

Transcript of Interview with Ellen Galindo by Kathryn Jue

Interviewee: Ellen Galindo

Interviewer: Kathryn Jue

Date: 03/10/2021

Location (Interviewee): Huntington Beach, California

Location (Interviewer): Orange, California

Transcriber: Kathryn Jue

Abstract:

I recorded this oral history with 34 year old Ellen Galindo. She teaches high school with me (the interviewer/transcriber) at Garden Grove High School, in Garden Grove, CA. She is expecting her first child this summer.

Kathryn Jue 0:05

Hi. My name is Katy Jue, and I'm a graduate student intern with the COVID-19 Archive at ASU. The day is March 10, 2021. The time is 1:19 Pacific Standard Time, and I'm speaking with Ellen Galindo. I want to ask you some questions about your pandemic experience. But before I do, I would like to ask for your consent to record this response for the COVID-19 Archive. The COVID-19 Archive is a digital archive at ASU that is collecting pandemic experiences. Do I have your consent to record your responses and add them to the archive with your name?

Ellen Galindo 0:37

Yes.

Kathryn Jue 0:39

Okay. Thank you. First, can you tell me your name, age, race and where you live?

Ellen Galindo 0:46

Name, Ellen Galindo. Age 34. Race? Can I say mixed? Or should I select a specific one?

Kathryn Jue 0:55

That's up to you, mixed is fine if that's what you -

Ellen Galindo 0:56

Mixed. And then what was the last one?

Kathryn Jue 1:03

Oh, where do you live?

Ellen Galindo 1:04

Huntington Beach, California.

Kathryn Jue 1:07

All right-

Ellen Galindo 1:09

Oh, Was that it?

Kathryn Jue 1:11

That was the last question on that.

Ellen Galindo 1:12

Okay.

Kathryn Jue 1:14

Alright um, I'm just gonna ask you a little bit about your background to kind of set the context for this interview. So if you could please tell me a little bit about your family and living situation when the pandemic began?

Ellen Galindo 1:28

Um living situation, it was, it's just me and my husband in our house. And um, backgrounds? Both teachers. And I don't know, was that just living situations? Just us two.

Kathryn Jue 1:48

Yes.

Ellen Galindo 1:51

And both teachers working from home once the pandemic hit.

Kathryn Jue 1:55

Thank you. Um, prior to the pandemic, can you describe an average week like, where you went, what you did, any commitments that your family had? Anything that would paint a picture of what your average kind of week looked like.

Ellen Galindo 2:10

Average week would be teaching at school from, you know, 7:30 to 3. And then on, at night or evenings, binge watching TV shows. And then usually on weekends, we would go hang out at a restaurant and meet up with some friends. And then I think, was your birthday scheduled around that time? Like, weren't we going to go to Azteca or something?

Kathryn Jue 2:45

We were.

Ellen Galindo 2:46

Yeah. So that, unfortunately, you know, got cancelled, but that was something I was really looking forward to for that week, before this all happened.

Kathryn Jue 2:58

All right, um, thank you, um. Describe how your like, average week changed or did not change after the pandemic began.

Ellen Galindo 3:08

Definitely changed in the sense of well, working from home and being around your significant other all the time. And then, um, the, because we didn't really have a set schedule for school, So it was just kind of a, I don't know. How would you describe it like, a, you know, just posting materials online, having due dates and having the kids, um, complete the assignments by those due dates. So there were, there really was no set schedule or routine for kids or myself at that point for work. And then some things that didn't change was binge watching television shows. Um, still just hanging out, you know, I mean, cautiously, of course, but hanging out with, uh, family. And then, um, yeah, of course, not being able to go anywhere or touch anything, once this all happened.

Kathryn Jue 4:16

Okay, thank you. Um, we are going to transition now into looking more at online learning in a little more detail. So if you could describe distance learning in three words, if you were going to pick three words to describe distance learning.

Ellen Galindo 4:35

Challenging. Um... different. Um... ineff-, I don't want to say it's ineffective because it is, um... just not as effective. But that's two words. That wouldn't be three.

Kathryn Jue 5:04

It's we'll, we'll allow it.

Ellen Galindo 5:06

Okay. Not as effective as in person, obviously.

