Reflection Paper on Questionnaire Responses or STEM Paper

Currently we are in a pandemic and many things that used to be in our daily lives are either changed in some way or no longer exist. Many people have lost their jobs or are restricted to how long they can work and maybe even their income has taken a hit. Social distancing has taken a toll on everyone. Not being able to see friends or family, and for some people it is essential to communicate with other people; currently we are limited to other forms of human to human interaction, which can cause some stress. To address the stress, some discussions need to take place.

I first would like to talk about some of the personal problems that I have faced along with some of the other members of STEM league. I think it is important to obtain outside views on the quarantine because it is important to further understand how a pandemic can not only have a toll on us physically but mentally as well. On top of the views from my colleagues, I will provide what the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has to offer as far as training per sources on their website. Sure, we know how to stay safe from COVID – 19 or at least reduce the risk of catching it, which are through following the appropriate protocols put in place for such an outbreak; there are no protocols in place to address the stress that many are feeling.

The pandemic affected had negative effects on some of the biggest events of my life. ed. I consider myself an extroverted individual which means that I speak my mind often and am a social person, however, it’s been challenging not being able to chat, communicate, and work
with others. I am confident that I am not the only one that feels this way. I miss human interaction, the campus, and the everyday surprises that I am presented with in the outside world.

I have been going to SODA (School of Dreams Academy) for 6 years and UNM-Valencia (VC) for about 3 or 4 years in hopes of obtaining my High School Diploma and Associates Degree. Fortunately, I obtained them both, but my celebrations were severally limited. My high school graduation ended taking place in vehicles, and the graduation for the college was just a 3 second slide on a screen. I worked so hard for the celebration of my achievements which were then squished by this virus. This doesn’t just go for me, I know a handful of people that were disappointed by how their celebrations ended up for their hard-earned accomplishments. Life as we know it may never be the same, but we need to gain sight that this pandemic will eventually end at the hands of our hard-working scientists, doctors, and first responders. Despite what this pandemic has taken from us, we continue to fight for our future, and it will not stop us from completing our goals.

Before this paper was complete, I created a questionnaire for colleagues (many are friends) to read and answer questions, this questionnaire being entirely optional. I made this questionnaire so I can further understand how this pandemic has affected my colleagues and for it to be utilized as a coping tool. Many of you may understand that it was mainly used to get the input of others, however, having the ability to talk about some unfortunate situations in your life that cause you stress, in a way is relaxing. One of the therapeutic techniques I learned (this technique being Rodger’s Person – Centered Therapy) is for a client to freely express their thoughts and emotions without being subject to judgement while at the same time, the therapist would be empathetic (learned in a previous psychology class). Using this technique, it is important for the other individual to do all the talking, you are simply there to listen, empathize,
and reflect with the individual. (Disclaimer: By no means are you a therapist, this is only meant to help someone in a time of need, if an individual needs psychological evaluation, they need to see a professional.) When people say, “That feels good to get off my chest,” it is the release of repressed emotions, thoughts, and ideas that linger within you, talking about them reduces overall stress. Writing about the pandemic may not be the best way to reduce your stress but, it most certainly is a start. I will get into everyone’s input soon, but before I do, I would like to give a special thanks to everyone who participated in answering my questionnaire. First. I read through the questionnaires sent to me, and then paraphrased what my interviewees said.

Let’s go through the questionnaire one question at a time and get some of everyone’s input to each question. The first question goes as follows “How has this pandemic impacted you? (positively, negatively, emotionally, physically, etc).” Multiple people who remained anonymous say that this pandemic has limited them from interacting with others and has affected their classes during spring. Another says that the isolation is challenging for them and they miss the casual daily interaction with their colleagues. Starting with those who want to be known, we will start with Angelica Ulibarri (Business Major and UNM – VC Tutor). Not being able to interact socially with friends has been challenging. Lorrey Romero (UNM – VC Tutor and Business Administration), has been affected positively and negatively during this pandemic. Positively, Lorrey enjoys the extra time she has to spend with her family, on the other hand she talks about how she misses interactions between others which results in the loss of social and communication skills. Lorrey also feels bad for those who’ve gotten sick or even died from the virus. We all have sympathy for those who have lost loved ones at the hands of this virus, although it is important to sympathize and mourn with others, we must understand that there can be a positive outlook.
“What are you looking forward to once the Pandemic ends?” From a few anonymous people, they look forward to eating out with their family, and another wants to go back to the movie theatres. Lorrey would like to see people continuing to care for each other after the pandemic is over, along with no longer wearing a mask once a cure is found.

