Quiet Excellence: Deconstructing the Extravert Ideal and Leveraging Introverted Strengths in Pedagogy and Educational Leadership

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Abstract
This position paper challenges the extravert ideal in teacher preparation, urging teacher educators to reframe introversion as a pedagogical asset rather than a professional deficit. By examining current evaluation tools, the authors provide a framework for quiet excellence—leveraging deep reflection, intentional planning, and a calm, steady presence. This paper offers actionable strategies for clinical supervisors to move beyond performance-based rubrics toward asset-based feedback, ensuring that introverted educators, and students who share their reflective nature, thrive through depth, stability, and authentic classroom connection.

Keywords: Introversion, Educational Leadership, Pedagogy, Professional Development, Extravert Ideal, Classroom Management.

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In this position paper, we advocate for stronger support of introverted teachers and suggest ways in which introversion is an asset to students in the classroom. Building on Chuhran's (2020) analysis of introverted teachers' lived experiences, we examine how the extravert ideal may shape teacher evaluation and suggest ways teacher preparation programs can foster more inclusive and strengths-based approaches to assessment. We share insights from our own firsthand perspectives as introverted educators who have spent decades balancing our temperament with a profession whose heavy demands for constant communication and social adeptness seem incompatible with our introverted nature. We suggest strategies for field observers to leverage the built-in dialogue protocols of a state-mandated assessment to evaluate and celebrate quiet excellence. Drawing on teachers' lived experiences, we examine how the extravert ideal may shape teacher evaluation and suggest ways teacher preparation programs can foster more inclusive, strength-based approaches to assessment.

While modern organizational leadership research increasingly affirms introverted temperaments as strategic assets, teacher preparation programs have largely taken little notice of the potential pedagogical value of these strengths, which is similar to the general public sentiment. According to Lawn et al. (2019), approximately 96% of individuals believe that extraverted characteristics are more highly valued in society than introverted ones. This cultural bias is so pervasive that 53.6% of participants expressed a desire to embody more extraverted characteristics, and 82.2% believed it was necessary to display extraverted behaviors in their daily lives. Furthermore, while 52% of Americans believe that extraverts make better leaders (Ballard, 2023), contemporary management models have actively debunked this notion. The preference for extraverted teachers may be particularly evident in teacher preparation programs. This may be problematic for highly visible tasks like public speaking, modeling activities, and managing transitions that are frequently evaluated through a performative lens that may sometimes conflate an energetic personality style with overall instructional competence. However, the critical offstage responsibilities of the profession—such as instructional design, lesson differentiation, data analysis, and one-on-one mentoring with students—depend on reflective and analytical strengths that characterize the introverted side of the personality continuum.

In the following section, we explore how mainstream cultural preferences for extraverted behaviors may affect beginning educators and how these preferences can overshadow the reflective and analytical strengths associated with the introverted side of the personality continuum.

Effects of the Extravert Ideal

Cain (2012a; 2012b) asserts that societal norms value extraverted characteristics as markers of success, a belief she describes as the *extravert ideal*. In schools, this belief may manifest as an intense pressure for educators to operate as highly energetic individuals who enliven classrooms through volume and quick interactions. Consequently, introverts—who comprise roughly half of the population—must constantly navigate a system that treats their natural temperament as a deficit (Myers et al., 2018). They are frequently told they are too quiet, need to be more outgoing, or lack an authoritative presence (Cain, 2012b). This bias is empirically supported by qualitative research, which found that introverted educators are often criticized for lacking classroom command simply due to their deliberate use of wait-time, processing space, and active listening (Chuhran, 2020). However, we assert that a balanced educational ecosystem does not merely need extraverted teachers; it also needs teachers who can design intricate lessons, allow time for processing, and create room on the stage for the rest of the classroom community. By recognizing and affirming the unique strengths of the introverted mind, teacher preparation programs can shift teacher candidates from a mindset of merely surviving the classroom to genuinely thriving within it. Failing to support these educators risks driving a segment of talented, reflective individuals out of an already depleted workforce (Fuller, 2022). Furthermore, it may deprive our students of the very teachers they need most. When introverted educators engage students with quiet confidence, they provide a powerful model for the roughly half of our students who are similarly negotiating an extravert-dominated world. As we identify the strengths of introverted teachers, we will also define introversion from a psychological, physiological, and historical viewpoint.

