

## Transcript of Interview with James Ziehr by Andrew Ziehr

**Interviewee:** James Ziehr

**Interviewer:** Andrew Ziehr

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**Location (Interviewee):** Dodgeville, Wisconsin

**Location (Interviewer):** Wisconsin

**Transcriber:** This transcript has been provided by Otter.AI with a 2nd pass for accuracy provided by Bryan Paintiff, HST580 intern, at ASU.

**Abstract:** James Ziehr, a University of Wisconsin Platteville student, describes the impact that COVID-19 has had on his life. He discusses the difficulties with online learning and the frustrations that will occur if classes remain in the online format in the fall. He shares where he gathers his news and information during the pandemic. He reflects on the response to the pandemic by Dodgeville residents as compared to the rest of the nation. James explains how he stays in touch with friends. He details what he is doing for recreation to pass the time and to stay safe during the pandemic.

**Andrew Ziehr 00:05**

And we're recording. All right, I'm here with James Ziehr full disclosure, he is my son. I'm interviewing him about the COVID 19 pandemic that we're currently experiencing. So, how has this affected your day to day life?

**James Ziehr 00:32**

Um, well, right now, normally, I would be at college. So this has moved me away from there, and I'm back living at my house. So it's affected it that way. And normally, I would hang out with friends or do stuff with people, or even just like, leave my dorm to go study. But now I'm pretty much and one place where I do everything. Pretty much.

**Andrew Ziehr 01:19**

Okay.

**James Ziehr 01:21**

Except go visit a few people.

**Andrew Ziehr 01:24**

All right. Um, so yeah, I guess I know this On the plus side. You get to see your girlfriend more. So tell me how that all kind of worked out.

**James Ziehr** 01:36

Yeah. So she goes to college, two hours away from me normally, but now we're back in the same town again. So she's like, the one person I go and spend time with like, outside of the house and go do both. So it's nice to have that to have something to do. but, yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 02:03

Can you tell me about like the first time you heard of COVID 19, Coronavirus? A little bit about that?

**James Ziehr** 02:11

Yeah, um, it was brought up in one of my classes by one of my professors, I think he mentioned like, Yeah, this is a thing that's like somewhat starting to happen. And back then it was like, end of January. So he was like, this probably isn't going to be anything. But it's the thing that's happening. And then it slowly escalated from there. Because we kept on talking about it as time went on in that class. And, yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 02:48

So tell me about maybe when it was first a concern to you, when when you heard maybe some news or something that made this a concern.

**James Ziehr** 03:02

Um, I really didn't think about it too much or worry about it until like, the school decided that they were going to do something about it. Because up until then, it was sort of just like, not a problem. It seemed like, but then my school decided, hey, we're going to extend our spring break, and then go to online classes, and then all that. And then that's sort of when it became like, real, like a real issue kind of.

**Andrew Ziehr** 03:40

just Just a note, you attend school where?

**James Ziehr** 03:44

UW Platteville.

**Andrew Ziehr** 03:46

and your major?

**James Ziehr** 03:49

sustainability and remote, renewable energy.

**Andrew Ziehr** 03:58

So as far as employment, I know you were not working while you were in school. I know that in a normal summer, you would go work somewhere. Tell me about your plans for that for the summer.

**James Ziehr** 04:15

Yeah, once school is over, I plan on going and talking to where I worked last summer, which is [inaudible] and trying to get shifts there again throughout the next few months over a summer break. And hopefully they'll still be able to give me decent hours because they were being affected by it too. So yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 04:47

Have you had any communications with your group of friends from Platteville since you've been home?

**James Ziehr** 04:54

Yes, we have me and like some of my closer friends have a group chat. on Snapchat and we talk on there occasionally.

**Andrew Ziehr** 05:05

Okay,

**James Ziehr** 05:05

So yeah, I've kept up with them there

**Andrew Ziehr** 05:08

any, any sort of schedule to that? Or is it just kind of when somebody feels like it?

**James Ziehr** 05:14

Just when we feel like it, when something happens and like, hey, this happen, you know, we joke with each other on there and like yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 05:28

and how do you feel like you're doing with like self value, self isolation, that sort of thing. You feel like you're following guidelines, not following guidelines?

**James Ziehr** 05:41

Um, for the most part, following guidelines, like you know, I've I've spent time with Arianna, and stuff, but outside of that, I haven't been like going to stores for the most part, it's pretty much like, my house, your house, Ariana is house or like going to a park or something. It's not going to like, stores or anything like that. So pretty much staying away from people.

**Andrew Ziehr** 06:19

One thing that, excuse me, one thing that's been in the news is the closing of parks, closing of activities that, you know, you might be able to do to entertain yourself during during this time, how affected you?

**James Ziehr** 06:36

Um, for like the past couple of weeks, governor dodge closed, which I definitely would have gone to there a few times if it hadn't been closed. But we also have a bike trail next to the house. So I can still like go walk there. So hasn't been too much of a detriment, I would say.

**Andrew Ziehr** 07:09

What was your experience at the park like governor dodge, for example, before a closed?

**James Ziehr** 07:17

there was a lot of people there, it seemed like, but everyone made sure to keep their distance, and all that. So you because like there's a whole bunch of parked cars and everything, but didn't see a whole lot of people, exactly. Because everyone was like, staying away kind of from each other.

**Andrew Ziehr** 07:39

Okay.

**James Ziehr** 07:44

Where would

**Andrew Ziehr** 07:44

you say you've gotten most of your actual news on the pandemic?

