

# Teacher's Myers-Briggs personality profiles: Identifying effective teacher personality traits

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## Abstract

The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) and Beiderman Risk Taking (BRT) scale were administered to 58 teachers living in the state of Florida, USA. These teachers are considered part of prestigious group of educators who were nominated into the Florida League of Teachers by their superintendents/directors. Descriptive data includes frequency and percentage of response for each Type Indicator and for each combination of Type Indicators. Furthermore, a  $\chi^2$  statistic showed that the sample of 58 Florida League of Teacher recipients were significantly different from two comparison groups of elementary school teachers ( $N = 804, 189$ ). In this study, significant differences ( $p < .01$ ) occurred with the ENFP and the ENFJ combined profile types. Additionally, the significant results ( $p < .01$ ) occurring for the combined ENFP type contradicts the typical ISFJ type as reported in other research characteristic of other American elementary educators.

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## 1. Introduction

The underlying premise of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, signed by President Bush in January 2002, is every child deserves a quality teacher. The act declares that each state in the USA will have a “highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom by the end of the 2005–2006 school year” (p. 3). This highly ambitious, yet important goal is vital considering the findings by Sanders and Horn (1998). Their study indicates that the single most important factor in determining student academic success is the classroom teacher. They concluded that, “the teacher effects on student achievement have been found to be both additive and cumulative

with little evidence that subsequent effective teachers can offset the effects of ineffective ones” (p. 254).

In the next decade over two million additional teachers will be needed to teach in the USA and, in an increasingly diverse student population. Estimates suggest one in three school children are now from non-traditional racial, ethnic, religious, or linguistic backgrounds (Peterson, Cross, & Johnson, 2000). This ratio is expected to increase to one in two by 2025 (National Commission, 1996).

In the USA over 20% of beginning teachers leave the profession within the first 3 years of teaching, the *No Child Left Behind Act* goal of placing a quality teacher in every classroom will require diligence; a revitalization of teacher education programmes, particularly in the area of Alternative Certification; and a shift in how society views the

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teaching profession. In recent past it has been the American public school teacher who has been the focus of debates, criticism, and negative media attention. Indeed, American public education is under fire and has experienced an explosion of reform debates, discussion, and reports, relating to what is considered to be quality education and who is best qualified to teach (National Commission, 1996). Important questions have arisen, such as, what is “a quality teacher?” What is the role of personality in determining an effective teacher? And, are certain teacher personality types more effective at teaching than others?

Countries around the world are facing the need for qualified, educated, competent educators. Most European and Asian countries, however, regard their teachers with a higher level of respect than many of their American counter-parts (OECD, 1995). Generally, teachers in these countries receive longer, more extensive training in both pedagogy as well as in content, receive better pay, and are provided more time to focus on the needs of their students. Perhaps more importantly, European and Asian countries spend more money on hiring staff to work directly with the students and less on bureaucracy more (National Commission, 1996). The individual personalities and temperaments of these staff members may also impact the quality of education the students receive in these countries. Research regarding cross-culture personality types is warranted. Do teachers in European countries differ in their personalities from one another, and if so, and how do these differences and similarities compare to teachers in the USA and other countries.

Research on effective teaching and personality characteristics that support quality teaching has been an integral part of the academic milieu for over 40 years (Gage, 1963; Rushton & Juola-Rushton, 2006; Ryan, 1960; Sears, Kennedy, Kaye, & Gail, 1997). Getzels and Jackson (1963) (cited in Gage, 1963, p. 575) surveyed over 800 studies and assessed the research in this area as generally “unproductive and chaotic”. Their conclusion, in part, was based upon the weaknesses of standard psychological tests available during that time. They postulated that many of the tests measured only psychopathological conditions and were inappropriate to address teacher effectiveness. Flaitz (1987) suggested these findings, unfortunately, negatively impacted research on teacher personality effectiveness, which resulted in few studies ever being completed. Recently, American researchers (Barrett, 1991; Kent

