

APPENDIX 3

Handouts on Personality and Writing

EXTRAVERSION AND WRITING

Process: Extraverts generate ideas best by talking about the topic, interviewing people, or actively experiencing the topic. They tend to leap into writing with little planning, using trial and error. Free writing is a good method of developing ideas (especially if N), for extraverts will think better when writing quickly, impulsively, and uncritically. They tend to develop more ideas while writing than introverts. When writing in class, their essays may reflect confusion in the early paragraphs and clarity in the latter paragraphs. They usually pause when blocked (especially if J), and the blocks are best overcome by activity (such as writing about having nothing to write about). They may even "write" better by speaking their first drafts into a tape recorder. If they perform traditional prewriting strategies (such as outlining), they can often do so more easily *after* writing a first draft as a means of clarifying rather than generating ideas. Discussing drafts with others helps them both to realize the need for revision and to understand what needs to be revised. Some (especially if J) may not revise unless they receive spoken feedback. Their first drafts tend to need editing out of unrelated material. Those ideas that remain can be written about in greater depth.

Strengths: Extraverts tend to generate more ideas (if N) or facts (if S) than introverts and will generate them faster. They tend to excel at writing about experience.

Weaknesses: They may write fragmentally (touching on too many ideas) or superficially. They may lack awareness of the audience if that audience is not a part of their active outer experience.

Blocks: Extraverts may become blocked if they are often unable to develop an inner dialogue with themselves. The block can be overcome by carrying on an outer dialogue (discussing the topic with someone) or by simulating an outer dialogue (pretending to give a speech, or simulating a debate). They may also become blocked as a result of having generated shallow ideas or too many ideas (especially if also N and P). Sometimes they may generate ideas so quickly that they fail to realize they have good ideas (especially if S); they may need to tell their ideas to someone who can help them isolate and identi-

fy important ideas. Extraverts will also benefit from using their introversion (by planning an outline or getting away from a first draft to contemplate revisions); they may be more willing to use their introversion when isolated from possible distractions or in a comfortable position (in a bed or hot bath). Some extraverts find it easier to think through a topic when involved in a routine task, such as washing dishes.

INTROVERSION AND WRITING

Process: The introvert's basic writing process follows the prewriting—writing—rewriting pattern. Introverts plan before writing and want most of their ideas clarified before writing. They make outlines (especially if T), brainstorm (if N), or perform prewriting exercises. They tend not to generate ideas during class discussions but rather after the class discussion. When receiving oral feedback, they may become confused as they realize the flaws in their writing plans. The confusion will more likely be resolved after they have been allowed to think about the problem in isolation. Since they need time and solitude for concentration, they are at a disadvantage when required to write in class (unless they have anticipated the topic and thought about it in advance). When they begin to write, they stop frequently to anticipate the direction of the essay. They may become dissatisfied with a first sentence or a transition not because it is poorly written but because they are not yet sure where it is going. Despite frequent stops to anticipate the direction of the paper, their writing flows at a more even pace—once they finally begin—than extraverts because they are usually better at creating an inner dialogue. The paper also has usually been planned in advance. They spend more time than extraverts between drafts considering revisions. They may, as a result, revise more extensively. Throughout the writing process, they tend to write alone, asking for advice only from close friends or during private sessions with teachers. When revising, they may need to relate their ideas to experience.

Strengths: Introverts tend to excel at writing about ideas (especially if N). They tend to have the needed distance from their audience to gain a perspective for whom they are writing.

Weaknesses: They may (especially if T), present their ideas dryly unless they learn to connect them to experience. Since they tend to have less outer experience than extraverts, they may lack the information needed to analyze or connect with an audience.

Blocks: Introverts often become bored with writing because they plan so thoroughly that writing becomes a process of transcribing what has been written mentally. They may become blocked when they can-

not see where the paper is going (especially if N) or when they want to have the entire paper planned in their minds before beginning to write (especially if P). The blocks can be overcome by writing temporarily in an extraverted way, by trial and error, or by writing to discover what they want to write about. Such activities work best if the introvert can see how they can free up their *inner* block. They may tend not to ask for advice when having trouble writing, which may unnecessarily prolong the block.

