

The 10-Day Pediatric Dentistry Block: A Retrospective Survey of Student Educational Impact

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Introduction

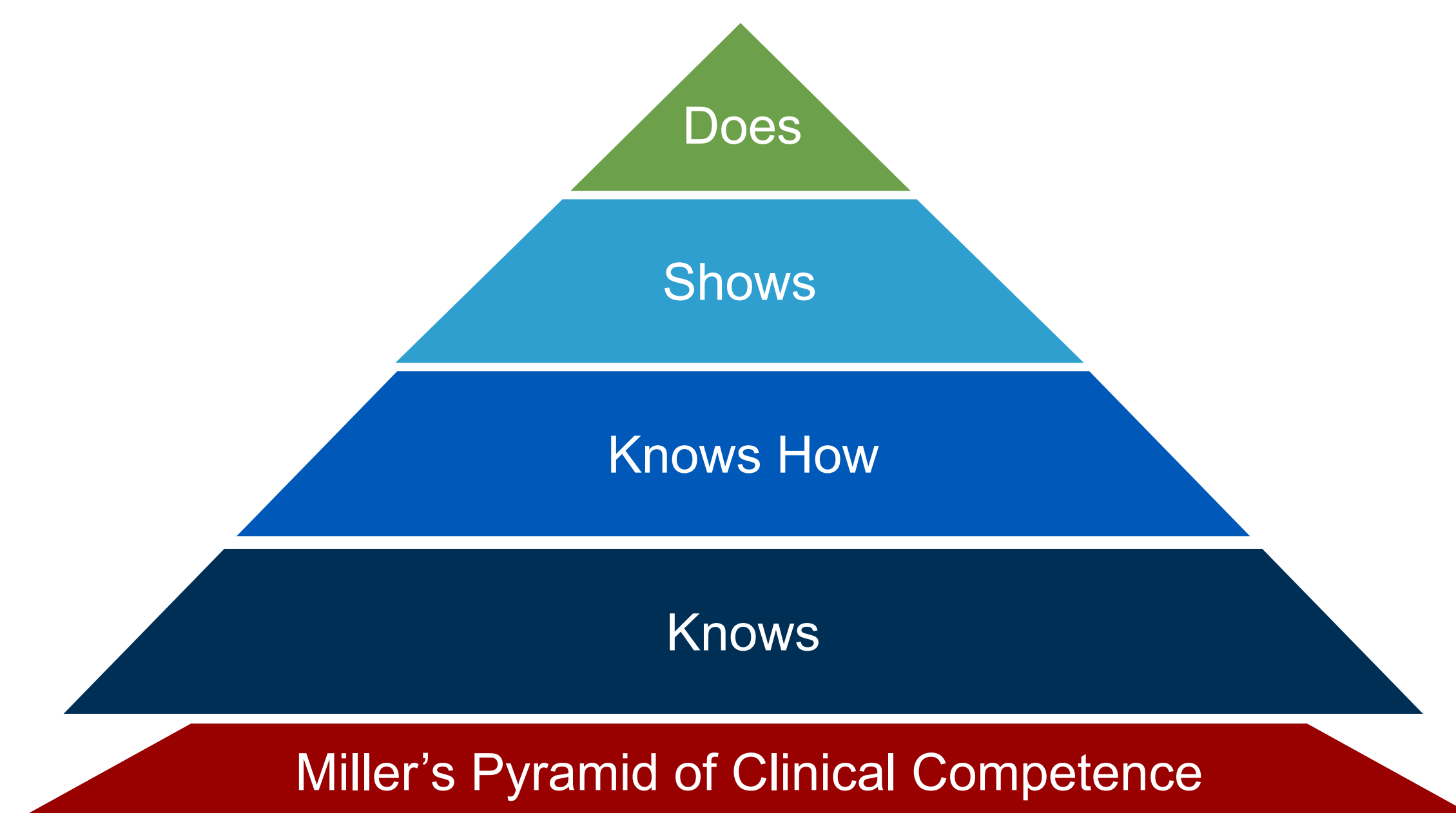
John Dewey, the American philosopher and educator, saw the purpose of education to be the cultivation of thoughtful, critically reflective, socially engaged individuals rather than passive recipients of established knowledge (4). Essentially, students learn and adapt through engagement with their environment, questioning, and critiquing. The Pediatric Dentistry Preceptorship Program (PDPP) was incorporated into the D4 curriculum in 2022 to adapt this philosophy to dental education. This 'mini-residency' was meant for students to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the D3 year by immersing them in pediatric dentistry with a consecutive 10-day rotation.

