appears in the book. On page 83, after the aforementioned continuum chart, Archer states “some degree of *introversion* [emphasis mine] is healthy and can be advantageous in both your work and social lives. *Shyness* [emphasis mine] confers the following ascendant strengths...” (Archer, 2012) and continues on to mention positives such as listening skills, independence, and productivity. Here the word “introversion” is being interchanged with “shyness”, which further confuses the fact that there is a difference between them. Director of the Center for Neurobiology and Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, Dr. Samuel Barondes also made the decision to exclude both “shyness” and “introvert” in the index of his 2012 book, *Making Sense of People: Decoding the Mysteries of Personality*; yet he uses both throughout the text. In Chapter Two, entitled, “Troublesome Patterns”, he describes people with low extraversion (eliminating the word introvert altogether) as those with “low warmth, low gregariousness, low assertiveness, low activity, low

excitement seeking, and low positive emotionality” – all negatives. Throughout the book, he describes introverted qualities using words like “schizoid”, “odd”, “bizarre”, “narcissistic”, “dependent”, “avoidant”, “borderline”, “antisocial”, and “histrionic”. Exclusion and misrepresentation of this kind from a medical professional, an assumed valid source, is irresponsible and detrimental to introverts in that they are left feeling they are an unacceptable “other” ; Sophia Dembling, in *The Introverts Way: Living a Quiet Life in a Noisy World*, states “introversion is often treated as the space where extroversion is not. It is treated as a vacuum. An absence rather than a presence” (2012). This is exactly the attitude educators need to work against within themselves and with students; though quiet, introversion is a presence in itself, if only one knows how to recognize it.

Often shy behavior is based on fear of a new situation, anxiety from a past experience, a general sense of high-sensitivity, or some other emotional or mental activity. It is not a physical reaction, though shyness can manifest itself physically (blushing, sweating, avoiding eye contact, hand wringing, etc.). Introverts have no such tell-tale physical behaviors therefore this may be the simplest (though not definitive) way to separate true shyness from genuine introversion. An introvert is not always shy, but they are usually reserved and quiet; an exclusively shy person has sometimes *been taught* to be “easily frightened” and “timid”. A shy person can often re-learn behaviors and become less shy whereas an introvert tends to stay an introvert. Another important fact to reiterate is that extroverts can also be shy.

“A shy extrovert... gets her energy from others, but it takes a while before she feels comfortable with people. Once she gets used to her social environment and

warms up to people, she usually feels very much at home, talking easily, and sensing an increase in energy as the social event progresses. She is often one of the last to leave a social gathering” (Hilliard, 2005).

An introverted person may be quiet because the environment is overly stimulating and adjusting to it consumes energy. At the same social gathering mentioned above, the introvert may also eventually warm up to the people around him, but will need to exit much earlier. Introverts are usually not interested in small talk instead wishing to carry on a lively discourse about one topic. The introvert seeks depth while the extrovert desires breadth. Introverts will participate in a conversation that they find compelling or chat animatedly with their friends at lunch. A shy person may avoid such activities out of anxiety and fear. There is nothing wrong with being introverted and/or shy, but when so much of what surrounds you tells you to be gregarious, outgoing, and constantly sociable – orientations of the extrovert – it is easy to fall into the trap of feeling that something is inherently wrong with your behavior and psychological needs.

“Extroverts are seen as bighearted, vibrant, warm, empathic. ‘People person’ is a compliment. Introverts are described with words like ‘guarded,’ ‘loner,’ ‘reserved,’ ‘taciturn,’ ‘self-contained,’ ‘private’ – narrow, ungenerous words, words that suggest emotional parsimony and smallness of personality. Female introverts, I suspect, must suffer especially. In certain circles, particularly in the Midwest, a man can still sometimes get away with being what they used to call a strong and silent type; introverted women, lacking that alternative, are even more likely than men to be perceived as timid, withdrawn, haughty” (Rauch, 2003).

Women standing around a water cooler may condescendingly call a quieter colleague not in their social circle a “bitch” or “snob” in order to disparage her more reserved behavior. If overheard, that woman will undoubtedly feel that she is wrong for being herself and may attempt to change her own personality in order to fit in with the others. After reading her book, *The Introverts Way: Living a Quiet Life in a Noisy World* Dembling’s in-laws said to her: “We didn’t know you were an introvert, we thought you were just a bitch” (2012). One may be surprised to learn that many well-known people categorize themselves as introverted, such as: “Eleanor Roosevelt, Robert Frost, Jack Kerouac, Robert De Niro, Sting, Prince Albert of Monaco, David Lettermen, Michelle Pfeiffer, Barbara Walters, Sigourney Weaver, Steve Martin, and Mike Myers” (Carducci and Kaiser, 2003). Other well-known people who consider themselves introverts have also created some of the greatest artistic and scientific masterpieces beloved around the world. They include: “Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, W. B. Yeats, Frederic Chopin, Marcel Proust, J. M. Barrie, George Orwell, Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss), Charles Schulz, Steven Spielberg, Larry Page, and J. K. Rowling” (Cain, 2012). Many of the people listed are respected for their artistic and scientific talents, but perhaps none of their great works would have come to fruition if they were forced to be extroverted and thusly become depressed or disenchanting with their talents. In fact it is difficult to imagine what the world would be like without the penultimate example of introversion in the character of Linus from *Peanuts* (Charles Schulz) or how much science would be altered without the theory of relativity (Albert Einstein). I would also argue that both Elliot from *E. T.* (Steven Spielberg) and Harry Potter (J. K. Rowling) are introverts and have become iconic for showing bravado and bravery when a situation necessitated it. They both

demonstrate prolonged consideration before making big decisions and have a profound sense of empathy for others, two characteristics of introverts.

Introverts are less likely to network at a social gathering (or even go for that matter), less likely to share a creative idea to a large group (unless they have considered it carefully and thoroughly), and are less likely to voice an opinion in a classroom where they do not feel comfortable. They may also need longer time to complete an assignment or understand a complex idea, which may appear as lack of participation or laziness. This lack of presence could potentially be of serious concern for the livelihood of an introvert, which is why it is important to establish effective strategies to operate in a world where they may not always be comfortable. This is a delicate task and should not be taken lightly. It is highly unlikely that our extroverted culture is going to alter. Therefore, an introvert is forced to learn to fake the ways of an extrovert in order to appear attractive to potential employers. Though this could make an introvert feel that they are making too big a compromise, it is important to remind them that they will have a much broader understanding of the world and its people in it. They may also be more psychologically balanced as Jung wished for all of us through his integration theory.

Here then is one major disadvantage of being an extrovert. If you never have to change, you never have to understand another side, the shadow side. For this reason, I do encourage extroverts to try to be more empathetic with introverts and also learn to operate in a world where *they* may not be comfortable, one that is not as loud, quick, or talkative. If an extrovert and introvert are sharing a classroom together – which is inevitable – it is the responsibility of both parties to come to consensus for sharing that space. It cannot always be quiet and it cannot always be loud, therefore the extrovert

must learn to turn inward just as the introvert must learn to turn outward. Sure, this sounds reasonable and simple, but the reality is that in everyday life, this so-called easy compromise does not happen. All sorts of distractions happen in the modern classroom and the introverted students are mostly ignored and sometimes ridiculed for their reservation or seeming slowness both by educators and their peers. Allowed to follow their own inherent behaviors without ridicule and with fewer limitations and distractions, an introverted student will be better able to achieve individual academic and social success. Acting outside of your normal is exhausting and creates deeply embedded anxiety and resentment. A student forced to consistently act outside of their normal behaviors cannot learn well, much less achieve mastery.

### *Jung and Personality*

Carl Jung first coined the word introvert and extrovert at a conference in 1913 (Snowden, 2010). Later, in 1918 in a “large and complicated volume called *Psychological Types* ... he attempted to explain his theory” on personality types, introversion, and extraversion (Snowden, 2010). However, Jung had been considering these theories for several years before this volume was published. Starting in 1904, Jung was working with patients in Burghölzli, a psychiatric hospital of the University of Zürich, Switzerland, using word association tests in which he separated the patients into two categories: hysterical and schizophrenic, “but he soon realized that [these classifications could be expanded and] could have wider implications on general psychology” (Snowden, 2010). In *Modern Man: In Search of a Soul*, published in 1933, Jung reflects on this process:

“[These observations] caused me to formulate these typical distinctions in the following way: there is a whole class of man who at moment of reaction to a given situation at first draw back a little as if with an unvoiced “no,” and only after that are able to react; and there is another class who, in the same situation, came forward with an immediate reaction, apparently confident that their behavior is obviously right. The former class would therefore be characterized by a certain negative relation to the object, and the latter by a positive one” (Jung, 1933).

It is interesting to note that Jung observes the negative feeling associated with the situation based on the initial reaction. However, the distinction also carries through to how others perceive the individual. A negative reaction is often not attributed to behavior, but to the person. For example, a boy whose does not wish to revisit a playground after an unpleasant incident falling from the swings is perhaps told to “get over it”, “man up”, or “forget about it”. Typically none of these responses are intended towards his behavior or residual bad feeling towards the incident, but instead are focused on the young man’s personality in that he is weak, a sissy, or too afraid. In this way, Jung’s theory mentioned above is also attributing the negative relationship to the person themselves. In fact, this is where we are today: any behavior that demonstrates hesitation, reservation, or seeming lack of interest is considered snobby, coy, or disengaged, all negatives. Ironically, being reserved in nature has “evolved as a kind of safety mechanism” (Archer, 2012) where more introverted animals who stay distant from the pack usually stay alive longer than those that boldly enter into unfamiliar situations. Helping the two-thirds (or one-half) of Americans that are mostly extroverted better

appreciate the talents, skills, and behavior of the others who are more introverted may just be the way towards a community of compassionate and successful people. Realizing that in studying the unconscious,

“one inevitably comes up against the fact that it is the case of one psyche studying another, or worse, still, studying itself. This means that human relationships and the personality of the investigator always get in the way. Jung felt that a broad understanding of the different ways in which people relate to the world would help analysts and their patients towards understanding the dynamics of their relationships. This was one of the main reasons that he was interested in developing a theory of different types of human personalities, which he called a ‘psychology of consciousness.’ He also explained that if one could be made aware of the strengths in one’s psyche, one could then begin to work on the weaker areas, and so achieve more balance” (Snowden, 2010).

