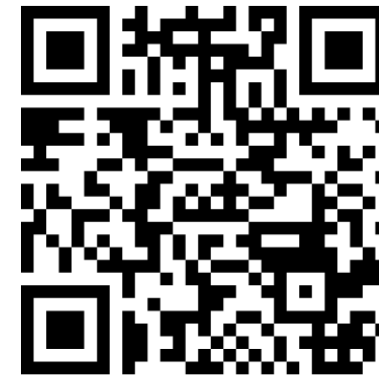




<https://manchester.padlet.org/mewxgmn3/baleap-session-transferring-the-benefits-of-community-buildi-awq2sfmupjy7ym6p>



<https://www.menti.com> code **8604 0433**

By Michelle Nixon and Kamil Stobiecki

‘TRANSFERRING THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING IN  
TEACHING EAP ONLINE TO ONSITE’.

# ABSTRACT

The recent pandemic has had a profound impact on EAP provision. Not unlike other universities, Manchester had to adapt and move courses online in both 2020 and 2021. Although the adaptation was undeniably successful in many ways, it came with certain costs to both students and teachers. This encouraged us to investigate the benefits of community building in teaching EAP online, specifically focusing on strategies that aid learning. We distributed questionnaires and conducted interviews with students, tutors and the course designer of the six-week pre-sessional course. The findings indicate that both students and tutors perceived community building as important and that the strategies that promote developing learners' social presence (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000) used on the course were seen as effective. Some of these include providing opportunities for students and teachers to get to know each other before the course and develop a sense of community further during the six weeks through completing a range of activities associated with using selected applications and websites.

In 2022, we were able to return to the campus and deliver some of our pre-sessional courses onsite. Fortunately, it did not mean parting with the strategies that proved to be so important in previous years and most of the elements of the course that promote community building remained. While we are still investigating whether the students and tutors perceived them to be as important as those who had studied and taught entirely online, we would like to use the opportunity to lead a discussion on various aspects of course design and delivery among conference attendees. In addition, we would like the participants to share strategies for community building to give us information about the elements of online EAP teaching that are vital in the blended provision of the future. To achieve the above, we will use the key findings of our research as stimuli for discussion, followed by opportunities to share ideas through various applications and live polling.

## References:

Garrison, D.R., Anderson, T. and Archer, W. (2000), 'Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education., The Internet and Higher Education, 2 (2-3), pp. 87-105

Stobiecki, K. and Nixon, M. (2022). 'The benefits of community building in teaching EAP online', Life online and beyond (EAP in the North event) University of Manchester 24th November 2021. Available at: <https://www.baleap.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EAP-in-the-North-abstracts-with-links-to-papers.pdf> (Accessed: 29/09/2022)

# OUTLINE

1. Discussion context
  - 1.1 Theoretical background
  - 1.2 The 2021 research context
2. Selected findings and discussion:
  - 2.1 The value of getting to know each other
  - 2.2 The value of sharing personal and study updates
  - 2.3 The value of developing a sense of community further
  - 2.4 The value of working in groups
3. Conclusion and recommendations



# I. DISCUSSION CONTEXT



# I.I THEORETICAL BACKGROUND



Fig. 1. Community of inquiry framework.

(Garrison et al., 2010, p. 6)

Figure 1.

ELEMENTS	CATEGORIES	INDICATORS (examples only)
Social Presence	Open Communication Group Cohesion Personal/Affective	Learning climate/risk-free expression Group identity/collaboration Self projection/expressing emotions
Cognitive Presence	Triggering Event Exploration Integration Resolution	Sense of puzzlement Information exchange Connecting ideas Applying new ideas
Teaching Presence	Design & Organization Facilitating Discourse Direct Instruction	Setting curriculum & methods Shaping constructive exchange Focusing and resolving issues

(Garrison, 2009, p. 3)

## I.I THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

‘Classroom community was defined as the connections among students and between students and instructors that lead to increased learning’ (Young and Bruce 2011, p. 220).

## I.I THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THE BENEFITS

‘A sense of community is central to student engagement and satisfaction.’

(Berry 2019, p. 164)

‘Higher education has consistently viewed community as essential to support collaborative learning and discourse associated with higher levels of learning.’

(Garrison and Arbaugh 2007, p. 158)

‘Student engagement and sense of classroom community are closely related to one another; students who feel a sense of connectedness rather than isolation are very likely better prepared to become more actively involved with course learning, successfully persist, and experience real world success.’