& Fisher, 1997; Sprague, 1997) re-examined teacher personality characteristics or traits, many using the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory (MBTI) in order to explore (a) Teacher of the Year (ToY) recipients and effective teaching, (Rushton & Juola-Rushton, 2006), (b) the effect of a teachers’ specific teaching style on student learning (Fairhurst & Fairhurst, 1995; Pankratius, 1997), (c) the relationship between a teacher’s personality and the learning environment he or she creates (Barrett, 1991; Kent & Fisher, 1997), and (d) the relationship between mentoring teachers and pre-service teachers (Sprague, 1997).

In this article we provide a brief overview of the MBTI and a review of the relevant literature on the use of the MBTI in determining teacher personality related to effective teaching. We also report on the Florida Department of Education’s selection criteria in determining which teachers in the state of Florida shall become known as the “Florida League of Teachers” (FLoT), teachers deemed “outstanding” in their fields (including ToY winners, Milken Award winners, Technology ToY winners, and National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certified teachers). These teachers, selected from the FLoT, were compared to the personality preferences of both USA national and local samples of teachers to see if teachers considered effective share personality preferences and or differ from the typical public profile. Finally, we discuss implications of these findings relating to efforts to improve effectiveness in public education and enhance student outcomes.

### *1.1. Myers-Briggs type indicator*

The MBTI (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) a 166-item self-report inventory based on Jungian psychological principles helps individuals identify their learning preferences, teaching styles, and personality characteristics (Mamchur, 1996). The MBTI measures four, bi-polar dimensions of personality and is often “the frequent choice of researchers in education as it is particularly suited to applications in teaching and learning” (Kent & Fisher, 1997, p. 18). In short, the MBTI indicates a person’s psychological preference for consistence and enduring patterns of how the world is viewed, information is collected and interpreted, how decisions are made, and how individuals live out lifestyle choices (Martin, 1997). Four separate scales exist. Each is continuous in nature and indicates a person’s

preference for a particular index. The four scales are: Extraversion versus Introversion, Sensing versus Intuition, Thinking versus Feeling, and Judging versus Perceiving.

- *Extraversion (E) and Introversion (I)*. Extraverted individuals obtain information through an orientation toward the outer world of people, events, or things. They enjoy meeting new people, thinking aloud, and being active. Introversion types seek the introspection of ideas, thoughts, and concepts. They prefer to process their thoughts internally before speaking, have few close friends, and often seek conversations that tend to be deeper in nature.
- *Sensing (S) and Intuition (N)* relates to individuals' preferences in how they receive and make sense of information or data from the external world. Sensing types are more aware of their senses in relation to their environment, are often factually based, focus on practical concrete problems, and generally believe that if something works, it is best left alone. Individuals who have a tendency to understand the world through an Intuitive process prefer to live in a world of possibilities and options, often looking toward the future. They also tend to focus on complicated abstract problems, seeing the big picture, sometimes at the expense of the details (Hirsh & Kummerow, 1997).
- *Thinking (T) and Feeling (F)* are considered the "rational processes" by which we come to certain conclusions and judgments regarding the information collected. Thinking types (T) prefer to focus on making decisions based on an impersonal objective position. Feeling types (F) have a tendency to respond well and easily to people's values and are adept at assessing the human impact of decisions.
- *Judging (J) and Perceiving (P)* relates to how we "live our outward life". Judging types prefer to live a structured, organized life. They also tend to be self-disciplined, enjoy making decisions, and thrive on order. Perceiving types prefer to live a lifestyle that is more flexible and adaptable. They tend to thrive on spontaneity, prefer to leave things open, require more information in order to make decisions, and often get things done at the last minute (Sprague, 1997).