Using the two attitudes of the psyche of introvert and extravert, Jung needed a more expanded method of categorizing and thusly formed the four functions – Thinking, Feeling, Sensation, and Intuition. “Therefore, a person is basically either introverted or extroverted, and their primary function can be any of the four.... But the personality is not fixed – it is possible and even desirable to develop opposite characteristics and functions in order to become more balanced” (Snowden, 2010). These four functions are used by all people, but some seem to stand out more prominently. A person can have a superior function of Sensation and an inferior function of Intuition as a child, but as one gathers experience and age, can develop their Intuition into the superior function. It is within these four functions that personality can alter whereas temperament

(introvert/extrovert) likely will remain permanent. The Sensation function is one “by which we realise [sic] that a thing actually exists. It is perception through the senses” (O’Connor, 1985). It is through this function that a person sees, hears, tastes, touches, and smells. “Sensation is to do with establishing that something exists through the senses” (O’Connor, 1985). The Thinking function “adds a concept, because thinking is perception and judgment, thinking gives meaning and understanding. It is a rational function” (O’Connor, 1985). It is through this function that a person makes decisions about the logistics of an accident or how to build a birdhouse. The Feeling function has “to do with values. It tells you whether a thing is acceptable, agreeable, or not. It tells you what a thing is worth to you. It is through this function that a person works out whether a situation was fair or if a scenario is enjoyable or horrible. “It is a rational, but not logical” function (O’Connor, 1985). The Intuition function is “fundamentally concerned with time. It is the function that tells us of future possibilities. It is the proverbial hunch and the function that informs us about the atmosphere that surrounds an experience or event. It is an irrational function” (O’Connor, 1985). It is through this function that actions and thoughts come strongly but without prior thought. It can be considered a reactive – not joining in a conversation with a person that seems unsafe – but it can also be seen as protective – not touching a hot stove because it will hurt.

Using these four functions along with the two types, a person can categorize themselves as any one of eight personality types. An Intuitive Introverted will be vastly different than a Feeling Extrovert, but a Feeling Introvert and a Feeling Extrovert may have a lot in common though their temperaments are different. Students in the blossom of identity creation (adolescence) should be exposed to these categories so that they could

possibly understand themselves more fully. This researched, proven, and studied theory could counter balance the negativities of the misconceptions and students could be more personally forgiving of themselves if they are one of the introverts. Since we are each of the four functions and can grow and change within the eight personality types, understanding our behavior within these types is just a first step towards Jung's theory of integration and achieving balance. Modern psychiatrists who adhere to the personality theory of the Big Five are biased towards extroversion. They follow the theory known as OCEAN – **O**penness, **C**onscientiousness, **E**xtroversion, **A**greeableness, and **N**euroticism and offer such tests to their clients, so “if [they] answer yes to a positively weighted item, it indicates extroversion. If [they] answer no, it indicates lack of extroversion – or, scientists assume, introversion” (Dembling, 2012). Again, introversion as full-bodied temperament is ignored. Instead of the perception that the other is a shadow (Jacobi, 1967) or absence (Dembling, 2012), we can see that the other is an essential side of ourselves that needs to be understood and developed. Jung's goal was to develop a method for description and category that would help him further explore the conscious and unconscious mind. He believed that the four functions along with the introvert/extravert categorization was complete and encompassed all of humanity. Jung argues:

“Sensation establishes what is actually given, thinking enables us to recognize its meaning, feeling tells us its value, and finally intuition points to the possibilities of the whence and whither that lie within the immediate facts. In this way, we can orientate ourselves with respect to the immediate worlds as completely as when

we locate a place geographically.... The four points are somewhat like the four points of the compass; they are just as arbitrary and just as indispensable” (1933).

### *How the Extrovert Became the Ideal Personality in America*

We are all trying to function in a world that is demanding, hectic, and expectant. Flipping through television channels reveals countless shows that celebrate extroversion with timed challenges, brash and often reckless behavior, and witty characters that socialize to extremes. Many of the scenarios depicted on television are not truly realistic, which may lead impressionable young adults into believing their quiet ways are not good enough for society. The most popular movies and songs seem to center around scenarios that are hyperbolic and “epic”. What could be well-crafted storytelling is instead reduced to formulaic humor and pratfalls. Extroverted qualities seem to be best suited for modern lifestyles depicted in mass media which allow them to further become elevated and celebrated. By necessity, extroversion has become the ideal and therefore by default, introversion has seemingly become a luxury or even worthy of ridicule.

I blame Mark Twain. He and other spirited writers and speakers lectured across the country in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. They told stories of dynamic go-getters and helped to eradicate what has now been labeled as a Culture of Character.

“In the Culture of Character, the ideal self was serious, disciplined, and honorable. What counted was not so much the impression one made in public as how one behaved in private. The word *personality* didn’t exist in English until the eighteenth century, and the idea of ‘having a good personality’ was not widespread until the twentieth” (Cain, 2012).

This archetype was where the rags-to-riches storyline came about as well as how perseverance became a coveted personal quality for those striving for the American Dream. Eventually this character turned into an ideal personality for Americans as it seemed to be the only type of personality that would ultimately succeed in life.

“When they embraced the Culture of Personality, Americans started to focus on how others perceived them. They became captivated by people who were bold and entertaining. ‘The social role demanded of all in the new Culture of Personality was that of a performer. Every American was to become a performing self’” (Cain, 2012).

This “performing self” is perhaps how many modern Americans feel about their own personality, in that they are not really being themselves on a daily basis. In fact, I imagine that many supposed extroverts are in actuality introverts, but the social pressure to be an out-going person is so infused into our everyday life, we are unable to genuinely understand our own tendencies. This further extends the idea that being less than the archetypal personality is unfavorable. Should society gave introverts more leeway? This will not happen quickly or easily, so if one is an introvert, how does one survive in an extroverted world, much less succeed in a classroom that feels unwelcoming and just a little bit too chaotic?

“Although each individual does possess both types, it is very characteristic of each type to denigrate the other, seeing the negative rather than the positive qualities of the opposite type. This is because we tend to develop one attitude over and above the other, placing firmly in the unconscious, whereby it becomes a shadow figure” (O’Connor, 1985).

As previously discussed, Jung believed that the shadow side needed to come to light and be examined in order for our psyches to become whole, or fully integrated. Since we no longer have the need to focus only on begetting and protecting children, the focus can change to “acquisition of money and social position” (Jacobi, 1967), which correlates with the introduction of a “good personality” in the nineteenth century and the rise of safer and more predictable travel, improved health care and nutrition, and the increase in the intelligence of the general public. We got comfortable in our new lifestyle and consequently, we also got bored. Thusly began the popularity of outside entertainments, like carnivals and World Fairs. Here a multitude of exciting distractions were available (Ferris Wheel!) and new sights to witness (A bearded lady!) that provided conversation for months afterward. Many Americans enjoyed the religious revivals in the deep woods under enormous tents where they could hear the scandalous secrets of their neighbors. They looked down on those not willing to participate and celebrated the pioneers and explorers that returned home from long journeys with heart-stopping tales of danger, adventure, and success. Everything had to be thrilling, exuberant, and loud. There was no longer room for the serene, settled, and quiet. Truly, this persuasive shunting of introverted qualities into conformity is cemented into the foundation of our country. The founding fathers believed in their divine right to pursue their own dreams away from the oppressive eye of authority, yet they oppressed and ravaged the introverted culture of the Native Americans tribes with no thought or mercy. Humanity continues to ostracize and ridicule cultures that are not deemed acceptable. Americans are not the only ones of intolerance, whether it is social, religious, political, or economic; cultures around the world tend to separate and abandon those that are seemingly unfit for

the ideal society. Occasionally this can be validated as acceptable due to safety and community harmony, but that parameter has been expanded to include any individual or group that is outside of the norm accompanied by excessive amounts of prejudice and intolerance.

In the modern era this segregation continues, while many businesses have consulted outside hiring companies that have developed methods to “avoid admitted loners... singles or workers with few friends, little family nearby and no social life... while it’s illegal to ask about family or personal issues” (Rufus, 2003). Women with no significant other or with no children are silently blamed for not being a good mate rather than being perceived and valued as strong and independent. Children who are not fond of playing with other children are taken to therapists and taught that their behavior is inappropriate and worrisome. If the roles were reversed and introversion was considered the ideal in society, the medical disorders and prescriptions would be different. We might believe “that talking to others is symptomatic of failure to individuate. That it indicates an unhealthy fear of thinking. That being unable to entertain oneself is surefire proof of being sick” (Rufus, 2003). Instead, many introverts are seeking medications for “disorders” that do not exist except in the social mores of the modern world. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), like Prozac and Paxil, are popular prescription drugs for enhancing “social confidence to the habitually timid, to make the sensitive brash, to lend the introverted the social skills of a salesman”, says one enthusiastic therapist (Rufus, 2003). Depression, a most pervasive and troubling illness, has been getting a lot of attention in recent years and the increase in available medications and treatments is proof. There could be many valid reasons for a diagnosis of depression, but

it is worth considering the idea that in some cases people may be feeling depressed because they are being forced to act outside of their own temperament.

“Taking a solitary tray to a quiet corner of the employee canteen is not quite cricket. Interviewed for *Newsday*, [an employee] who worked for a public-relations firm, a highly sociable office in a highly sociable field lamented that ‘being in such an environment has caused me to be deeply depressed. Much of this has to do with extroverts’ feelings towards quiet types and their tendency to ostracize’” (Rufus, 2003).

If one were to argue that perhaps this employee should not have pursued a field that involved activities with which she knew she would not comfortable, I would emphasize that blaming the employee is exactly my point. As aforementioned, the negative reaction is focused on her (as a whole) and not just her behavior. Instead of examining the culture in which she finds herself – highly extroverted – and how others treat her, it is culturally acceptable to blame the individual for not fitting in, for being different, and for possibly being, a loner.

### *Section Two: Learning Information and Processing Stimulus*

For an introverted student in an extroverted classroom, learning may not happen easily. Too much stimuli can “gunk up” an introvert’s senses and prevent them from being able to focus. For many introverts, school can even be terribly stressful. The pace may be too quick, the constant noise exhausting, and the moving between classes tremendously overwhelming. This is known as “transmarginal inhibition” (Aron, 1998), when the body and the brain effectively shut down from too much stimulation. During

this process, “a person feels out of control, and the whole body warns that it is in trouble. Overarousal often means failing to perform at one’s best” (Aron, 1998). In a school, there is a lot of activity, people, and movement which can lead to a student disengaging in the classroom from over-stimulation. If an introverted child consistently feels this way during the school day, it would be difficult for him to keep up with the lessons. This turning-off could be misinterpreted in many ways: not getting enough sleep at home, not interested in learning, or even as a serious disorder or learning disability. Yet, the issue could be simply remedied through periodic breaks from all the chaos and noise to recharge their batteries. This should not be labeled as oversensitivity – another negatively-charged word in American culture. Educators need to respect the needs of an introverted child by learning the difference between gently encouraging a child to join in an activity that is new to them and forcing them into an uncomfortable and inevitably unsuccessful situation. There is not a simple formula for doing this, but learning more about introversion does help alleviate an extroverted educator’s selfish need to “coax a quiet student out of his shell”.

