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**Katie V. Johnson\*** (kjohnson@fgcu.edu), 10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Fort Myers, FL 33965. *Early Explorations: A Variation on the Traditional Undergraduate Research Project*. Preliminary report.

The standard model for an undergraduate research project is often faculty-driven; we have questions that intrigue us, and we share these with students who would like to work with us, usually starting by assigning a few papers to read as background material. However, as undergraduate research projects become more common and students begin working on problems earlier and earlier, it is worth considering whether the standard model for a project is the best choice for every student. In this talk I will share an alternative process aimed at younger students where the focus is on explorations: asking questions, writing mathematically precise conjectures, and doing literature reviews. I will also include a few examples of graph theory problems that were developed by a student of mine who experienced this process as part of an honors contract. (Received September 04, 2019)