COLLEGE STUDENTS’ RESPONSES TO THREE NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS PLACED IN CAMPUS DINING HALLS AT A MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

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DEDICATION

I would like to specifically thank three individuals with whom I could not have completed this thesis without. First, I would like to thank my wonderful parents. Dad, thank you for always supporting me no matter how many mistakes I think I may have made throughout this process. You are always there to rationalize my thoughts and assure me that it is perfectly ok to screw things up and have difficult times in life, because that is part of life. Mom, thank you for always supporting me no matter how many times I called you in tears saying that I wanted to quit and move back home. I know it must have been extremely difficult for you knowing that at times I was unhappy, but you encouraged me to stay and do my best… and for that, I am forever grateful. Finally, I would like to thank Paul Knell, a great human and my closest friend throughout graduate school. Paul, thank you for always supporting me and trying your hardest to help me stay sane throughout this process. You are one of the most motivated people I have ever met, and you have taught me so much about hard work and dedication. Without this knowledge, the thesis process would have been much more difficult, and for that I thank you. I also appreciate you simply being there for me on a day-to-day basis throughout my entire thesis process. I would also like to quickly thank my sister and few close friends for always making me laugh and keeping me sane throughout the thesis process.
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ABSTRACT

Current studies have not clearly defined the components of a successful nutrition education intervention among college students. To address this gap in research, the current study will explore college students’ responses to three different models of nutrition interventions. The study was conducted in a qualitative manner, in an effort to provide the researcher with a more detailed description of the participants’ experiences with the nutrition education intervention. There were 10 participants in this study, all of whom were female ranging from 18-20 years of age. Three nutrition education models were created, and then placed in two campus dining halls for one week each. The study results revealed three main ideas; the models received positive feedback, there are barriers that influence college students’ food choices, and students have a general idea of the type of nutrition information they would like to see in the dining halls. In conclusion, it was found that there are several components that go into making a successful nutrition intervention successful on a college campus. Although this study carried some limitations, it did hint at the necessary components of a successful nutrition education intervention. A successful nutrition intervention for college students in a campus dining hall should be one that contains easy to understand, but often forgotten nutrition information, relatable images, and should be placed at the point of food selection. Future studies will be necessary to determine additional details of a successful nutrition education intervention.
INTRODUCTION

Currently, at least 35% of college students in the U.S. are considered either overweight or obese (1). Obesity is the fastest growing cause of non-preventable death in the U.S (2). Obesity can cause an increased risk for type II diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease, all of which could be fatal (3). Although determining the cause of obesity is complex, caloric imbalance and physical inactivity are at the forefront (4). A positive caloric balance can lead to weight gain. Making changes in food choice is a simple way to correct a positive caloric imbalance, and decrease weight (5).

College students tend to have unique meal patterns and food choices when compared to adults of the same age (6). College students are at a high risk for developing a positive calorie balance and nutrient deficiencies (7). A positive caloric balance can lead to weight gain, and nutrient deficiencies can lead to poor overall health. Only one out of three students report consuming the recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein (8). It is thought that avoiding fruits and vegetables, consumption of large amounts of fast food, and high calorie snacks all contribute to the unhealthy practices of college students (9,10).

There are several factors that can effect college students’ food choices. Students tend to select foods based on taste, convenience, time limitations, health, weight control, and physical and social environments (11). These factors can all contribute to the poor food practices previously mentioned. Students who are time sensitive will usually select whatever food is fastest for them to obtain in the dining hall. These foods tend to be pre-prepared and packaged, and subsequently high in calories. In terms of convenience, students normally select the dining hall that is closest to their residence hall. This is
important to consider because the differences in food availability at dining halls can
effect students’ food choices.

However, students’ poor food choices can be positively influenced by nutrition
interventions (12). Several studies have shown that increased awareness and knowledge
of healthful foods among students can lead to improved food choices (13). Generally, the
goals of college nutrition interventions are to increase nutrition awareness by promoting
the most healthful food choices that are available in the dining halls. This can be
accomplished by the use of food labeling, signs, literature, logos, and nutrition courses.
Several studies have shown that approximately 50% of college students use the
information provided in nutrition interventions when making food choices, and the other
50% do not consider the information when making food choices (14,15). Students who
do use nutrition interventions tend to do so for general knowledge, concern about overall
health, calorie counting, or concern about a specific nutrient (16).