Introverted students also “don’t feel as if they know enough about a subject until they know almost everything” (Laney, 2002). They also experience “brain locking” which is when the mind is wiped blank and is unavailable for comment. Many people have experienced such a moment, perhaps as they are walking onto a stage to give a speech; but for introverts, this may happen in ordinary circumstances, like when an educator spontaneously calls on him to give an answer. Introverted students also “do not talk about what they are thinking” (Laney, 2002), unless they feel it is necessary to share a piece of knowledge they know. Since introverted people are thinking so often, they

have a strong notion of what is right and wrong. This kind of insight could be interesting in an English classroom when discussing characters or thematic elements. I believe this could be the biggest motivating factor for introverted students to speak up in class. They may feel compelled to speak up for an assumed villainous character offering a new perspective to a discussion. Not speaking in class can be a major detriment to a student's grades, especially if an educator mandates all students to participate. An educator can remedy this issue easily by asking students to write questions and/or comments briefly at the end of class. This allows them to voice an opinion or share an insight without being put on the spot. The educator is then also aware of their level engagement in the class discussion without publically humiliating them.

We have established that continuing to prevent an introverted student the opportunity to step away from the hustle and bustle will inhibit them from mastering a skill. Erik Erikson, noted psychologist, talked about the stages of crisis that we go through as we develop. "According to Erikson, when children are in the early years of school – roughly ages five to twelve – their 'crisis' involves building a sense of mastery by solving problems, meeting goals, acquiring skills, and feeling good about their accomplishments" (Carducci and Kaiser, 2003). This is *the* reason for school and an educator's job is to help students navigate unfamiliar material and ultimately achieve mastery in the given subject area. For an introverted person in an extroverted world, helping them gain

"... A sense of mastery is an almost magical psychological power. A well-spring of both optimism and decisiveness, it is a view of yourself as responsible and capable of achieving goals through your own independent action. It makes people

active participants in life. It sets people off on the path of lifelong learning. It gives them courage to experiment and explore and direct their own activities. It allows children especially to go after what knowledge they need, not wait for it to be poured into them. It's not a guarantee that you walk on water; it's a belief that you can solve whatever problems come your way.... It's a *sine qua non* for resilience, that indefinable quality that allows some people to overcome the [direst] adversity" (Marano, 2008).

For both extroverts and introverts, this is the goal of schooling – to achieve a sense of mastery, resilience, decisiveness, and responsibility for their own learning. Persistence is an important part of mastery. Giving up too easily is a major issue in any classroom and will most likely occur in an extrovert. As we are an extroverted country, it is logical to wonder if maybe we are validating to our children that material must be mastered quickly, essentially avoiding mastery. When comparing cultures, it has been discovered that Asian cultures value persistence and the entire country effectively imparts it to their young people. This is seen in a study conducted by a cross-cultural psychologist “who gave Japanese and American first graders an unsolvable puzzle to work on in solitude, without the help of other children or any educators, and compared how long they tried before giving up. The Japanese children spent an average of 13.93 minutes on the puzzle before calling it quits, whereas American kids spent only 9.47 minutes” (Cain, 2012). I do find this study a bit cruel – giving students something that cannot be solved – but it does again pose the question of what are we teaching our children if they are not learning how to persist?

In American public schools, other introverted cultures, such as the American Indian/Alaska Natives students were “3.6 times more likely to receive services for a developmental delay than any other racial/ethnic group combined” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2009) and consequently be labeled as a student with a deficiency. This is due mostly to the fact that in the American Indian/Alaska Native culture working as an individual by speaking out without being specifically chosen to answer a question is discouraged because the tribal culture is based on a strong connection to community and group. Individuality is not valued. An American Indian/Alaska Native “may look down to show respect or deference to elders, or [ignore] an individual to show disagreement or displeasure. A gentle handshake is often seen as a sign of respect, not weakness” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Yet in the American culture, this type of body language is seen negatively as submissive, meek, or confused. Arabic and Asian cultures are also introverted in their body language. Both of these nations use bowing as a gesture of gratitude and humility (Brehove, 2011). In American culture, a bow is often more symbolic of subservience and hierarchy. In Japanese culture, eye contact is considered rude as is handing an item to someone with only one hand, finger-pointing, or patting another’s head (Brehove, 2011). These gestures may be used by an extroverted American educator – direct eye contact, gesturing towards an item, touching someone’s shoulder – and can be misconstrued by an introverted ELL. The American classroom is now populated by foreign students, many from introverted cultures like Nepal, Yemen, Viet Nam, and Turkey, which demand that educators reconsider their own behaviors. Realizing that “extroversion is only an advantage in some cultures” (Dembling, 2012), essentially effects personal change in an educator. They must reflect on their usual body

language and dialogue, the so-called acceptable noise level in the classroom, how students are grouped, or even if they should be grouped. There are so many other considerations to make, but even making the steps towards realizing that there are invisible students that need to be reached is an important step towards reaching every student in the classroom.

### *How to Effectively Educate Knowing About Introverts and Extroverts*

A study of conversation style was done at the University of California at Santa Cruz by first pairing highly introverted and highly extraverted women into separate groups and then putting them into pairs of one introvert and one extravert. It was discovered that the highly introverted group “were serious and focused. They talked more about problems and were more cautious. They tended to listen, to interview, to give advice; they seemed to be concentrating on each other in a deep way” (Aron, 1998). The highly extraverted group “did more ‘pleasure talk’, sought more agreement, looked for similarities in background and experience, and paid more compliments. They were upbeat and expansive” (Aron, 1998). In the pairings, the highly extraverted “liked not having to be so cheerful” (revealing the cultural ideal) when paired with a highly introverted woman, who thought it was “like a breath of fresh air” to be with someone so outspoken. In both instances, the women felt heard, included, and valued.

This study is indicative of what may happen in a classroom when an educator elects to utilize a group work activity in a lesson. Group work has been enthusiastically received in schools recently in the idea that it fosters community, listening, and collaboration with the bonus for students of being able to socially interact. This is also

motivated by the need for adolescents to practice working with others to produce a project, so they can be ready to join the adult work force. Group work *sometimes* generates creative product, which is especially important in the modern era of the Common Core. *Sometimes*, group work generates hurt feelings and resentment. When allowing students to group themselves, there are often one or two lone students that are left out of the gatherings. This could be the result of shyness and the inability to successfully interact with peers, but it could also be an introvert that prefers to work alone. In some cases, this may be appropriate to allow, an educator who recognizes that a particular introverted student in the class may only be able to work independently. This is, of course, not ideal, but choosing when to require that student to join a group and when they can work alone is situational. Group work is valuable for educators because it offers the opportunity for students to try out their skills independently and benefits those students that are quieter because they are able to bring their valuable skills to the end-product. There are, of course, many disadvantages for the quieter student though. For example, a student in a group where they are the lone introvert may not be able to “get a word in edgewise” due to all the extroverted behavior. An introvert’s ideas may also be discounted or ignored because they do not coincide with the momentum of the others’ thoughts. Looking back at the group study when highly extraverts were grouped together, they “sought more agreement” when the highly introverted group “listened to each other in a deep way”. This difference will result in different end-products, but the focus for an educator should not always be on what they created together. Occasionally, the focus should be on how well the students listen to one another and include all members of the group into the end-product. The focus should be on the skills that were practiced and

hopefully mastered. The focus should be on whether the students benefitted from the grouping and what they could modify and perfect next time. It is in these moments in a classroom that community is cultivated. If an educator desires a group of adolescents to work together harmoniously and then take those skills to other areas of their lives, the educator must communicate and demonstrate to the student effective collaboration.

One such way to do that is to restrict group size to only three or four members. Groups larger than four tend to get off-task more often, produce less, and often leave one person out of the discussion. Providing each member of a group with a specific task allows introverts opportunities to participate in the activity and prevents extroverts from monopolizing conversations. These jobs can vary according to an educator's tastes, but essentially need to fulfill these functions: lead, manage, organize logistics, and present the end-product. The Leader is responsible for assuring the group remains organized, on task, and that every member knows their function. They also maintain peace between members by addressing issues, maintaining professionalism, and guiding conversations. The Manager is in charge of deadlines, time and materials, as well as assuring that every member of the group has what they need to complete their tasks. They also check in with members to make sure that all are managing their time and tasks efficiently. The Logistics Person organizes how tasks get done. They decide who will gather data, how it will be disseminated between members, how the end-product will be constructed and why, and maintain integrity in the end-product (avoid plagiarizing, spell-checking, etc.). They also maintain organization between members and with data. The Spokesperson is responsible for sharing the work with the rest of the class. They must be able to justify why certain decisions were made to include or exclude information into the end-product.

They are also responsible for insuring that all members of the group participate equally in all of the project's stages. When each member of a group has a job, they are more comfortable to participate in the entire process. Each member is also allowed to monitor others, which creates boundaries and affords practice of self-advocacy and productive interaction. Additionally, extroverts can practice to self-monitor so they do not go overboard and introverts have the space in which to work and interact. Usually, I have seen introverted students feel more comfortable to speak up and share a valuable insight or perspective they might not otherwise because of the noise level or dominance of other students. Having rules allows all students to be a functional member of the group without having to push past their own comfortable zones or take over the project.

Along with assigned jobs, students should be aware of group activity rules, like noise level, rules of discourse and debate, how to deal with frustration and anger. Ideally, having group rules adopted by an entire school helps to maintain consistency; otherwise, students will not be able to practice ways to manage their own behaviors effectively. Allowing educators to contribute to the basic rules for group activity establishes this consistency, but also allows for additions to be made within individual classrooms. Students, of course, must learn to adapt to different styles in teaching, therefore this is a helpful reminder that essentially the rules are the same, but can be modified as needed. Educators should also carefully observe groups to help foster the lesson, but also to assist students in being a part of the process. Most importantly, students need to be able to voice their concerns of other members of the group that may be troublesome or ineffective. Instituting the four group functions alongside the basic group rules, verifies to students that all of their voices can be heard in an organized fashion. Introverts that are

not often receptive to group work, may find this method attractive because they can support the group, conserve their energy, sustain time for independent thought, and discover personal skills they may not realize they possessed. Extroverts are also actively buoyed by the spirit of the group, contributing their knowledge and skill, bouncing ideas of other members as needed, and learn how to curb their impulses to talk through silences.