What is Introversion?

While Jung (1923) is widely credited with coining the terms, *extraversion* and *introversion*, the concept's early framing was heavily influenced by Sigmund Freud. According to Laney (2002), Freud's initial research often characterized introversion as a psychological deficit or disorder, a negative lens that established a long-standing stigma. Despite a century of personality research, introversion continues to be misunderstood as shyness or poor social skills (Cain, 2012b). Rather than being recognized as a distinct personality with its own strengths, introversion is too often viewed simply as the absence of extraverted characteristics. Moreover, management research asserts extravert traits like assertiveness, sociability, charisma, action, and quick thinking as evidence of leadership success (Judge et al., 2002). However, recent scholarship is shifting this narrative. Blevins et al. (2022) defined introversion by what it is instead of what it is not. This strength-based understanding of introversion focused on the benefits of this temperament, especially in professional roles such as teaching. They group these strengths into three distinct domains–*autonomous*, *analytical*, and *internally driven*. (Blevins et al., 2022).

Importantly, because an individual's position on the introversion-extraversion continuum is often context-dependent, the inclusion of these positive descriptors is not intended to rigidly categorize candidates; rather, it serves as a framework for understanding how to support introverted educators. When evaluators rely primarily on traditional observation metrics that emphasize visible classroom performance, they may be overlooking indicators of instructional competence that manifest in reflective practice, intentional instructional design, and thoughtful student engagement. By articulating these explicit adjectives, we aim to help evaluators identify and name the pedagogical assets—such as deliberate reflection, deep context-building, and purposeful one-on-one connections—that may be obscured by an extraverted observer bias (see Table 1).

Currently, the American Psychological Association (n.d.) defines introversion as an "orientation toward the internal private world of one's self and one's inner thoughts and feelings, rather than toward the outer world of people and things" (para. 1). The extravert thrives when engaged in social environments, whereas the introvert finds strength in solitude and quiet reflection. This preference for low-stimulation settings allows introverts to excel in tasks requiring autonomy, analytical thinking, and long-term meticulous planning, and these strengths are what we believe define introverted teachers.

The Physiology of Temperament: Neurobiology and the Quiet Mind

Now that we have defined the introverted teacher, it is important to understand the physiological differences that may manifest as specific classroom behaviors. To better understand introverted educators, teacher preparation programs would benefit from looking beyond surface-level classroom behaviors and examining the neurobiological foundation of temperament that impacts perceptions of teacher effectiveness. For many introverts, a lifetime of navigating a world that emphasizes the extravert ideal may contribute to a persistent, internalized anxiety that something is fundamentally flawed in the way they process and engage with the world. Within educational preparation programs, this systemic pressure frequently manifests as a misconception that introversion reflects a lack of confidence or a psychological deficit. To reframe this narrative, it is essential to recognize that introverted candidates are physiologically different. While we do not claim neurobiological expertise, a review of personality and physiological literature reveals that these differences are structural and chemical, rather than behavioral flaws or mere lifestyle preferences (American Psychological Association, n.d.; Granneman, 2016; Johnson et al., 1999; Koepp et al., 1998). Grounding our evaluation models in this physiological reality shifts the conversation away from potential personal bias.

Introverts and extraverts possess distinct physiological pathways and neurotransmitter preferences that dictate how they process information. While the extraverted brain utilizes shorter, faster neural pathways geared for immediate action, the introverted brain relies on longer, more complex routes designed for deep reflection (Johnson et al., 1999; Koepp et al., 1998, as cited in Laney, 2002). Specifically, neuroimaging studies reveal that introversion is associated with higher resting blood flow and distinct gray matter volume variations within the prefrontal cortex—the region responsible for complex cognition, long-term memory, and metic-

Table 1

Positive Facets and Descriptors of Introversion

Positive Facets of Introversion	Descriptors/Adjectives
Introspective thoughtfulness	Reflective, observant, sense-making, deep thinking, analytical
Independent Mindset	Works independently, autonomous, self-sufficient, self-reliant, enhanced sensory processing
Solitude Preference	Internally driven, enjoys being alone, recharge/recover internally, appreciates solitary activities, quieter

Note. Descriptors represent positive introverted facets of a continuous personality spectrum; behavioral expression is context-dependent and situational.

ulous planning (Johnson et al., 1999). While this complex, long-term processing facilitates deep analysis, it is often misunderstood by observers as hesitation or a lack of confidence. Consequently, what an outside observer might misinterpret as an educator's diminished instructional presence is often the physiological manifestation of a highly reflective mind at work.