If changes are not made to college students’ food choices, the rates of obesity and
its associated health problems could continue to rise. Developing a nutrition intervention
that successfully heightens awareness of good nutrition, and subsequently changes food
choices among college students is necessary to combat this problem.

The goal of this study is to explore college students’ thoughts on three types of
nutrition intervention models that are placed throughout campus dining halls. Exploring
the students’ opinions could potentially reveal what components of each intervention are
most helpful and why. There are currently only a handful of studies that have explored
participants’ personal opinions of interventions. Obtaining students’ opinions is necessary
to create effective future intervention materials, and ultimately reduce the prevalence of obesity.

Generally, the current studies regarding nutrition interventions among college students have been conducted in a quantitative matter, although some qualitative studies do exist. The foundations of qualitative and quantitative research methods are fundamentally different. Quantitative research is extremely specific in its goals, and every aspect is designed before the study begins. A quantitative researcher uses surveys, questionnaires, or equipment to collect numerical data. The numerical data is statistically analyzed, and the observed phenomena are explained. Qualitative research is conducted in a looser manner. The goal is to provide a complete, detailed description of a process or phenomenon. The data is usually collected in the form of words, through participant interviews. The research design tends to unfold after the study has begun. This allows the participant to express their thoughts more accurately, because the researcher does not have to adhere to a concrete study design. Research participants are encouraged to provide detailed answers to the research questions. This type of in-depth participant interviews allows the researcher to create a rich, thick description of the data. A detailed description allows for a better understanding of the main research question.

For nutrition intervention materials to have a significant impact on food choices, materials must be perceived by the students as helpful. Currently, the components of a helpful nutrition intervention for students are not well understood. Conducting a qualitative study could potentially provide information for determining what intervention components students find most helpful. After establishing the most helpful components of an intervention, new interventions could be created that will be specifically tailored to
college students’ needs. Therefore, the current study will be conducted in a qualitative manner.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore college students’ responses to three types of nutrition intervention models that are placed throughout campus dining halls. The following sub-questions will be addressed in the research:

- How do college students make daily food choices?
- What beliefs do participants hold about nutrition and proper diet?
- What are the factors that influence food choice among the participants?
- How do participants respond to nutrition information displays about food group distribution, fruits and vegetables, and portion size, which are placed at the point of food selection?

Addressing these questions will add important information to the existing literature. There have been studies that have explored factors that influence food choice among college students, but they have failed to state how and why these choices are made. The current study will address how and why college students make their daily food choices. Additionally, this study will be the first to explore college students’ responses to three different types of nutrition interventions. Existing studies have limited their interventions to only one type. In doing this, the researcher is limiting the participants’ experiences and responses. By allowing participants to be exposed to three different models, they will be able to respond with a better idea of the components they like or dislike in a nutrition intervention.
**Implications**

This study has potential to produce several important findings. First, this study could potentially demonstrate what intervention components are most helpful to college students in a campus dining hall setting. The study also has the ability to indentify reasons why students find certain intervention components more helpful than others. The study also has the potential to demonstrate how and why college students make certain food choices in the dining halls, which could lead to a better understanding of college students’ nutrition intervention needs.

There are several populations that could potentially benefit from the findings of this study. Experts in the field of nutrition could benefit from the findings of this study. Nutrition experts develop the majority of nutrition literature for the general public. By using the potential findings of this study, nutrition experts could create nutrition literature that is specifically tailored to the college student population. Additionally, the experts could take components of the findings and apply them to literature for similar populations.