There are a lot of expectations for educators to cover breadth rather than depth. There is never enough time to cover all areas that one wants to cover, nor is there reason. If a student is interested in a topic, they should be allowed to complete open-ended projects that have no deadline. Projects of this nature could include researched essays, written and/or performed plays, short stories, songs, or products that utilize mixed media. Giving students occasion for self-exploration enables them to take ownership of their own education. Introverts may particularly enjoy this opportunity, but many extroverts may also relish in the independent work. Students interested in a topic and permitted to study it at their own pace will achieve Erikson's idea of mastery not just on that one topic, but likely in other areas as well. Providing autonomy and authority to an adolescent affords them time to practice being independent. They are responsible for all aspects of the project, the work therein, and the end-product. These types of independent projects deliver a chance for students to demonstrate their intelligence on their terms and in their own manner of delivery. This in itself is empowering for all students but may also counterbalance the pressure many introverts feel while taking timed tests. Not only is the ticking clock a reminder that they must work quickly, but so are the scribbling classmates that can be distracting. Timed tests can weaken even the strongest-willed, but introverts

especially are not comfortable working under pressure. Giving student balance (much as Jung suggested for humanity), is vital for students to achieve success in school.

Consider how often you ask a student about their weekend, only to find that they did “nothing”. Do you then rebuke them for not going to the festival in town or the basketball game? Do you feel miserable believing they were “lonely all weekend?” Do you wonder if they have any friends? These are common extroverted notions that stem from the societal convention that being alone is unacceptable. Consider how often your conversations revolve around people and activities. Compare that with the number of times your conversations concern ideas and theories. How often do either of these types of conversations occur in your classroom? “Based on his research concerning casual human conversation, University of Liverpool psychology professor Robin Dunbar concluded that about two-thirds of it ‘is taken up with matters of social import. No other subject ... occupies more than ten percent of all conversation’” (Rufus, 2003). This is part of the extroverted ideal in American society. Often, when asking an introverted person about their weekend, extroverts may feel spurned, brushed off, or ignored, when perhaps an introvert is not interested in sharing personal information. An extrovert must accept the fact that not everyone expects or is willing to share the same amount of personal information. It is often not an intentional slight or meant to bruise, it is a matter of comfort level and temperament. However, an introvert should also try to sometimes meet the extroverted half-way as it cannot be the sole responsibility of all extroverts to conform to introverted behavior. An introverted colleague that is assumed to have a sour personality due to the constant scowl may be deliberating a complicated problem or fascinating idea. An introverted student that rarely speaks in class and instead remains

bent over a sketchbook during instruction may be working on a graphic novel at home. An introverted educator that does not join his colleagues for lunch on a regular basis may need that time to re-energize for his afternoon classes. Open-mindedness and understanding go a long way in interactions with others and students will learn from educators how to appreciate and value those that may not feel the need to divulge parts of their inner workings.

### *Section Three: Working with Prosocial Behavior to Create a Community of Compassionate Learners*

Building a community is not trouble-free or simple. The general attitude of a building can either help to facilitate an educator's goal or impede it. The chemistry of a group of students will alter and modify each class time differently as will the time of day the class meets. The events happening outside of the school building or even the weather can either contaminate or invigorate the inside. One "bad apple" can spoil any effort just as one shining leader can elevate an educator's aims. It requires patience, thoughtfulness, research, and consistency. A classroom community can be created; but without stability, constancy, and fidelity to the core purposes, it will not last. I spoke earlier of having roles in group activities, and the same foundational rule applies with community building. In fictional and historical examples of crumbling societies, those communities often failed because a person or group of persons decided to act outside of the community spirit leaving behind them a wake of destructive forces. Having roles is important to a classroom community, but strict adherence to those roles can lead to resentment and prejudice. This happens when community members wear their roles like suits of armor, when members act invincible at the expense of others, and when leaders take their roles

too seriously. Bullying can happen in this case, as can fear, intimidation, and anger.

Providing roles for students in a classroom is important for individuals to learn responsibility and how to be part of a community.

By the time students are in high school, many of the community-minded roles have been taken away and students are only expected to participate in class and conduct themselves appropriately transitioning between classes. Imparting classroom jobs in a high school may seem elementary and childish, yet introverted students are then given opportunities to be a part of a community with comfortable limitations, extroverted students are given occasional platforms, and everyone gains the opportunity to undertake a role that enables them all to be part of the community. An educator must be careful to afford these opportunities equally and reliably, offering enough variety in classroom jobs that are interesting, constructive, and worthwhile. An educator must decide these roles for herself as each classroom has different needs. For example, a teacher helper is one of the most beloved jobs for elementary students. Every so often, the student is asked to run an errand for the educator or perhaps serve as extra eyes in a classroom for a small group test. Young students feel empowered with this job because it is infused with a sense of leadership and authority. Adolescents can also have such a position in a classroom for the same kind of activities. A teacher's assistant would be able to help a group of absentee students catch up on work missed. They could be provided with small instructional tasks, like reciting an oral test or reviewing vocabulary. These small tasks may even inspire a student to become an educator. Discussing how this role would be utilized would be principally important and could open a pathway for discussing various leadership styles. Some leaders may operate with bombastic robustness while others use

a more serene peacefulness. Asking students to examine these styles would help them categorize world leaders, literary characters, and other people in their lives. Just as it is easy to simplify the categories of extrovert and introvert by saying that an introvert is quiet (with a negative connotation) and an extrovert is loud (with a positive connotation), reducing people too minimally short-changes the implicit nuances and causes dangerous misconceptions as already revealed. Yet humans automatically categorize and compartmentalize others on a regular basis; this is a rapid-fire reaction that we perform in order to make sense of our world. Yes, it is a judgment and though “being judgmental” has gotten a lot of bad press there is nothing inherently wrong with grouping people together. The conflicts arise when prejudice is involved, such as: “This person is often alone; *they have no friends and must be very lonely.*” Coaching adolescents to recognize the difference is significant in building a community as well as being a more whole human being.

Labeling is just information used to describe an object or person. Prejudice is when a label carries with it a negative undertone in order to belittle. Bullying is the prime vehicle for such action. Bullying happens because of ignorance and fear; working with and developing prosocial behavior can change that. Building a community of sympathetic and empathetic individuals is worth the considerable time and energy as it helps to lessen bullying and prejudice and it emboldens individuals to value themselves and others publically. Awareness campaigns have led us to believe that bullying has risen recently; however, it has not increased. Education.com, a website for parents and educators, states that there are two reasons for this false consensus. The first is a “greater awareness of the seriousness of bullying, which could be due to higher reporting rates”

and “the addition of cyber bullying as a new, easy, and round-the-clock place to bully” (2009). Bullying has always been in communities and likely always will; but it could be minimized, I believe, with an increase in prosocial interaction. In 2010, a University of Michigan study revealed that “college students today are 40 percent less empathetic than they were thirty years ago, with much of the drop having occurred since 2000. (The study’s authors speculate that the decline in empathy is related to the prevalence of social media, reality TV, and ‘hyper-competiveness)’” (Cain, 2012). This seems to be a logical conclusion when considering that much of the content of social media and reality TV is to ridicule. Again, I reference the amount of television shows that are about competition, quick-wittedness, and bravado – all extroverted characteristics – as well as the relative anonymity of the Internet that allows students a mask in which to hide the ugliness of their prejudice. Introverted activities are misperceived and misunderstood, which lead to others deciding that “those” people are “weird”. The word “loner” itself carries with it so much negativity that it is impossible to categorize someone as such without slandering their character (Rufus, 2003). Teaching empathy and sympathy may help introverts and extroverts see each other more openly, but it also could help in other areas as well. In a recent conversation with a young man from the Congo that is currently enrolled in a Rochester, NY city school, I learned that he disliked America entirely and could not wait to return home. Knowing the history of that country and a little of what he had to go through to get out of it, I was shocked to hear this fact from him. He elaborated by saying that, “these kids do not make me feel welcome. They make fun of my accent rather than ask me about my language or my country. They only care about where they will all gather after school.” This young man yearns to learn about other people and

wishes to share the ways that make him unique. The meanness with which he is affronted with every day in the hallways is insulting and degrading to his spirit. An empathetic adolescent is indeed not common, therefore helping them learn this valuable trait could help them be better citizens when they leave high school.

Helping students see alternative points of view and also learn to appreciate that others may adhere to their views just as steadfastly can help alleviate many complications in a high school classroom. Practicing empathy in a classroom can help build a community of learners that are willing to see this other side, welcoming the shades of an issue and learning how to discuss rather than just loudly delivering derisive and sardonic clichés that are hollow and meaningless. It is important for young people to treasure the differences that make a community excellent and successful.

“A species in which everyone was General Patton would not succeed, any more than a race in which everyone was Vincent Van Gogh. I prefer to think that the planet needs athletes, philosophers, sex symbols, painters, scientist; it needs the warmhearted, the coldhearted, and the weak hearted. It needs those that can devote their lives to studying how many droplets of water are secreted by the salivary glands of dogs under which circumstances, and it needs those who can capture the passing impression of cherry blossoms in a fourteen-syllable poem or devote twenty-five pages to the dissection of a small boy’s feelings as he lies in bed in the dark waiting for his mother to kiss him goodnight.... –Allen Shaw”  
(Cain, 2012).

## Chapter III: Solutions

There are many ways students and educators can make small incremental changes in their thinking and interacting with others that can help alleviate the conventional belief that being introverted is only a negative and being an extrovert is only a positive.

Empathy, sympathy, and community-mindedness are especially important in this regard but the change must happen *thoughtfully*. When most people hear this word, they are inclined to think of it as demonstrating kindness and generosity due to popular connotation and usage. While this holds true, *The Oxford English Dictionary* extends the definition of the word thoughtful into two important forms; it is in one form “disposed to think about or consider matters; prudent; reflective; also characterized by reflection; manifesting thought or consideration” (Def. 1. b.) and in another form as “thinking about or meditating on something; mindful” (Def. 1. c.). Self-reflection could be one of the best tools in any person’s arsenal for navigating the world respectfully and effectively; though meditating on inner thoughts without prejudice takes enormous courage and practice. People tend to get defensive when they believe they have conducted themselves poorly and it becomes much easier to justify convention to ourselves without any counterbalancing influence. Being thoughtful in respect to how we treat, interact, and support our invisible students will help *all* of the students in a classroom become better people.

