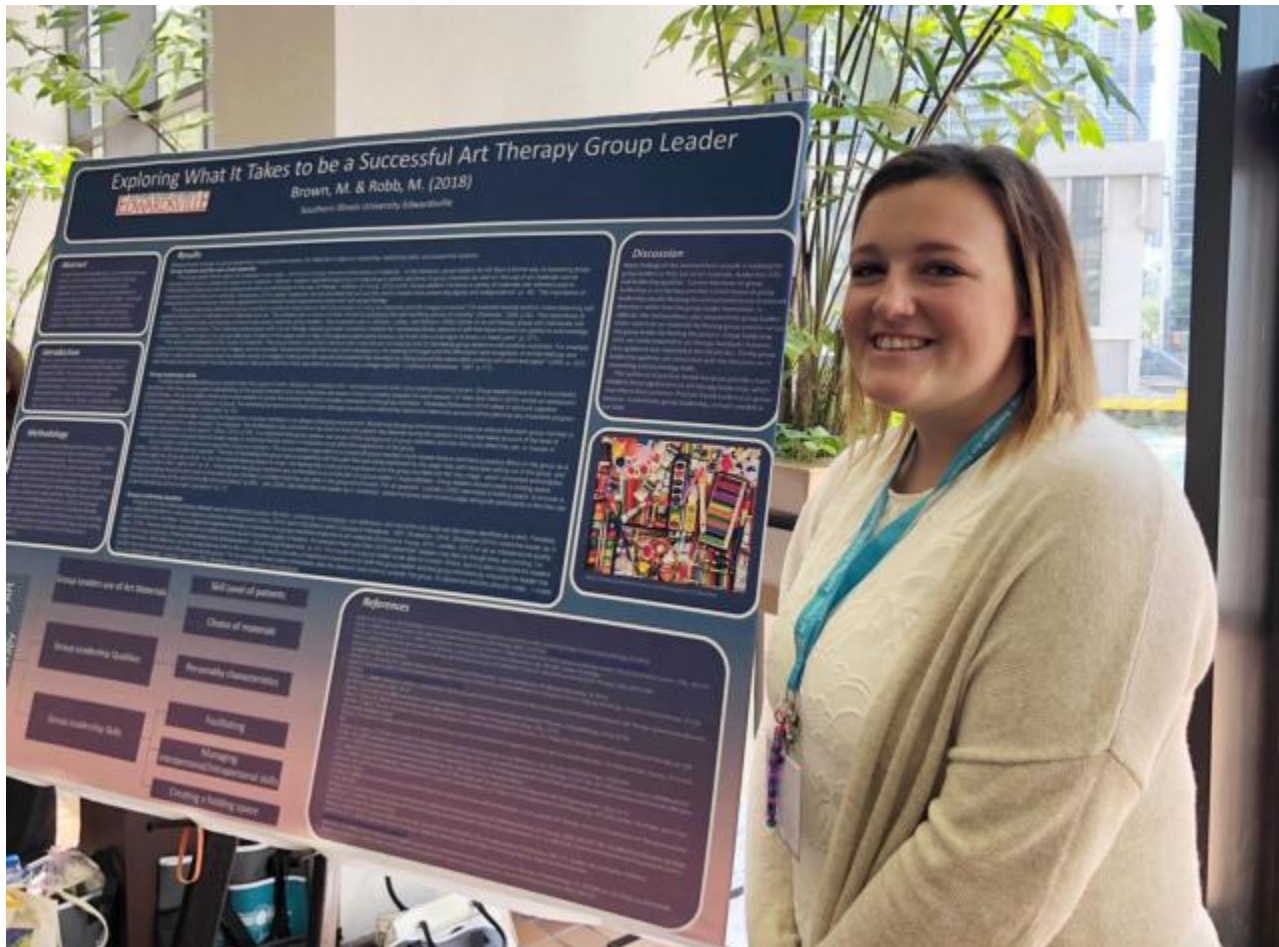


# SIUE undergrad earns competitive research award at National Art Therapy Conference

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville sophomore Macey Brown, of Pekin, has achieved an honor not many undergraduates can boast. Brown earned Best Undergraduate Research Poster Award from the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) during their Nov. 3-4 national conference in Miami.

Brown is double majoring in art and psychology. Thanks to SIUE's unique Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) program, she has had the opportunity to pursue a novel research project alongside faculty mentor Megan Robb, MA, ATR-BC, graduate program director for art therapy counseling.

"The title of my research project was, 'Exploring What it Takes to be a Successful Art Therapy Group Leader,'" Brown explained. "My main research objective was to find patterns of successful leadership among art therapy groups, since there are few published articles on the topic."

"My reaction to winning an award from the AATA was a flood of gratitude," she recalled. "Making my travel to Miami wasn't easy, and the research and work that I put into my project wasn't either. But, this recognition confirmed my research was making a difference. It has motivated me to continue working through the URCA program. What I have learned so far has reassured me that art therapy is the field I want to pursue."

According to Robb, the URCA program is a gateway for undergraduates to work alongside research mentors in order to increase an understanding of what research is and how to conduct it, and to develop critical thinking skills.

"Since art therapy counseling is only a graduate program, URCA provided Macey an opportunity for exposure to art therapy unavailable through other avenues," Robb said. "Macey has gleaned qualitative research skills, exposure to art therapy literature, and hopefully, a sense of confidence about her own skills as an emergent researcher."

Brown secured the only undergraduate poster award presented by the AATA. She enjoyed the opportunity to meet and learn from art therapists from all over the world.

"I have gained a great mentor to whom I will forever be grateful," Brown said. "As a sophomore, I have already learned so much about the art therapy field that I never would have known until graduate school, if not for the URCA program. My experiences and opportunities through this program have been incredibly valuable."

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and

enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.