Sixteen possible combinations of letters are possible from the four dichotomous pairs. Each

"type" (e.g., ENTJ or ISFP) represents a dynamic interaction with individual preferences for those related traits. Martin (1997, p. 7) states that, "the four preferences interact in dynamic and complex ways that can tell you much about who you are and how you approach the world". Fairhurst and Fairhurst (1995) suggest that knowing ones temperament and personality is important for teachers so they can recognize the differences between their personality types and their students' learning styles.

An early study using the MBTI and teacher typology, conducted by Lawrence (1979), recorded the individual types of 5366 American teachers.

He reported that the most frequently "preferred typology" was the Extraverted-Sensing-Feeling-Judging (ESFJ) teacher. Unfortunately, he did not specify the particular level (i.e., elementary, middle, or secondary) of teaching or the frequency of teachers in each of the various levels. Similarly, Macdaid, McCauley, and Kainz (1986) reported that of 804 American teachers in their study, 49.50% had a combined preference for Sensing and Judgment. The second most favoured combination was Sensing and Feeling (40.80%). The largest percentage of the 16 types was the ISFJ profile (17.91%).

More recently, Sears et al. (1997) examined the typologies of 1281 pre-service teachers in the USA to determine if particular characteristics were associated with effective teaching. They observed a difference between the elementary pre-service students and their secondary counterparts. Students inclined toward the elementary level were more often Sensing, Feeling, and Judgment (–SFJ) profiles with no particular favoritism on the E–I scale. They describe the –SFJ personality type as one who seeks order and would not likely lead either the reform movements or lead in the educational arena as they are not particularly "comfortable with the disorder, ambiguity, and confusion that inevitably accompanies change" (p. 6). Conversely, they indicated that the opposite personality types, the –NTJ (Intuitive, Thinking, and Judging), were more attracted to secondary teaching and would be more likely seek out change and leadership roles. They further note that the –NTJ teacher is "more oriented to the theoretical; disposed to investigate possibilities and relationships; and drawn to complexity, innovation, and change. Their intuitive and thinking nature [sic] inspires them to seek solutions to complex problems" (p. 6).

Addressing the reliability and validity of the MBTI, Capraro and Capraro (2002) completed

a meta-analytic reliability generalization study that examined the variability of measurement error in multiple administrations. Though some variability was present, strong internal consistency and test–retest reliability yielded solid scores. According to Capraro and Capraro, Cronbach's Alpha was computed on more than 10,000 participants. The results are as follows: EI = .79, SN = .84, TF = .74, and JP = .82. They also found test–retest coefficients to be stable over time (ranging from 1 week to 2.5 year intervals). The scores ranged from .93 to .75 (EI), .93 to .69 (SN), .89 to .48 (TF), and .89 to .64 (JP). Thompson and Borrello (1986) used factor analysis to report factor pattern coefficients higher than .30 between “MBTI scores, behaviors reflective of MBTI constructs, and persons' self-assessment of their own MBTI type” (p. 594).

### 1.2. Florida league of teachers

With the recent call for “quality” teachers, a greater need has arisen to identify the most effective teachers. The Florida Department of Education is unique in that it has created an organization of 148 “outstanding practicing educators dedicated to assisting the Florida Department of Education and public schools throughout the state with school improvement”. The FLoT was founded in 1993 and was designed primarily to support educational reform by identifying the most effective teachers in the state of Florida. These teachers help coordinate professional development, become model teachers, provide trainings, and help in the facilitating and coaching of other teachers' professional development.

Through a rigorous nomination process, League teachers are selected on the following selection criteria:

- A record of superior teaching performance as evidenced by honors, awards, student performance, or other kinds of recognition.
- A superior ability to foster excellence in education and contribute to the continuous improvement of student learning and the school environment.
- Knowledge of the subject taught and the ability to effectively use materials relating to the subject.
- Use of original or innovative instructional methods such as interdisciplinary instruction, use of student gains data in planning and delivering instruction, development of new instructional materials and programmes, and use of technology in instruction.
- Continued professional development as evidenced by participation in in-service training, seminars, and other methods of facilitating colleagues' or other teachers' improvement instruction.
- Leadership in educational activities at the district, state, or national level, such as membership on an advisory council, task force, or professional organization.
- Demonstration of exemplary interpersonal skills in communicating with colleagues, students, families, and the community, and the ability to collaborate with other professionals.
- Strong commitment to creating a climate of caring and respect conducive to effective teaching and learning (FLoT Nomination Process, Draft Copy).