Furthermore, research suggests these two temperaments exhibit differing sensitivities within the autonomic nervous system. Extraverts demonstrate a higher sensitivity to dopamine-driven pathways tied to the sympathetic nervous system, which thrives on external reward, novelty, and high-energy stimulation (Granneman, 2016). Alternatively, introverts exhibit a lower threshold for dopamine overstimulation; instead, their neural architecture is strongly associated with pathways linked to the parasympathetic nervous system and the neurotransmitter acetylcholine (Granneman, 2016). In plainer terms, these neurological differences may help explain why introverts tend to experience fatigue in highly stimulating environments. This may also contribute to a preference for sustained concentration and reflective thought. These physiological characteristics explain why introverted candidates often benefit from quiet pauses in the midst of their busiest days (which we will later describe as the *gift of the pause*). Overall, what an evaluator might perceive as a lack of confidence is in reality, an active, high-level cognitive process where the introvert is internally iterating and pondering before choosing to speak.

Introversion: From Disorder to Diversity

Outside the field of education, the perception of introversion has shifted significantly over the last century. In the early 1900s, introversion was frequently pathologized and labeled as a psychological deficit. As personality theory evolved, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) began to categorize introversion more neutrally, focusing on environmental preferences (Myers et al., 2018). This shift toward a more neutral understanding was further reinforced with the emergence of the Big Five personality traits (OCEAN), which

standardized the study of extraversion alongside openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Kim et al., 2019).

Additionally, the comparison between extraversion and introversion has been one component of educational research throughout the 20th century. For example, some studies have viewed extraversion as a primary predictor of high teacher self-efficacy and leadership effectiveness (Klassen & Tze, 2014). Scholars frequently use personality traits to characterize effective teachers or to make sense of student classroom behavior. Similar assumptions have appeared in research about students, such as Evans and Wrenn (1942), often labeled introversion as a barrier to academic achievement, favoring the highly vocal and socially active nature of extraverted students.

Since the turn of the 21st century, and particularly following Cain's (2012a) presentation "The Power of Introverts," academic and professional discourse has increasingly recognized introverted attributes as distinct strengths rather than deficits. Kahnweiler (2020) emphasizes the role that leaders, managers, and human resource professionals play in redesigning the workplace to support and value introverted diversity, moving beyond awareness toward meaningful inclusion. Overall, business and management leadership has grown to see introversion as a source of potential and have developed frameworks to support and provide feedback for introverted employees. Ultimately, the field of education, specifically in teacher preparation programs, would benefit from adopting a similar asset-based perspective.

Introversion in the Classroom: Hidden Strengths

Although we recognize that introversion and extraversion exist on a continuum, the traits commonly associated with introverts may serve as hidden assets in the classroom. As we examine these hidden classroom assets, we will focus on specific traits of introverts; however, teachers, like all individuals, fall on a continuum. While any teacher may exhibit some of these traits, here, we aim to illustrate how introverted teachers' strengths may impact the classroom. We suggest ways to identify these hidden introverted assets.

A key difference between introverts and extraverts is their approach to action and context. Rather than engaging in immediate action, introverts tend to prioritize internal cognitive iteration, evaluating situations within a broader situational context before acting (Blevins et al., 2022). As a result, thoughtful and detailed lesson plans are often a strength of an introvert. However, teacher educators primarily observe teachers during instruction, often evaluating planning and preparation through the lesson's execution. This may be problematic for introverted teachers because thoughtful planning is not always fully reflected in classroom performance, especially for novice teachers. To fully appreciate an introverted teacher's depth of planning, it is beneficial to spend time discussing the planning process in addition to the execution of the observed lesson. This kind of discussion will honor the context-oriented thinking that is a strength of the introvert.