Health care providers could also potentially benefit from the findings of this study. Most health care providers have a limited knowledge of nutrition, and are not able to provide the type of in-depth dietary guidance that overweight or obese individuals need. The findings from this study could give health care providers insight into what best helps college students change their food choices. A provider could place one of the models in their office, allowing patients to easily view and inquire about the information. This action could help patients who are looking to their physicians for help changing food choices.
Another population that could potentially benefit from the findings of this study is campus dining hall directors. Due to the large percentage of obese college students, dining hall directors are under pressure to place effective nutrition information in the dining halls, if they have not already done so. The findings of this study could potentially provide directors with the nutrition information college students find most helpful. By placing information in the dining halls that students find helpful, directors can be confident that they are contributing to the improvement of their patrons’ health.

The population that could potentially benefit the most from the findings of this study is students who eat in campus dining halls. Although students with good health can potentially benefit, those students who are overweight or obese stand to benefit the most. The potential findings could allow new interventions to be created that will be direct representations of what college students find most helpful. This will give overweight and obese college students exposure to models that are specifically tailored to their needs, and potentially positively influence food choices.

Limitations

Despite the potential benefits of this study, it does carry some research limitations. One potential limitation is the study’s small number of participants. Obtaining a variety of participant responses ensures there is no response bias. Due to the small number of participants and lack of variety in responses, the findings of this study could potentially be biased. Another potential limitation exists because the participants were not given follow-up interviews. Having a follow-up interview allows the participant to reflect on their previous interview responses, and possibly provide new, more cohesive information regarding the interview questions. This study did not include follow-up
interviews, which could cause a lack of cohesiveness in the participants’ responses. The short amount of time that intervention models were present in the campus dining halls could also create a limitation. Each model was present in the dining halls for one week at a time, for a total of 3 weeks. It is possible that the participants needed a longer time to let the intervention models settle in their minds before they could determine the models’ effectiveness. However, the potential benefits of this study outweigh the limitations.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Few studies really investigate food choice among college students, or the types of nutrition interventions that are most effective with this population. Additionally, most relevant studies tend to be quantitative; however some qualitative studies do exist.

Generally, two themes occur in the research literature. First, awareness of nutrition information influences food choice among college students. Second, the types of interventions vary, but have common elements across the studies.

*Increased awareness of nutrition positively influences food choices among college students.*

Richards, Kattelmann, and Ren (17) demonstrated that a 4-month nutrition intervention caused an increase in the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed by college students. The goal of the intervention was to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among college students. The intervention consisted of stage-based newsletters, computer-based communication, and motivational interviewing. The participants were each given a 26-item food frequency questionnaire (FFQ), an 18-item decisional balance questionnaire, and a 5-item self-efficacy questionnaire both pre- and post-intervention. The post-intervention questionnaires revealed that the participants increased their fruit and vegetable consumption by at least 1 serving per day. Kicklighter, Koonce, Rosenbloom, and Commander (18) also showed that increased nutrition awareness influences food choices among college students. The purpose of this study was to identify college freshmen perceptions of the effectiveness of a nutrition module taught by graduate nutrition students. After the course ended, the graduate students conducted 5 focus groups with the participants. The questions presented in the groups focused on
different concepts learned within the course, and what they found most helpful about the course. The participants reported that the course provided them with increased knowledge of nutrition.

Increased awareness of nutrition can also positively effect the consumption of specific food items. Bergen and Yeh (19) demonstrated that a nutrition intervention could decrease the rate of soft drinks consumed in a college setting. The goal of the study was to examine the effects of an intervention promoting non-energy containing beverage consumption, compared to soft drink consumption through vending machines in a college setting. Eight soft drink vending machines were assigned to one of three interventions over a 9-week period: energy content labels on non-energy containing beverage selection panels, labels plus motivational posters, or control. The totals of all beverages sold were recorded at pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention. The results showed that the use of the labels combined with the motivational posters, compared with the control group, resulted in a significantly lower growth rate of soft drinks. Freedman and Connors (20) also showed that a nutrition intervention can positively influence the consumption of specific foods. The purpose of this study was to determine whether the Eat Smart point of purchase (POP) program affected food-purchasing habits of college students at an on-campus convenience store. The Eat Smart POP program labels specific healthful foods with a tag that reads “Fuel Your Life”. The labels were placed on foods in the cereal, soup, cracker, and bread categories for 5 weeks. Sales data for the specific food items were recorded pre- and post-intervention. The results showed that the sales of the tagged items in the cereal, soup, and cracker categories increased by 3.6%.
Nutrition interventions can positively influence food choice of college students in campus dining halls. Conklin, Cranage, and Lambert (21) showed that the use of food labeling in a campus dining hall affected the food choices of college students. The goal of this study was to determine whether freshmen were aware of the food labels and used the information on the labels to influence their food choices. Labels were placed at the point of selection on foods that were considered healthful. A web-based survey was then given to the participants. The results showed that females reported a significantly higher tendency than males to use labels to make food choices. Females also reported that the labels made a difference in their decision to eat at the dining hall rather than other restaurants.