Each district's superintendent, or designee, nominates individual teachers who meet the criteria and selection eligibility. Suggestions are sent to the State Department of Education where applicants are carefully screened. Potential nominees often exhibit the following credentials:

- District ToY.
- Technology ToY.
- Subject Area Award Winner.
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification.
- Teacher recommended by principal, staff development director or current League member.
- Teacher recommended by a local civic or parent–teacher organization.

## 2. Methodology

This study is an effort to add to the research on the MBTI personality traits of educators selected as outstanding in the profession. The purpose of this study is to determine if FLoT, which we suggest are *effective teachers* due to the rigorous selection process, share more common personality preferences (as determined by the MBTI) with each other than with other schoolteachers here in the USA. We hypothesize that the typical personality often selected for teaching, i.e., the Introverted, Sensing, Feeling, and Judging (ISFJ) types, will not be prevalent in this group. Further, we suggest that similar to the Rushton and Juola-Rushton (2006)

study of Florida ToY recipients, this sample of outstanding teachers will have a higher percentage of Extraverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Perceiving (ENFP) types. The Myers-Briggs Types of 58 of these selected teachers were compared to profiles of a random sample of 804 national schoolteachers and 189 Florida teachers (Reid, 1999). A second purpose of the study is to assess whether these award-winning teachers take more risks than the general population, which we determine through the Beiderman-sensation seeking scale (BSSS) (1994).

### 2.1. Data collection

Four sources of data were compiled and reviewed in this effort: (1) MBTI results on the 58 participants in this study, (2) comparison data for 804 randomly selected teachers, (3) comparison data for a random sample of Florida elementary school teachers ( $N = 189$ ), and (4) results of the BSSS for the 58 study participants. The MBTI and BSSS were collected with the participation of the FLoT. The MBTI and BSSS were administered to each participant after receiving voluntary consent. Comparison data for the national sample ( $n = 804$ ) and Florida elementary school teacher sample data ( $N = 189$ ) was described in the MBTI Manual (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

### 2.2. Participants

Each year the FLoT holds an annual leadership conference. Last year, one of the authors, Stephen Rushton, was invited to attend that conference. He told them about his research plans and asked for volunteers. About 100 were given a copy of both, and if they did so, were asked to take home the MBTI and the BSSS; 58 sent back completed forms of whom 7 were male and 51 females. They ranged in age from 38% to 68% were teaching at the elementary level; and 4 were African American, 1 was East Asia, and 53 were White.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Results of sensation seeking

The BSSS, a revised version of the Zuckerman-sensation seeking scale (ZSSS), was utilized to measure five categories of sensation (very high, high, average, low, very low) seeking for the 58 participants. The scale is a forced-choice format

that gives the respondent two choices of related behaviors, one involving a greater degree of risk and the other a lesser degree of risk. The individual must choose which activities he or she would prefer.

The total score of the instrument is obtained by assigning one point to the high-risk activity and no points to the low or no risk activity. The total score reflects the degree of risk taking in which a person is willing to participate, high scores indicating a greater willingness to take risks and low scores indicating a lesser willingness. Total scores on the BSSS fall in one of five categories, as previously described, ranging from very low to very high.

Results from the 58 respondents indicated that 83% could be categorized in the low, average, or high categories. The majority of these respondents scored in the average category (37%). The low and high-risk taking categories were 24% and 22%, respectively. The remaining 13% were in the very low category, with no participants scoring in the very high category (see Tables 1 and 2).