**James Ziehr** 07:52

I'm just scrolling through like Google News or stuff like that. Or from family or people I know.

**Andrew Ziehr** 08:08

And do you feel that that has given you enough information, the right kind of information? Are you are you satisfied with the information you're getting?

**James Ziehr** 08:17

Yeah, I don't know what else I would really need to know. Because I'm not sure if anyone else has like answers on stuff or anything that I would like want because like, I want to know, like, how long is this going to last? But nobody knows how long this is going to last kinda thing. So I'm fine with knowing what I know kind of.

**Andrew Ziehr** 08:52

Okay. And do you personally know anybody that has gotten sick from COVID-19?

**James Ziehr** 08:59

No, I don't.

**Andrew Ziehr** 09:01

Okay.

**Andrew Ziehr** 09:21

Do you get any sense of the of a conflict maybe between the way like Dodgeville like local people are handling this compared to maybe what you're seeing on a more national level through the news? Or do you feel it's a pretty similar reaction?

**James Ziehr** 09:50

I feel like people in dodgeville are being mostly pretty good about following guidelines except for some things But like, most people, it seems like are wearing masks and that sort of deal. But looking at things across the nation, it seems like a lot of people are just not caring about the guidelines or actively going against them. But it seems like dodgeville is doing pretty good about following them

**Andrew Ziehr** 10:21

okay

**Andrew Ziehr** 10:40

what kind of activities have you been doing, say for recreation for leisure, entertain yourself?

**James Ziehr** 10:50

I've been playing a lot more video games, watching a lot more TV, and stuff like that. Fill the time, kind of. I've also gone on a lot of walks, and that kind of deal kind of trying to distract myself to do something kind of.

**Andrew Ziehr** 11:17

what, uh, what will be your reaction if, say things don't get better immediately. And they start discussing fall semester classes being all online?

**James Ziehr** 11:46

I'd be really disappointed in that. And I would really not like that. Because it would also like affect what kind of classes I take. Because I'm also a music minor. So some I just won't be able to take like, ensemble bands or marching band or anything like that. So those could like, send me behind. And like, personally, I find it harder to learn through online classes. So it could worsen my GPA and stuff like that. And also just being stuck here, for another, who knows how many months? Doesn't seem great. Yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 12:42

Okay.

**Andrew Ziehr** 13:03

Have you noticed? Or have you experienced any, like real challenges? I mean, or where have you experienced challenges in the last couple of months, as a result of this?

**James Ziehr** 13:16

um, most of them have been through schooling and stuff, just the difficulties with transitioning to online classes and having to learn that way. Outside of that. I haven't faced too many challenges. I mean, it's not great that I can't, like, interact or spend time with my friends and stuff like that. But that's not the worst because I can still talk to them over my phone and stuff like that. Most of it's been for schooling, and stuff related to that.

**Andrew Ziehr** 14:01

Okay. Yeah, I've seen you do a piano class. How is that working out? You feel like, you feel like you're just doing busy work? Do you feel like you're gaining as you would if you were in normal classes? I mean, how is your education going?

**James Ziehr** 14:23

Um, some of them I feel like I'm just kind of doing the work to get it over with to try to get a grade. And I'm not actually retaining much information. I'd say it's like that for like, my math class on my chemistry class. It's kind of like trying to learn what I need to know for the tests and then forget about it right afterwards. Which isn't great. Because not really learned in it, but other classes, I am learning stuff like my environmental class. And I'd say like my piano class has gotten better as time has gone on. Because like the teacher learned how to do it better. It's mostly dependent on like, how hard the teacher is trying pretty on how much we got out of it.

**Andrew Ziehr** 16:12

how do you how do you feel about UW Platteville's response to a pandemic? Do you gotten enough information you feel just how do you feel about it?

**James Ziehr** 16:29

Well slow, to respond kind of like. And the changes they did, Raul felt like kind of last minute because like, could see like UW Madison, and a whole bunch of other UW System schools like responding to this. And like, we actually had like, a bracket to see like, which UW School would respond last to this. And it was UW Platteville. So like, they responded really slowly. We had to wait a really long time to get our stuff from the dorms. It took them a long time to say like, how are they're going to help us help the students like compensate for... The whole situation with like, their grades and like how we classes and like a lot of other schools went to like pass fail, which we don't even have mention for. We just have

the option to drop it last day of classes, which we didn't even know we could do until like a couple of weeks ago. So I feel like they've been very slow and haven't been doing enough. Yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 18:02

Do you feel that you at least now know what's going on? I mean, if they reached that point, you might not like their decisions, but you at least know what's going on? Or is there still some stuff that's up in the air?

**James Ziehr** 18:14

I'd say by now. I know what's gonna happen pretty much. Yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 18:24

And have you? Have you even registered for next semester's classes?

**James Ziehr** 18:29

I have.

**Andrew Ziehr** 18:31

Okay.

**James Ziehr** 18:31

I'm just prepared to drop like three classes. If we aren't actually there next semester, and pick up some other class if need be. Uh, yeah.

**Andrew Ziehr** 18:45

And how was the process? Was the process any different for registering for classes this semester than it had been the previous semesters?

**James Ziehr** 18:54

Um, for me, it wasn't, it was just the same thing pretty much.

**Andrew Ziehr** 19:00

Okay. All right. Well, for now, I think we're gonna wrap this up. Okay. May or may not do a follow up meeting.

**Andrew Ziehr** 19:13

Okay.