(Young and Bruce 2011, p. 227)

# I.I THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THE STRATEGIES

Berry (2019, p. 164) identifies four strategies for building community online:

1. reaching out to students often
2. limiting time spent lecturing
3. using video and chat as modes to engage students
4. allowing class time to be used for personal and professional updates

Online community can be improved by:

1. decreasing the learners' transactional space
2. increasing social presence
3. providing equal opportunity for involvement
4. designing small group activities
5. facilitating group discussions
6. matching teaching style with the learning stage
7. limiting class size

(Rovai 2002, pp. 7-10)



## I.2 THE 2021 RESEARCH CONTEXT

- Six-week pre-sessional online course at the University of Manchester
- Synchronous and asynchronous elements

## I.2 THE 2021 RESEARCH CONTEXT: METHODS

1. Questionnaires distributed to approximately over 500 students with **147 responses**
2. Questionnaires distributed to 47 tutors with **9 responses**
3. A small focus group with 2 students
4. An interview with one of the course designers



## 2. SELECTED FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

PLEASE JOIN OUR PADLET TO ACCESS QUESTIONNAIRE LINKS AND OTHER RESOURCES



## 2. I The value of getting to know each other

---

It's easier for students to learn after getting to know their class.

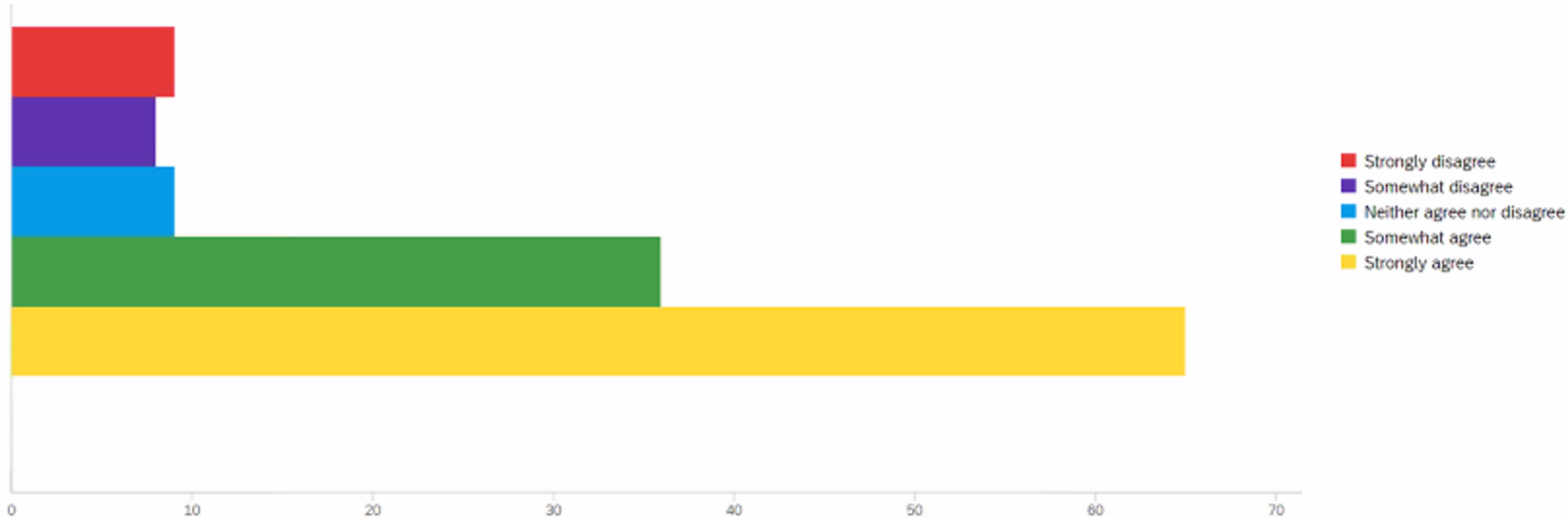
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## 2. I The value of getting to know each other: students' perspective