Peterson, Duncan, Null, Roth, and Gill (22) also showed that increased awareness of nutrition positively affects food choice among college students. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of a point of selection intervention on college students’ perceptions and selections of 10 targeted health foods in a campus dining hall, and changes in their self-reported overall eating behaviors. The participants were given a survey regarding their eating behaviors pre-intervention. The intervention consisted of food labels, large signs, table tents, and flyers. All of the intervention materials displayed the same logo, reading “The Right Stuff.” Following the intervention the participants were given a survey regarding their use of the intervention materials and their eating habits. The results of the survey showed that due to the intervention, increased awareness of healthful foods was the top reason for self-reported changes in eating behaviors.

In a study by Driskell, Schake, and Detter (23), it was also shown that nutrition interventions can positively influence food choice of college students in campus dining
halls. The goal of this study was to examine the influence of the nutritional labeling program “Nutrition Bytes” on the eating habits of college students eating in dining halls. Nutrition Bytes labels were placed on food items that were considered to be healthy. After the labeling intervention, the participants were given a 15-item written, descriptive survey. The survey contained questions aimed at determining the participants’ frequency of eating in the dining halls, their use or non-use of the labels, their reasons for use or non-use of the labels, and whether they would use the labels if they were available online. The results of the survey revealed that 58% of the participants used the labels when making food choices.

*What makes an intervention?*

Current nutrition interventions aimed at increasing awareness are either based upon education and communication, or food labeling. As previously described, Richards et al. used newsletters, computer-based communication, and motivational interviewing as an intervention. Although the study did not determine which components of each material the participants liked, it did show that the materials did cause a change in food choice. Kicklighter et al. used a nutrition module taught by graduate nutrition students as an intervention. College freshmen reported that the module provided them with an increased knowledge of food portions, and healthier breakfast and snack food choices.

Another popular method for nutrition interventions is the use of food labeling, either at or near the point of food selection. There have been studies that have shown food labeling in college campus convenience stores and on vending machines can have an impact on students’ food choices. As previously mentioned, Freedman et al. used food labeling as a means of changing food choice among college students at an on campus halls.
convenience store. The labels were placed at the point of food selection, and increased sales of labeled items by 3.6%. Bergen et al. also used food labeling as a nutrition intervention. Labels were placed on healthier beverage choices in vending machines on a college campus. The labels lowered the growth of unhealthy beverage sales significantly.

Studies have also shown that food labeling in campus dining halls can have a positive effect on students’ food choices. As mentioned above, Conklin et al. used food labeling as an intervention in a campus-dining hall. The labels were placed at the point of food selection of several healthful foods. A survey showed that females had a greater tendency to use the labels when making food choices, and when deciding to eat at a dining hall rather than other restaurants. Peterson et al. also used food labeling at the point of selection in a campus dining hall. The results of the study showed that the labels increased awareness of healthful foods, and therefore encouraged the students to make healthy food choices. Driskell et al. used labels at the point of food selection as a nutrition intervention in a campus dining hall. The results of the study found that 58% of the participants used the food labels when making food choices.

