

# COACHING TUTORS: AN INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY ON TESTING AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR TUTORING SESSIONS

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# Tutor Coaching Study Research Team



**Dr. Alicia Holland** lives in Phoenix, Arizona and serves as the Primary Research Investigator for this study. This Tutor Coaching Research Study is based upon her copyrighted tutoring frameworks, *Dr. Holland-Johnson's Session Review Framework* and *Dr. Holland-Johnson's Tutoring Coaching Framework*.



**Chris Grant** is from Austin, Texas and he serves as the Research Project Manager for the Tutor Coaching Research Study. He has earned Bachelor and Master degrees from Prairie View A & M University in Computer and Electrical Engineering. He is an avid track and field athlete with three world titles in the 400 meter hurdles at the master's level.



**Reshema Donthamsetty** lives in Bolingbrook, Illinois and she serves as the Research Assistant for the Tutor Coaching Study. She has earned BS in Molecular and Cellular Biology with a minor in Business and English. Reshema just earned a MS in Biomedical Engineering and has several academic research publications.

# INTRODUCTION

Coaching is a relatively new process in professional development; however, coaching has deep theoretical roots that have been around for over a century and are observed in the words of Alfred Adler and Carl Jung (McDowell, 2014). Coaching and mentoring are necessary to ensure that professionals learn and grow with support.

# INTRODUCTION

The general problem is that there is not any research being conducted in the tutoring industry focusing on tutoring coaching and mentoring for tutors resulting in the gap in the literature. Instructional coaching is incongruent to what occurs in an effective tutoring session and there are not any existing studies to support tutoring coaching and helping tutors conduct effective tutoring sessions.

# PURPOSE OF OUR STUDY

The purpose of the study was to examine participants' perceptions on the tutor coaching framework and describe methods and strategies that tutors might use to effectively conduct tutoring sessions.

# **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

This research study was significant because there is not research conducted on coaching and evaluating tutors. Although research has been done for a reading checklist for volunteer tutors (Al-Hazza & Gupta, 2006), there is a gap in the literature on the qualitative experience and descriptions of participants themselves using the tutoring coaching framework and session review framework because it has only been field-tested.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

## CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

- ❑ What are the tutor coaches and tutors' experiences, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the tutor coaching and session review frameworks in a tutoring context?

## SUB-QUESTIONS

- ❑ Sub-Question #1: How do tutor coaches describe their experiences in using the session review framework to evaluate tutoring sessions?
- ❑ Sub-Question #2: From the tutor's perspective, how do the tutor coaching and session review frameworks improve their tutoring skills to conduct effective tutoring sessions?
- ❑ Sub-Question #3: What methods and strategies might tutors use to effectively conduct tutoring sessions?

# METHOD AND DESIGN

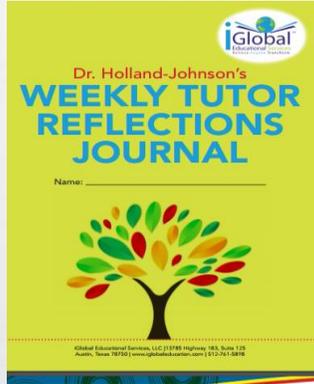
- The method for this research study was qualitative and the specific research design was an instrumental case study (Yin, 2013). This particular qualitative research design was deemed appropriate because the focus on the study was known in advance and designed around established theory or methods. In this case, the tutoring coaching frameworks and session review frameworks were field-tested with tutors and tutor coaches (Holland-Johnson, 2013).

# METHOD AND DESIGN (CONT'D)

- The case study lasted for 6 weeks involving one research study site in New York in which included one tutor coach and two tutors.
- At the beginning of the study, participants were trained on how to implement the tutoring coaching framework with their tutors and tutors were trained on how to use the session review framework in separate online trainings.

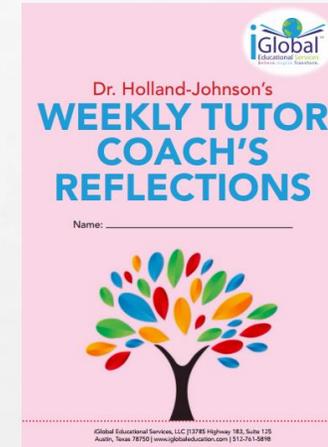
# DATA COLLECTION PLAN

## TUTORS



- Online questionnaires
- Weekly Reflection Journal Entries
- Monitoring Notes from each tutoring session conducted each week.