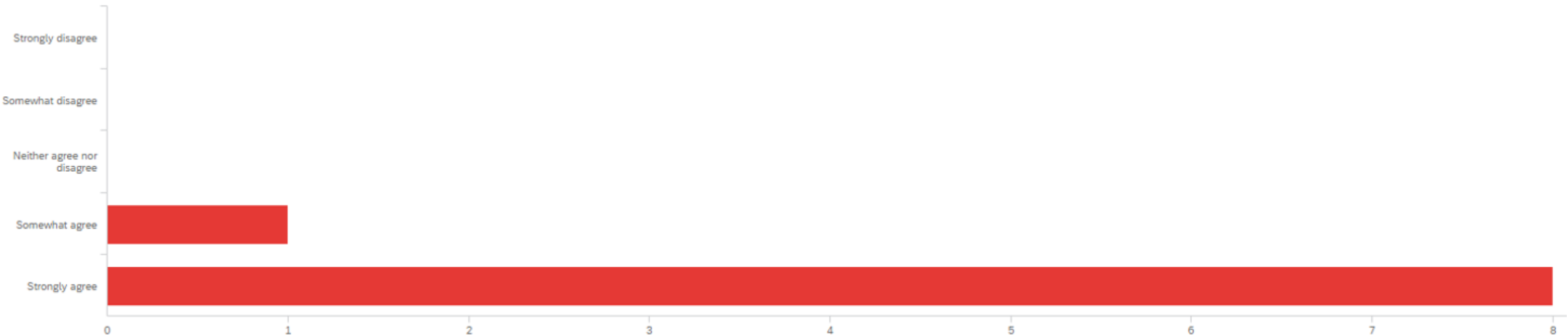
It's easier for me to learn after getting to know my class.



## 2. I The value of getting to know each other: tutors' perspective



It's easier for my students to learn after getting to know their class.





# GROUP DISCUSSION I

HOW CAN A TEACHER HELP STUDENTS TO GET TO KNOW THEIR CLASSMATES ONLINE AND ONSITE AT THE START OF A COURSE?

DISCUSS YOUR VIEWS IN GROUPS (5 MINS.)



## 2.2 The value of sharing personal and study updates

---

It's important that students are given time to get to know one another and share personal (and study) updates.

Scan the QR code or click the link in our Padlet to answer this question.

