

Sociology 345 at Longwood university has immensely increased my knowledge on research. I have learned how to write a formal research paper, collect data, code data, how to conduct a survey questionnaire, and more. Reflecting upon this research project allows me to understand the importance of researching a topic before conducting a study, as well as learning the most effective ways to research as well. After the study was completed, the respondents' love for the activities we provided has motivated me to address this more in the future, and express my love for research.

Conducting a study with a questionnaire on Head Start parents was a great experience. We learned the importance of writing a literature review before anything else, and understanding previous research as well as being knowledgeable on your study topic before you attempt to analyze data or make any conclusions. Evaluating sources was important in the beginning of the research process, to help me narrow my subject field, as well as to ensure my sources were credible and relevant. I picked which sources to use by the amounts of data they provided, and the relevancy to my topic. I also focused on sources that tried to connect family involvement to child behavior or single-parent households. I learned about the IRB, and all of the required hoops researchers must go through to conduct a study, and this increases my appreciation for researchers' work and the time involved. Upon creating surveys for parents, we learned how to best present them, so that they are easy to read as we can not assume that respondents are educated, and so that they are short to encourage a higher response rate. The detail required to create something seemingly simple like a survey, was immense.

I also learned the importance of demographics questions and their locations within a survey. We placed our demographic questions at the end of the survey to reduce any negative feelings towards sensitive topics. This was a challenge for me initially, because I was unfamiliar

with the options for race and gender that need to be displayed when asking those types of questions, however researching other studies and viewing their multiple choice options to make sure that all respondents have a box to check was important in overcoming my confusion and struggle.

The time spent analyzing data, discovering themes, and studying variables such as single parent households allowed me to see the connections between variables, and how to properly present the connection as well. Studying the findings that proved family fun time activities did in fact increase family involvement, provided me with encouragement that I can conduct successful research, and that our study had positive findings. After completing this study I feel that addressing issues in society and making a change with them is possible, through education and research. To think like a researcher to me, means that when looking at issues in society, you desire to gain more information and knowledge around that topic in order to address it completely. It also means that you hold the capability of formally researching said topic, and conducting a study to retrieve answers. It also means striving for accuracy, and credible data, where you must remain humble and all inclusive, however persistent to retrieve the answers you want.

The overall experience of conducting a research study at Longwood University was motivating. I learned how to research my topic, create surveys, code data, and study my findings. I learned how to formally present research to an audience after the study was completed as well. The research topic of family involvement or lack thereof was a relatable issue and common within society, which allowed my peaked interest as well. Providing activities to low income households for children to complete with their families, and seeing the happy respondents wanting more activities and spending genuine time with their family, made me believe that

change is possible. There is something that I personally can do to change the world, and it starts with research. The most important thing that this study showed me, is that the sky is the limit.