SENSING AND WRITING

Process: Sensing types tend to prefer explicit detailed and specific directions. When given general directions, they need to interpret them by making them more concrete. They generate ideas best from direct experience (if E) or concrete observation (if I). Their preferred prewriting exercises move from the collection of sensory data to the development of abstract concepts in a step-by-step process. Their first drafts tend to be a recording of facts that may not be related to a central theme or idea. They feel more comfortable when following a specific pattern that is what the teacher wants or is "tried and true," such as the five-paragraph theme. Their focus on isolated specifics often causes them to have a concrete coherence without a global cohesion of the topic. One word may cohere to the next until they drift off the topic. At the sentence level, they may lose sight of their point, writing sentences in which clauses are not logically connected. Even during a first draft, they closely attend to mechanics (grammar, spelling, handwriting, etc.). Similarly, they often tend to view revising as merely "correcting" or proofreading. They should be encouraged, when revising, to explain the implications of the data presented in the first draft by adding or rewriting topic sentences, thesis statements, summaries, and so forth.

Strengths: Sensing types excel at presenting factual information. As a result, they may excel at writing descriptions and technical reports.

Weaknesses: They may fail to present the idea behind the observation. They may fail to see the unique demands of each assignment and adjust to those demands.

Blocks: Sensing types may follow previously used patterns or "rules" too rigidly. When the pattern or "rule" does not meet the demands of the present assignment, they become blocked. They may also become blocked when they fail to interpret general directions. Unless given a general principle to separate important from unimportant details, they may become overwhelmed by large amounts of data. If too concerned about mechanics, sensing types can have the development of their thoughts interrupted.

INTUITION AND WRITING

Process: Intuitive types tend to write best when given general directions from which they can create their own goals. Developing a unique approach to the topic is an important part of their prewriting phase. They generate ideas quickly, almost unconsciously. At their best they tend also to write quickly, letting one idea trigger another and paying little attention to mechanics. They will tend to innovate organizational patterns. In the first drafts, they present generalities without examples. Their revisions may be more effective if they resolve the unnecessary complexities of their ideas, check their facts, and, as a *last* step, clean up the mechanics of spelling, punctuation, and the like.

Strengths: Intuitives tend to excel at presenting theories and concepts and at devising new and unusual approaches to writing.

Weaknesses: They tend to forget to include concrete examples and may not provide the reader with background information. They may also fail to follow directions closely.

Blocks: Intuitives sometimes become blocked through trying to make even a simple writing task (such as a memo) unique. As they generate ideas, they may become blocked by the escalating complexity of the topic (especially if P). In such cases, they need to get back to earth, to apply their ideas to concrete situations, which both tests and simplifies their abstractions.

THINKING AND WRITING

Process: Thinking types tend to select topics that can be written about with distance rather than self-involvement. They organize their ideas (if N) or data (if S) into systems. In their introductions, they often establish a point of view and then argue against it. They tend to make organizational decisions by following a structure (such as an outline). If the structure dictates the inclusion of material, it is included. If not, it is excluded. Unsurprisingly, their essays often read like an outline. While writing they tend to focus on the content rather than how the material is presented to the audience. They value feedback that is given with a clear rationale (such as, "It is important for you to provide more details so that your reader will better understand your ideas"). In revising, they may need to enliven their writing with some personal examples and qualify blunt statements.

Strengths: Thinking types tend to excel at writing logically, objectively, and analytically. Their essays are often well organized.

Weaknesses: They may regard their beliefs as being universally held (especially if E) and thus be abrasive or dogmatic. They may objectify ideas

and examples to a point where they lack personal interest. As a result, readers may regard their writing as being cold.

Blocks: Thinking types may become blocked when not given a clear rationale and regard an assignment as an "academic exercise." They may also become blocked when they perceive that they are treated unfairly (such as with arbitrary grading practices). They may find it difficult to write on topics that draw upon feelings or personal experience. If they are unable to adopt or develop an organizational structure, they may find it difficult to make organizational decisions.