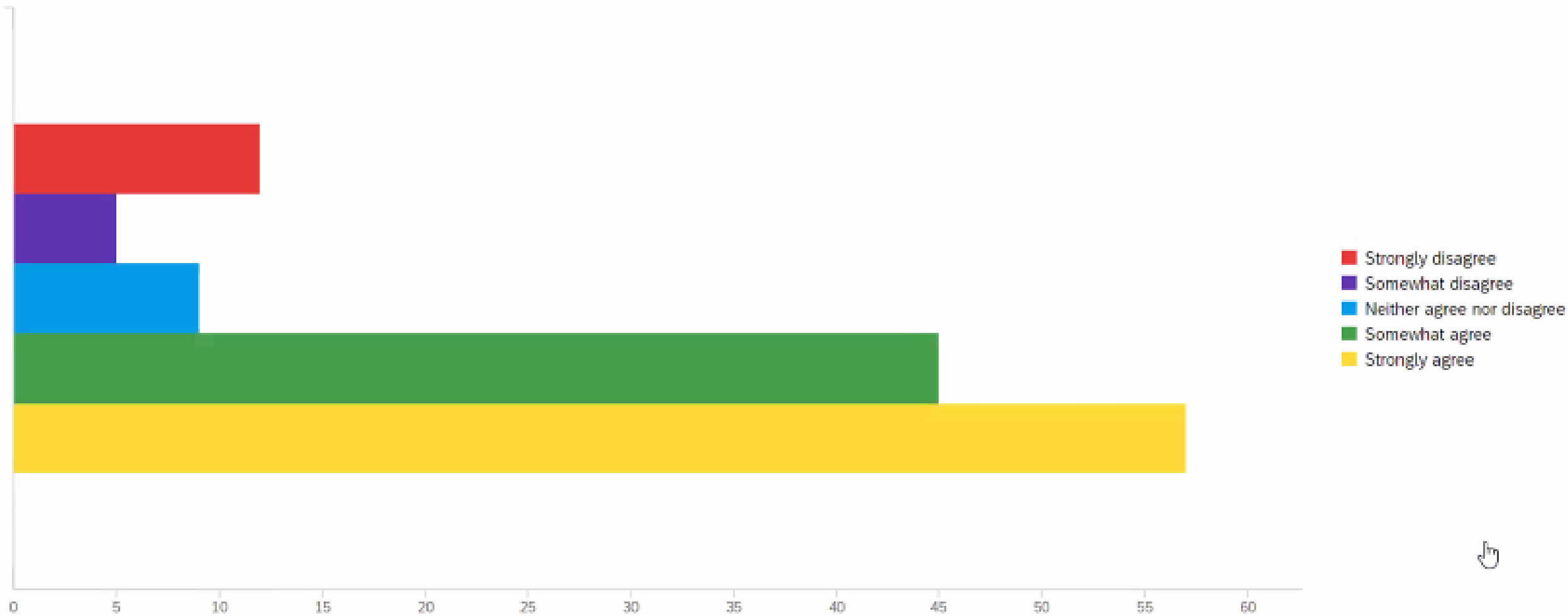
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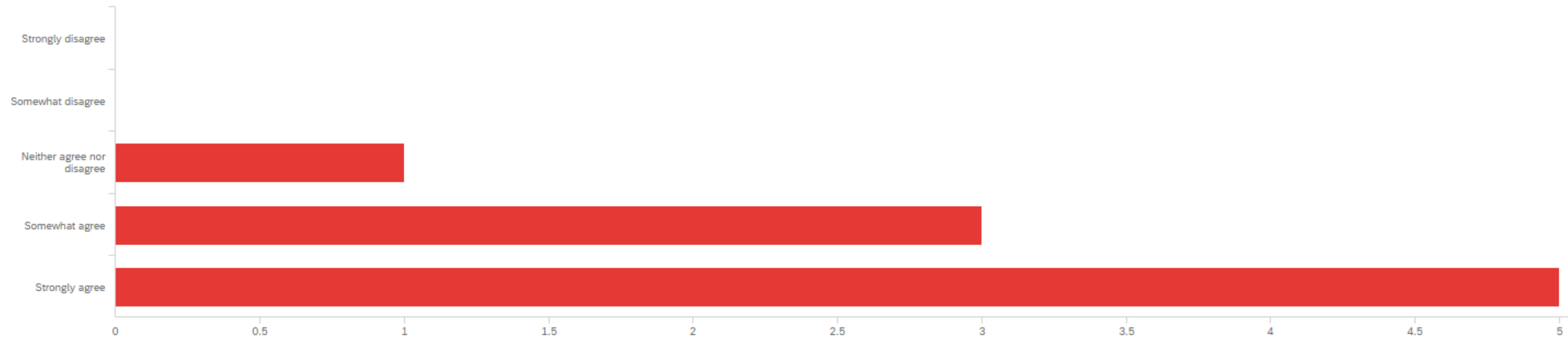
## 2.2 The value of sharing personal and study updates: students' perspective

It's important that our tutor gives us time to get to know one another and share personal (and study) updates.



### 3.The value of sharing personal and study updates: tutors’ perspective

It’s important that I give them time to get to know one another and share personal (and study) updates.





# GROUP DISCUSSION 2

HOW CAN A TEACHER HELP STUDENTS TO SHARE UPDATES WITH THEIR CLASSMATES ONLINE AND ONSITE TO MAINTAIN COMMUNITY?

DISCUSS YOUR VIEWS IN GROUPS (5 MINS.)



## 2.3 The value of developing a sense of community further

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- I think it's easier for students to learn in a class that feels connected.
- Good rapport with the tutor and other students is important for course satisfaction.