There have been a few studies aimed at determining what students liked best about the nutrition intervention, or their reasons for use or non-use of the intervention. Kicklighter et al. found that students thought the most effective aspects of the nutrition module were the food models and the visual presentations. Driskell et al. surveyed participants to determine their reasons for using or not using their nutrition intervention. It was shown that the students used the food labels for general knowledge, health concerns, calorie counting, and specific nutrient concern. The students also noted that
they liked the information about serving size, ingredients, and specific nutrients on the labels.

Conclusion

Current research relating to nutrition interventions shows that increased awareness of nutrition information can positively influence food choices among college students. Increased awareness of nutrition information can positively influence food choices in college students in campus dining halls, convenience stores, and at vending machines. The research also reveals that successful nutrition interventions tend to have similar features. Generally, the type of interventions used are either communication-based, education-based, or a form of food labels. Students respond best to visuals, and information regarding serving size, ingredients, and specific nutrients.

Given the larger insights from the research literature, this study attempts to more accurately define the components of an effective nutrition intervention among college students in a campus dining hall. Based on the current literature, this study will incorporate serving size, food labels, and visuals into the nutrition intervention models.
METHODS

Introduction

As stated earlier, the goal of this study is to explore college students’ thoughts on three types of nutrition intervention models that are placed at the point of food selection throughout campus dining halls. Exploring students’ opinions could potentially reveal what components of the interventions are most helpful and why. Therefore, obtaining students’ opinions is necessary to create effective future intervention materials, and ultimately reduce the prevalence of obesity in college students.

This study will be conducted as a basic interpretive qualitative study. Qualitative studies are often conducted because there is a lack of information regarding a phenomenon or process. The purpose of a qualitative study is to understand a process or phenomenon from the participant’s perspective. Qualitative data is usually collected in the form of words and pictures, and are analyzed by the researcher. This type of data allows for a rich, detailed description of the process or phenomenon.

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore college students’ thoughts on three different nutrition intervention models that are placed throughout campus dining halls. The following sub-questions will be addressed in the research:

- How do college students make daily food choices?
- What beliefs do participants hold about nutrition and proper diet?
- What are the factors that influence food choice among the participants?
• How do participants respond to nutrition information displays about food group
distribution, fruits and vegetables, and portion size, which are placed at the point
of food selection?

To address these questions, this study included three different types of nutrition
intervention models. All of the models were designed and created on a computer design
program. The nutrition information contained on the models was based on the 2010
USDA Dietary Guidelines. The first model was a poster providing information about the
proper way to distribute food groups on a plate. The plate resembled a pie graph and was
divided into two 25% sections, and a 50% section. The 50% section contained colored
pictures of fruits and vegetables. One of the 25% sections contained colored pictures of
different lean protein sources. The second 25% section contained colored pictures of
different whole grain sources. The top of the poster had a phrase that read “Healthy Plates
= Healthy Tigers.”

The second model was made up of two different posters, demonstrating the
importance of fruits and vegetables. The first poster showed numerous types of fruits and
vegetables placed together in the shape of a rainbow. Under the rainbow was a statement
that read, “Taste the Rainbow with Fruits and Veggies.” The second poster showed a
vending machine that contained several types of fruits and vegetables. The poster had a
statement which read “Fruits and Veggies: The Original Fast Food.”

The third model was a set of several small icons that depicted correct portion sizes
for various foods. Each icon contained a picture of a non-edible object that approximated
the portion size of several foods available in the dining halls. These icons were placed
directly at corresponding foods’ point of selection. There were approximately 10-15 icons
placed throughout the dining halls.

This study was conducted in two on-campus dining halls, at a Midwestern
University. The participants were asked to observe the original nutrition information in
the dining halls for 1 week before the intervention. The intervention models were then
placed by the point of food selection in the dining halls on a weekly rotating basis. The
plate portion model was placed by the main entrée selection area for the first week. The
fruit and vegetable models were placed by the salad bar and fruit area for the second
week. The portion size icons were placed by their respective food item for the third week.
After the third week, the portion size icons were removed from the dining halls.