These results suggest teachers considered outstanding in their field are not generally extreme risk takers. However, a score of 6.38 for the non-parametric  $\chi^2$  goodness of fit tests suggests this sample is not significantly different at the .05 level than would be expected given an equal distribution of scores across categories.

To better understand the implications of this result, it is important to look at the development of similar sensation scales and what “personality type” would fall into each category. At the high end of such scales are the extreme risk takers, defined as persons who accept a great deal of risk as necessary to participate in novel or varied activities. This category also includes antisocial risk takers who consistently seek to maximize risks. Moderate risk takers (low, average, high) also accept risk as part of novel or varied activities, but they seek to minimize the risks. Very low risk takers view any risk as unacceptable and something to avoid.

In this study, we found that the majority of participants were considered moderate risk takers, who sought novel and creative ways to achieve their goals, but who also attempted to minimize risks. Further, of this sample ( $N = 59$ ), none fell into the category of “high risk taker”, as the manual defined it (which is a category that includes antisocial risk takers). However, it should be noted the sample size in the high and low categories was too low to allow any further comparisons. A larger sample of BSSS



Table 1  
Comparison of study sample with other samples and percent of MBTI types

Type sample	Study sample <i>N</i> = 189	National study <i>N</i> = 58	Florida sample <i>N</i> = 804
ISTJ	5.17	10.70	10.10
ISTP	0.00	1.74	3.20
ESTP	1.72	0.87	1.10
ESTJ	0.82	8.46	5.30
ISFJ	5.17	17.91*	29.9*
ISFP	1.72	4.73	4.80
ESFP	1.72	5.72	7.90
ESFJ	5.17	12.44	12.7*
INFJ	0.00	5.10	4.20
INFP	3.45	4.60	4.80
ENFP	32.76*	10.20	5.30
ENFJ	6.90	7.21	6.40
INTJ	6.90	2.11	2.10
INTP	3.45	1.49	1.10
ENTP	10.34*	1.49	0.50
ENTJ	12.07**	5.22	1.10

\*Implies significance at the .001 level, \*\*implies significance at the .01.

Table 2  
Number per category and percent of total response on Beiderman sensation seeking scale: *N* = 59

Very low	Low	Average	High	Very high
10	14	22	13	0
17%	24%	37%	22%	0%

scores for outstanding teachers providing a normal distribution would be ideal for future research.

### 3.2. Results of the MBTI

The MBTI test results were analyzed utilizing the Section Ration Type Table PC Software Version 1. Data included the frequency and percentage of responses for each MBTI type, for each combination of two types, and for each combination of four types. A  $\chi^2$  statistical measure was generated that compared the 58 study participants to a national sample of 804 teachers who had demonstrated teaching as their preferred occupation. A second  $\chi^2$  was generated comparing the study sample to 189 Florida elementary school teachers who also had completed the MBTI.

When MBTI results for teachers nominated for FLoT (*N* = 58) were compared to the sample of teachers who expressed teaching as their chosen profession (*n* = 804), a significant difference

( $p < .001$ ) was found between some of the specific traits. Specifically, the sample of FLoT educators had a strong preference for choosing the following traits: E, N, and P.

When the comparisons of teachers nominated for acceptance into the FLoT were made with a random sample of Florida elementary school teachers (*N* = 189) the individual traits reported as significant ( $p < .001$ ) were again, E, N, and P. Comparisons of dual combinations revealed the following were significant for FLoT: EP, NF, NP, FJ, and EN.

When the combined four MBTI types of FLoT candidates (*N* = 58) were compared with the USA national random sample of 804 teachers, it was discovered that combined types of ENFP and ENTP differed significantly at the  $p < .001$  and .05 levels, respectively when compared to the random sampling of teachers.