Kathryn Jue 5:11

Thank you, um, just again, to build a little bit of context, can you explain what a normal school day looked like prior to the pandemic?

Ellen Galindo 5:20

Normal school day started at 7:30, with, you know, prepping for your first period at eight o'clock. And then students had 56 minute periods every day. Um, and you got to see your students every day and maintain, you know, good relationships and connections with them that unfortunately, you don't have during distance learning. Oh, and then school day would end at 2:45.

Kathryn Jue 5:58

Thank you. Just didn't want to cut you off. Want to make sure you, you get to answer whatever you want to say. Um, you kind of already mentioned this, but just to recap it. Is there anything else you want to add to the end of the 2020 school year with distance learning? I know, you already kind of talked about what that was like. But is there anything else about describing how, excuse me, how those last months of the 2020 school year looked with distance learning?

Ellen Galindo 6:31

Uh, yeah, it was just, it was really confusing for everyone involved. And everyone approached it differently. So I feel like the students, in a sense, checked out because they just didn't see I guess the point of it at this point. And then on top of that grades, you know, everyone was going to either pass or not pass depending on how low their grade was. And so participation from students was, you know, it decreased compared to being in person. And so it was just kind of a self-esteem, like a hit to the self-esteem in seeing or not seeing these kids who used to care or put in effort not doing that anymore.

Kathryn Jue 7:24

Thank you. So looking at this year, compared to last year, can you describe how distance learning changed between last year and this year?

Ellen Galindo 7:36

We do have a new schedule, which makes it a lot easier to hold students accountable. Um, of course, the periods are longer, which you know, has it's good and bad, you know, you get a lot more done in 80 minutes than you can in 55 minutes. But at the same time, holding students' attention for 85 minutes while on a conference call, or a Zoom call, can be challenging. Um, with the schedule, though, and with grades, you know, counting towards their GPA this time, I feel like there is more participation from students. They're being held more accountable and responsible for their actions or lack thereof. And so, and me being a very routine person enjoy-, enjoys having a routine and schedule put in place.

Kathryn Jue 8:37

Thank you. Um, so this is just a, question is just another opportunity for you to kind of just describe what it's been like teaching online this year. So if there's anything else you just want to share of, like, what has it been like, teaching online?

Ellen Galindo 8:58

I'll go with that first word I used to describe it, which is challenging. Um, you know, just trying to find the balance of giving kids grace and being flexible with everything, and then at the same time, holding them accountable and being, having them be responsible for their learning. That balance is difficult to balance. And then, wait, remind me the question again?

Kathryn Jue 9:30

Just what has it been like teaching online?

Ellen Galindo 9:33

Um, and then for those students who, you know, have kind of fallen off the radar or aren't participating, um, you, unfortunately, there's no way you can, you know, reach out to them and physically, you know, hold them accountable or have them meet up with you and talk to them. That I feel like that makes more of a difference than saying, "Hey, over Zoom call, can you meet me, you know, in an hour to help you, you know, get more time on homework or complete assignments." I feel like, although there are- [audio stops]

Kathryn Jue 10:18

Oh, could you stop talking for one second, the sound went out. Can you hear me?

Ellen Galindo 10:30

-you know, not be as successful as you think they could be, while in person... or normally.

Kathryn Jue 10:37

Okay, this is-, I'm so sorry, but your sound cut out for half that answer. I could, I could recap what I heard on my end. And then if there's anything you want to add.

Ellen Galindo 10:50

Okay, where did I cut off?

Kathryn Jue 10:52

So you were talking about having a kid, how it's a little more difficult if you're asking a kid during a Zoom call to come meet up with you. And it's like, right after that you cut out.

Ellen Galindo 11:02

Yeah, I was just kinda repeating myself. Yeah, it's difficult to kind of reach out to those students who need extra support over, you know, distance learning than if they were in person, and you can have them come into your room and ask any questions. And, um, you know, physically be there, which you wouldn't think makes that big of a difference, but it really does. And so, that's just kind of another challenge that's been difficult to deal with this year.

Kathryn Jue 11:37

Thank you, um, what has, oh, you know what, let me-, and I forgot to ask you what you teach. So if you could tell us what, what you teach, or what, what grade, that sort of thing so we know.