Because introverts are comfortable with slow processing, another strength is that they are able to create a slower-paced classroom environment where curiosity and deep engagement occur. When students are not expected to have an immediate response, they are given the opportunity to think more deeply. Although introverted educators' quieter instructional style may not look exciting, their classrooms can be equally engaging since they provide opportunities for deep cognitive processing. Introverted teachers may excel with questioning because asking a question that does not have a straightforward answer does not make an introvert uneasy; rather, it invites curiosity. While leaving a question open might be seen as an error or appear as if the teacher lost track of the classroom discourse, there is the possibility that the choice was intentional. Introverts are comfortable in the space of possibility. Being comfortable in liminal spaces–letting a big question unfold without the immediate need to answer it–means that the class can explore a concept more deeply. Pedagogically, we call these big questions essential questions, which are known to deepen learning when taught in thoroughly designed lessons (Bulgren et al., 2011). For teacher educators, discussions about the pace of the lesson may reveal intentional planning that deepens thinking rather than poor planning or uncertainty which can be attributed to weak teaching. Beyond intentional planning, introverts may excel in developing learning communities.

Building classroom communities results from giving

proper attention to individuals. Because introverts tend to prefer interactions with individuals and small groups, their strength is engaging with individuals or small groups of students. While whole-class instruction is important, small-group and individual instruction is also very effective across grade levels and subject areas (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Pai et al., 2015). Teacher educators might consider observing small group or one-to-one interactions as well because introverts may display some of their hidden strengths in these lesson formats. Recognizing these strengths may lead to a deeper understanding of how the introverted teacher plans lessons, monitors learning, and engages the individual students in the classroom.

Introversion: From Deficit to Development

For many teacher candidates, the journey to becoming a teacher has been paved with years of being told their natural disposition is a deficit to be corrected. According to Kahnweiler's (2020) framework, traits such as a reserved demeanor or a subdued facial expression are frequently misinterpreted in K-12 settings as a lack of engagement. To effectively reframe this narrative, teacher preparation frameworks must delineate innate temperament from professional dispositions. Dispositions extend beyond personality, encompassing observable behavioral tendencies, pedagogical mindsets, and ethical commitments. Yet, in practice, evaluation metrics often obscure this distinction by framing active engagement through high-energy, extraverted indicators. For example, a review of our locally developed dispositions assessment highlights descriptors such as *active*, *initiative*, *collaborative*, *leadership*, and *passion*, that evaluators may subconsciously associate with highly visible, energetic, and verbally expressive forms of engagement. If left unexamined, these criteria risk penalizing introverted candidates who process internally and lead calmly, turning a standard professional review into an unintended measure of extraverted temperament. Table 2 outlines these contrasting behavioral tendencies between temperaments as described by Kahnweiler (2020). The characteristics of introverts, such as listening, deep focus, problem-solving, and quiet presence, may be valued in the classroom as indicators of thoughtful learning when teacher candidates are students, but may come under scrutiny as they develop into professional educators.

In teacher education, we have a responsibility to help these candidates unlearn the deficit-based narrative surrounding introversion and instead recognize their temperament as a specialized pedagogical toolset. While the extravert ideal suggests that teacher energy must be visible and constant, the introverted teacher provides an equally vital asset: a steady, calm presence.

Beyond classroom management, these introverted traits facilitate a depth of relationships that fast-moving environments often overlook. Because introverted teachers are energized by solitude and thrive in focused conversations, they are uniquely positioned to excel in one-on-one interactions like conferences or small groups. This natural inclination toward reflection before responding ensures student concerns are met with intentionality rather than a reflexive reaction. By validating these traits as professional assets rather than limitations, teacher preparation programs empower candidates to lead with authenticity. Ultimately, the introverted teacher does more than manage a room; they curate an environment where depth is valued over speed, providing a vital mirror for all students who need to see that leadership does not always require a loud voice. We propose actively adopting an asset-based mindset when working with introverted teacher candidates to recognize the diverse ways excellence is expressed in the classroom, cultivate environments where depth is valued over speed, and provide a vital model for students who need to see that leadership does not always require a loud voice.

