



Empowering Dental Students: Experiential Learning Initiatives in Hong Kong and Africa



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Background

Dental training in the teaching hospital may not fully prepare students for **future clinical practice**

- Working with screened patients
- **Global competence** is often overlooked in dental education due to the **limited patient diversity**

Experiential learning in dental education offers valuable

- **Practical exposure** in **diverse** outreach settings
- Apply theoretical knowledge in real-life scenarios
- Transition from the classroom to **real-world clinical settings**
- Reflect on outreach experiences based on **existing knowledge**
- Refine their understanding
- Encourage experimentation with **new concepts**

Aims

Engage students in

- Developing **practical** skills and insights
- Consolidating and extending concepts through exposure to diverse outreach experiences
- **Creatively** promoting oral health promotion
- Conducting dental treatments in **compromised settings**
- Developing **problem-solving skills** in addressing challenges, by proactively responding to unexpected settings and making informed decisions in novel situations
- Enhancing **communication skills** through collaboration with charitable organisations
- Upholding **personal professional ethics and standards** and providing optimal dental care in challenging settings by thorough preparation and research
- Cultivating a sense of **global citizenship and leadership** by advocating for **oral health awareness**

Local and Overseas Outreaches

Between Aug 2022 & Aug 2024

- 2 overseas projects in **Togo** and **Tanzania** respectively, for orphans and villagers in rural areas
- Several local dental outreach projects in Hong Kong for **senior residents in Tai O**, **ethnic minority groups**, **grassroot families**, etc.

Involved dental examinations, prophylactic treatment, simple scaling, atraumatic restorative techniques, etc. under the supervision of clinical tutors

Student engagements

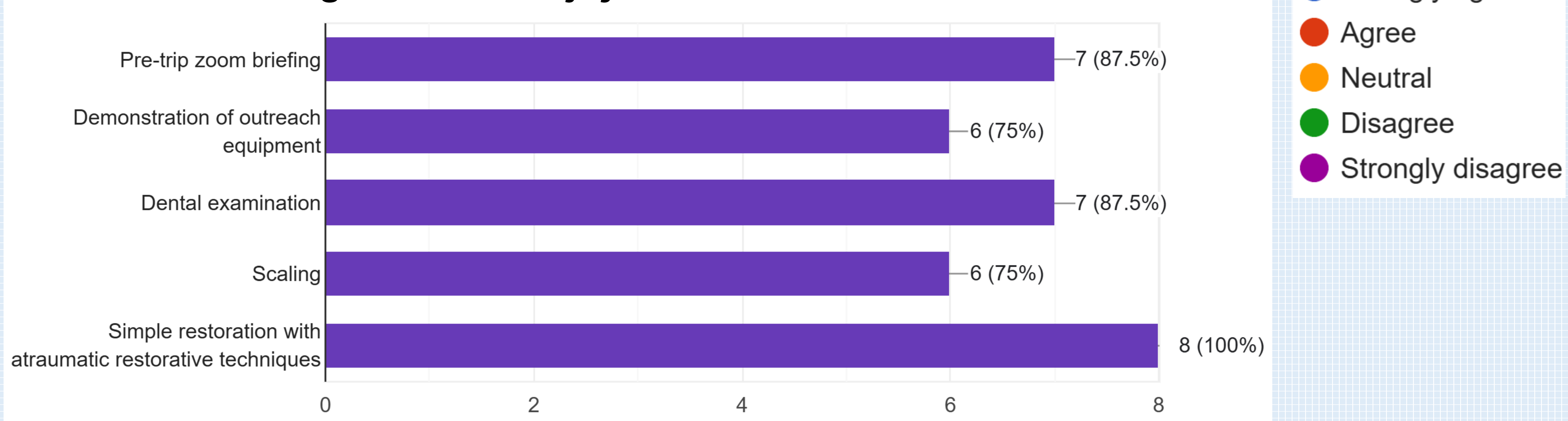
- Projects were **co-designed** and **implemented** by students under guidance
- All students were given the chance to set up dental equipment, provide dental exam, education and treatment
- Students interacted with local people encountered during the trips, facilitating **cultural exchange**
- **Social workers** from collaborating partners organized useful **debriefing** sessions for participating dental students to reflect on their learning experiences

Experiential learning evaluation

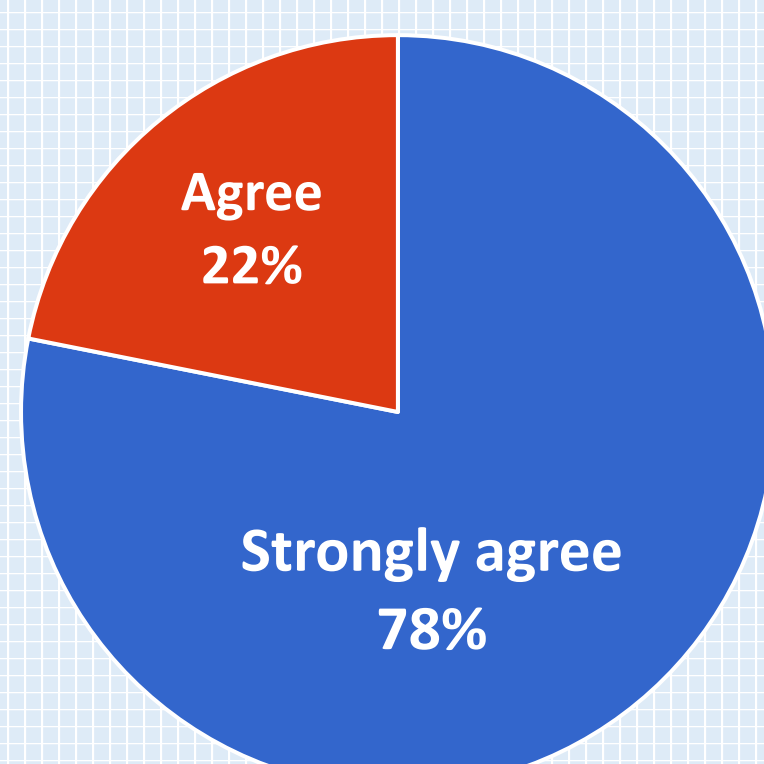
- Focus group discussion
 - Calibrated interviewer from the HKU Faculty of Education
 - 5 BDS IV students interviewed
- Anonymous online evaluation questionnaire