The core components of the 10-day block include:

- Case-based simulation exercises
- On-call shadowing of emergency care
- Diverse clinical practice settings
- Community outreach
- Exposure to special healthcare needs
- Virtual case-based oral examinations
- Interprofessional educational experiences
- Station-based Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)
- Hospital-based clinical experiences
- Direct patient care competencies

Educational Philosophy

These core components expose students to diverse clinical experiences, and higher-order assessments to ensure clinical competency, as defined by Miller's Pyramid of Clinical Competence (5). The OSCE and oral examination are the third level of the pyramid requiring demonstration of learning, and the direct patient care competencies are at the highest-level reflecting performance in practice.



Study Goal

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine (UBSDM) fourth-year students' self-reported perceptions of the educational value associated with the PDPP.

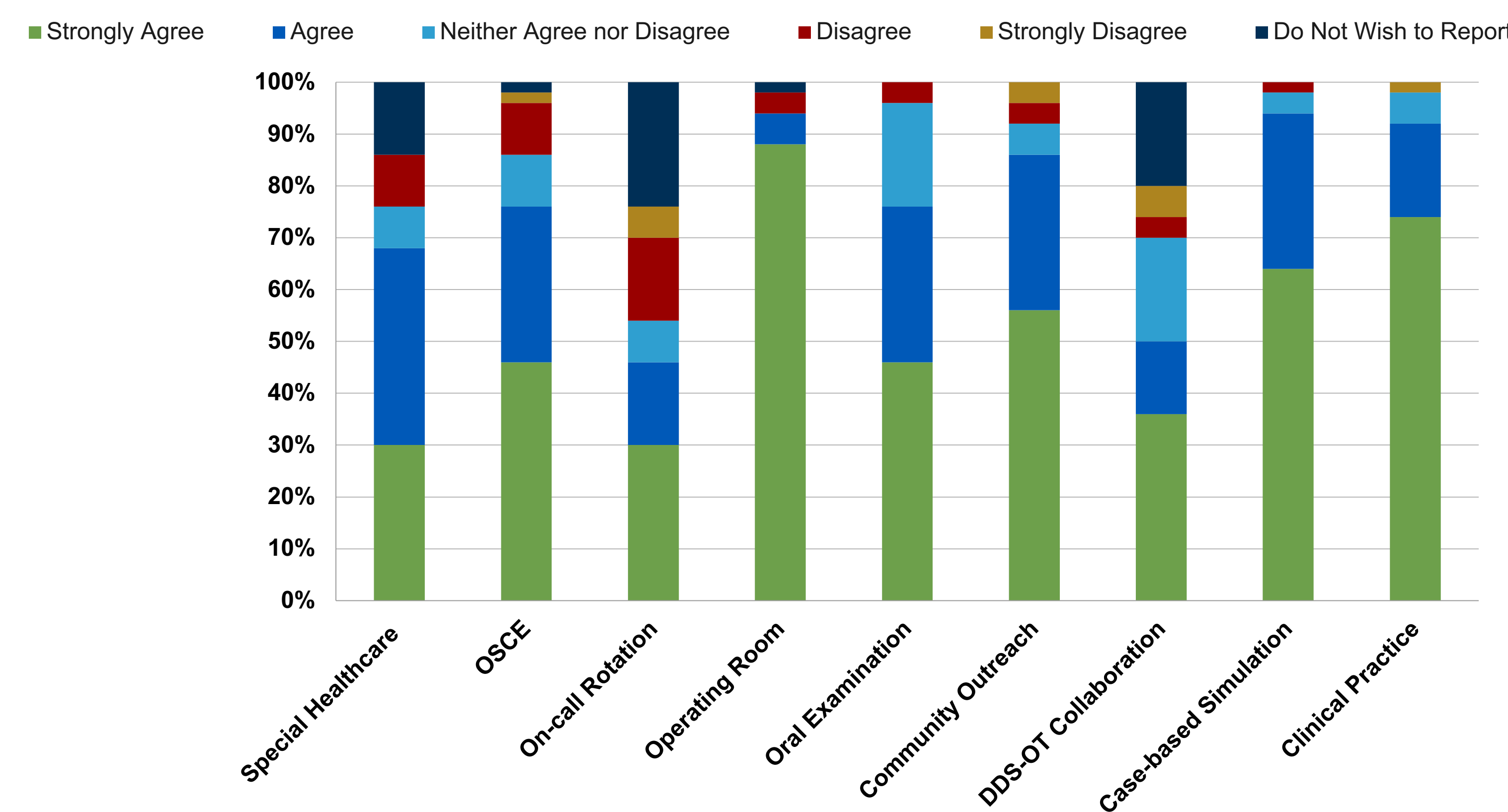
Methods

Students from the classes of 2023, 2024, and 2025 were recruited to participate in this study. Participants were informed of the study, provided consent, and received a link to the survey (SurveyMonkey). Fifty responses (n = 50) were collected (Class of 2023 / 20%, Class of 2024 / 38%, Class of 2025 / 42%).