“The capacity to notice the distress of others, and to be moved by it, can be a critical component of what is called prosocial behavior, actions that benefit others: individuals, groups or society as a whole. Psychologists, neurobiologists

and even economists are increasingly interested in the overarching question of how and why we become our better selves” (Klass, 2012).

Prosocial behaviors cover an enormous range of activities “from kindness to philanthropy” (Klass, 2012). This may seem overwhelming in addition to all the other required parts of an educator’s day. Additionally, a student who is asked to be more philanthropic may just decide to ignore the request and move forward in their selfish pursuits. Small changes are vital to overall change. Thoughtfulness, empathy, sympathy, and kindness can be taught without having to create new lesson plans or read new research. Students will not notice small changes in a classroom (or even more effective, those expectations that are established from the beginning of a new course) and can easily get on board without genuinely knowing they are being asked to be philanthropic. The most damaging action would be to march into a classroom and state, “We are going to learn about introversion and extroversion by being nicer to one another.” This will go nowhere and will diminish an educator’s respectability with a class. Students know that they must pass “these tests” that loom on the horizon and the accompanying anxiety will block any attempts an educator will make that seems to deviate from that goal. Focusing solely on empathy or sympathy can create too much “personal distress that [results in] a desire to avoid the source of the pain, researchers have found” (Klass, 2012). In some ways actions that foster community have to be disguised and embedded in other lessons that help students learn “the ability to perceive others’ distress, the sense of self that helps sort out your own identity and feelings, the regulatory skills that prevent distress so severe it turns to aversion, and the cognitive and emotional understanding of the value of helping” (Klass, 2012). In this section, I will provide solutions for students to facilitate

learning about introversion and extroversion, solutions for educators to include the introverts more often without excluding the extroverts, and how all of that will help bring about a stronger classroom community.

### *Solutions for Students*

Americans are fond of celebrating only the monumental milestones, disregarding the smaller bits that eventually become larger. These seemingly unimportant smidgens are worth victorious celebration too for they will eventually lead to the successful completion of a goal. We do this with young children when they are learning a new complicated skill, yet somewhere along the line we forget that adolescents are also still learning and need the same form of encouragement. For this reason, an educator should praise students often in a high school classroom, but students can also take small steps for themselves. The first such step would be to read a book on the subject. Susan Cain's 2012 book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* is an excellent place to begin. Not only is it well-researched and well-written, it supplies anecdotes and intriguing research studies that would engage an adolescent. Both males and females would enjoy this book because it is not too academic, but still provides a range of connections to social, business, college, and even historical areas. Another choice that may be more suitable for females for her quirkiness would be Sophia Dembling's *The Introvert's Way: Living a Quiet Life in a Noisy World* also published in 2012. This book is organized in short chapters and Dembling's casual and fun style of writing is also smart and clever. A book perhaps more suited for males is Aneli Rufus' *Party of One: The Loner's Manifesto* because her writing has more edginess and grit.

Though I do worry a bit about introverted males labeling themselves as “loners” due to the negative charge of that word in modern society, even if Rufus addresses this very fact. For adolescents, their first resource may be the Internet, though I strongly suggest staying away from the web at first, as it is riddled with misguided, negative, and unexamined personality tests and slide shows that are often misleading and incorrect. As aforementioned, many tests are based on the OCEAN theory that is biased for extroversion. There is also a tendency for fraudulent website tests to claim “accuracy” and that they “are the real deal”. Susan Cain’s website for her book includes “The Quiet Quiz” which is one place an adolescent could venture. It is based on information from her book and includes a disclaimer that it is “an informal 12-question quiz, adapted from *Quiet* by Susan Cain, based on characteristics of introversion commonly accepted by contemporary researchers” (Cain, 2011); but overall I do not feel website tests are helpful to genuinely learn about the two temperaments. Some introverts may discover they are Highly Sensitive Persons (HSPs) and there are several resources for them as well. One excellent example is Elaine N. Aron’s book *The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the Worlds Overwhelms You*, published in 1998. A well-regarded psychologist, Aron conducts workshops and publishes many books on the subject. An HSP is “easily overwhelmed by bright lights, strong smells, coarse fabrics, or sirens and are highly sensitive to pain... it may be that sensitivity is more of an issue rather than introversion” (Aron, 1998). Many HSPs are also labeled as Gifted. My experience tells me however that highly sensitive adolescents may have already learned this about themselves based on prior issues, but this resource can offer additional help. There are also many books for shy adolescents, though I do worry that some of these sources are negatively pressuring

shy persons to become more extroverted. As already established, there is only a need to address the issue of shyness when the behavior is detrimental, causes dysfunction in everyday life, and creates physical ailment (anxiety manifesting itself as illness). There is plenty of room for mildly bashful people to balance out those that are unflinchingly bold and modern society needs both.

Within these books and others, there are many suggestions for deciphering temperament and deciding where strengths and weaknesses lie. One simple method could be a quick exercise found in Rufus' *Party of One: The Loner's Manifesto*. In this exercise, she asks readers to "keep track of how many hours they spend each day engaged in 'introvert activities (writing, reading, meditating, eating alone, and relaxing)' and how many in 'extravert activities (going to a dinner party, window-shopping at the mall with a friend)'" (Rufus, 2003). As one is gathering this information, Rufus suggests keeping track of when one feels best during those activities. For example, if one feels best when leaving a party, it could be because of the overstimulation – an introvert. Alternatively, if one feels best when arriving or participating in the party, it is likely generated from the energy of the other guests – an extrovert. This kind of data recording could be done privately and without any need for students to reveal their temperaments to others. It is also helpful as a reevaluation tool when one notices major changes in frustration, stress, or general discomfort in everyday life.

Secondly, introverts especially need to "learn to manage social events so they don't suck the life out of us, we can anticipate them with pleasure rather than dread" (Dembling, 2012). Introverts should also be aware of how much time they spend in solitary activities, on the Internet, or reading for long periods of time. This is known as

“Introvert Overload” and it happens when an introvert “has taken in too much and thrown out too little” (Helgoe, 2008). If this happens, then an introvert must limit the amount of time they spend occupied in the introverted-binging activities and do something different, perhaps even an activity that is more extroverted. For extroverts the same holds true. If the overabundance of an extrovert’s time is spent socializing, zipping from one activity to another, or searching for the next distraction, perhaps it is time to slow down and try an introverted activity. All adolescents seem to need to learn this type of time management, which makes it an easy activity for a class. Using a questionnaire for students to collect data on how they spend their time, then asking them to write about their results offers an opportunity for a short research paper. The students need not know that it is an introverted/extroverted activity, but along with learning research writing skills, they will learn important facts about themselves, how they spend their days, and how they could improve their chances to be more efficient with their time. Again, I must point out that requiring students to talk about their temperament data with other students may not be constructive, particularly for a shy and/or introverted student. It puts pressure on them to reveal personal information they may not be comfortable sharing. More than likely, those that want to share the information with others will naturally talk about it outside of class, which is advantageous for the lesson, personal identity growth, and community building.

Once a student has discovered their natural temperament, that information can be useful in understanding their own behavior, learning styles, and social needs. It should be noted that extroverts should be also cognizant of their own comportment as well. “While an introvert is reflecting on [a] question..., the extrovert takes this as an invitation to fill

the void. As long as the introvert doesn't interrupt, the extrovert continues." This may happen during group discussions in class and socially. No student should ever feel that their "input is unworthy," or their questions are "stupid and a waste of time"; group activities can "be competitive if everyone is vying to advance their own views" or "worry[ing] about evaluations" (Carducci with Golant, 1999). As aforementioned, to separate students into small groups can often be more of an obstruction than an opportunity. Introverts must understand that their silence can be misleading or "construed as disinterest or lack of enthusiasm" (Carducci with Golant, 1999). One suggestion for introverts to join in socially is "to join a group in progress: Stand at the edge and listen for a while; offer a social grace; jump into logical openings during silences or lulls; ask questions at first; let others bring you into the conversation; provide relevant information; move on if you little to offer" (Carducci with Golant, 1999). Initially only asking questions is an excellent method for introverts to demonstrate that they are engaged in the group's activities, but also offers them the opportunity to guide the pathway of the discussion with their questions. Doing this may also afford the space for *thinking*, as others are talking through their thoughts, an introvert can take that time to think through theirs. Though an extrovert who constantly talks over silences will lose an introvert's respect and trust as "they'll get tired, bored, angry" (Helgoe, 2008). Most importantly, an extrovert cannot always be the one to compromise their own natural instincts. Both parties must be conscious of their domination of a conversation – whether through silence or over-talking – and be sure to balance it more equitably through modification of personal behavior for equality.

There are many other extroverted habits that seem to govern the behavior expectations of a classroom and though the following is intended with a bit of humor, introverts do find some extroverted traits annoying. Some of these habits include:

“When an extrovert calls too often, talks too much, and says too little; when an extrovert enters your space, uninvited, and handles your stuff; Asks ‘are you okay?’ just because you are quiet; when an extrovert talks at length without a single pause; when you finally get to speak and your words remind an extrovert of something else they wanted to share and interrupts you; when an extrovert is oblivious to all of your attempts to end a conversation and continues” (Helgoe, 2008).

A similar list could be made by an extrovert for annoying introverted traits, but the fact remains that understanding one another is crucial for harmony in a classroom. Later, when students enter collegiate classrooms, workplace meetings, and social events, they will need to traverse through a cavalcade of obstacles, traps, and potentially lethal (at least to relationships) situations. Learning to do so in the environment of a supportive community classroom, with people they have known for long periods, and where mistakes are easily forgiven and retaught, will help them become excellent leaders, creative innovators, and valuable citizens in the larger community of their lives.

In a culture that values extroversion over introversion, it is necessary for introverts to occasionally fake extroversion. Though some research urges introverts to “stop trying to act like an extrovert; it is exhausting, unsustainable, and ultimately ineffective” (Kahnweiler, 2013), I feel this is impractical in modern American society. Many employers look for social, gregarious, high-energy people, especially in fields that

require a lot of interpersonal communication. Educators often forget the misconceptions they have learned of equitable inclusion and inadvertently praise extroverted behavior over introverted behavior which perpetuates the stereotype. This is all regrettably inevitable, but can be modified when recognized within an individual and can be handled when demonstrated by others. Unfortunately, an introvert will have to accept that this issue is just coming to surface and there is a long road still ahead. Individuals can act as spokespersons for the temperament, but educators are in an excellent position to assist. Many reformist social movements have started in schools (“Stop using the r-word” and bullying campaigns), why not also understanding introversion and extroversion?