Participants

The participants for this study were recruited through an undergraduate nutrition
course. The course was freshman level, and titled “Nutrition, Current Concepts and
Controversies.” The researcher was a teaching assistant for the course, and recruited
participants through an announcement at the beginning of a class lecture. The participants
were not nutritional sciences majors, but were taking the class to satisfy a university
science requirement. The participants were students who ate the majority of their meals in
the campus dining halls.

There were 10 total participants in this study. They were all females with diverse
ethnic backgrounds, and had an age range of 18-20 years. Although no formal weight
statuses were collected, it was clear to the researcher that there was a mixture of normal
and overweight participants. The participants signed written consent forms approved by
the IRB. They were also made aware that they would be given pseudonyms in the study.
Data Collection

Following the 3-week intervention, each participant was interviewed for approximately 15 minutes. Before the interviews began, the participants were reminded they could drop out from the study at any time. Participants provided verbal consent to be interviewed and audio-recorded. The interview questions mainly focused on how the participants responded to the intervention models. The models were not available for the participants to view during the interviews, the students had to recall them from memory. There were also questions about the participants’ daily food choices, and factors effecting them. The participants were also asked about general changes that the dining halls could make to their nutrition information.

Data Analysis

After the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed them. After transcribing the interviews, they were coded using an open coding method. While using this method, each transcript was taken apart line-by-line and a code was given to each important concept or phrase. From this, emergent themes were identified, and conclusions were drawn.

Trustworthiness

The coded transcripts were verified in several ways. Member checking was used to allow each participant to determine if they were quoted accurately. The participants were also able to determine if the emerging themes matched with their experiences. The data was also double checked using peer reviews. When describing the themes, multiple
quotes were used in order to provide a rich, thick description. This allowed for a greater transferability of the findings.
FINDINGS

As the data was analyzed, three general themes emerged. First, there are barriers that influence healthy food selection among college students. Second, the students generally had positive responses to the intervention models. The third emergent theme is that students have a general idea about the type of nutrition interventions that would be most beneficial to changing their food choices.

Barriers influencing healthy food selection among college students

This study found three barriers that influence healthy food selection in campus dining halls among college students. First, good nutrition is not supported among all of the campus dining halls. Second, there are varying levels of nutrition and diet knowledge among the students. Finally, the willingness of the students to access and accept nutrition information is lacking.

*Good nutrition not supported on the campus.* Participants reported that a healthy food selection and nutritional information were difficult to find within the university’s dining halls. First, participants reported that healthy food choices were limited in their preferred dining halls. Participants specifically noted the lack of fruits and vegetables. Several participants said the only fruits available were oranges, apples, and bananas. Faye stated, “I always see like bananas, and then I never see like apples, or pears.” Holly noted, “There’s always salad you know, but it would be nice to have other options.” Aside from salad and a few fruits, students found it difficult to make healthy food selections in their preferred dining halls.

Students reported that it was difficult to find a healthy food selection among all of the campus dining halls. Many students said that the varying food selection among the
College Students Responses to Three Nutrition Interventions Placed in Campus Dining Halls at a Midwestern University

dining halls had an impact on where they chose to eat. These students stated that they would walk farther across campus to eat at a dining hall with a more healthy food selection than a dining hall that was closer to them. Bella said “I know there’s a salad bar at Maple, but it’s just not as appealing to me as the one at Jester.” Claire noted, “I know there is a big difference between locations, like at Jester that seem to have better quality meat because they cook it on a real grill.” Not only did students find it difficult to locate a healthy food selection across the campus dining halls, they also found food quality differences among the healthy selections.

In addition to a lacking healthy food selection, students also reported that nutritional information was not sufficient in the campus dining halls. Although some students were aware of some nutrition information, they found that it was not readily available. Ellie stated, “I think it’s pretty lacking. I know they have the nutrition information cards, but you know it’s like you have to go seek them out.” Many other students reported not seeing any type of nutritional information in the dining halls. Bella said, “Other than seeing your little things at Jester, I really haven’t ever seen anything [nutritional information]. Um, and I wouldn’t even know where to go to find it actually.” Students either found the nutrition information in the dining halls to be difficult to access or to be non-existent.

