

Reflection

This semester's research experience has been greatly beneficial to my academic career. Prior to this experience, I have not done academic research this intensive. Previous research work entailed gathering data on a given topic then presenting the works with an analysis. For this, it was hands on from the start. Adding more and more information to the paper each week. I was reevaluating, analyzing, and collecting data constantly as this research progressed.

Throughout conducting this research, my process for doing academic research has improved. With constructive feedback throughout each section of the paper, I learned what I needed to improve my work and skills. With this came critical thinking. Conducting research questions, research on previous works, and my own work required time management, analyzing skills, adapting, and much more. We also experienced some complications throughout this research. When collecting back surveys, the response rate was lower than anticipated and there was not enough data, so we had to adapt and find another solution. This taught me how to find a new perspective and to work with that I have. When doing research, it is never going to go the way it is planned so being able to adjust and adapt is vital for this field of work.

I also learned how to better communicate and work with my peers. At the beginning of this project, we were divided into groups. We came together to discuss key parts of our research. This required effective communication. With everyone voicing their ideas, we had to make sure everyone felt heard and understood while still respectfully coming to an agreement to finalize key parts. This project overall has significantly increased my academic research skills.

The process for evaluating and selecting sources for my research was very extensive. I first started looking at my topic very broadly. I looked at what research has already been done on

family involvement in relation to children's academic success. I let this guide the parental limitations I discussed in the literature review section. I used articles that were relevant and beneficial to my paper. Literature that did not relate or insufficient for my research were not used. However, before coming to the final version of my paper, I had found new research that better fit the data points I selected and changed one of my topics. This allowed for a better understanding and analysis of the research.

As mentioned above, there were some challenges encountered when doing this research. The biggest challenge faced was having a low response rate of surveys completed for this semester (2023 data). This impacted my current work but by adapting and finding a new perspective, we combined data from two previous years' surveys. With this, we were able to still conduct our research and it still be applicable to what we already started. It increased our workload, but with proper time management, we successfully completed it. Another challenge was communication within my group. When producing survey questions, we were struggling to all agree on questions to meet our S.M.A.R.T. objectives. Everyone had a different perspective. After communicating and critically thinking, our group was able to come to an agreement on the questions going to be asked.

My attitudes and perceptions about doing research have significantly increased over the course of this semester. While this was a long process, and required a lot of work, I enjoyed seeing the progress and how the "hard work pays off". After having feedback and reflecting on this experience I feel very confident in doing future research. I learned how to use resources that will be beneficial to future research projects. This will be one of my academic works I will be looking back to and referencing in my future career.

Lastly, after doing all this research this semester, I have learned what it means to “Think Like a Researcher”. This means to be open-minded and to not be set in one way. While conducting research, the outcome is constantly changing. Researchers must be able to think critically and analyze while being able to adapt to constant changes and/or challenges.