

Introverts vs. Extroverts: Tips for Designing and Facilitating

Adapted from Susan Cain's *Quiet* p342-344 and p348-9

Design Tips to Honour Introverted Learners:

- 1. Include solo work as well as pair and small group work.**
All of us get a boost out of solo work – even if we are the type who don't ask for it. Let learners surprise themselves by seeing what emerges when they work alone.
- 2. Let people choose how they want to take in, and process, new content.**
When a facilitator invites each learner to choose for him or herself – where to work or sit, how to complete a task, whether to work in a group or solo – they are given an optimal environment in which to perform.
- 3. Offer time and options for people to share their ideas.**
Be careful not to fall in a rut of always asking for everyone to speak, or always asking for people to share with a partner. Might it be enough for them to think it through for themselves?
- 4. Wait at least 5 seconds after asking a question.**
This gives introverts time to think and encourages reflectiveness. People also soon learn that you will wait for them.
- 5. Affirm everyone's contributions wherever and however it is seen.**
Find opportunities to affirm the work of everyone – even those who may choose not to speak up or share in a fully group. This may mean citing their written contributions, or chatting with them on-the-side.

Tips to Honour Introverted Facilitators:

- 1. If you can, visit the room where the event will be held in advance.** You will want to ensure the room arrangement is set up in such a way that maximizes engagement and works well for your learning design. You also want it to feel comfortable for you and your needs i.e. If you know you know voice tends to be soft, move as close to the group possible. Just taking time to “connect” with the space may be critical for you feeling ready to facilitate a group.
- 2. Remember: the event is about the learners, not you.** This means you are not there to entertain the group, but rather facilitate a well thought-out learning design that will ensure learning. The learners' voices are important, *not yours*. Experience of freeing this feels!
- 3. Take time for yourself – before, during and after the course.** It is critical to come early enough before your course to set up and “feel” the space – time to center yourself. Although it may seem especially challenging to take time for yourself during your learning event, a few minutes alone in the hall, bathroom, or another room can really help to keep your energy up. Likewise, after your session is finished take time to be alone before rushing off to dinner or a debriefing meeting. What you do during these moments to “pause” – meditate, stretch, or just sit – is personal; the important thing is self-care.