Students found it difficult to make healthy food choices on campus because they thought the dining halls did not offer a wide enough variety of healthy foods, the food choices varied too much between dining halls, and the nutrition information was severely lacking.
**Varying levels of nutrition and diet knowledge.** When asked about their feelings towards their current diets, students were found to have either a shallow or intermediate level of nutrition and diet knowledge. Those who had a shallow knowledge of nutrition and diet only mentioned the importance of fruit and vegetables in a healthy diet. Allison stated, “I mean I already ate fruits and vegetables.” Delilah noted, “So, I guess I would like more vegetables and things. I think I would if I had the opportunity to get to them but I really don’t.” Students with a shallow level of nutrition and diet knowledge know the importance of increased fruit and vegetable consumption, but do not demonstrate knowledge of additional important healthy diet concepts.

Many students were found to have an intermediate level of nutrition and diet knowledge. These students were able to recognize the importance of fruits and vegetables, lean meats, whole grains, and portion sizes in a healthy diet. Several students stated that they are not consuming the proper portion sizes of fruits and vegetables in their current diets. Ellie said, “I’ve been trying to make sure I have the majority of my plate vegetables or fruits, then some grains that’s like whole grains, and a little bit of meat.” Students with an intermediate level of nutrition and diet knowledge know the suggested daily portion sizes of several food groups, and are able to determine if they are meeting or falling short of the suggestions.

The students were found to have either a shallow or intermediate level of nutrition knowledge. The students’ varying levels of nutrition knowledge served as a barrier when attempting to make healthy food choices in the dining halls.

**Willingness to be informed about nutrition.** Students showed little initiative to access nutrition information for food in the dining halls because they did not
like the online information, and because they prefer visual information to pure text. The students found that having the dining hall nutrition information only online was a hassle, and said that it was preventing them from making informed food choices. Students did not like that nutrition information for the dining halls was placed only online, and not physically in the dining halls. Bella stated, “It’s just kind of a hassle to remember what you ate, or write it down, or just go look it up, it’s kind of like an effort thing.” Holly said, “I mean no one is going to look it up before they go eat. I mean it would be better if it was available right there.”. Additionally, students felt that having the dining hall nutrition information only online was preventing them from making informed food choices. Multiple students stated that they never know how many calories they are eating when they dine in the dining halls. Isabelle said, “There’s like this sandwich that Maple has sometimes, and there’s like 500 calories for like a half of one, which I didn’t realize, but I never would have looked it up.” Holly noted, “It would be especially helpful for some really fatty foods like hamburgers and stuff like that might have higher content of fat or content of calories in general. It might be nice just to know how much you are actually eating.” The students feel as though they are not making the most healthy food choices in the dining halls because the nutrition information is only available online and not physically available for them in the halls.

Students would prefer the nutrition information to be more visual in presentation, including less reading, more pictures, and less numbers. First, students do not want to see a lot of different numbers when they are viewing nutrition information in the dining halls. Several students stated that if they had to do math when viewing nutrition information they would not pay attention. Claire reported, “If you don’t understand the numbers,
you’re not gonna be able to use it effectively.” Bella noted, “I’m probably never gonna be like oh I wonder how many calories or how much sodium is in this just based off the dining hall food. I wouldn’t say it helps much unless you’re really really tracking it.”

Aside from students’ desire not to have to do math when viewing nutrition information in the dining halls, they may also not understand what the numbers mean and how to apply them to their food choices.

Second, students want nutrition information in the dining halls to be presented as more pictures and less text. Some students stated that they like the idea of posters, but do not want to have to read anything on them. Allison said, “We’re college kids, we don’t wanna do much reading anyway.” Students also reported that pictures with less text are better for their time schedules. Claire said, “I think I wanna see it, it’s visual, I wanna be quick because I wanna sit down and eat.” Participants would prefer dining hall nutrition information to be presented as more pictures and less text because of their unique lifestyles as college students.