Meanwhile, introverts must balance their tendencies with extroversion without over-doing it or overshadowing their own strengths. Finding a balance takes practice, perseverance, and consistent self-reflection. Otherwise, an introvert can easily morph into a permanent fake extrovert and be unaware that their anger and frustration is generated from denying their natural needs. “Acting in a way so alien to our true impulses means presenting a false face to the world... *Pleased to meet you, I’m not really like this*. Is this really any way to start?” (Rufus, 2003). “The introvert may adapt, but she walks around with a nagging sense of homelessness” (Helgoe, 2008). If this is how an introvert begins to feel – that they are not themselves – then there is a problem. Again, I must point out the disadvantage to being an extrovert. In a culture that celebrates your own innate behavior, you never need to counterbalance it. You are never able to practice a new skill or learn to grow and stretch yourself. An extrovert that never has to change does not learn adaptability, how to manage their emotions, or how to really listen and

understand other people. For this reason, I believe it is important for extroverts to practice being more introverted. The methods are the same.

“Know when you are stuck. Boredom is a clue. Addiction is a clue. Low energy is a big clue. Real desire promotes flow and expands you. Fear sometimes is *masked as desire*. You may feel compelled to stay locked behind your computer even though you are miserable there and all life has been sucked out of the activity. This is not desire; this is avoidance, a response to *fear*” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Almost every person enjoys having a “day off” from the usual routine, but when a person’s “alternate-standard” begins to make them ill, angry, frustrated, or uncomfortable, then it is necessary to make some changes. It is important though to consistently try something new that is not comfortable every so often. In this way, individuals – either introverts or extroverts – can learn to balance their innate ways with a this-is-not-like-you activity. It is simply mentally, spiritually, psychologically, and neurologically healthy. Suggestions for introverts doing this include: “setting goals; if you say you will come to an event, follow through and show up; wear a brighter color rather than a color that allows you to be invisible... get help from others” (Wier, 2006). One of the most valuable activities an extrovert can practice is learning how to be alone, how to manage emotions when feeling bored or lonely, and how to allow others to gain the attention while remaining relatively silent. Extroverts can also ask for help from their fellow introverts because they should understand that there is a different way. Hopefully, there is an empathetic classroom community where getting help from others is easy and expected. “Extroverts are slowly (very slowly, some argue) realizing that we stand to lose the wisdom and contributions of more than half of the population if we don’t listen to the

introverts in our world” (Kahnweiler, 2013). Though extroverts are not forced to be more introverted in our culture, it would be in their best interest to learn the ways of the introvert in order to better understand and appreciate them. All extroverts should better value that “solitude is not *lack*. As understood by Taoist practitioners, solitude is a ‘fertile void’, an open door to a world overflowing with possibilities” (Helgoe, 2008).

### *Solutions for Educators*

As already established, tiny successes matter but tiny issues can become monstrous if left alone to gather and accumulate. When not placed in check, these small problems can become deeply habitual and hidden. When ignored, these negatively intrinsic practices in an educator can lead to alienation of students, behavioral problems during instruction, and lack of cohesive unity with a class. An educator who takes small steps towards being more inclusive, understanding, and open can easily lead a class into collaboration and harmonious interaction. One way is to pay attention to the language and tone one takes with others. Conversations that are focused too heavily on activity, social events, and cultural trends promote extroversion while questions regarding feelings, solitary pursuits, and ideas tend to promote introversion. Balance is all that is necessary here. Being aware of how much attention is paid to any one subject over another is part of self-reflection. Limiting the amount of mischievous mocking is important for educators to consider. Sarcasm can be taken seriously by some introverts though they may play along, laugh, or roll their eyes with an educator out of distress, embarrassment, or feeling the need to conform. Teasing that is intended good-naturedly can resonate with a deep thinker and become like a tumor in the brain, especially if the teasing continues

over time. Some students can handle sarcasm and teasing, but it is important not to center this behavior on any one student.

“Inspired by the Quiet Influencers I have met and the effect they had on me, I turned my attention to the question of *how* these successful introverts make a difference. How exactly do they challenge the status quo, provoke new ways of thinking, or inspire others to move forward? What inner strengths do they call upon to effect change? What steps do they take to influence others?” (Kahnweiler, 2013).

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, author, speaker, executive coach, and self-proclaimed extrovert, wrote *The Introverted Leaders: Building on Your Quiet Strength* which is an excellent resource for educators to learn how to tap into that “soft power” (Cain, 2012). Her website asserts that Kahnweiler is a leader in the field by “championing quieter people, first by helping organizations recognize and value them, and second, by helping introverted individuals step confidently into leadership and influencing roles” (2013). Considering her list of clients – the Centers for Disease Control, NASA’s Space Telescope Science Systems, Harvard University, Verizon Wireless, Home Depot, and many others – Kahnweiler is helping companies strongly focused on extroversion flourish more fully by identifying the talents of their introverted employees. Companies that utilize all of their employees help make that environment more inclusive and collaborative, regardless of their business. Educators, too, must help students distinguish their talents, teach practical interpersonal skills, and help to maintain an atmosphere where all are welcomed, honored, and heard.

Many educational resources will argue that teaching empathy is as easy as having a student write a short story from another person's perspective. In actuality, this does not teach empathy but rather focuses on point of view; though some aspect of empathy can be understood through this exercise. To be empathetic is to truly *feel* the emotions felt by another person. Sympathy is feeling pity or sorrow with another person and their expressed feelings. To be empathetic is often confused and interchanged with sympathy. When another person suffers a tragic loss, most people will feel sympathy – sadness that the other person is suffering emotionally. In this instance, they would only feel sorrow. Empathy is to carry into that sorrow the emotion the other person is experiencing – crying at a funeral not for the husband who has died, but for the wife who does not know what she will do without him. In this case, an empathetic response would be both the sorrow and the emotional pain. HSPs are most often afflicted with the profoundly painful feeling of empathy when they hear of tragic events. They are sometimes not able to separate the events that are happening to others from their own emotions. In extreme cases, this can become debilitating. In Sue Monk Kidd's 2002 novel *The Secret Life of Bees*, the character May is an example of this type of HSP-empathy. Her transference of emotions from events outside of her experience was managed through a lumbering rock wall that she constructed to bear her burden. Eventually, she was no longer able to deal with the amount of pain and sadness she endured on a daily basis and decided to end her own life. When I have read this book with students, often they come to believe that this event as the climax in the novel and not the protagonist's struggle to find identity and self-love. I think reactions such as this demonstrate empathy and sympathy in students and should be nurtured. Students that experience this kind of hyper-sensitivity are not

necessarily as fragile as this character, but delicacy and grace are still essential. A simple contrast would be someone who acts with empathy understanding another person's feelings, disregarding any opinions or judgments of the situation, or feeling sorrow for the person going through the experience, whereas a person who acts with sympathy relies only on sharing the experience by feeling sorry for other person. Both are necessary for community growth and cohesion, but empathy truly connects people when sympathy is just a pat on the back.

This then means that any kind of prosocial behavior, voluntary behavior intended to benefit another, should be the goal. I believe it may be irresponsible and unreasonable to expect adolescents to empathize with others all of the time. Teaching them how to do it and when it is appropriate is an excellent compromise though. Prosocial behavior allows for empathy and sympathy, but also encompasses many other virtuous qualities, which many students already possess. The variety of prosocial traits – kindness, altruism, generosity, grace, forgiveness, trust, morality, patience, humility, charity, sharing, comforting, rescuing, helping – allows for students to venture into community building through a pathway they are most comfortable. Where one student may be generous (maybe an extrovert), another may be comforting (maybe an introvert); where one is friendly (maybe an extrovert), another may be gentle (maybe an introvert). Knowing that the practice of altruism (the belief in acting for others' good) and other prosocial behaviors creates positive neurological stimulation could be the best rationale for helping adolescents appreciate and use it. “Experimental studies have shown that the same brain region that is activated when people win money for themselves is active when they give to charity — that is, that there is a kind of neurologic ‘reward’ built into the motivational

system of the brain” (Klass, 2012). Helping students build better brains is indeed the job of an educator. Another reason for including prosocial behavior into a curriculum is “social cognition – the recognition that other people have needs and goals” (Klass, 2012). These simple scientific facts mean that individuals that practice prosocial behavior like empathy and sympathy learn more effective ways to interact with others. Learning this behavior in high school will make for an easier transition into the wider world where students will interact with many different types of people, some from introverted countries and backgrounds.

There are several methods to teach prosocial behavior. One simple way is to “Explain how other people feel. Reflect the child’s feelings, but also point out, look, you hurt Johnny’s feelings.” (Klass, 2012). This may seem awkward to point out and the offending student may simply not care, but an educator’s mention of it will be noticed by the targeted student and others in the class. Doing this consistently will tell students that it is a serious and expected element of the classroom. The educator that does this is saying, “I am paying attention to how you treat one another and it matters to me.” A second method is to never provide a tangible reward, such as money or candy, when a young person demonstrates a prosocial and unsolicited behavior; “but do offer opportunities to do good – opportunities that the child will see as voluntary. And help children see themselves and frame their own behavior as generous, kind, helpful” (Klass, 2012). Opportunities to do good can be simply incorporated into the everyday part of the class, though initially there may need to be rules or expectations. Remember the classroom jobs mentioned? This is a spectacular example of such an opportunity. An example of a prosocial classroom job is the Environment Engineers, students who are

responsible for making sure others put materials away neatly and push in their chairs. I have often laughingly told students that my legs do not always follow directions. What my clumsiness means for our classroom is that not only do chairs need to be pushed in when not being used, but book bags and other general messiness scattered on the floor is a danger to me. They see then that the request for cleanliness is not a quirk of the educator, but a safety issue. This changes the “rule” into a courtesy for someone in the classroom community. The Environment Engineers become like the litter police for the room, reminding others to take care when returning materials. As everyone in the class gets this job at some point eventually no one has anything to do because they all neatly and responsibly pick up after themselves without reminders. Drawing attention to the positive prosocial behaviors not only eliminates the focus from the one being helped (assisting a classmate with makeup work), but it also eliminates attention towards poor behavior (laughing at a student who trips over a chair leg). Rather than waiting to criticize, ridicule, or act disruptively, a student will turn their attention towards helping to maintain a civil and responsible environment because that is what is expected and what makes the learning community work well. Introverted temperaments are more likely to intrinsically understand empathy and sympathy; therefore paying attention to those individuals and how they handle situations where prosocial behavior is beneficial could help an extrovert learn those same behaviors. “Working with a child’s temperament, taking advantage of an emerging sense of self and increasing cognitive understanding of the world and helped by the reward centers of the brain, parents [and educators] can try to foster that warm glow and the worldview that goes with it” (Klass, 2012).

