

The STEAM Internship Program for Leaders – Week 6

Ami Konate, e-Counselor

What time is it? It's Blogging Time! Welcome back to week 6 of our program! Remember last week when I said that I realized Hawa broke a record of a nearly 53-minute interview with Lesley and that her record would be hard to beat? Turns out I spoke too soon. On Monday, Mariella Pérez Pérez visited the EDsnaps team once again but this time to interview Dr. C! One thing I really loved about the whole interview is that both Mariella and Dr. C were very prepared: both were on time, demonstrated a good dress code, made eye contact, and listened to what the other person was saying. Back to what I was saying about Hawa's record being broken, Mariella's interview with Dr. C lasted for a whole hour! Now that will be hard to top. This interview was important because the students got to learn more about Dr. C's career pathway, her research with zebra finches, and some of her early childhood memories. After Dr. C's interview with Mariella, we moved to a presentation with Dr. C about "The Brain on Nicotine". Listening to Dr. C talk about the brain and the effect that nicotine has on it brought back memories of when I was taking a class in my sophomore year called Alcohol, Drugs, and Behavior. It's one of those topics where you don't want to miss a single slide, and you take so many notes because everything that's being said is so new, important, and educational. Due to our lack of timing and the importance of this subject, Dr. C left the rest of the presentation for Thursday.

Did you know your phone is just as capable of taking as many good pictures as a professional camera? We learned this on Tuesday. I know I am always saying "another awesome Tool Tuesday", so I will simply just say this: "Tuesday is becoming my favorite day of the week instead of Fridays". This Tuesday, e-visiting from Brazil, Marcela taught us all about photography. As a professional photographer, Marcela said that photography is about expressing yourself and capturing the moment. Sure, I knew that photographs capture the moment, but I've never thought of it as a way to express

myself. Learning this new information made me want to be more aware when I am taking pictures and we are indeed “our own best equipment”. Personally, I don’t like taking pictures of myself because I would take about thirty pictures and only save five. I enjoy taking pictures of objects because I have more control over the camera angle, the lighting, and the perspective. My favorite picture that Marcela showed us was her photo of the Brooklyn Bridge. She used an amazing angle and captured this very touristic spot in such a way that it gave the picture a feeling of peaceful, orderly chaos. She told us to embrace what’s around you because this will make your picture even more unique and truthful. After Marcela’s presentation of how to edit photos, the students were given a chance to download some of the applications and edit their prepared picture and share. Although we didn’t have enough time to go around and see everyone’s editing, Felicity, one of our students, showed her amazing skills of editing, which were very smooth, colorful, and neat, just like our day.

On Wednesday, we met Thais Russomano, an incredible woman who taught us the true meaning of dream and passion. Thais was interviewed by Raiza, one of our students, who did an amazing job asking fantastic open-ended questions. Thais said that one of the things that annoys her the most is unfairness: I too can relate to my dislike of unfairness and I had to learn that sadly life is not fair and sometimes there’s literally nothing we could do about it. Thais also said that her passion for space started when she was as young as 4 years old and that space became a huge part of her life. She continued by saying she wasn’t sure if this was a curse or blessing because she had no desire for anything else. This statement made me think a lot because people who don’t really know what they want to do from an early age like me also feel the same, it’s a curse to not know what you want to do in life because you’re constantly searching and searching, but it’s also a blessing because you are always experiencing new things and trying out different things. One of the most powerful take-aways that I got from Thais is “every time you make a decision, you have to be careful because it’s easy to make a

decision, but the consequence will be there forever.” Many people, especially the younger generation, can benefit from this advice because many people like to engage in certain activities or make life-changing decisions now because they “only live once” and then do not realize that these decisions can affect them much later in life. After Thais’s interview, Mary Alonso, a fashion & marketing management instructor, was interviewed by Alex. During week 1 of our program, Mary Alonso taught us all about creating a Mood/Trend board. We learned more about Mary’s life, the importance of putting your data in use, and networking. Throughout her interview and presentation, we clearly saw her love for the fashion industry. Mary said that one of the first things she tells her students is “reputation is everything” and “learning is a two way street”. I personally feel like this statement should be shared with every student from middle school all the way to graduate students. Mary then presented a short PowerPoint of her story. She started by not knowing what to do, but through constantly adding skills and hands-on experiences, self-reflection, and networking, Mary proved that anyone can make their way up in any industry they want.

As promised, on Thursday morning we continued with Dr. C’s presentation: “The Brain on Nicotine”. Overall, I enjoyed the presentation because it made me think a lot. We learned about human brain development, stress on the brain, neuroplasticity, and much more. My favorite topic was on the different types of addictions. Although I am much better now due to quarantine, I hate to admit that I am addicted to shopping. It got to the point where I realized that even if I didn’t have the money, I would go window shopping, and just going around to look at and touch clothes or shoes. Sometimes I didn’t want the clothes but if I had the money, I would buy it just because I felt the need to see and feel new material. Learning about addiction is very useful because it forces us to look at ourselves and the choices we make. After all, these advertisements and slogans are all to get us to spend money! I believe that, due to this pandemic, we as a society should reassess how we spend our time/money/attention to a certain

extent. Even though I no longer shop in person, once in a while I shop online, but this time for things that are important. Instead of shopping, now I spend more time socializing. After Dr. C's presentation, Wildaliz Nieves (Liz), a biomedical scientist, e-stopped by from San Francisco. Wildaliz was interviewed by one of our students, Elisa, who did a fantastic job. Liz was a former undergraduate student of Dr. C and it was really a pleasure seeing and hearing her talk about her journey. I loved it when Liz said that she doesn't let failure bring her down, a mindset many of us need to consider. Liz gave a workshop about her experiences throughout her academic career and the journey she took to go to where she is at today. I felt motivated, smart, and powerful throughout the whole day.

Friday's panel discussion was all about College-Masters-Graduate Students discussing "Building STEAM Bridges". There were 6 panelists, all in different phases of their academics and careers: Leanne Spears, Caroline Kriegstein, Oyinda Adefisayo, Lisanne van Engelen, Alex Valauri, and Tianpei Xiao. Lisanne, one of the panelists, stated that "Building STEAM Bridges" means "not sticking to one subject but combining all of the STEAM principles together". I really found the discussion motivational, as all panelists gave powerful advice. Many students outside EDsnaps should hear this conversation because often times we go into the next phases of our lives wanting guidance, advice, and support but don't have access to the resources or are not sure where to look. Networking with people who are outside your comfort zone, not just the people you are close to will get you far. Seeing all these amazing and inspiring young STEAM leaders communicating so effectively gave me hope to keep doing better, because if not today, one day I will be able to cause a change in someone else's life.

What a way to capture the whole week! Before you know it, I'll be back next week with all new updates, stay tuned because it's about to get even better. Till then!