

# Teachers Can Foster the Hidden Gifts of Introverted Children

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## *The Extroverted World Needs the Balance of their Strengths*

*“Still waters run deep”  
...Shakespeare*

Children are born with either an introverted or extroverted temperament. This impacts many areas of their lives, more than just social preferences. Introversion is not the same as shyness. Temperament impacts many of the body systems: energy renewal, information processing, attention, memory, interests and learning style. Our Western culture idealizes extroverts and many teachers are extroverts. This increases the likelihood that introverted children will be misunderstood or overlooked. Teachers may misread innies energy conserving behaviors like keeping a straight face or a having a hesitant manner. Introverted children spend their energy in school so they are drained by the end of the day. Extroverted children gain energy when they are at school and therefore they tend to be livelier. However, we all need to foster the reflective and complex gifts of “innies” in order to balance our fast-paced extroverted world.

### **How to Spot an Innie in the Classroom**

- Pauses when speaking, listens more than talks and may have less eye contact when speaking
- May have trouble answering questions if they are put on the spot
- Reflects before speaking or acting
- Hesitates and observes before joining in
- Sticks to complicated tasks in which they are interested
- Self-motivated, enjoys working alone and making their own decisions
- Has one or two close friends but is considerate and thoughtful of others
- Has trouble working when the classroom is noisy, pressured or over-stimulating
- May not show expression or may look disinterested because they are conserving energy

### **How to Spot an Outie in the Classroom**

- Acts and speaks quickly, often interrupts, has eye contact when speaking, less when listening
- Impatient with frustration and delays
- Sparked by others, enjoys working with others, learns by trial and error
- Attention span shorter and interested in what others are doing
- Loves lots of stimulation and action
- Has lots of pals but can sometimes be selfish or bossy
- Expressive and talkative
- Answers questions even if they don't know the answer
- Jumps into new experiences

### **Innies Learn Best:**

### *When*

- They have developed a trusting relationship with the teacher
- They feel like they have time to polish their thoughts and ideas before sharing them
- They are allowed to receive lots of outside information without needing to respond
- They are learning in a classroom that is quiet, structured, less pressured, with private space and individual assignments

### *Study Style*

- Building new learning on what's personal to them
- Studying bit by bit over several days
- Learning main points and then adding details
- Underlining, re-reading or writing to store in memory
- Studying individually or with a trusted friend
- Being well prepared for anything they need to perform, be tested on or to show
- Listening, observing, doing lab work, reading about others experiences, journaling or discussing learning with a good pal

### *Instruction that Fosters an Innie's Gifts*

- Finding out what interests them
- Understanding their need to process information at their own pace
- Showing the results of their work to them privately
- Providing ample time to finalize their work before presentation
- Allowing time to reflect before answering questions
- Communicating one-on-one or in writing with the teacher
- Providing time to develop a topic of interest in a more complex way
- Making available video's, books on tape, workbooks and computers
- Understanding that timed tests were designed for extroverts

## **The Hidden Gifts of the Introverted Child: *Helping Your Child Thrive in an Extroverted World***

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