There are other small considerations and actions that can be made to ensure community and inclusion. Often it is necessary to alter the agenda for the day; this is sometimes unavoidable and all people must learn to adapt to changing expectations and environments. However, it is not recommended to change the circumstances of a presentation or project at the last minute (Wier, 2006). An introvert may panic and perform poorly while an extrovert may relish in the spontaneity. This creates the brain-locking in an introvert mentioned earlier and sends them into a tailspin that is difficult to recover. One strategy for presentations is to offer all students a chance to practice a “dress rehearsal” for presentations or projects maybe during a free period or lunchtime. This provides introverts with the opportunity to gain one-on-one time with an educator (an opportunity an introvert may enjoy) and may also help alleviate their stress of the project. Students who do not take this opportunity will not be penalized for it and the option to do so should not be ridiculed in any way. Another solution I have found effective is to provide a calendar of events for all students, posted in the classroom, referenced often, and provided individually. All students seem to enjoy knowing what to expect in class and they are able to stay organized in terms of homework, assignments, and expectations. Any major changes that need to be made can be done publically and hopefully ahead of time with the caveat that sometimes pre-warning cannot happen. Providing information slowly and steadily seems to be most effective for introverts. Educators that provide information too fast – because they know and/or are bored by the material, sense extroverted students’ restlessness, or because of a time crunch – will create anxiety in an introvert or anyone with slower neurological processing speed (special education students or ELLs due to having to translate). Providing information

ahead of time creates optimism (Carnegie, 2011), the idea that anything is possible, that success is achievable, and that the environment is a safe and nurturing one. “Designing rotations so that all students are asked to participate will make the introvert more a part of the class. Allowing the students to prepare questions at home by assigning the material for the next class discussion in advance can help” (Issacs, 2009). Students who are in need of having some control over their daily activities will appreciate an educator disseminating information in this way and it will boost their outlook for their success. Besides a public calendar in the classroom, another way is through a classroom website. It gives introverts a chance to gear up for the day’s class and allows them to participate within their own limits. They can arrange their behavior and expectations to the situation without feeling overthrown. Extroverts will also enjoy this method so they can anticipate the appropriate behavior for the environment and activity. If they know that it will be a quieter day, they will not enter the class with too much bravado and noise. If it is a working day, they can bring their special brand of charisma and enthusiasm to the class. Individual assignments can be completed and conversations can also happen privately online which eliminates any student feeling singled-out for lack of achievement or unique personal needs.

Classroom environment is an important part of building community and sharing space with others. All types of students must be represented, whether they are introverted or extroverted, but also if they are from various countries and heritages or various levels of ability and disability. “High levels of stimulation (e. g., a noisy classroom) will distress and exhaust [introverts and] HSPs sooner than others. While some will withdraw, a significant number of boys will become hyperactive” (Aron, 1998). A classroom cannot

always be silent, so balancing quiet days with noisy days effectively represents the reality of life. Quiet days can be days when students read, research, and write with little interaction between each other. Lecture days could also be included in this category. Noisy days are when students participate in group work, project building, and discussions; on these days, students interact with one another often. This type of organization lays the groundwork of expectations that some class days require activity and noise while others require silence and contemplation, but all types of learning are represented and valued.

### *Building a Community*

An entire school community should assist in instilling prosocial behavior, but it is possible for one educator to create a collaborative community in a single classroom. Modeling behavior is particularly important and an educator that is self-reflective, attentive, and consistent will be most successful. One very easy way to establish a group mentality is to hardly use the pronoun “I” and instead use “we”, “us”, and “our”. This is a subtle way for an educator to demonstrate that they firmly believe they are not the only ones in control in the classroom. Educators do this occasionally *with* their classes – “Today **we** will begin reading the play...” – but rarely when they speak *about* their classes to their colleagues – “**I** started them on the play....” Students overhear these conversations and though may not consciously process what they are hearing, internalize that the educator is in charge. Using “we” makes the educator part of the group, even if it is understood that they still hold most of the authority. The English language is riddled with other language bombs, like clichés, idioms, and common expressions that restrict growth, connection, and community.

“Think, for example, of the expression ‘I’m only human.’ The emphasis is on the middle word: it is what we fail to do or be that seems to us most noteworthy. The phrase ‘human nature,’ meanwhile, is reserved, as if by some linguistic convention, for what is nasty and negative in our repertoire. We invoke it to explain selfishness rather than service, competition rather than cooperation, egocentricity rather than empathy” (Kohn, 1990).

Again, self-reflection and thoughtfulness become essential in determining what language is useful in fostering community and what is maintaining exclusivity. Educators that take care to measure their words against an inclusion yardstick are cognizant of their burgeoning classroom community

“Creating classroom rules together, where everyone’s ideas are listed, then grouped into three or four rules that are easy to remember, is essential to establishing a feeling of ownership” (Hittie, 2000). Many educators now embrace this practice of student-generated classroom rules, yet the dependability and effectiveness of this practice is not even. In some cases, the rules are not adhered to consistently or for any length of time. In other cases, the rules are modified at the discretion of the educator out of frustration, necessity, or to gain back control. Student work that is asked for and expected, then dismissed will prove to them that their voice does not matter. The educator must make sure that *all* students have been heard in this process and that the rules are posted and followed regularly for the entire semester. If changes need to be made, the entire class agrees to it. Not doing so will send the message that the exercise was only a time-filler, students’ opinions do not truly matter, and ultimately the educator is the boss. It is inevitable that misbehaving will occur. When arriving at classroom rules, the

students should also be asked to come up with consequences for not following them. The educator can suggest possibilities, but the class must decide together. The onus has been then put on them to stick to the rules and gracefully accept the decisions they have made if they are broken. One addition to this task is to provide students with the following excerpt:

“We raise our children, manage our companies, and design our governments on the assumption that people are naturally and primarily selfish and will act otherwise only if they are coerced to do so and carefully monitored. We assume that genuine generosity is only a mirage on an endless desert of self-interest; if we are lucky, that self-interest will occasionally be of the ‘enlightened’ sort” (Kohn, 1990).

Asking students to agree or disagree with this theory could be one of the first discussions in a classroom. It is also an excellent practice for the final portion of the New York State Comprehensive Regents exam where students are required to interpret a critical lens (quotation) and persuade a reader to believe in their interpretation. Once a debate has begun in class, too many students will need to express their opinions at once (The extroverts who think *by* talking.) and some will withdraw (The introverts who need to think *before* talking.), which opens up the opportunity for the class to decide on discussion rules (more on this later). No list of rules should ever be written in stone, as in life. Therefore, classroom communities must revisit their rules often – at least in the beginning of a course – in order to establish ones that are equitable, dependable, and workable. While the quoted statement above is mostly accurate, classrooms can decide not to be motivated by selfish intent and in its place conduct themselves with altruism,

compassion, and other examples of prosocial behavior. Every person in the class is held accountable, including the educator, and all members of the community are beholden to others. In this way, introverts cannot skate by with only partial participation and extroverts cannot overshadow others by dominating all of the attention.

Students that have faith in their classroom community take the responsibility to welcome guests. This is a skill that must be taught, not just expected. When a guest arrives to a classroom, students immediately notice. An extrovert who enjoys meeting new people may shine in this situation, while an introvert may fade. Pairing introverts and extroverts together to greet guests (another specified classroom job) and teaching them the appropriate method to do so gives them both a chance to practice the skills in a benign and safe circumstance. “Require that every student greet each other and guests in the classroom using the SEEK method: **S**mile, **M**ake **E**ye Contact, **E**mpathize, and **S**how **K**indness. This can be further extended by using the GIVE method: **G**et emotionally involved, **D**evelop **I**nsight, **V**erbalize, and **E**mpathize” (Aron, 2010). Students who become confident in one situation feel better about trying other new activities. They are also empowered with the leadership role in a classroom which grants them permission to advocate for the rules, the environment, and their needs. You will notice also that this suggestion involves students greeting each other this way. Once students establish their silence in a class, it is very difficult for them to change. This method does not involve any bodily contact, so introverted foreign students should be comfortable with it. It involves getting a little invested in the people who are around them on a daily basis as well as extending that friendliness towards guests in their school “home”. What seems

like a rule to be “nice to everyone” is, in actuality, a lesson in empathy, self-confidence, and compassionate leadership.

Other classroom routines are also important for building community and for helping both introverts and extroverts achieve. To get the class’ attention: “Clap hands in a rhythm students imitate, ring a bell or other musical instrument, hold up a silent hand and count down while children join in, or quietly ask each group to put their eyes on the teacher. Involve the kids themselves in figuring out attention getting strategies” (Hittie, 2000). This suggestion may seem too basic for adolescents. Yet their elementary educators likely used the same method and so they are accustomed. Changing the method into something more “grown-up” (a music colleague of mine uses a small gong) is possible, but it is especially important to add a warning prior to making the sound. Simply and soothingly saying, “You have five minutes”, is a gentle reminder for introverts that they need to be prepared for a transition. Here is another opportunity for a classroom job that perhaps remains unofficial. Students who finish early can assist others in returning materials, cleaning up, or handing in papers. This collaborative effort helps everyone feel a part of everyone else’s success without anyone feeling like they are needy or weak.

Class discussions are another area where community and empathy can be built. As already established, introverts may appear uninterested when having a group discussion because there are so many extroverts taking up the talking space. Discourse rules must be determined (preferably by the students and not the educator) so that trust can be built.

“Trust plays a role in the process of developing empathy. In the workplace, employees are challenged to trust one another and their managers on a regular basis. When workers disagree, for example, do they have a sense of trust that they are safe in their dissenting views? Empathy evolves when people display understanding despite disagreement – when they can disagree without criticizing each other” (Paige, 2013).