Ellen Galindo 11:51

10th grade world history and 12th grade economics.

Kathryn Jue 11:55

Thank you, um, what has surprised you the most teaching this pandemic year?

Ellen Galindo 12:01

Um, you know, as much as I, my last answer might not, you know, support this, but I do believe that this actually has taught not only, you know, kids, better, extra, uh, you know, A+ students, but just kids in general, how resilient that they can be kind of dealing with all this stuff, and still trying at least to make an effort to come and log on and try their best. Um, on top of that, another good thing has been the gaining of knowledge of using technology in order to make learning more effective, whether it is, you know, going to be in person and used eventually down the road normally, or even this year, just having some, everything online is kind of nice, at least. So that's something that could be positive, I guess.

Kathryn Jue 13:08

Thank you. Um, what is your opinion on school reopening?

Ellen Galindo 13:16

Well, how long do we have?

Kathryn Jue 13:22

We are here for you.

Ellen Galindo 13:25

So I'm going to take this as-, this question, I'm going to take as, you know, our school opening with the last two months of school in session, um, which I think it's ludicrous. Um, I think that, and even asking the kids, you know, since with all the safety protocols and guidelines that we're basically Zooming, whether you're in class or not, just kind of defeats the purpose of being in class. And, you know, with the whole argument of preventing or trying to help out learning loss, it's the last two and a half two months of school, the kids who are getting, you know, 30% I don't think we'll be able to get up to 60% in just the, you know, last few months of school, so, I prefer to stay home until numbers are completely, completely low and or people have been completely vaccinated. Um, because at this point, I personally don't see the point of going back to campus.

Kathryn Jue 14:47

Thank you. Has your opinion on school reopening changed throughout this year?

Ellen Galindo 14:52

Nope.

Kathryn Jue 14:56

Thank you. Before we transition into the next topic, which is, I guess, more personal, it's about the fact that you are expecting a baby. Is there anything else that you want to add in about, anything about online teaching or school reopening, or anything at all, that you didn't get a chance to share?

Ellen Galindo 15:21

Um, I just, you know, I don't want to sound like a negative Nancy, like, I probably have in my last few responses. But I do appreciate all the effort that everyone has been putting into place in order to try to make it as successful as possible. I mean, we all know that it's not nearly as effective as a normal school day, seeing your students every day, answering questions, being there for support, but I do think everyone is doing the best that they can.

Kathryn Jue 15:54

Thank you. Alright, so like I said, we're gonna transition over here to a different topic, which is the fact that you are expecting a child. So can you describe your initial emotions when you learned that you were pregnant?

Ellen Galindo 16:08

Terrified. Terrified, and then excited.

Kathryn Jue 16:17

Thank you. Um, to relate back to kind of the, the main topic, which is about you-, your experience teaching during this pandemic, how, excuse me, how has being pregnant changed or not changed your outlook on school reopening?

Ellen Galindo 16:35

Um, it hasn't, in fact, it only reinforced my opinion that I would not want to go back until numbers have decreased significantly, or everyone has been vaccinated.

Kathryn Jue 16:54

Thank you, um, how has changed-, how, excuse me, how has being pregnant, changed or not changed your outlook on the pandemic as a whole?

Ellen Galindo 17:04

Um, it, before, I knew I was able to get vaccinated while pregnant. It only made me, I guess, more fearful and paranoid, just knowing that already being pregnant, your immune system is, you know, suppressed. And so you're more likely to have a risk or at greater risk of getting COVID. So it just made me really, more, you know, cautious, I guess would be the better word of surroundings of, you know, what is it called, surfaces, people, until I finally realized that I could get vaccinated, and then that was kind of a weight lifted off my shoulders.

Kathryn Jue 17:53

Thank you. Um, has the, has the pandemic changed your expectations for your pregnancy? And if so, how?

Ellen Galindo 18:04

Um, yeah, I mean, I don't, I don't know what to expect being pregnant in the first place. But it, unfortunately, when I go to doctor's appointments, my husband cannot go with me. And it being our first child, his first child, it's kind of a bummer. Um, you know, because he can't see the ultrasound, he can't be there to ask the doctor questions and me, as for myself, you know, it kind of is sad that I have to go and do it alone, so to speak. Um, so it's kind of just made things a little bit more you know, not, I don't want to say it's not exciting. It just kind of made things a little bit more difficult, I guess, so to say as a word.