## 4. Discussion

Many researchers who have investigated teacher preferences and typology using the MBTI (spell out first time in discussion) have consistently found that the “typical” elementary school teacher has a preference toward the personality style of sensing, feeling, and judging (Lawrence, 1979; Macdaid et al., 1986; Reid, 1999). Lawrence’s (1979) study explored education teachers at all education levels and found that 52% of them had an E and S style, and 63% of them had a F and J style. Similarly, Macdaid et al. (1986) examined a national sample of 804 teachers and found that nearly 50% had a combined preference for S and J. They also reported that the SF combination was highly valued by 40% of the teachers. The ISFJ profile included the largest percentage of the 16 types. These researchers also sampled 100 preschool teachers and obtained comparable results. Of the sample 41% favoured S and J and, again, the ISFJ profile accounted for the largest (20%) percentage of all types.

Although using smaller samples (*N* = 122 and 153), Hinton and Stockburger (1991) and Marso and Pigge (1990) reported that the dominant elementary pre-service teacher scored as ESFJ. Meisgeier and Richardson (1996) used the MBTI with out-of-field, non-education career students entering the teacher-preparation program. Comparing the MBTI responses of incoming students (*N* = 91) in the alternative certification programmes (ACP) to data from the MBTI Atlas compiled by

Macdaid, McCaulley, and Kainz (1986), Meisgeier and Richardson (1996) discovered that these students had a high preference for S and J and, thus, tended to be more realistic, factual, detail oriented, and well organized.

Rojewski and Holder (1990) reported in a study of vocational teacher-preparation students that 58% had a preference for the S and J combination. More recently, Reid (1999) sampled 189 Florida elementary teachers and concluded that 57.7% favoured both S and J as preferences in their teaching, whereas the second most favoured combination was SF at 55.0%. The ISFJ profile accounted for 30% of the total teachers. In contrast, the least preference at 12% was the NP combination. The ENFP type accounted for only 5% of the sample. It appears that the typical elementary teacher has a preference for both S and J and a combined ISFJ profile, not the ENFP or ENFJ type that was significantly represented in our sample of FLoT members.

Another study by Rushton and Juola-Rushton (2006) examined “ToY” recipients for a small county in the state of Florida. Using the MBTI, 39 district-level ToY educators were surveyed over a period of 3 years. Descriptive data included frequency and percentage of response for each type indicator and for each of the 16 combinations. These teachers too were found to be ENFPs.

The question arises as to why both the FLoT and the ToY recipients represented a significantly different personality than the average public school teacher. In both cases, those teachers favoured a preference in their personality toward ENFP. Their profile (ENFP) scored significantly higher ( $p < .001$ ) than the other 15 types. How does the nature of those teachers preferring the ENFP differ from the typical American elementary profile of ISFJ? The following discussion will first examine the teaching styles and preferences of the ISFJ. Second, we will explore the ENFP typology to see if particular traits stand out as being more applicable for the FLoT or ToY candidates.

Fairhurst and Fairhurst (1995) suggest that almost one-third of elementary school teachers fit the ISFJ profile and over 57% of elementary teachers have a preference for S and J. They suggest that individuals with this particular typology are attracted to the teaching profession, particularly the primary levels, because of the nurturing and dependency young children require. Further, they suggest that the ISFJ teachers are usually loyal and devoted and have great

patience in helping students learn to perform detail tasks. As introverts, they prefer a quieter learning environment than extroverts. Their S and J tendencies means they prefer things to be under control, appreciating predictability to spontaneity. Fairhurst and Fairhurst (1995) summarize these individuals teaching style as:

They use pencil-and-paper drills, workbook assignments, and quiet deskwork to teach their lessons. They often use course outlines and contracts with students. Their students are encouraged to memorize facts and will be exposed to audiovisuals as a way of teaching them about reality. ISFJ teachers also like short periods of teacher-led questions and answers, and brief lectures (p. 61).