## TUTOR COACH



- 30-Minute Recorded Interview
- Weekly Reflection Journal Entries
- Session Reviews using the Session Review Framework.
- Coaching Tutors using the Tutoring Coaching Framework.

# RESEARCH RESULTS

**The analysis of interview transcriptions, online questionnaires, monitoring notes, and reflection journals were based on an inductive approach by finding themes, categories, subcategories, and codes.**



# **Interview data**

**Three Emerging Themes from Tutor Coach's Recorded Phone  
Interview**



# EMERGING THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM TUTOR COACH'S INTERVIEW

Helps tutor coaches focus on what they are looking for.

Prompt to ask questions afterwards.

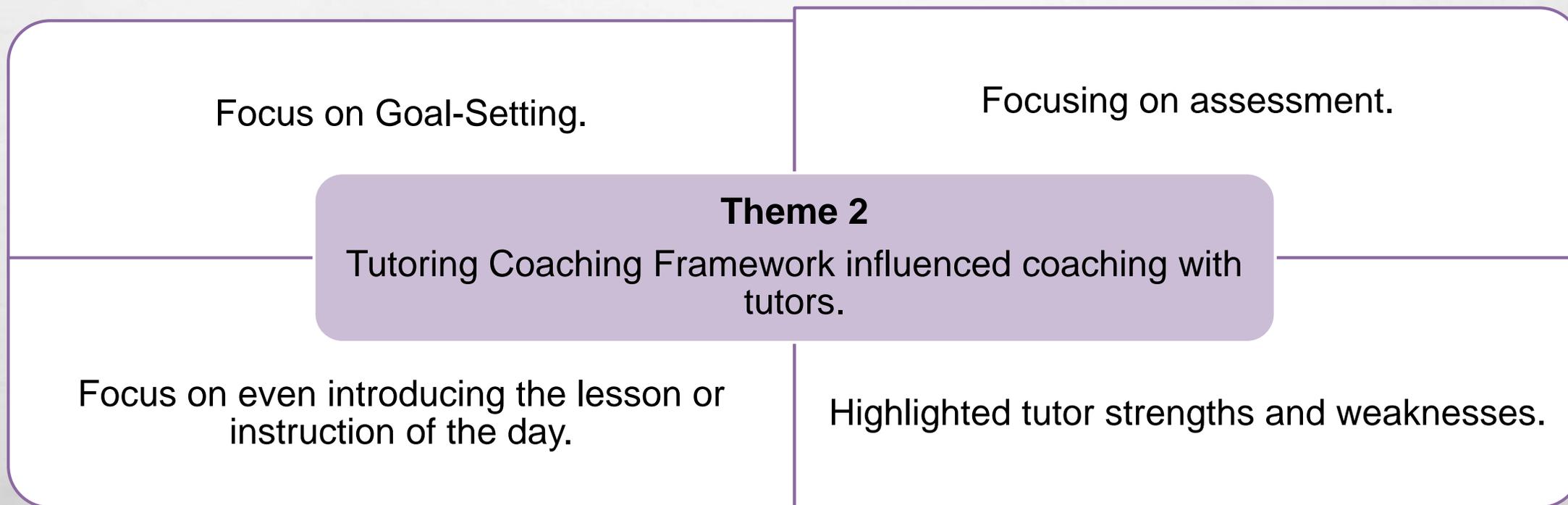
## Theme 1

Session Review Framework provides an avenue of viewing and keeping track on what to look for in tutoring sessions.

Focused Observation of Tutor Sessions.

Reviewing a session before coaching.

# EMERGING THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM TUTOR COACH'S INTERVIEW



Focus on Goal-Setting.

Focusing on assessment.

## Theme 2

Tutoring Coaching Framework influenced coaching with tutors.

Focus on even introducing the lesson or instruction of the day.

