Reflection

The STEM Fair was quite a success. Many people came to see our presentations and it was a great experience to be able to show our work. Thinking back on that night, I took time to acknowledge the process and work that lead up to the success. Most of the work was strong, however there were weaknesses it. If we had had additional time, there probably would have been changes we would have made to make our experiment stronger. Through all of this though, I also realized that this process was much more efficient than last year’s. It also taught me more about the scientific method.

Luckily for us, our project had more strengths than weaknesses. I believe the only weakness we encountered was deciding how to run the procedure. My partner and I had the idea that it would make the experiment more fun if we tested reaction times with dodgeballs rather than rulers. While this sounded like a great plan, there were unreliable variables that we at first had not consider. In the end, we decided it would be best if we used the ruler. While it may not have been as fun, the results were very pleasing and easy to understand.

Since my partner and I had performed the experiment at an early date, we did not have problems with meeting deadlines. The powerpoint was done on time and we even had spare time to practice our presentation. My only benefit of having had more time would be that we could have gotten more test subjects. We could have possibly separated boys and girls or done the test on adults to compare ages. This extra data would have been very valuable and would have allowed us to make even more detailed conclusions.

Last year’s science fair was a bit different. We had the same outline given to us on a powerpoint but the requirements for each section was different. This year, our abstract was a big deal. The way we presented our hypothesis as an “if...then…” statement was different as well. The biggest change however was that our presentations were fully digital and included a video of our procedure. Whilst some students disliked the tight space and discomfort of not having a tri-fold in front of them, I felt that it worked better. I liked that we could flip through the slides and spend sufficient time in each area of the experiment without your audience getting distracted on the rest of your experiment, as might happen if using a tri-fold. Another benefit was being able to review your presentation and make corrections as needed.

Throughout my years of science fairs I have always been told to use the ‘scientific method’ as a guide to the perfect science experiment. Year after year I have done this, only knowing and understanding the basics of this method. However, I feel that this year I finally understand where the scientific method comes from and how it is used not only in science but in everyday tasks. I have also been given more detailed explanations on each section such as the fact that your data should have both qualitative and quantitative information.

In conclusion, I believe that the 8th grade science fair was a great triumph It was well planned and well executed. I am very proud of the work my partner and I put together. Walking away from this experience I feel a new sense of accomplishment.