

Peer tutoring: Tutor perceptions of a training program

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INTRODUCTION

- Peer tutoring has been adopted in many medical schools both as a complement to limited faculty teaching resources, and/or to help medical students achieve teaching competency and prepare for lifelong teaching.^{1,2}
- Peer tutoring could help tutors strengthen their own knowledge depth, recognize their own shortcomings and deficiencies in knowledge, and provide them the opportunity to reflect on their own learning.³
- Few studies in medical education on peer tutoring discuss the training that tutors receive in these programs, especially regarding tutors' teaching and learning skills.

The purpose of this study is to explore the following three research questions:

- How do tutors perceive the effectiveness of a tutor training program?
- How do tutors perceive changes to their tutoring after engaging in the tutor training program?
- How do tutors perceive changes to their own learning after engaging in the tutor training program?

METHODS

Context

- MSU College of Human Medicine
- Predominately 2nd – 4th year medical students tutoring 1st – 3rd year medical students.
- The content and structure of tutoring sessions is decided by the tutor and the tutee.
- 70 tutors participated in this study during the 2019-20 school year.
- The following five online training modules were provided for all peer tutors starting in the Fall of 2018:
 - Preparing for a tutoring session
 - Setting and assessing goals with your tutee
 - Using questions to build understanding
 - Note making structures
 - Step One prep support
- The goal of the training was to support the tutors in developing the following skills and knowledges in the field of medical education:

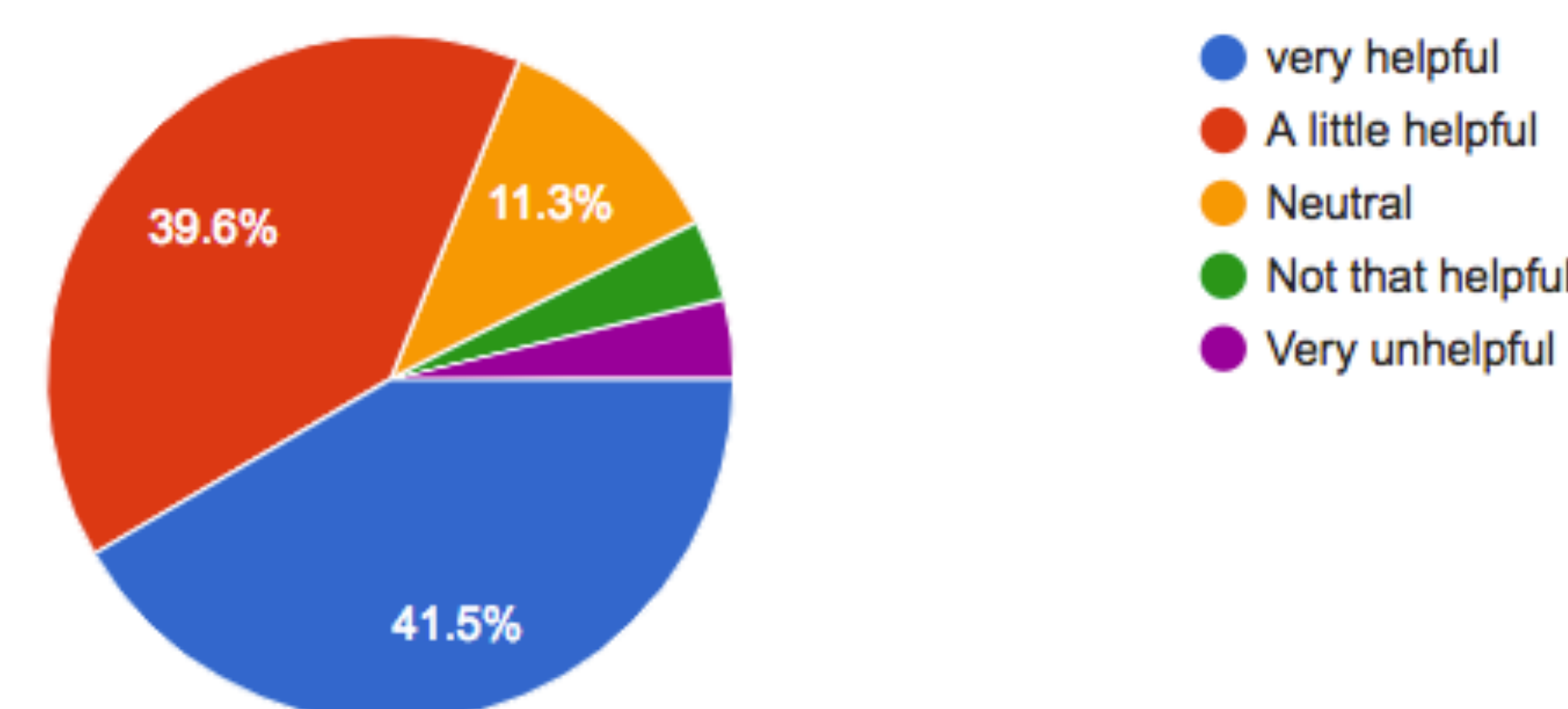
Core Medical Education Skills for Peer Tutors	Core Medical Education Knowledge for Peer Tutors
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to build rapport and create an open learning environment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be able to design learning activities that promote understanding and the building of long-term memory.
<input type="checkbox"/> Assist tutees with the development and accomplishment of iSMART learning goals.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understand the "Self-regulated Learning" Framework and how to promote it.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to assess student progress.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understand the relationship between assessment (including formative observation) and instruction.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to promote independence in tutees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Able to use "Guided Release of Responsibility" as a framework for individual sessions and as a guiding principle in working with students