Highlighted tutor strengths and weaknesses.

# Emerging Themes Identified from Tutor Coach's Interview

Tutors have difficulties with questions and need to be able to support them.

Motivation Strategies for Clients and Communicating with Parents.

## Theme 3

In-Between Support to tutors as part of the Tutoring Coaching Framework.

Making sure that tutor coaches are available and flexible.

Providing support for tutoring methods, instructional strategies, and tutoring discourse.

# **MONITORING NOTES DATA**

**THREE EMERGING THEMES FROM TUTORS' MONITORING  
NOTES**



# EMERGING THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM TUTOR'S MONITORING NOTES

Helps students reinforce the information to go into long-term memory instead of short-term memory.

Interactive lesson plans help the students learn and focus more on what was being taught.

## Theme 4

Connecting what students' have learned to real-life situations or examples are fundamental to student learning.

Mutual trust between tutor and student are developed or established.

# EMERGING THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM TUTORERS' MONITORING NOTES

As tutoring sessions progressed, Week 1 vs. Week 6, students seemed to have a lot more energy and focus.

They were more willing to fix their mistakes without being asked or not repetitive with their mistakes.

## Theme 5

Frequency and duration of tutoring sessions are important.

Working around the students' schedule and times that are convenient for them allows greater sense of independence.

Student motivation is also positively impacted.

# EMERGING THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM TUTOR'S MONITORING NOTES

More tutor prep allowed the tutor to put more time into a detailed lesson plans for their students.

More practice problems and assessments are planned.

## Theme 6

Effective tutoring sessions require lesson preparation.

The students were able to apply what they learned into actual practice.

# **Tutor Questionnaire data**

**Two Emerging Themes from Online Questionnaires**



# Theme 7: Various Instructional Strategies are used in Face to Face (F2F) and Online Tutoring Sessions



# Emerging Themes Identified from Tutors' questionnaires

Helps monitor students progress.

Used to help students build on their levels of proficiency.

## Theme 8

Monitoring notes are used to increase student achievement in face to face and online tutoring sessions.

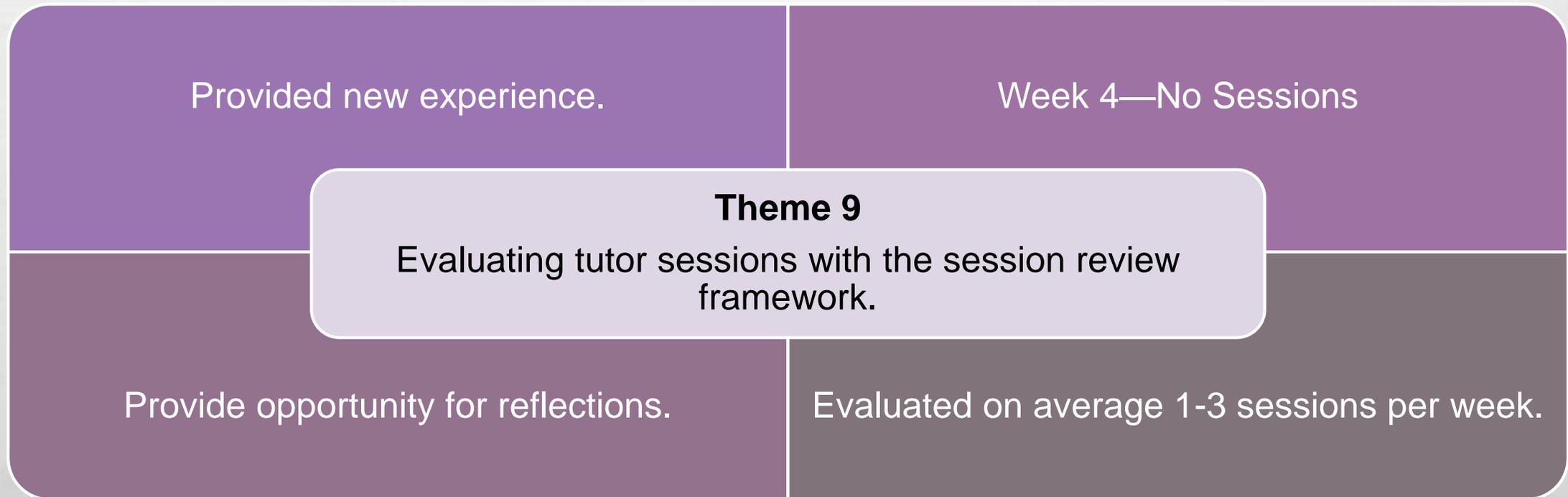
Used during lesson planning for individualized instruction.

