

SWOSU Psychology Instructor Teaches Stats in Untraditional Way to Washington Students

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University Instructor of Psychology Kristin Woods, M. A., recently completed a program at Central Washington University that introduced high school students to statistics courses in an untraditional manner.

Woods taught a weeklong course—Passion Driven Statistics—to high school students. The course is similar to a Psychological Statistics course she teaches at SWOSU in Weatherford.

“I was drawn to this model of teaching statistics because it makes statistics real for students—it’s not about formulas, it’s not about functions, it’s not even about math,” Woods said. “Passion Driven Statistics is about learning to use statistics to understand real world problems and conduct meaningful research. So many of our students have a fear of math, but they quickly realize that statistics is so much more than just math.”

The students were participants in Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. Woods was invited by Wesleyan University Professor of Psychology Dr. Lisa Dierker to join her this summer at Central Washington University to work with GEAR UP students. About 20 students participated in the weeklong residential program. Their College Professor of Psychology Dr. Kristel Gallagher also contributed to the program.

Woods said the high school students followed a condensed but similar course plan to college-level students. Class participants developed research questions from the adolescent health dataset and learned computer coding and how to use that coding to statistically answer research questions. The students then created research posters to display their findings in a poster session.

“I love teaching statistics using this model because it has made my classroom a place where my students are the stars of their own shows, instead of it being about what I bring to the classroom,” Woods said. “My students bring their ideas, passion and experiences to the classroom to answer their research questions. I’m just there to guide them and provide the skill sets they need to understand applied statistics.”