Data Collection and Analysis

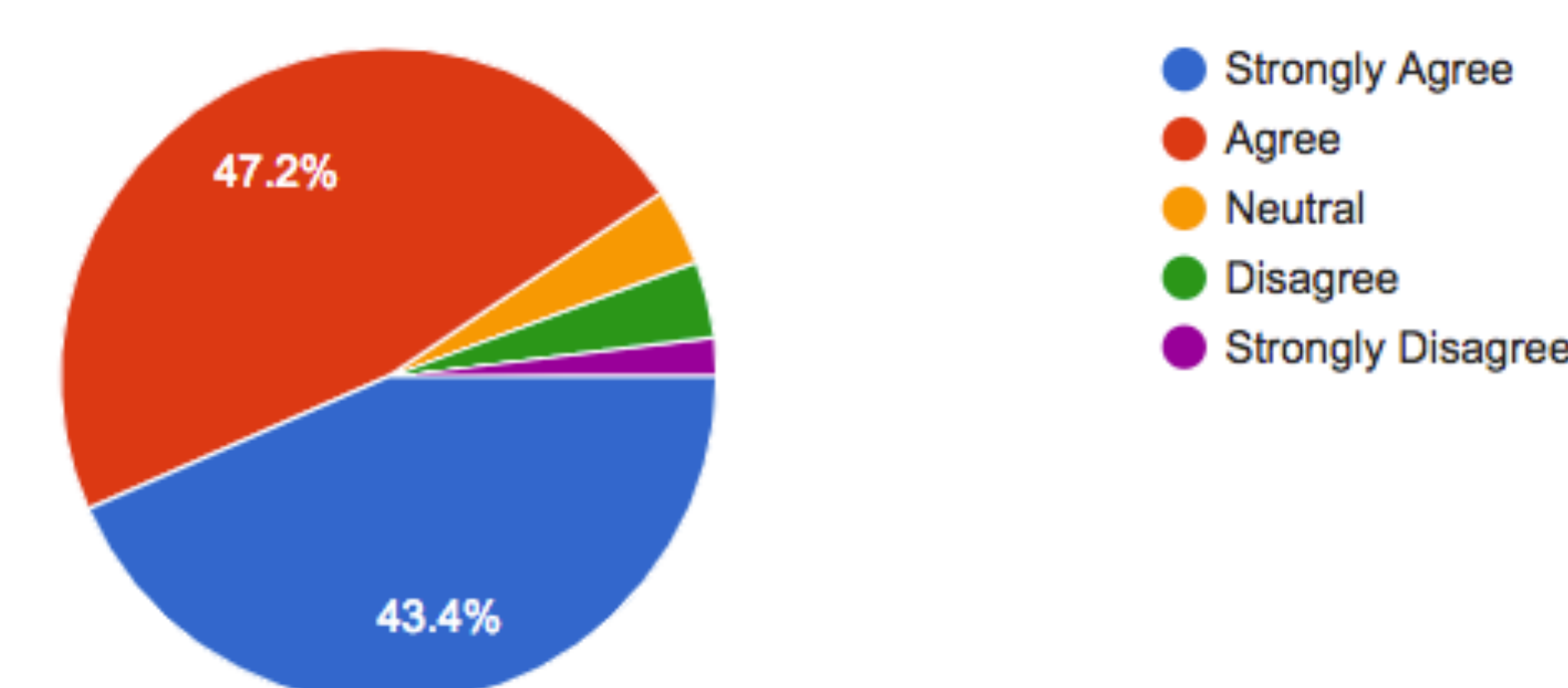
- A survey was sent to students after the first training session. Some sample questions include:
 - Overall, I find this training session to be helpful (true, false answer)
 - What, if anything, do you anticipate implementing from this module in sessions with your tutees? Explain why (short answer)
 - What, if anything, do you anticipate incorporating or thinking about in terms of your own studying? Explain why (short answer)
- 53 tutors responded to the survey (76% response rate)
- Frequency and content analysis was conducted on the surveys

RESULTS

- Overall I found this training module to be helpful (over 80% agreement).



- I found the platform used for this training module easy to understand and use (over 90% agreement).



Changes to their tutoring: Student-directed learning	Changes to their own learning: Higher-order thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "This gave me a lot of good ideas about how to help the student learn rather than just teaching concepts...Now I understand that having the tutees explain concepts, label images, or make their own table with my assistance is a much better way for them to learn and show their understanding." "Do not lecture and instead let them (the student) guide the session...help by filling in the gaps or helping direct them in certain places." "I certainly anticipate more student-directed learning activities rather than me spending most of the time lecturing because this will be more effective for their long-term retention/learning." "I intend to make various types of resources so that activities represent different levels of bloom's taxonomy." "This was a great reminder of the many different levels of learning and the progression of them; I will use this to help teach more difficult concepts in which my tutees had difficulty learning/understanding" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will do more synthesizing, by "creating new documents/tables/diagrams from memory about what I am currently learning" Emphasize integration and applying knowledge Think more critically about a subject to achieve longer term retention and understanding Helpful reflection; "helps to identify what I do that falls into different categories of learning"

DISCUSSION

- Our study suggested that providing a tutor training program is helpful for tutors to prepare for tutoring.
 - Specifically, this training program helped tutors adopt student-directed learning activities in their tutoring, rather than lecturing.
- The training program also helped tutors develop self-regulated learning strategies such as elaboration, integration, critical thinking, and reflection in their own learning.
- Our training program could also shed light on how medical educators can provide better support for tutors engaged in peer tutoring programs.

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