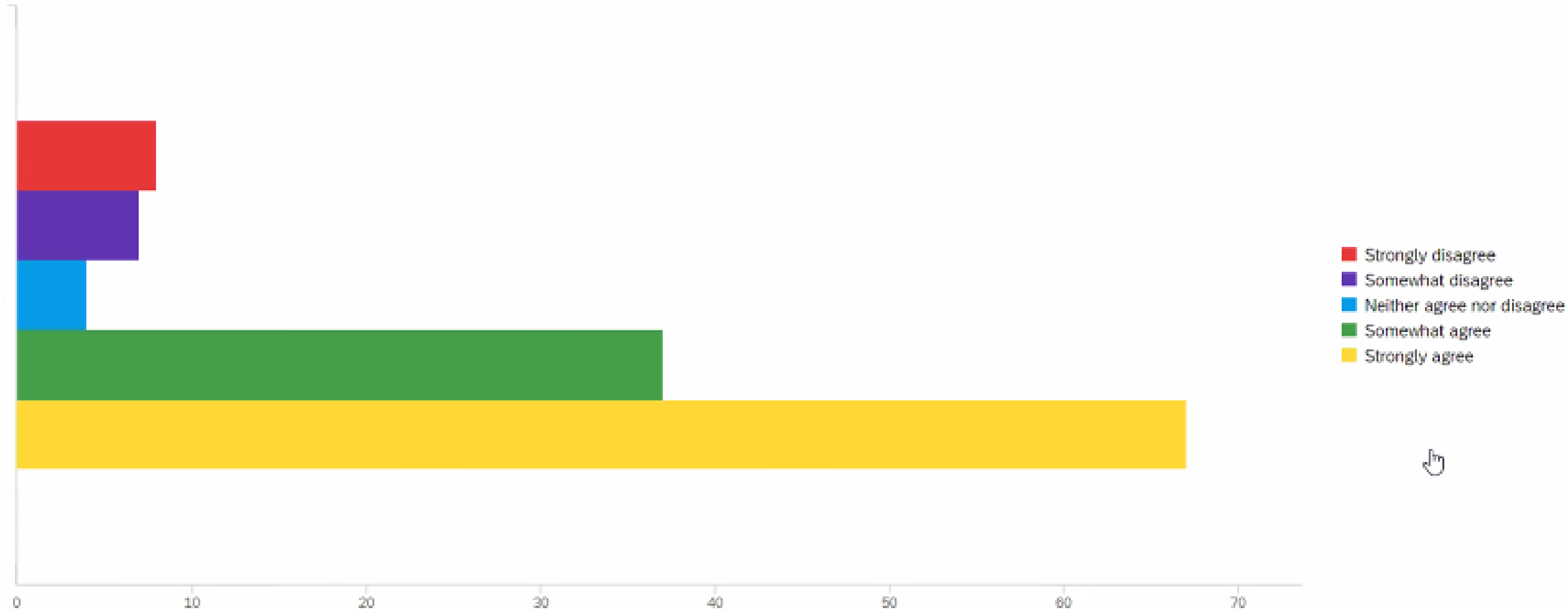
Scan the QR code or click the link in our Padlet to answer the questions.

<https://forms.office.com/e/NVebjywNVk>



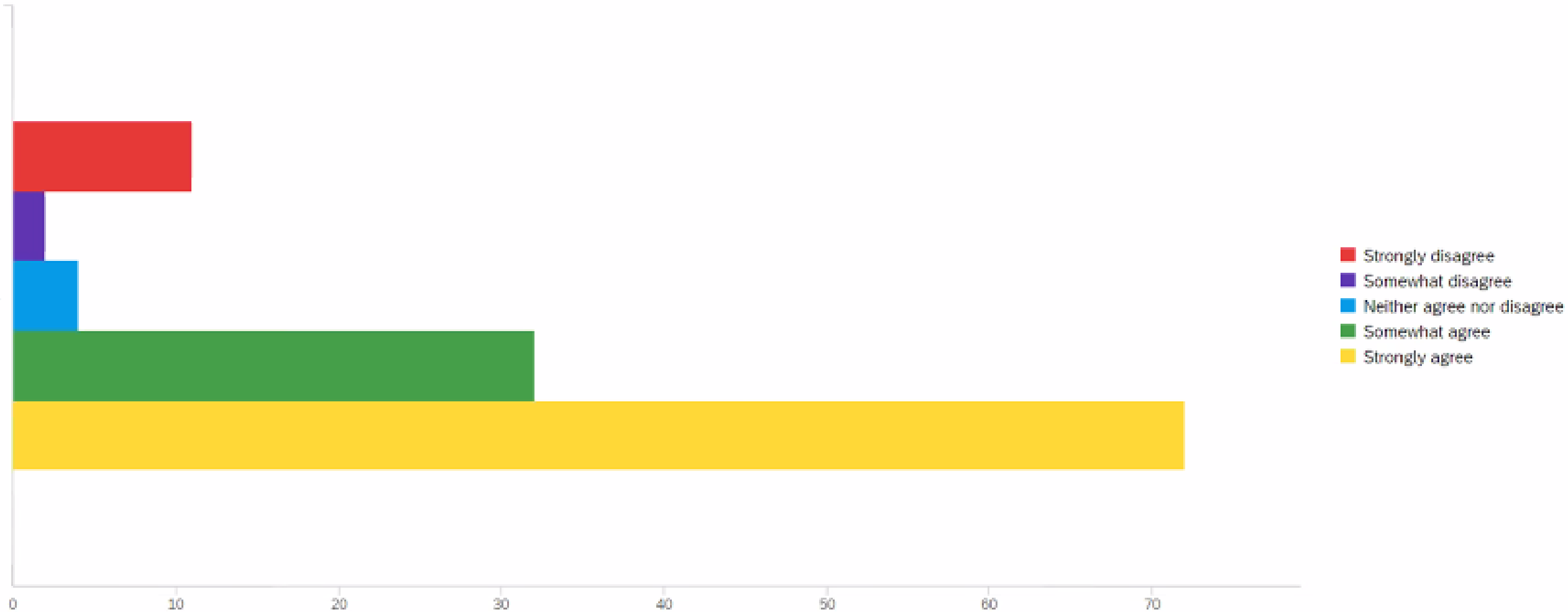
## 2.3 The value of developing a sense of community further: students' perspective