# **Weekly Journal Reflections data**

**Two Emerging Themes from Tutor Coach's Perspective**



# Emerging Themes Identified from Tutor Coach's Weekly Reflections Journals



# Various Coaching Needs Identified from Tutor Coach's Weekly Reflections Journals

Need to model better questioning and session flow.

Provide strategies to motivate students.

## Theme 10

Various coaching needs identified evaluating tutor sessions using the Session Review Framework.

Discuss assessment strategies.

Develop pre- and post assessments and ongoing assessments.

# Emerging Themes Identified from Tutor Coach's Weekly Reflections Journals

Helps both tutor and tutor coach be on the same page (i.e. tutoring expectations).

Provide clarity.

## **Theme 11**

Both the Session Review Framework and Tutoring Coaching Framework are part of coaching tutors.

Future use to develop tutor skills in instruction, assessment, and overall professional development.

Provide guidance and structure to tutor session observations and evaluations.

# **Weekly Journal Reflections data**

**Three Emerging Themes from Tutor's Perspective**





# Emerging Themes Identified from Tutor's Weekly Reflections Journals

Prepare a variety of engaging lessons.

On average, planned detailed lessons for 1-4 sessions per week.

## Theme 13

**Preparing for tutoring sessions is important.**

Implemented provided resources and guidelines from tutor coach.

Used monitoring notes to determine next lesson for students.



# EMERGING CATEGORIES FROM ALL DATA

- Tutoring Coaching Framework
- Session Review Framework
- Tutor Coaches' Beliefs and Perceptions
- Tutor Perceptions
- Tutor Coaches' Perceptions
- Perceptions
- Effective Tutoring Sessions
- Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- Professional Goal Setting
- Tutor Coaching
- Online Tutoring Sessions
- Professional Development
- Tutor Coach Perspectives
- Lesson Engagement
- Curriculum
- Tutoring
- Student Motivation
- Tutor Coach Evaluating Tutor Sessions
- Tutoring Frameworks