Reimagining Teacher Evaluation: Beyond the Extravert Ideal

Pennsylvania's recent adoption of the new *PDE 430 – PDE Framework for Evaluation of Preservice Teacher* (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2025) provides an excellent opportunity to examine this rubric and refine evaluator training to ensure the effective identification of the strengths and developmental needs of all teacher candidates. While we cannot alter the rubric itself, we can transform how we train our clinical faculty and cooperating teachers to implement it. Completed twice during student teaching, the PDE 430 mirrors the Commonwealth's in-service evaluation system aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2011; Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2025). Importantly, these frameworks

Table 2

Common Characteristics of Introverts and Extraverts according to Kahnweiler (2020)

Introverts	Extraverts
Energized by solitude	Energized by other people
Must have breaks	Breaks are nice but not required
Reserved	Enthusiastic
Express thoughts after reflection	Express thoughts immediately
Private at first	Share openly
Low-key facial expression	Expressive face
Prefer writing	Prefer talking
Like small group, one-on-one focused conversations	Prefer larger groups where they can move fast and change topics
Humble	Talk about their accomplishments
Need time to prepare	Wing it
Calm	Excited

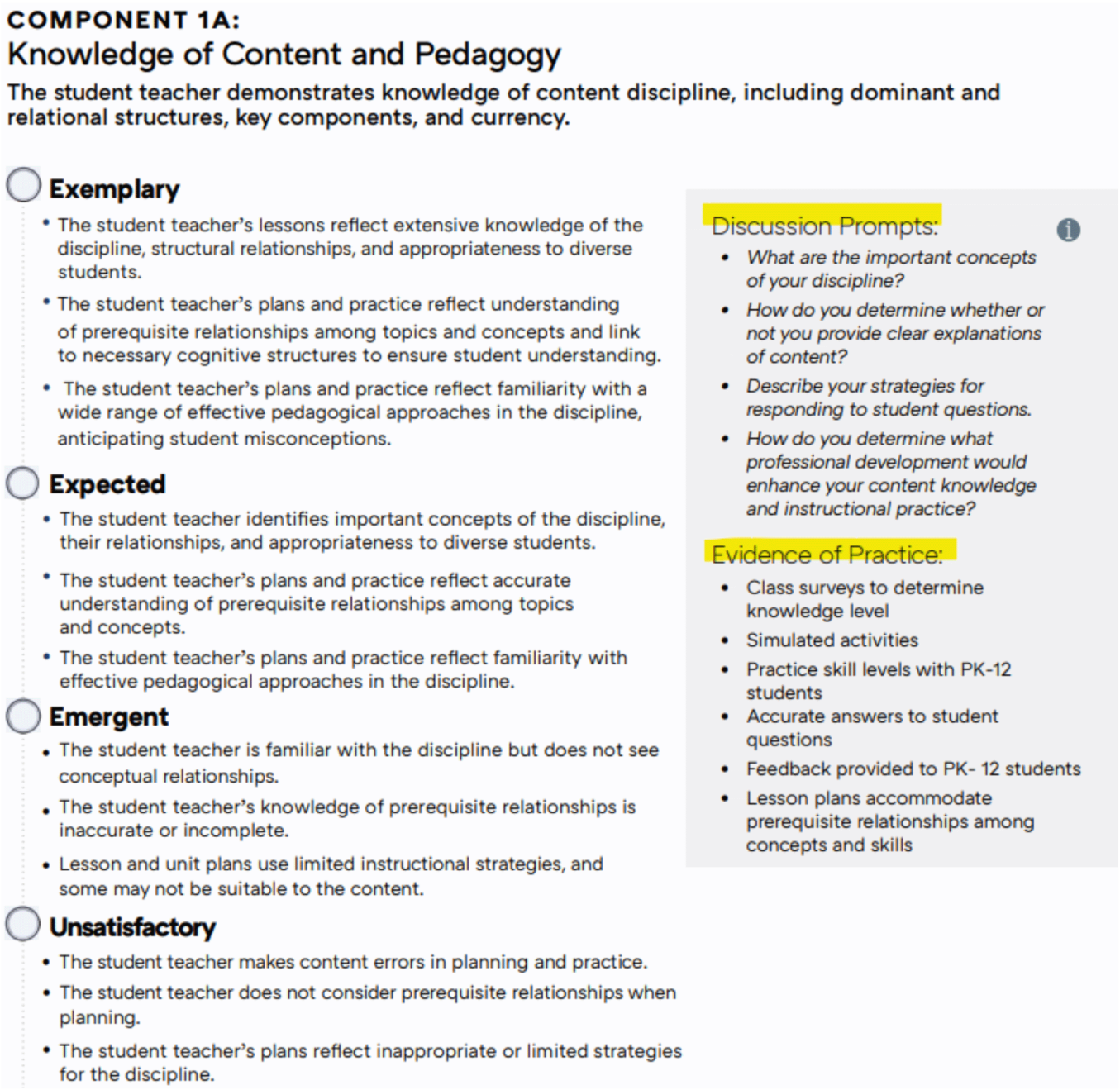
Note. While these characteristics are categorized to highlight distinct behavioral tendencies, personality exists on a continuum. Expression is highly context-dependent, and most educators dynamically shift between these styles based on situational demands, professional roles, and individual energy reserves.

