Centennial Honors College

Western Illinois University

Undergraduate Research Day 2012

Poster Presentation

Measuring Physiological Changes with Arousal and Relaxation

Bridgette Fouts and Kearston Barwegen

Faculty Mentors: Sandra McFadden and Hiroko Sotozaki
Psychology

The purpose of this study was to examine emotional differences (positive and negative), to the participant's sweat gland activity, or "electrodermal response". Electrodes attached to the first and middle fingers on the participant were used to measure gland activity. The sympathetic nervous system controls sweat glands. Therefore we could use the reading from the participant's sweat glands to evaluate the level of sympathetic arousal linked to positive and negative emotions. The participant was to sit contently and listen to a positive scenario to induce positive emotions and a negative scenario to induce negative emotions. Our hypothesis is that the electrodermal activity will differ when a participant listens to a positive scenario versus a negative scenario.