Kathryn Jue 19:01

Thank you. If there, if there was no pandemic, would there be any changes to how you're preparing for the baby?

Ellen Galindo 19:13

Um, no pandemic? I don't think so. I mean, I'm still early on. So I mean, of course, I guess you could say like later on down the road, baby showers and getting together with family and things like that. Like we couldn't tell our family members in person, it had to be over FaceTime or Zoom. So it would have been nice to, you know, have people or family together for that. As I mentioned, the baby shower, doesn't look like that would be a possibility in person maybe. I don't know. It's still a few months away. So yeah, just different in the terms of keeping a low profile to just make sure everybody is safe and protected.

Kathryn Jue 20:04

Thank you. Um, has the pandemic changed the amount of time you're planning to take off when the baby arrives?

Ellen Galindo 20:15

It-, actually, you know what, no, I don't think so. I'm trying to think, no, but that's hoping that everything goes back to normal by the fall.

Kathryn Jue 20:28

Thank you. Um, if a future, like history student, or I guess anybody were to ask you, you know, if they found out that you had been pregnant during the pandemic, and they were like, "Mrs. Galindo, what was it like being pregnant during the pandemic?" How would you answer that?

Ellen Galindo 20:48

I would say it was scary and anxious, or whatever the word that you would use for anxiousness. Just because like I said, before, I could figure out that I was going to get the vaccine, or I could get the vaccine, it was just like, an extra layer of stress, and anxiety, you know, looking at who, you know, is coming over, who we even want to be in contact with or where we even go. Um, and so it was just kind of an extra layer of stress and anxiety.

Kathryn Jue 21:31

Alright, thank you. Um, I just have a couple more questions. So this is kind of wrapping up the interview now. So to kind of conclude here, is there anything you want to share to help people better understand what it's like to be pregnant during this pandemic?

Ellen Galindo 21:49

Um, I want, I really, I wish that there was more awareness, I guess, because I was totally in the dark. I wish there was more awareness or maybe even more research about being pregnant during a pandemic and there-, the options to get vaccinated. I'm sorry, repeat the question again.

Kathryn Jue 22:15

Just, is there anything else you want to share to help people better understand what it was like to be pregnant during a pandemic, this pandemic?

Ellen Galindo 22:24

And then you know, just to make sure that you're safe and to take care of yourself both physically, and mentally because it is exhausting mentally. Um, but yeah, I think that's pretty much it.

Kathryn Jue 22:38

Thank you. Um, and then to just wrap up the teaching portion of the interview here. Assuming you return to the classroom when the pandemic ends, are there things you will, that you'll change about the way you teach as a result of this pandemic? And if so, what are those?

Ellen Galindo 22:58

Online tests. Yeah, there are, there are a few assignments that I thought were beneficial, more so online than there would be, you know, old school pen and paper. Um, so yeah, I mean, I guess the idea of using more technology would be something that I could take away and use once school resumes back to normal.

Kathryn Jue 22:28

Thank you. And then just to wrap everything up, is there anything else you want to share about what it has been like to teach during this pandemic? Today is March 10th, right? So I guess for you, it has been almost exactly a year since, almost a year anniversary when we went online. So is there anything else you want to share?

Ellen Galindo 23:54

Um, yeah, I just really miss the kids like, I missed, you know, coming towards the end of the year, you know, you usually at the end of the year are sad to say goodbye. And, you know, you wish them the best and you can't wait to see them next year when they're, you know, nine feet taller than you all of a sudden. Um, and so that's kind of what I'm missing is just the connections, the relationships that you have during a normal school year that I don't think that I will have at this end of the school year. I mean, even those that may be coming back with reopening, I can't guarantee I will recognize their faces, especially with masks on, and that's just, you know, kind of sad and depressing to think about, so I really, that's kind of the main part that I miss about teaching in person normally.

Kathryn Jue 24:53

Well thank you. If just, one more time throwing it out there, if there's anything else you want to add now would be the time.

Ellen Galindo 25:02

I'm good.

Kathryn Jue 25:04

Okay. Thank you. In that case, thank you so much for your time. I'm going to stop the recording now.