# Emerging Sub-Categories from All Data

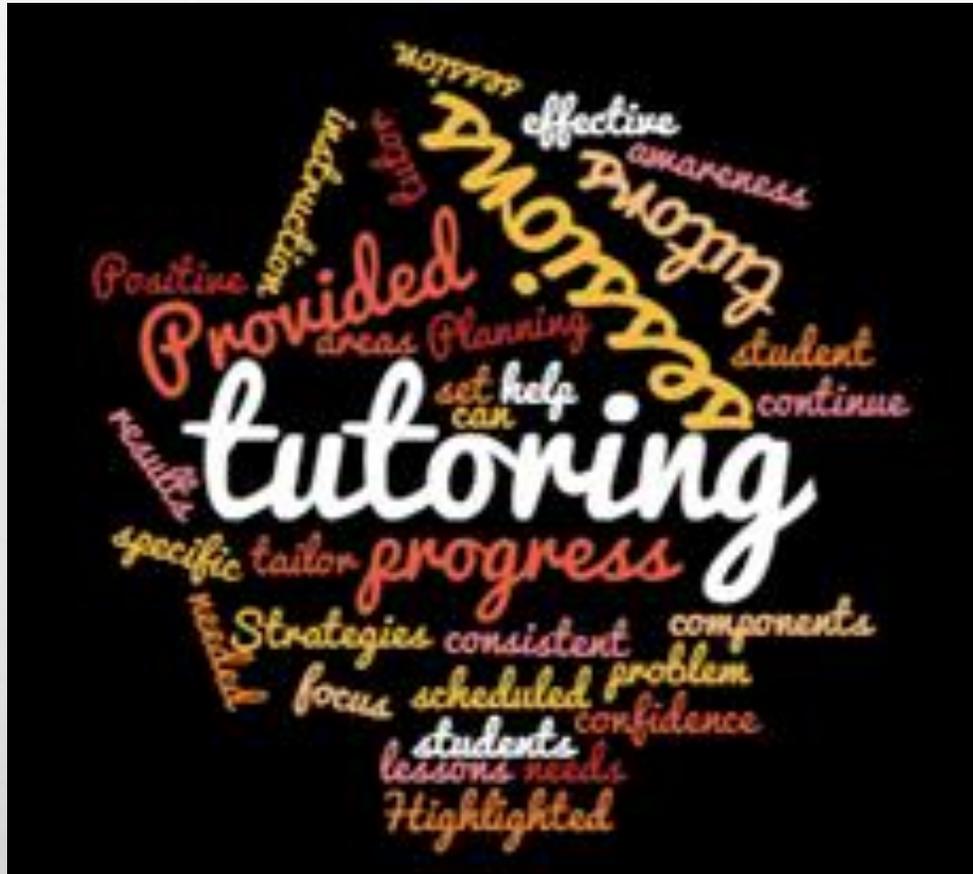
- Professional Development
- Evaluating Tutoring Sessions
- Observations
- Coaching Tutors
- Tutoring
- In-Between Support
- Perspectives and Beliefs
- Virtual Learning Environment
- Student Motivation
- Tutor Lesson Plans
- Tutoring Program Sessions
- Incentives and Rewards
- Instructional Strategies
- Lesson Plan Framework
- Monitoring Notes
- Tutoring Methods
- Observing Tutors
- Effective Tutoring Sessions
- Tutoring Needs
- Lesson Planning for Sessions

# **DISCUSSION**

**Key Findings, Limitations, Future Research, Contribution to the Industry**



# Key Findings from the Study



- Both tutoring coaches and tutors had positive experiences with both the tutoring coaching framework and session review framework.
- From the tutor's perspective, both frameworks support tutors in preparing and conducting tutoring sessions.
- An interesting finding was how the tutor placed significant value on establishing mutual trust between the tutor and student during the engagement aspect that was evaluated using the session review framework.



# LITERATURE REVIEWED HAS SUPPORTED FINDINGS OF OUR STUDY

- McFarlane (2016) suggests that tutors lack training in tutoring and may lack clarity as to the purpose and boundaries of the role. A key theme—strategies to move forward--include sub-themes related to training, dialogue with colleagues, and other suggestions in her study on personal tutoring in higher education from a tutor's perspective. Tutors reported training and suggested that the trainings might include guidelines, specific mentoring, and peer observations (McFarlane, 2016, p. 84).

# LIMITATIONS OF OUR STUDY

1. Lack of prior research studies on coaching tutoring framework and session review frameworks. Therefore, that was the purpose of using an instrumental case study design.
2. Researcher had to establish a research team and project manager to conduct the research and engage with participants. As a result, each researcher kept a reflection journal and completed separate data analyses and was later shared with the rest of the research team.
3. Three tutors who initially consented, later withdrew from the study.
4. In Week Four of the Research Study, there were no tutoring sessions conducted due to a school break impacting the learners' tutoring schedule.

# FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Conduct a further study with a larger sample size, comparing the experiences and perceptions of both tutor coaches and tutors in a learning organization. Specifically, in the K-12 and higher education setting using both frameworks in both virtual and face-to-face tutoring sessions.

# CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TUTORING INDUSTRY

1. Findings can be used to provide additional guidelines and recommendations for both tutor coaches and tutors. Specifically, from a tutor coach's perspective, the tutoring coaching framework was deemed appropriate for providing a structure and specific guidelines on how to coach tutors.
2. Tutor coaches are able to use the session review framework to evaluate tutoring sessions and cite specific examples that would be captured to use in coaching sessions with tutors.
3. This research focused on testing an integrated framework for effective tutoring sessions.
4. The findings support that these frameworks are effective in both coaching tutors and evaluating tutoring sessions.

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# **GOT QUESTIONS?**

**General Questions about the Coaching Tutors Study:**

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