

Abigail “Abby” Olson

Department of Psychology

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to describe my experiences being mentored by Jiawen Wu within the Center for Parent-Child Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s Psychology Department. I joined the project in May 2025 as a psychology master’s student interested in children’s math anxiety and how it relates to math self-efficacy. Under her mentorship, I have contributed as a graduate research assistant to *The Math Learning Project*, a project examining children’s and guardians’ collaboration on a joint math activity to understand 2nd graders’ math learning.

From the very beginning, Jiawen played an essential role in my onboarding as well as supporting my research interests. She took extra care to train me on how to run our experimental sessions, organize participant data, and create reliability in our coding systems. Because of her guidance, she allowed me to practice independent problem-solving while creating a coherent coding scheme that helped me refine my skills. During our coding meetings, she encouraged me as well as others to think critically about how participants may differentiate in our metrics and how we could obtain reliable and valid data through our study.

Through her mentorship, I developed skills in coding reliability and interpretation, as well as research design. She has nurtured my growth as an independent researcher by encouraging me to inquire about my own questioning. One example that stands out occurred when I wanted to explore new ways to analyze our math anxiety data. When I brought my ideas to her, Jiawen met with me to refine my research questions and helped curate them within our paradigm for a potential conference presentation. She encouraged my critical thinking abilities and to think about my research in a broader context and implications for education, an invaluable skill for my future academic work. This experience exemplified her thoughtful teaching style and mentorship, as well as demonstrated her commitment to helping her research assistants flourish within the project and academia as a whole.

Throughout our collaboration, Jiawen fostered a highly inclusive and supportive environment for my academic learning. She was consistently organized, responsive, and clear about expectations, which allowed for academic growth. Her mentorship has had a lasting impact on my academic and professional development, inspiring me to pursue further graduate study in psychology with the same curiosity and care she models.

I am pleased to provide this letter for Jiawen Wu's teaching and mentorship portfolio and give full permission for it to be used.

Sincerely,



Recoverable Signature

X A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abigail Olson".

Abigail Olson

Signed by: 3b535239-1b8f-473b-88ba-5a4a0e255d09

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