Question 3, “Was there an event in your life that you were looking forward to, that was later limited or cancelled due to COVID – 19? Please describe the event and how the change affected you.” To one anonymous individual, professional meetings where cancelled in cities they enjoyed, someone else says that a field trip to the VLA (Very Large Array in Socorro) had been canceled due to the pandemic. Lorrey and Angelica were looking forward to graduation and were unable to attend.

Question 4: “What are some of the things that you have been doing during quarantine to stay healthy and focused on school? Do you have any recommendations?” Some anonymous people say that they cannot recommend anything because they have been struggling with holding a routine and not feeling well physically from other conditions. Another person has said they have been playing basketball and taking a summer course to keep themselves mentally and physically fit. Lorrey has been gardening with her grandpa, spending quality time with her family, along with working on projects within the house.

This concludes all of the questions, however, I did ask those who took the questionnaire if they had any thoughts, questions, or concerns at the end of the questionnaire. Anonymous people responded that their main concern would be to just get this pandemic over and done with so we can continue with life as we knew it.

Let’s talk about the CDC, as mentioned previously, I decided to go ahead and check out their website and look for additional protocols that we may know or may not know. As it turns
out, there was no new information on how we can change our daily lives to better protect us from COVID – 19. Everything that we have been doing now and will continue to do will work just fine and it appears that it is recommended that we continue the daily routine we have, according to “COVID-19 CASE INVESTIGATION AND CONTACT TRACING SUPERVISOR OR LEAD TRAINING: GUIDANCE, RESOURCES, AND SAMPLE TRAINING PLAN” (CDC, 2019). This is a PDF from the CDC factsheet regarding COVID – 19 so you can be further informed on the current and dynamic status of the pandemic. (Link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/contact-tracing-training.pdf).

Looking through the table of contents within the PDF, there are a couple of things that can be seen that draws my own personal interest. For example, on page 8, it is about “IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SPREAD OF COVID-19,” which in this case is very useful. On page 8, there is a link provided that allows you to become trained in identifying COVID – 19 and its symptoms, on top of that it also asks some questions regarding COVID – 19, and this PDF seems to be a complementary tool to the class you can take. I will leave this source for you so you can look through it and maybe if you’re interested become trained by the standards of the CDC to battle COVID – 19. I will leave any links under the “Works Cited” page of this paper.

Even though I consider this a STEM Paper because I am writing it for STEM league, I didn’t use a whole lot of science to inform my audience. Sure, I cited the CDC which is a scientifically correct and accurate source when it comes to a pandemic, but instead I used each other’s experiences to inform my audience. As I’ve said before (outside of this paper), empathizing and listening to one another can serve as an effective coping mechanism. Talking about our experiences, how something affects us, and having someone actually understand can put potential negative feelings to rest. This paper, as far as the number of concepts were
concerned were small, however, carried a strong message. Talking about our experiences within this pandemic, along with briefly talking about the CDC and their protocols, has led to the creation of a beautiful tool, sculpted in our eyes and imagination. This tool being the unity of our friends, family, and colleagues putting together our emotions to lift each other up in a deep time. I leave you with this, having faith in our doctors, scientist, and other hardworking people around the globe is bound to yield victory against COVID – 19. Be there when we need one another and please, never be afraid to ask for help, there are people out there who want to help you. You are never alone.
Works Cited

Interviews of Ulibarri, Angelica; and Romero, Lorrey by William Mitchell, 14 July 2020


Special thanks to those who filled out the survey.