I think it's easier for me to learn in a class that feels connected.



## 2.3 The value of developing a sense of community further: students' perspective

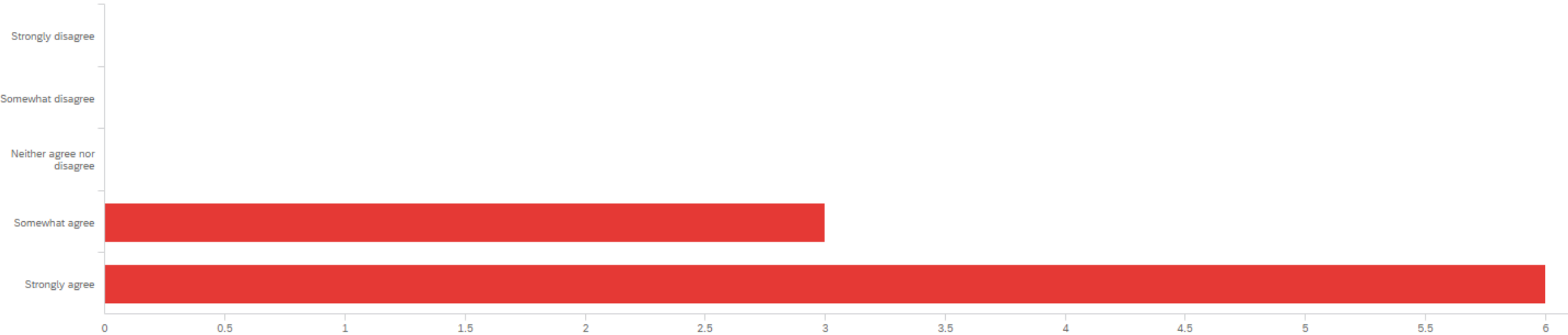
Good rapport with the tutor and other students is important for my course satisfaction.



## 2.3 The value of developing a sense of community further: tutors' perspective



It's easier for my students to learn in a class that has a sense of togetherness.





# GROUP DISCUSSION 3

HOW SHOULD THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY BE DEVELOPED FURTHER ONLINE AND ONSITE?

DISCUSS YOUR VIEWS IN GROUPS (5 MINS.)





## 2.4 The value of working in groups

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- Completing tasks as a group helps students to learn more.
- Working in breakout rooms in smaller groups helps students to feel more 'connected' to the class.