FEELING AND WRITING

Process: Feeling types prefer topics that they can care about; they often complain about topics that are "boring." Thus, deciding how a writing project is of value to them is an important part of their prewriting phase. While writing, they tend to draw upon personal experience (an inner experience if I and outer if E). Their introductions will often begin with a personal example. They rely less on structure than thinking types. They often begin with a sentence and then follow "the flow" (their own subjective thought process). They also make organizational decisions by anticipating the reader's reaction to their prose. If they feel that the reader needs additional information, they will include it, even when it violates a structure or outline. In general, they tend to focus more on how the message is delivered to the audience than on content. They write best when given personal encouragement and feedback that focuses on the possible reactions of the audience (such as, "How do you feel that your audience will react to this statement?") If overly criticized, they may wish to ignore revising or writing in general; when revising, they may need to clarify the content and improve their organization.

Strengths: Feeling types tend to excel at topics that draw upon feelings, and thus are good at making contact with the audience. They qualify their statements, but their writing will usually reflect a deep personal conviction. Their writing often contains personal examples and reflects a concern to make their writing interesting.

Weaknesses: Their writing may lack a clear organizational structure (especially E, S, or P) and be overly sentimental (especially if E).

Blocks: Feeling types may become blocked when trying to follow an outline or when too rigidly following an organizational pattern (especially if S). They find it difficult to write critically if they believe that the criticisms may hurt someone's feelings. They may also become blocked if their personal values are not involved. Often their concern to make their writing interesting will cause them to struggle to

find the exact word or phrase, the precise opening sentence, that will capture the reader's attention.

JUDGING AND WRITING

Process: Judging types tend to limit their topics very quickly and set goals that are manageable. They devote time to setting process goals (how to get it done), which ideally include plans to stop at key intervals to analyze and revise objectives. Since they want to complete the first draft expediently, they may divide the paper in sections (especially if I and T) so that it can be written more easily and make organizational and stylistic decisions quickly. Their first drafts tend to be short with ideas stated emphatically and without qualification (especially if T). The organization may be clear, but the content may lack development. When revising, they need to re-evaluate decisions that may have been made hastily or arbitrarily, more thoroughly analyze their ideas, expand their writing to clarify or qualify, and improve transitions.

Strengths: Judging types tend to write quickly, meet deadlines and produce more writing.

Weaknesses: They may be overly emphatic, set goals that are unambitious (especially if S), and too rigidly adhere to their original plans.

Blocks: Judging types may begin writing before they have collected enough information or generated adequate ideas; if so, they may become blocked during a first draft because they do not have enough to write about. Since they tend to stick to their plans, they may force themselves to sit and stare at a blank sheet of paper for hours. They are better off delaying the writing to think more about the topic or more thoroughly research it. Since they tend not to revise goals and plans, they may become blocked when those goals or plans prove faulty. They may become blocked when a teacher forces them to write more broadly than they want to.

PERCEIVING AND WRITING

Process: Perceiving types tend to select broad topics and dive into research without limiting them. Topics will usually be limited only as the deadline approaches. They want to research or analyze the topic thoroughly before beginning to write and may feel that there is always one more book or article to read. They may have difficulty dividing the essay into sections, and thus may need a large block of time to devote to writing. When writing, they pause frequently to consider numerous alternatives (especially if N) and to ponder over organizational or stylistic decisions. Their first drafts tend to be

long and thorough but also too inclusive. When revising, they may need to cut down the length of the paper or to refocus its direction.

Strengths: Perceiving types tend to investigate their topics thoroughly and present carefully considered ideas.

Weaknesses: They may write on topics that are too broad or may lose sight of their original goals while writing. As a result, their writing may lack a clear thesis. They may also only begin to write when an external deadline is approaching, which may leave them no time for revision.

Blocks: Perceiving types may become blocked if they fail to limit their topic adequately or limit it too late in the writing process. Their need to be thorough may cause blocks when they try to be too inclusive. Large amounts of material can be overwhelming (especially if S) or hard to organize (especially if F).