Key Findings

Previous studies have shown that students value exposure to diverse clinical care and academic experiences, such as the operating room (1), community-based clinics (2), and simulation-based learning (3). The most valuable aspects of the PDPP were variation in clinical care sites (74% strongly agreed) and direct patient care in the operating room (88% strongly agreed).

The ___ was a valuable experience in my dental education and should remain a part of the rotation.



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ORAL EXAMINATION

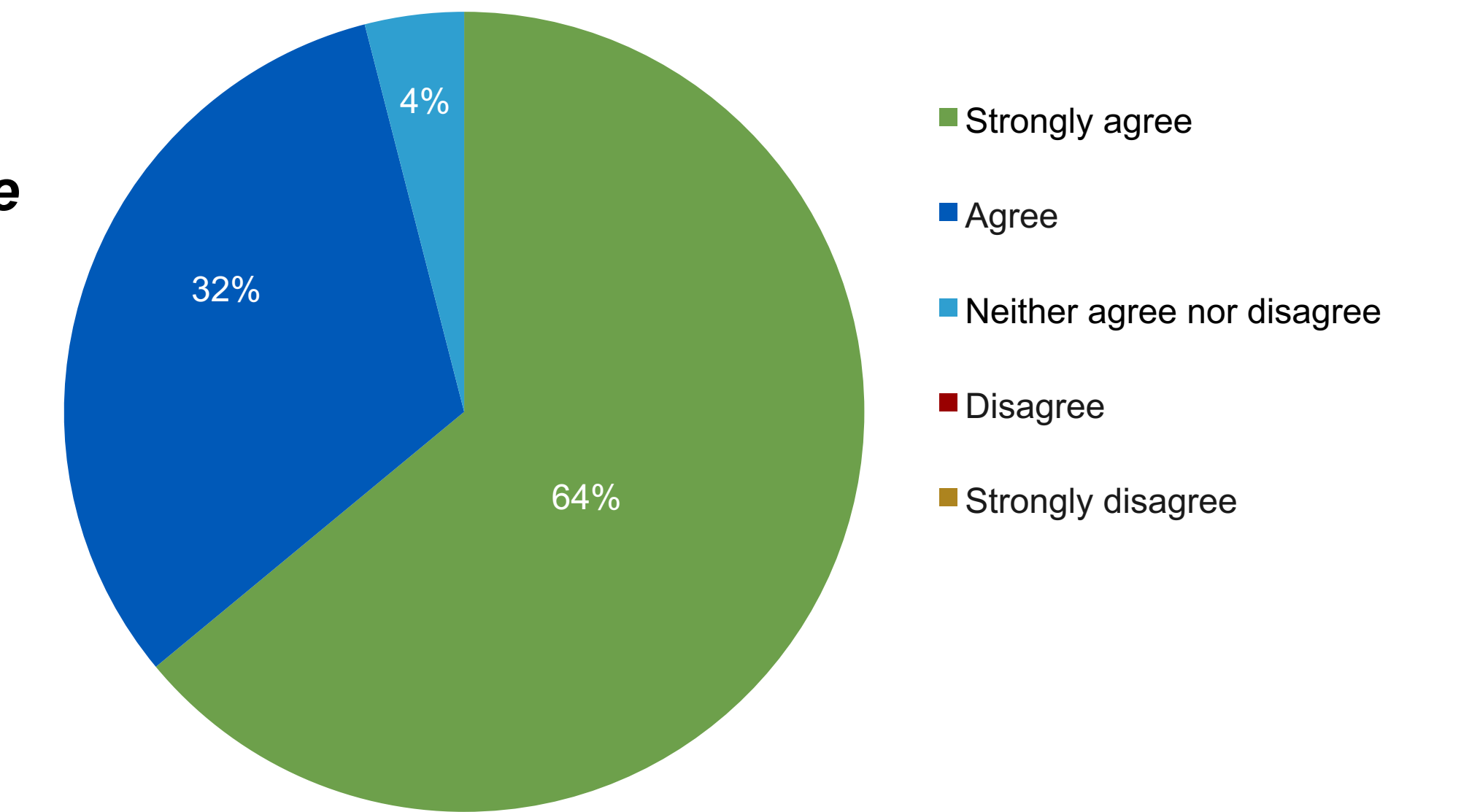


SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CASE-BASED SIMULATION

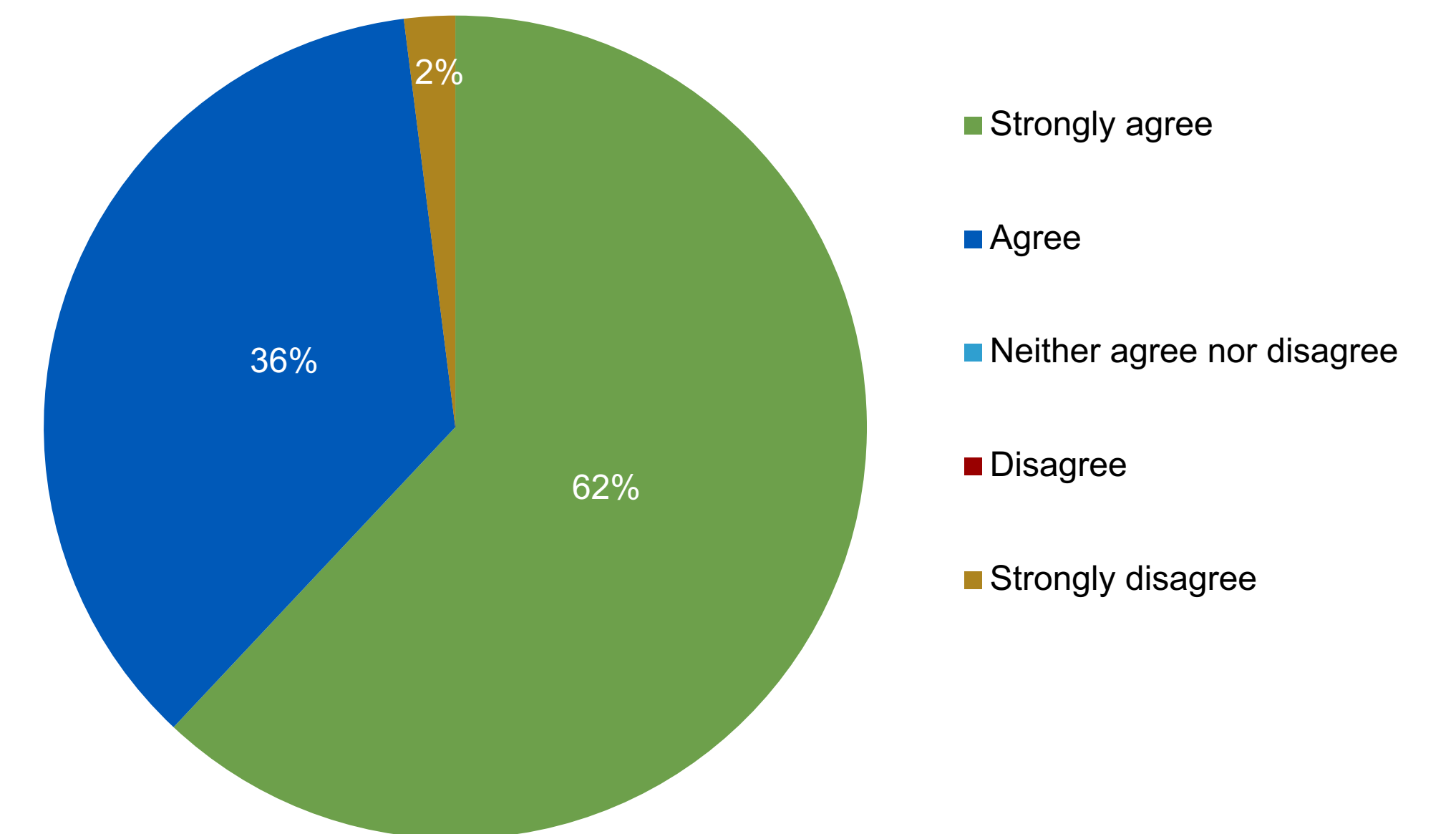


Key Findings Cont.

Overall, the PDPP was a positive aspect of my dental education.



Overall, the PDPP provided valuable preparation for clinical practice.



Conclusion

- Hospital-based operating room experiences, clinical simulation and dental clinic rotations received the strongest endorsement, highlighting the impact of diverse, hands-on clinical exposure.
- Summative assessments, including the oral examination and OSCE, were broadly recognized as effective learning tools.
- The PDPP was highly valued by UBSDM students and 92% strongly agreed/agreed that it should remain in the curriculum.
- These findings support the continued integration of preceptorship-based learning as an effective model for preparing students to deliver pediatric dental care.

References

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