Educators who are well versed in rhetoric and discourse will excel when facilitating a group discussion, but perhaps it is a better opportunity for a student to practice these skills. If a student is asked to be the facilitator of a group discussion, they must be told ahead of time so they can prepare. Giving students an authoritative role helps the students practice compassionate leadership, gain mastery of a topic, and add to their self-confidence. There is no research that proves a lack of self-confidence causes bad behavior, but I am convinced. Students that are empowered to facilitate discussion are contagiously enthusiastic and engaged and both extroverts and introverts will shine. In fact, an introverted student that volunteers to facilitate a group discussion may surprise the class with an astounding wellspring of knowledge and insight. Though an educator should be involved in the discussion as guide, it is also necessary for class discussions to follow their own flow. Also teaching the GIVE method – “**G**et emotionally involved, **D**evelop **I**nsight, **V**erbalize, and **E**mpathize” (Aron, 2010) – prior to major discussions will help alleviate the nastier conflicts that may arise. Not everyone will agree with each other, but empathizing with them may help lessen the gap between those differences. Discussion should not be a demonstration of who is the loudest or who can quickly come up with “best” reductive insults. Discussion should have calm silences where others are

thinking and considering the ideas that are shared. It involves listening with the absence of self, not just the absence of sound. “Most people think that extroverts care more about linking [with their peers] and are better at it, but linking is even more important to introverts, because they focus on the quality of their linking than on the quantity” (Aron, 2010). Students that understand the differences about temperaments will be less inclined to yell at others. They will learn to be more open-hearted to those that also hold tightly to their own beliefs, sometimes stubbornly, and why they behave in the manner that they do. This is an important lesson that some behavior is part of neurobiology and that each member of a classroom community has exquisite gifts to offer as well as valuable lessons to learn from one another. This also can change comportment and interaction in a positive and enriching fashion. It is not a simple undertaking, but with guidance, loyalty to prosocial behavior, and compassionate leadership, both introverts and extroverts can work harmoniously together and relish in each other’s success.

There can be many other informal ways to build a community and let introverts shine without ignoring the extroverts. If possible and comfortable, eat lunch with your students every so often. Asking students to return to the classroom at lunch for a special activity or gathering indeed goes a long way towards building relationships. In a high school, students are often broken up into separate lunch groups, so venturing into the lunch room is perhaps a difficulty. It can also be a brave act, if possible. Many introverts will prefer and need a quieter setting for lunch as it allows respite from the noise and stimulation of the day, but they cannot rely on isolating themselves every day. I have invited one or two classes at a time back to my classroom for lunch, sometimes as a work period for preparing for an upcoming exam and sometimes simply for a pizza party

reward. Students hesitate at first, but quickly become more relaxed and comfortably mingle with one another. Inevitably, they linger before moving on to class expressing gratitude and enjoyment with refreshed smiles and straightened spines. Often I am asked, “When are we going to do that again?” Adolescents are often confused between socializing innocently and age-appropriately and feeling the pressure to act more adult. School is the place where they can interact with their closest friends as well as others they may only know casually. They enjoy opportunities to social with others that are sharing a universal enjoyment, and providing that opportunity with a lunchtime gathering creates those connections.

“Giving props – a. k. a. ‘shout outs’ and ‘ups’ – are public praise for students who demonstrate excellence or other virtues. Everyone responds to praise, and most of us love to hear rooters cheer us on” (Lemov, 2012). Athletes will receive such praise with their teams or individually, but the intellectuals do not. Coaching students to give props is reminiscent of summer camp and college orientation counselors who attempt to fill every second of your experience with organized fun, but they were effective in bringing disparate groups together. One example is the “Cheese Grater”:

“Educator: ‘Oh man, let’s give Daekwan some cheese!’

Class: *Holding up right hand with the cheese, left hand with the grater. Scrape three times and say in unison, ‘You’re great, great, great!’*” (Lemov, 2012).

My favorite is the silent cheer which involves waving hands and open, happy expressions, with no noise lasting for a few seconds, but there are several examples out there of props that are simultaneously silly and encouraging. The best part of these short cheers is that the attention is focused on one student, but the entire class is participating.

Introverts may earn the enthusiastic praise through their insights offered to the class while the extroverts get to move around and celebrate. It is especially important for the educator to ensure that every student gets props and that they are given for prosocial and academic behavior. Also, everyone must participate in giving props. They are fast, controlled, practiced, and unobtrusive to instruction. They utilize “the muscular fun of group percussion, noise, and rhythm” (Lemov, 2012) and may help to arouse the sleepier and less engaged students. Extroverted students can help an educator to teach these props initially and even invent their own because it is more effective if there is creativity, novelty, and uniqueness involved. Students should also be given the power to call for a prop when warranted, though some limitations should be made per class period. In this way, students share the responsibility of recognizing prosocial and academic excellence and thus have more connection in helping to create the community. These more active props should not replace more traditional verbal props (“That was an excellent response!”), but can be a great addition to a collaborative and supportive classroom. Some former students of mine remember their specific props years later and it continues to bind them together as a group when they get together for reunions and social events.

Educators hope for less attention-seeking behavior, more learning, more mastery gained, more self-confidence, and lifelong interpersonal skills acquired. These are possible through teaching prosocial behaviors and developing community. Classroom communities are constructed and maintained by willing members who listen to and honor others. Introverts and extroverts alike must learn to balance their temperaments. They must also understand that

“...expressing the full range from inner- to outer-directedness might be the normal way of being human. What is abnormal is to get boxed in at one of the ends of the continuum, and experience life only as a gregarious, or only as a solitary being. Certainly temperament and socialization will push us in one or the other direction, and after a while it becomes easy to fall in with these conditioning forces and learn to relish either social interaction or solitude, but not both. To do so, however, curtails the full range of what humans can experience, and diminishes the possibilities of enjoyment of life” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Building a community involves work and thought. *Everyone* should be involved – parents, community organizations, nearby companies and colleges, volunteers, and other staff in the school. Being transparent in lessons (posting calendars, maintaining a website, etc.), inviting and being friendly to visitors of the classroom, helps those not directly in the classroom feel as if they could be a part of it and are welcomed to join. Expressing gratitude and generosity every day, watching for opportunities to show “appreciation [and] thinking about giving more [often] than receiving” (Carnegie, 2011) are other ways to help build a community of prosocial behaviors, help introverts feel less invisible without excluding the extroverts.

## Chapter IV: Conclusions

There is a lot to absorb with introversion and extroversion and even more research to peruse. I would hope that anyone who reads this project would feel compelled to learn more about it. For one reason, far more educated and intelligent persons have constructed fascinating studies and combined them with their own academic areas. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists who have a vast knowledge on the psyche, temperament, and our social constructs see this topic through the light of their own scientific experience. Taking it out of a scientific study changes it a bit, but should be no less valuable for educators. Colleges, consultants, mediators, scientists, businesses, and governmental departments are taking a look at introversion and extroversion and attempting to determine how to maximize the talents of their employees, colleagues, and classmates. Public schools should be doing the same. Another reason to further explore this topic is simply to be a better educator for your students by being an excellent human. Knowing your own personality type helps create space for your own needs as a life-long learner, which the students will see and hopefully emulate. Adolescents, who are learning about their own identity, deserve to add this information to their arsenal for self-advocacy, citizenship, and self-edification. Lastly, to continue to learn about introversion and extroversion is to bring it into conversations with others. The more and more it is discussed and contemplated, the more likely introversion can become less of a stigma. I have demonstrated that the extrovert is the ideal in American, but other cultures have developed a softer way of doing things – many of which are considered the “happiest”, “most relaxed”, or “best” areas in which to live in the world. It is plausible to strongly argue against the American way. Perhaps it is not the most efficient, nor is it the most

inclusive. Perhaps it is time to consider and try out some other choices. At the very least, modern American culture should be more inclusive of the introverts as they have valuable gifts to bring to our community.

There are many other avenues to investigate with this topic. I often wondered while writing this paper how to determine when one was displaying empathy or if one was simply being polite. How also to be more empathetic rather than just display good manners? The following statement stood out to me as one that was extremely telling in the prejudice towards introversion: “But lies about introversion are so embedded in the fabric of our culture that even the literature [and personality tests, etc.] geared toward correcting misconceptions inadvertently promote them” (Helgoe, 2008). Therefore, I questioned the reliability of personality tests such as the Myers-Briggs as it is biased through the OCEAN method and does not allow for introversion as a positive. This was my rationale for seeking out research from psychologists and psychiatrists that focused solely on introversion as a positive temperament. I was lucky that there were many recently published books on the subject. Interestingly, they were also more often written by women (though not all introverts, some admitted to be extroverts) which would be an interesting project for investigating gender roles and interpersonal relationships in a classroom. I feel strongly that no educator should tell a student their identity. Though my suggestions for bringing this information to anyone involved directly mentioning introversion and extroversion, I feel that asking students to write about their temperament or administer a personality test is not an effective use of instructional time and ventures too far away from literary study. Educators who are interested in elements of literature and language that involve introversion and extroversion should look into rhetoric and

debate methods. Group dynamics are a fascinating and meaningful area to pursue for any educator in high school since the makeup of each class group changes.

Another area I feel would be beneficial to study would be specifically looking into the eight psychological types that start with introversion/extroversion and are then combined with the four functions: Thinking, Feeling, Intuition, and Sensation. How does an educator reach all of them? A short stint in an area suburban high school recently lent itself to comparison with my past experience in an urban high school. These thoughts led me to wonder how personality is developed in a suburban versus an urban setting. How much does poverty /wealth, religion/atheism, geography play a role in the development of introversion and extroversion in a school? Also, I struggled with the logistics of a genuine creation of a community within a school and not just one that appears to be a cohesive unit? There are also many specifically English areas to study including authors and characters that are introverts and whether that influences or affects their writing process. A thematic unit on how personal temperament characterization reflects culture may be an intriguing pathway into reading multicultural texts with adolescents. Examining how authors often use the archetype of introversion to characterize an antagonist or someone untrustworthy in a story could be a rich and substantive unit in conjunction for an entire department. The new genre of dystopian literature could also be framed helpfully through introversion and extroversion. It has been my experience that many protagonists in dystopian literature are introverts. I feel students would have an excellent discussion concerning this.

This paper focused mainly on introverted and extroverted temperament and how that affects an adolescent's learning in school and interaction with the world. There are

many cultural misconceptions of introversion which are perpetuated by educators, whom are often extroverts. The fact that America praises the extrovert while diminishing the introvert is unfair and prevents the introverted students from full academic achievement. It also withholds the introverted student from joining fully into their school community. There is evidence in American history that the extroverted ideal was developed over time which originated from Dr. Carl Jung's original theory of introversion and extroversion and remains perpetuated today. The second portion of this paper illustrated solutions for students and educators to better interact with each other as well as provide ways to foster empathy and prosocial behavior in order to build a community of supportive learners.

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