

# When Silence is Golden: Re-thinking Quiet Students' Impact on Group Learning

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## Background

- Quiet personality traits are often undervalued in medical education <sup>1</sup>
- Emphasis on observable participation can disadvantage quieter learners by obscure their strengths <sup>2</sup>
- Quieter students often feel misunderstood or overlooked, which can negatively affect wellbeing and sense of belonging <sup>3,4</sup>
- Over time can affect both individual learning and the overall learning environment <sup>5</sup>

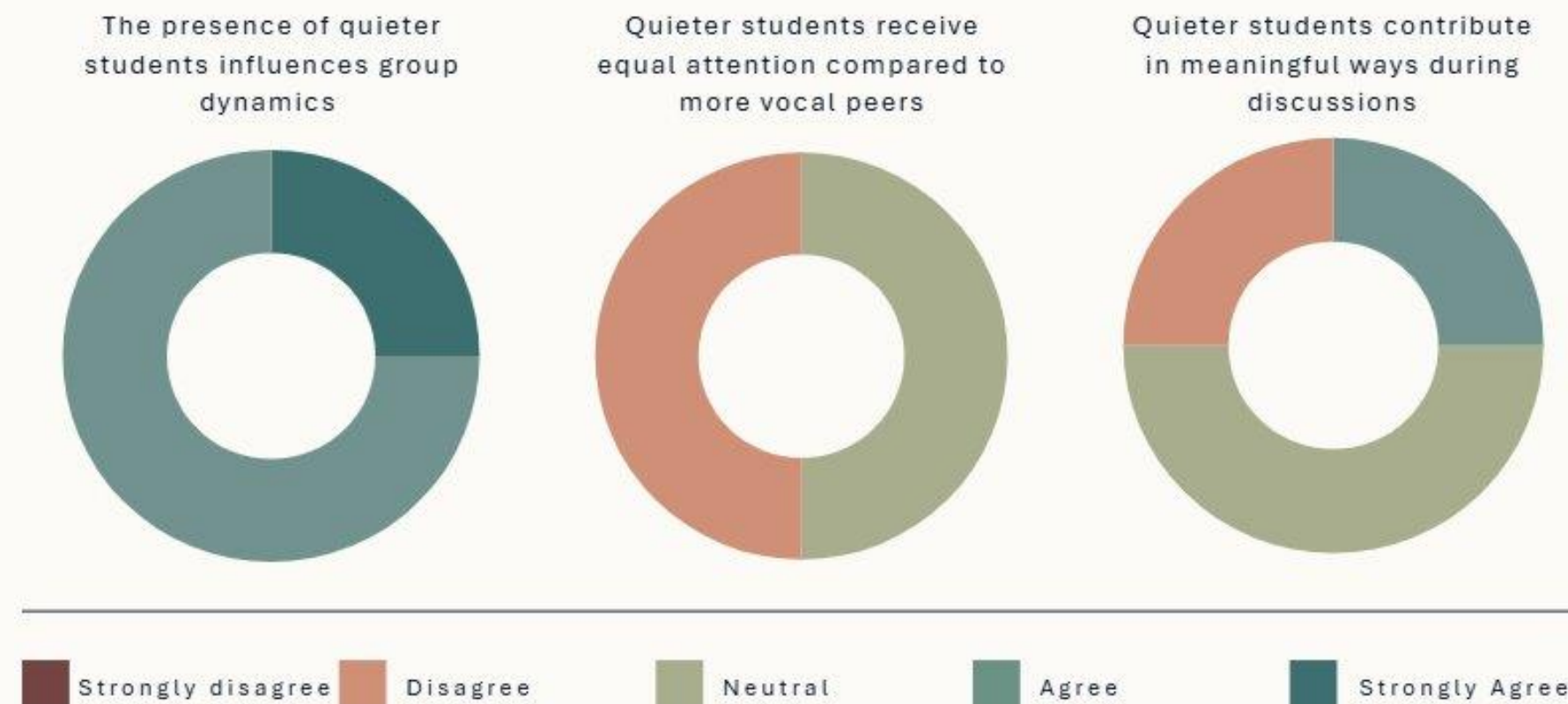
## Aim

To explore small group facilitators' perceptions of how quieter students influence the learning environment during their sessions.

## Methods

- A mixed-methods questionnaire, including both Likert scale and white space questions was used
- 80% of CTFs at Gloucester Academy completed the survey

## Results



- Quieter students' thoughtful and well-considered contributions can deepen discussion and drive learning forward.
- There was a difference in opinion on whether reduced verbal participation represents a challenge requiring intervention or limitation in session design
- Respondents expressed uncertainty about how to balance encouraging contribution without increasing pressure or causing a student to become disconnected from the group

"Smaller subgroups... foster belonging and engagement."

"It's rarely a one-size-fits-all issue."

"Ideas were sometimes more considered than outspoken peers."

"It's easy... for quieter voices to be unintentionally overlooked."

## Conclusions



Facilitators recognise both the challenges and benefits associated with quieter students in small group learning



CTFs expressed uncertainty about how best to support inclusion of quieter students.



Further work should explore effective facilitation strategies that promote participation while preserving psychological safety.

## References

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