Martin (1997) supports these interpretations indicating that the ISFJ combination stands for someone who has an “abiding respect and sense of personal responsibility for doing what needs to be done in the here and now” (p. 18). He proposes that teachers preferring the ISFJ combination enjoy living their lives in the moment and have a realistic approach to life. He proposes that they become unsettled when things are not organized in a concise manner, and that they have a respect and command of the facts leading to thorough attention in completing tasks. Other researchers, such as Hirsh and Kummerow (1997) support these views, stating that the ISFJs are somewhat pragmatic, conscientious, and sympathetic individuals who operate well when rules are clearly defined. Additionally, the ISFJ have a strong need to keep things under control and enjoy consistency. Three key themes appear to dominate the ISFJ perspective on teaching: preservation, prevention, and protection (Fairhurst & Fairhurst, 1995, p. 61).

The ISFJ teachers are often referred to as being the “Stabilizers,” “Traditionalists” or “Guardians” in the education arena and are an important factor in keeping the status quo. For the most part, they clearly prefer keeping to the tried and trusted ways of doing things, enjoying the well-planned activities that have been proven to work over time. Although willing to learn new approaches to teaching, they prefer to keep things the same unless they perceive an important need to change, in which case they require a logical step-by-step explanation and guidance on how to change and ample time to course correct. As stated, they are reluctant to jump into any new educational reform movement.

Fairhurst and Fairhurst (1995) have suggested that the ISFJ may be seen as pessimistic in nature, preferring to stick to the rules and regulations.

The findings in this study paralleled those of Rushton and Juola-Rushton (2006) research in which they compared Florida ToY recipient's Myers-Briggs Typology to elementary school teachers around the country and to Florida teachers. In both studies the ENFP type was over-represented at the  $p < .001$  level of significance. In this study, the ENFP typology accounted for 32%, with ENFJ representing the next highest level of preference at 12%. The FLoT does not represent, nor share similar traits with the majority of typical public school teachers in the USA.

Those teachers who have a preference toward NF are considered to be the "Idealists" or "Advocates" who take pride in their own unique identity and are committed to seeing their students express themselves as authentic individuals (Fairhurst & Fairhurst, 1995; Keirse & Bates, 1984). The research findings indicate that teachers who have a preference for extraversion, intuition, feeling, and perceiving are typically energetic, enthusiastic people who lead spontaneous and adaptable lives. They tend to be highly creative, fun, appreciative of individuals needs, and expressive (Martin, 1997). Additionally, ENFPs often have an orientation to the outer world of possibilities, whereas their intuition often draws them to new ways of doing things as they grasp new concepts readily.

Change is an important element in the ENFP's life. As such, ENFPs tend to be optimistic, active, and imaginative with an open eye to the future. Fairhurst and Fairhurst (1995) indicate that the ENFP teacher has a desire for the dramatic and will create stimulating and novel lectures. Yet, they will always be mindful and sensitive to the individualities of their students. Upon entering an ENFP's classroom one would notice a wide range of teaching strategies such as class discussions, class and team building activities, cooperative learning strategies, and an emphasis placed on divergent thinking.

Hirsh and Kummerow (1997) report the extraverted intuitive teacher often brings "zest, joy, liveliness, and fun to all aspects of their living. They are at their best in situations that are fluid and changing, and that allow them to express their creativity and use their charisma" (p. 195). Further, Martin (1997) describes the ENFPs as highly sensitive to the individual needs of students and

concerned with the personal growth of their students and themselves. Possibly viewed as very gregarious in nature, this 5% of the population (Keirse & Bates, 1984) are often seen as performers, catalysts for change, and generators of enthusiasm. Although independently minded and intolerant of routine, they are often viewed as warm, charming, and friendly.

Fairhurst and Fairhurst (1995) summarize the ENFP as:

ENFPs are energetic and enthusiastic teachers. They often stimulate students to seek out what is unknown and make it known. They promote imagination and creativity in their classrooms through many different kinds of activities. Their students usually feel that their ENFP teachers understand them and help them to deal with their personal problems (p. 63).