recognize both the visible onstage elements (Domain 3: Instruction) and the behind-the-scenes work (Domain 1: Planning and Preparation) that makes instruction possible, as well as the interconnectedness of each domain. Additionally, the state-adopted metric intentionally embeds built-in *Discussion Prompts* and candidate-curated *Evidence of Practice* artifacts alongside the rubric. This intentional design enables evaluators to look beyond a candidate's onstage teaching performance, pairing observed performance with an investigation of the planning and decision-making that shaped the lesson (see Figure 1).

Chuhran (2020) reminds us that introverted teachers are routinely penalized in field observations for a perceived lack of classroom command, despite employing highly effective pedagogical strategies like intentional wait time. This bias persists despite research indicating that extraversion is not a statistically significant predictor of instructional effectiveness or student achievement (Kim et al., 2019; Klassen & Tze, 2014). Because traditional clinical observation models prioritize observable teacher behaviors, they may fail to capture invisible instructional processes, including planning, reflection, and cognitive decision-making. This challenge can be exacerbated when supervisors are responsible for evaluating multiple candidates. By utilizing the PDE Framework for Evaluation of Preser-

Figure 1

Snippet of PDE Framework for Evaluation of Preservice Teacher



COMPONENT 1A:

Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

The student teacher demonstrates knowledge of content discipline, including dominant and relational structures, key components, and currency.

Exemplary

- The student teacher's lessons reflect extensive knowledge of the discipline, structural relationships, and appropriateness to diverse students.
- The student teacher's plans and practice reflect understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts and link to necessary cognitive structures to ensure student understanding.
- The student teacher's plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline, anticipating student misconceptions.

Expected

- The student teacher identifies important concepts of the discipline, their relationships, and appropriateness to diverse students.
- The student teacher's plans and practice reflect accurate understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts.
- The student teacher's plans and practice reflect familiarity with effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline.

Emergent

- The student teacher is familiar with the discipline but does not see conceptual relationships.
- The student teacher's knowledge of prerequisite relationships is inaccurate or incomplete.
- Lesson and unit plans use limited instructional strategies, and some may not be suitable to the content.

Unsatisfactory

- The student teacher makes content errors in planning and practice.
- The student teacher does not consider prerequisite relationships when planning.
- The student teacher's plans reflect inappropriate or limited strategies for the discipline.

Discussion Prompts:

- *What are the important concepts of your discipline?*
- *How do you determine whether or not you provide clear explanations of content?*
- *Describe your strategies for responding to student questions.*
- *How do you determine what professional development would enhance your content knowledge and instructional practice?*

Evidence of Practice:

- Class surveys to determine knowledge level
- Simulated activities
- Practice skill levels with PK-12 students
- Accurate answers to student questions
- Feedback provided to PK- 12 students
- Lesson plans accommodate prerequisite relationships among concepts and skills

Note. The instructions for the PDE 430 illustrate the integration of state-mandated evaluative rubrics with built-in discussion prompts and candidate-curated evidence of practice artifacts.

vice Teachers built-in *Discussion Prompt*s during pre- and post-conferences, clinical mentors and university supervisors can illuminate the offstage components an observation may miss. These prompts allow evaluators to probe a candidate's underlying thinking, shifting the focus from energetic performances to instructional design and responsiveness to student needs. This balance directly honors the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (2024) *Common Ground Framework*. Specifically, it applies asset-based perspectives to teacher

candidates by framing both their reflective, offstage technical expertise and their onstage instructional presence as distinct yet equally valuable professional assets. By applying the state-mandated rubrics through this lens, teacher preparation programs ensure that an introverted temperament is recognized as a pedagogical asset rather than penalized as a professional deficit. Developing this mindset requires a deliberate shift in feedback, as evaluators must actively reframe deficit-driven critiques into asset-based growth opportunities (see Table 3).