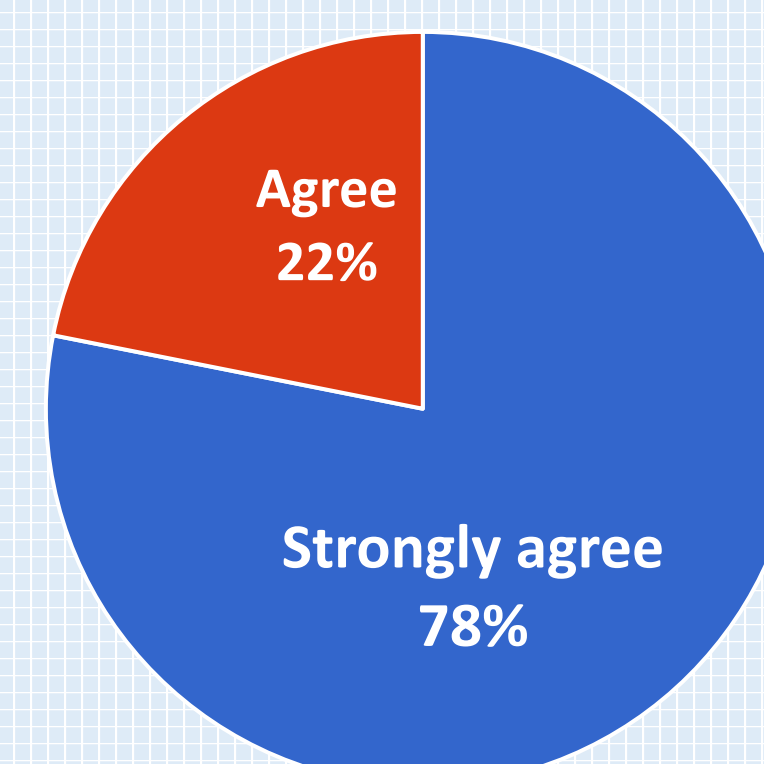
I find the following activities enjoyable and useful



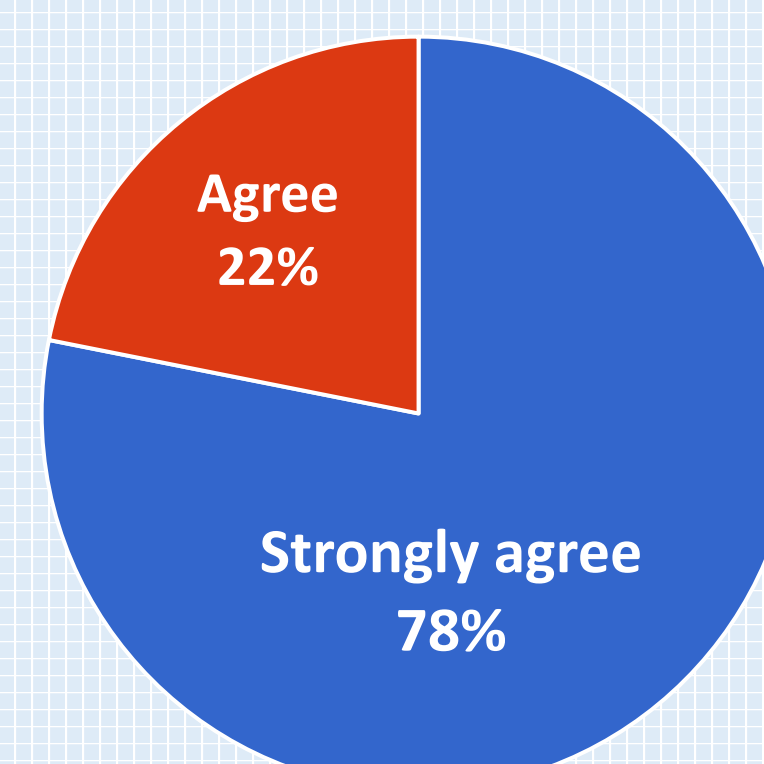
After this project, I acquire the skills to provide dental treatments in compromised setting



This project enables me to identify and respond to the socio-cultural factors that influence oral health in local and international community contexts



After this project, I acquire the skills to deliver oral health advice to the community



What did you like the most about this project?

"It gave me a chance to go and see Africa and related cultures and environments"

"Putting theory and skills to practice, being able to have in-depth communication with locals through dental checkup, treatment and OHI sessions (individualized and group presentation with Q&A), debriefing sessions with social workers"

"1. Good cooperation with the translators and missionaries 2. We can demonstrate oral hygiene instruction to the children in village and orphanage with props and songs."