The ENFPs possess numerous traits that serve them well in becoming effective teachers. Their E tendencies and sensitivity to others needs help them maintain a healthy interaction with the external world outside their classrooms (i.e., parents and administrators). Their Intuitive Feeling (NF) nature allows for a more sensitive to the harmony or disharmony of their students within their learning environment. Their P traits help them to remain open and flexible to the ever-changing demands that take place in a classroom. Overall, these optimistic and positive attitude teachers often beckon others to them, as they are known for their innovative, problem-solving skills. This, along with a high enthusiasm for life, makes them capable of handling numerous projects simultaneously.

## 5. Conclusion

For the past several decades, the effectiveness of public school teachers in the USA has been the focus of debate, criticism, and negative media attention. Meanwhile, national news headlines warn of a severe teacher shortage. With two million teachers needed in the next decade, many school systems are finding alternative certification routes to help speed up the placement of teachers in schools. Hiring a teacher out of field and placing them in a classroom with only few core educational courses behind them is becoming a necessary practice. And yet, today's teachers are faced with unprecedented issues as they enter the classroom. School violence in the USA is at an all-time high, with teachers often



the victims of discouraged children. Indeed, as the 1999 American National Teacher of the Year stated, “It takes enormous skill and talent, not to mention a good deal of courage, to walk into a classroom and motivate, engage, and teach young people”.

Clark and Guest (1995) suggest that certain personality characteristics will be required for tomorrow’s classrooms. The ISFJ and other permutations of this type (i.e., ESFJ, ESTJ, ISTJ) have been referred to as the “Stabilizers” or “Traditionalists” in the teaching profession. Clark and Guest suggest that more risk-taking catalysts, visionaries, and trouble-shooters will be needed, as teachers expand their roles to become motivators, mentors, counselors, and guides. Similarly, Sears et al. (1997) state the sensing, feeling, judging teacher (the most typical preference type for elementary school teachers in the USA) are not likely to lead the next reform movement, nor are they likely to be tomorrow’s leaders, particularly in the field of education. Adaptation and acceptance of change are becoming common factors necessary for success in public education. The ENFP and ENTP personality traits accept these factors more readily and are, therefore, an asset to the field of education. Does this mean administrators should solely hire teachers that exhibit these personality traits? It is imperative that individuals be aware and conscious of their personality type so that they may make the necessary changes to adapt and persevere. In addition, institutes of higher education must be aware of what it takes to foster a “quality teacher”. This study concludes that though a person may not exhibit the exact combination of personality traits we found illustrative of a quality teacher, the knowledge and understanding of one’s type is pertinent to success in public education.

The No Child Left Behind legislation holds out the promise that each child will have a quality teacher within the next few years. Indeed, every child deserves a highly qualified quality teacher each year of its educational life. How do we define “quality?” Educators and researchers are discovering more and more which specific teaching skills can enhance the quality of learning that takes place in a classroom. We know that children learn through a wide variety of learning styles, and catering to these differences requires an ability to step out of one’s phenomenology and be able to see through the eyes of the learner. Each child and each teacher is unique, each person bringing with them a particular balance of strengths and weakness.

European countries and other nations around the world have also been experiencing changes in educational reform, shortage of teachers, and a growing concern for the quality of both teachers and education. Indeed, recent changes in Germany, France and Japan have seen teacher preparation reform programmes improve the quality of their teachers and teacher preparation programs (Hollyoake, 1993; Sato & McLaughlin, 1992). The need for outstanding teachers is a universal requirement for quality education and every child, worldwide, deserves the best teacher possible.

The results of our study suggest that the ENFP types are more likely to be selected to participate in highly effective leadership groups, such as the Florida Department of Education’s “has coined the FLoT”. These teachers are considered to be the best teachers in the State. Many have been selected for ToY and other national awards. Further research might investigate their specific teaching skills and strategies as well as their interactions with students to better inform the profession as to the specific traits that make them effective teachers. Additionally, a cross-culture comparison of teacher personalities between other countries may reveal further insight as to what characteristics better support the education of our future generation.

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