Psychological Safety and Introverted Growth

We advocate for the psychological safety required of teacher candidates to develop their innate talents, particularly those who process the world internally. Forcing teacher candidates into performative extraversion ignores their natural strengths and may cause lasting anxiety. When we provide alternative ways to develop professionally, such as reflective writing or small-group contributions, we ensure that growth happens at a sustainable pace. This allows aspiring educators to engage in ways that can support both authentic and sustainable professional growth.

The common tropes used to describe differences in teaching styles are the sage-on-the-stage and the guide-on-the-side. In the classroom, the most impactful teachers are rarely just front-of-the-room entertainers; instead, they are learners who guide alongside their students. These educators leverage high emotional intelligence and active listening to create a space where students feel seen and heard. Introverted teachers transform their natural quietude into a professional superpower by leveraging the four Ps: preparation, practice, push, and presence (Kahnweiler, 2025). Preparation allows for mastery of the material, while practice streamlines student interactions. When a lesson requires high-energy delivery, they push into the spotlight, balancing it with quiet reflection to avoid burnout. Ultimately, their presence, rooted in quiet power rather than volume, fosters a classroom culture built on authentic connection and deep insight.

To truly support the introverted educator, schools must normalize “the gift of the pause.” In fast-paced staff meetings or collaborative planning sessions, introverts are often sidelined by rapid-fire dialogue. By providing agendas in advance and respecting phrases like, *"I’d like to process this and follow up via email,"* schools empower teachers to offer their most thoughtful contributions rather than their quickest reactions. This shift ensures that the most valuable perspectives are not lost to the loud voices, allowing introverted teachers to thrive as a steady force for student success.

Conclusion: What Can Teacher Educators Do?

There are a number of ways teacher educators can cultivate introverted educators. Two considerations may be particularly important in the development of quiet excellence: modeling introverted pedagogies and providing asset-based feedback based on the preservice teacher’s natural strengths. Both changes, though subtle, may lead to introverted teachers gaining confidence in their gifts. Additionally, they may contribute to further refinement of pedagogies that foster interactive and engaging classrooms.

As noted, teacher educators can model instructional strategies that suit both introverts and extraverts. For example, many educators learn how to model a task explicitly. Less commonly modeled, though, is how to facilitate discussions and group work. These pedagogies rely heavily on planning and knowledge, which align with the strengths of an introvert.

Additionally, when educators provide feedback, they should consider how a preservice teacher's temperament shapes their instructional strengths. One of the most significant barriers for introverted educators is the language used in professional evaluations. Traditional feedback is often laden with extraverted bias, penalizing introverted teachers for their natural processing styles. To address this, we might actively reframe common deficit-focused critiques into asset-based growth opportunities (see Table 3) and analyze concrete classroom scenarios where these biases manifest (see Appendix A).

The current educational landscape remains deeply tethered to the extravert ideal, a cultural bias that frequently misinterprets high-energy performance as the primary benchmark for teaching excellence. As it stands, many introverted teacher candidates navigate a system that views their natural inclination toward reflection, intentionality, and deep focus as a deficit to be overcome rather than a strength to be harnessed.

By overvaluing the sage on the stage, we inadvertently marginalize the guide on the side. In doing so, we risk both the burnout of talented educators and the loss of relatable role models for the significant portion of the student population who also process the world internally. We are at a critical juncture where the neurobiological reality of temperament must be integrated into our professional identity, shifting the narrative from one of "fixing" introverts to one of valuing their unique capacity for quiet excellence.

Moving forward, teacher preparation scholars and professionals must actively flip the script by embedding asset-based frameworks into their mentorship and evaluation processes. Crucially, this framework does not suggest that effective instructional planning, deliberate pacing, or community-building are exclusive to the introverted temperament; rather, it highlights that while these practices represent universally accepted markers of high-quality pedagogy for all educators, traditional observational bias uniquely risks misinterpreting them as deficits when enacted quietly. This requires a systemic shift: university supervisors and clinical mentors must be trained to recognize and validate the gift of the pause, community-building mindset, and deep instructional design as evidence of professional mastery. We must move beyond observation rubrics that prioritize performance and speed, instead rewarding the deliberate pacing and psychological safety that introverted educators provide. By

