

The topic of my undergraduate research project is tap dance with young children and the Tap To Togetherness program. This research is important because there isn't research of this kind, being done currently. The children that attended our program sessions were aged from birth and older. The question I wanted to address in this research project was how can dance, specifically tap dance, create connections within a family. How does dancing together, affect family connections. During the spring semester we held 6 sessions. These sessions consisted of one teacher leading the entire group in warm-ups and various dance movements and the group would split into smaller groups, usually two or three different groups. This allowed families to have more personal experiences with the undergraduate researchers and other tap dance leaders. Families were encouraged to participate with their children.

While I was engaged in the Tap To Togetherness sessions I personally discovered that when parents participated in the movements, their children were more willing to participate. If the parents were fully engaged in the engagement activity then the child didn't seem as afraid to leave their parents' side and dance with other children. If the parent separated themselves from the child, off to the side or was on their phone, their child was less engaged or didn't participate at all. I also observed that the parents of young children, less than 2, would consistently help their child participate, always being more fully engaged. An example of this is that they would crouch down and help them with the movements or hold their hands.

With this research project, I worked on coding the filmed data that was collected at each session. My process included watching the videos and notated my observations. I noted the actions of the parents and kids. Through this process, I expected to improve my observation skills. As the coding process progressed for me, through the semester, I am now able to notice smaller movements or gestures that I hadn't noticed while delivering the Tap To Togetherness program to the families. I'm a biology student and observation skills are necessary for my upper level labs. My ornithology lab is an example of a course that relies heavily on observational skills. This course required me to identify birds at a single glance. My undergraduate research scholarship offered me the opportunity to spend nearly 90 hours coding filmed data and as I completed my coding, my observations skills improved greatly. At the beginning of my ornithology lab I had a hard time even knowing what to observe. By spending so many hours observing the videos, I knew what to look for in my lab and could identify birds quickly and efficiently. As I continue to advance my studies in the Department of Biology, my strengthened observation skills will assist with my success in my degree.