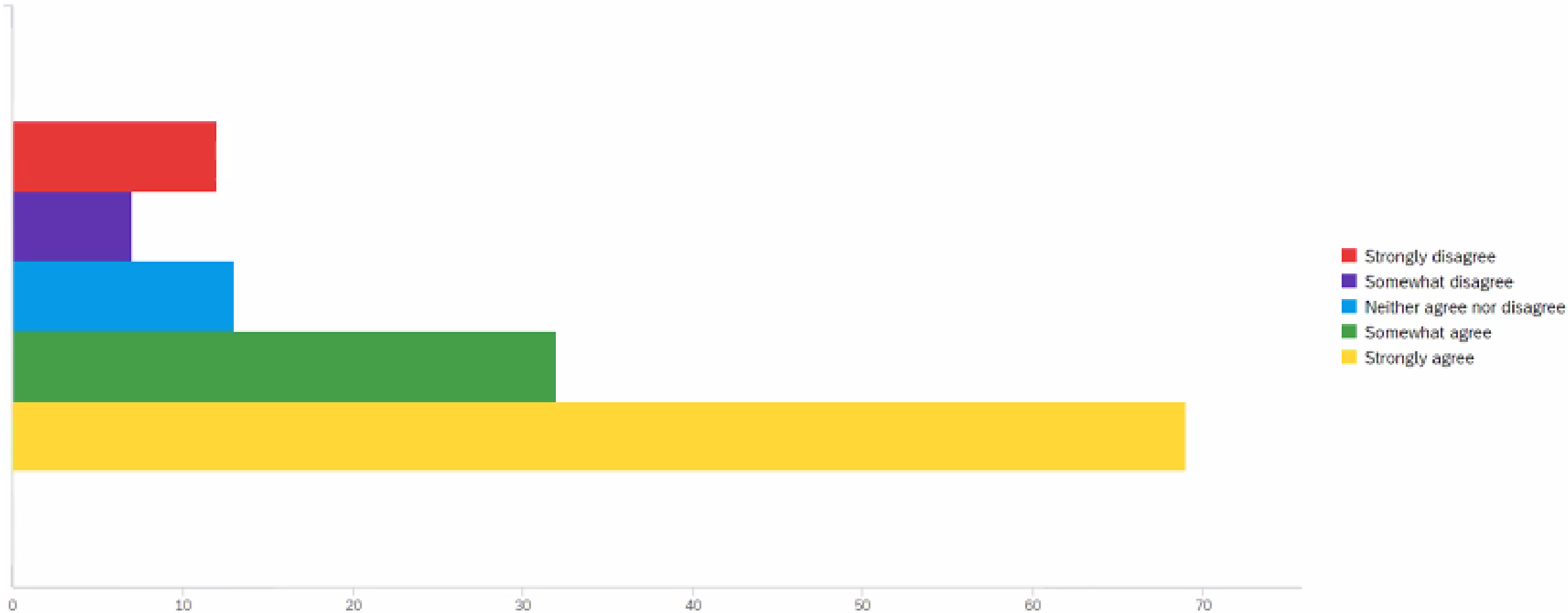
Scan the QR code or click the link in our Padlet to answer this question.

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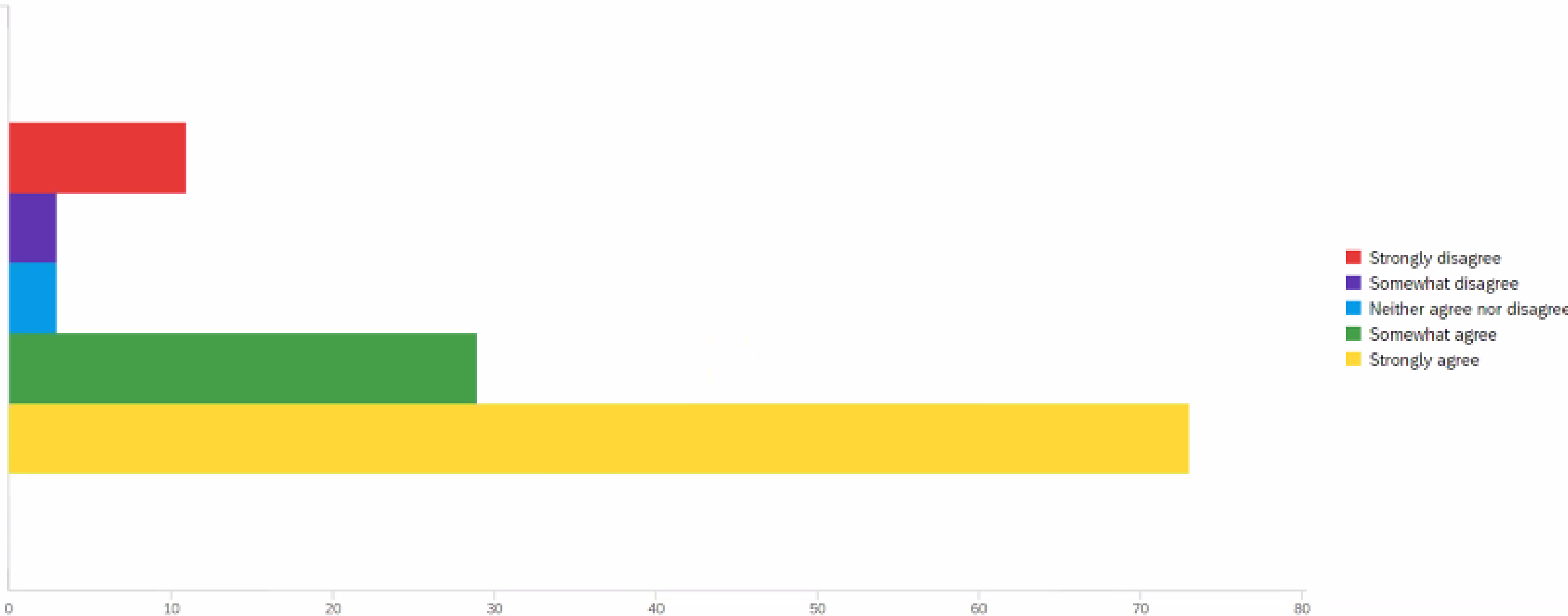
## 2.4 The value of working in groups: students' perspective

