

Project Statement

For the Un-Essay assignment, I decided to record an episode of “my podcast” that would focus on discussing the two theories of why pregnancy typically lasts nine to ten months and what the limiting factor(s) is for each. Our class was the first time I learned of the Obstetric Dilemma (OD) and the Energetic Gestation and Growth Hypothesis (EGG). I found the topic super interesting in both the readings and our class discussion. Also, I knew there was more to research and learn on the topic which is something else that interested me. From there, I thought that simply a podcast would be fun, but did not necessarily have the “wow factor” I was hoping to have in my final project.

That is when I decided to incorporate an interview with a doctor, specifically an OB/Gyn who would be familiar with this topic and be able to speak intelligently about the subject matter. To make this happen I reached out to my sister-in-law who is an Emergency Medicine doctor and asked if she had any friends or colleagues that would fit that description and be willing to speak with me. One of her friends from medical school, and a bridesmaid in her wedding, Katie Hoff came to mind. After exchanging a few texts, we set up a time to talk on the phone. I had sent her a list of potential questions ahead of time to give her some material to prep with. Additionally, with her permission, I recorded the call and used that to create my podcast.

As far as the structure, I begin with an introduction of the episode’s topic and then dive right into describing the Obstetric Dilemma and the Energetic Gestation and Growth Hypothesis. This information mainly came from the readings we did prior to class a few weeks back (sources below), but was supplemented by further research, as well as my discussion with Katie. Then I move into the interview portion and discussion with Dr. Hoff. Finally, I end with a brief conclusion that incorporates the overarching themes from the semester. And of course there is theme music as part of the final product!

This idea seemed to be a mix of fun, interesting, and unique. It allowed me to really dive into a topic that interested me, as well as demonstrate what I learned throughout our class. This class has covered such a wide variety of thought-provoking material and it was neat to really sink my teeth into one of the modules. Additionally, having the chance to talk to Katie about her job and thoughts on pregnancy in general was super fascinating. As someone who hopes to be a mother someday, it was refreshing to apply school material to real life situations and relate to the hot topics in science.

Sources

“Human Energy Expenditure in Anthropology and Beyond” - Cara Ocobock (2021)

file:///C:/Users/molly/Downloads/Ocobock%202020.pdf

“Birth, obstetrics and human evolution” - Karen Rosenberg (2002)

file:///C:/Users/molly/Downloads/Rosenberg%20et%20al.pdf

“There Is No “Obstetrical Dilemma” towards a braver medicine with fewer childbirth interventions” - Holly Dunsworth (2018)

file:///C:/Users/molly/Downloads/Dunsworth%202018.pdf

“Developmental evidence for obstetric adaptation of the human female pelvis” - Alik Huseynov, Christoph P. E. Zollikofer, Walter Coudyzer, Dominic Gascho, Christian Kellenberger, Ricarda Hinzpeter, and Marcia S. Ponce de León (2016)

<https://www.pnas.org/content/113/19/5227>

Self-Reflection

As mentioned in my project statement, I decided to create a podcast episode that would focus on the childbirth duration hypotheses we discussed in class: Obstetric Dilemma (OD) and the Energetic Gestation and Growth Hypothesis (EGG). The impetus behind this was because it was a topic I genuinely enjoyed discussing in class and had a desire to learn more about. That being said, I did some more research on the subject matter and spoke with a doctor specialized in that field and was able to really solidify and grow my knowledge on the topic. Over the process of completing this assignment I learned a lot about the more general birthing process, why we are different from other mammals in timing and length of pregnancy, and where there are still discrepancies, issues, and improvements in the current mechanisms used to undergo childbirth.

When I was first debating what to do for my Un-Essay, I was not sure where to begin. I tried to brainstorm something super creative or unique and quickly remembered that I do not have one artistic bone in my body. So one of my first challenges was figuring out what to create. That being said, I decided to play to my strengths and pick a project that was more socializing and research than design and crafts. Another challenge I faced along the way was figuring out how I would create a podcast with an audio recording of a phone conversation with a doctor who is practicing 8 states and a 3-hour time difference away. With some careful timing and lots of planning ahead, I was able to successfully pull it off.

Overall, I am satisfied with my podcast and interview production. I feel confident in the content it covers and am pleased with the way my conversation went with Dr. Katie Hoff. It was really cool to be able to ask questions first hand to a doctor, and I think it helped enhance my podcast. Also, the structure of my project allowed me to demonstrate the knowledge I gained in class while also stimulating the audience by introducing original thoughts. I would like to believe I successfully completed this assignment in an engaging way.

Despite being happy with my final project, there is always room for improvements. For this assignment, if I would have come to a decision faster than I did, perhaps I could have interviewed multiple experts to have widened the pool of opinions and thoughts. Or another potential area of improvement would be a video interview, had the timing with Dr. Hoff worked out better. When all is said and done, I am satisfied with my project!

This Un-Essay was completed individually. I also wanted to mention that the podcast appears as an iMovie, and that is because it was the only format I could successfully use the phone call audio on. However, all you need to consider is the audio, the visual is just a black screen throughout.