Table 3

Reframing Deficits as Assets

Traditional Feedback (Deficit)	The Introverted Reality	Reframed Feedback (Asset)
"Your voice gets lost in the room."	Use of calm demeanor and proximity.	Effective Proximity Management
"You need to increase student excitement."	Fostering deep thoughts and reflection.	Cultivating Calm Learning Spaces
"You seem hesitant to answer."	Active listening and reflecting.	Deliberate and Thoughtful Contributor
"You are not networking enough."	Preference for authentic, 1-on-1 interaction.	Purpose-Driven Connection

Note. Conversational scaffolds are adapted from Kahnweiler's (2020) framework to assist clinical mentors during post-observation conferences. These reframed responses counteract negative stereotypes and highlight objective instructional mechanisms. See Appendix B for an expanded guide.

modeling introverted pedagogies and providing feedback that celebrates internal processing, teacher educators can empower a new generation of leaders who prove that the most profound classroom impacts often occur in the quiet spaces of authentic connection, reflection, and deep learning.

Limitations

This position paper explores the ways introverts may interact in the classroom from the perspectives of two introverted educators. While we present research to support our claims, it is important to recognize some of the limitations of this paper. A primary limitation is that much of the research we present comes from the fields of business or psychology. Because we were importing ideas into the field of education, we recognize that field-research may yield more nuance or differences in how introversion and extraversion affect educators in the classroom. Additionally, because we self-identify as introverts, our experiences and perspectives may color our presented positions. Lastly, to illustrate some of the notions we are presenting, we used examples that represent the highly introverted position of the introvert/extravert continuum. Most people do not exclusively fall on one end of the continuum or the other but exhibit a mix of traits that may be context specific. With these limitations in mind, our position remains that introverted teachers are an asset to the classroom and school community.

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Appendix A

Case Study in Reframing

Consider the common critique: *"You need to be more commanding in the classroom."* This feedback assumes that management is a product of volume and high energy. However, when we reframe this through the introverted lens, we see Effective Proximity Management. An introvert uses a calm, steady demeanor and physical proximity to create a focused environment where students feel secure. The introvert's "quiet presence" is a tool for stability, not a lack of authority.

Similarly, when an evaluator says, *"The lesson lacked excitement,"* they are often measuring "noise" rather than "learning." The reframed strength is Cultivating a Focused Learning Space. High-energy excitement is often fleeting; the introvert fosters a stable atmosphere that encourages deeper thinking and allows students of all temperaments to engage meaningfully with the content.

Appendix B
Reframing Common Feedback

Common Feedback Phrase	Introverted Action or Tendency	Reframed Introverted Strength
Concerns about classroom presence, voice volume, concerns about classroom management. Phrases: "Your voice gets lost in the room." "You need to be more commanding."	Quiet Presence Using a calm, steady demeanor and proximity to manage the classroom rather than relying on volume or high energy.	Effective Proximity Management "Your composed and steady presence, combined with your effective use of proximity, creates a calm, focused environment where students feel secure and respectful."
Concerns about engaging students. Phrases: "The lesson was a little boring." "You need to increase student excitement."	Fostering a Calm Environment Using a calm atmosphere for deep thought, reflection, and collaboration instead of constant high-energy engagement.	Cultivating a Calm and Focused Learning Space "The calm and stable atmosphere you create is an asset, especially during moments of high tension. It encourages deeper thinking and allows all students, regardless of temperament, to engage fully with the content."
Concerns about pedagogy (knowing content is not the same as teaching content). Phrases: "You're overthinking it." "You're too stuck in the details."	Diving Deep (content knowledge) Exhibiting a reflective rather than reactive teaching style, thinking deeply to see complex connections within the content.	Deep Pedagogical Preparation & Reflection "Your ability to thoughtfully reflect and see intricate connections between topics allows you to present content with remarkable depth and insight, providing a rich learning experience for students."
Concerns about engaging students and families; not asking for help. Phrases: "You need to be more visible and vocal." "You need to build stronger rapport."	Creating Classroom Community (knowing students) Excelling at one-on-one connections, using empathy to motivate, and providing varied ways for students to participate.	Empathetic Community Builder "You excel at creating a culture of learning where all students feel seen. Your empathy and skill in one-on-one interaction allow you to build strong, caring relationships, which is a powerful motivator for students."