Completing tasks as a group helps me to learn more.



## 2.4The value of working in groups: students' perspective

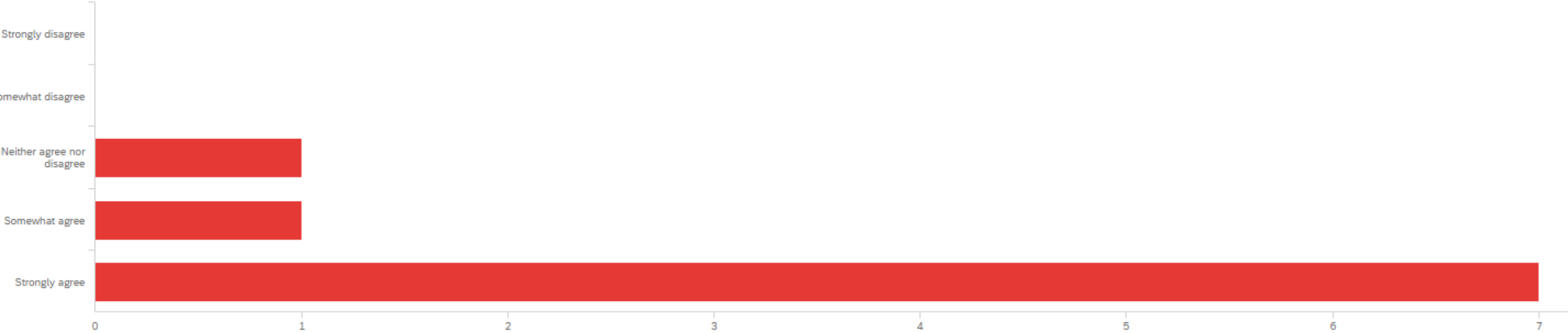
Working in breakout rooms in smaller groups has helped me to feel more 'connected' to the class.



## 2.4 The value of working in groups: tutors' perspective



Working in breakout rooms in smaller groups has helped my students to feel more ‘connected’ to the class.





# GROUP DISCUSSION 4

HOW CAN TUTORS FACILITATE GROUP-WORK ONLINE (BOTH SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS) AND ONSITE?  
DISCUSS YOUR VIEWS IN GROUPS (5 MINS.)



### 3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our aim has been to share strategies for community building to give us information about the elements of online EAP teaching that are vital in the blended provision of the future.

Why?

- In our context, a sense of community appears vital for student engagement and satisfaction (Berry, 2019).
- Community seems instrumental in supporting collaborative learning (Garrison and Arbaugh, 2007).
- Students who feel a sense of 'connectedness' are likely to be more active and motivated in their learning (Young and Bruce, 2011).

### 3. CONCLUSION

- Getting to know other students is important.
- It is valuable to develop a sense of community further during the course.
- It appears that good rapport with the tutor and other students is important for course satisfaction.
- It seems vital to give students opportunities to share personal and study updates.
- Students value group work and perceive it as helpful to their learning.
- It is useful to give students opportunities to work in smaller groups.
- Using different tools for communication facilitates engagement and can have a positive influence on emotional wellbeing.

## REFERENCES

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