These findings show that students are willing to be informed about nutrition information, but they may make healthier food choices if the information were to be more visual in nature, and placed directly in the dining halls.

**Favorable Responses to Models**

Overall, the participants’ responses to the nutrition education models placed in the dining halls were favorable. The participants liked all of the models, but there was a clear distinction as to their favorite model. The portion size icons received more positive feedback than the plate portion signs and the fruit and vegetables signs.
Positive responses to portion size icons. The participants preferred the portion size icons to the plate portion signs and the fruit and vegetables signs. The plate portion signs did receive positive feedback, but it was minimal. Faye stated “So, seeing that [plate portion model] is like really helpful in terms of like ok, I need to get this much on my plate of like fruits and vegetables or like this much of lean meat or this much of whole grains.” The fruit and vegetables signs received minimal feedback and most participants did not even remember seeing the signs. The participants preferred the portion size icons to the plate portion signs and the fruit and vegetables signs because of the noticeable difference in positive feedback amount.

Reasons why participants prefer portion size icons to other models. The participants gave several reasons to state why they liked the portion size icons more than the plate portion signs and fruit and vegetables signs. The reasons were the attention-grabbing placement, the use of commonplace objects on the icons, and the inclusion of eye-opening and easily forgotten nutrition information. These four reasons are what made the portion size icons more likeable and helpful to the participants than the other two models.

First, participants reported that the portion size icons were attention grabbing. Participants noted that the placement of the icons made them attention grabbing. Allison stated, “While I’m standing in line I would look at it [portion size icons]. So it definitely like caught your attention because it was right behind the counter when you go through, so I think everyone kinda saw it.” Faye noted, “It’s kind of like instant, it’s like more instilled, it’s like oh, I should only be eating this much, this is the correct portion.” Several other participants stated that the other models were not attention grabbing
because they were not placed in noticeable spots, as the icons were. The portion size icons caught the participants’ attention because they were placed directly at the point of food selection.

The participants also liked the icons because included images of commonplace objects in relation to portion sizes. Almost every participant stated that they felt the icons were helpful because of the objects. Claire noted, “Everyone knows how big a floppy disk is. Not everyone knows how big 6 ounces is, or 4 ounces, and stuff like that.” Ellie said, “When you’re scooping peanut butter or something, it’s like oh that’s right, ping pong ball, you know shoot to have it look like that. And so that was just kind of helpful cause you were like actively serving yourself you could really be thinking about how much you’re putting on your plate.” The participants found it helpful that the icons included images of commonplace objects that depicted correct portion size rather than ounces or other measurements.

Finally, the participants felt that the icons were likeable because they included eye-opening information. Many participants had little previous knowledge of correct food portion sizes, making the icons’ information new and eye opening to them. Claire said of the icons, “I remember being shocked, like wow, I think they’re really jarring.” Faye stated, “Well like I said, it kind of made me realize, okay, maybe I do eat too many cookies.” The participants noted that the information on the icons was eye opening to them, making them realize that they may not be getting the correct portions of food in the dining halls.

Additionally, the majority of participants stated that controlling their portion size is one of their biggest dietary struggles. Faye reported, “Portion is like something I really
struggle with, so having that [portion size icons] there is like a reminder, like ok you
know you’re only supposed to eat like this much.” Allison said “I liked them [portion size
icons] because it was like you could just kind of check your portion size while you’re
eating.” The icons served as a sort of reminder of proper food portion size for the
participants. The participants had positive responses to the portion size icons because
they provided them with nutrition information that they have trouble remembering.

Overall, participants preferred the portion size icons to the other two nutrition
models. They thought the icons were helpful because of the attention-grabbing
placement, the commonplace images used, and the eye-opening and often forgotten
information included on the icons. The participants did give a few positive responses
about the other two models, but could not pinpoint exact reasons as they could for the
portion size icons. The participants thought the portion size icons provided the most help
when trying to make healthy food choices.

What nutrition education information would college students like to be present
throughout campus dining halls?

College students would like some type of nutrition information to be permanently
available throughout the campus dining halls. Students find the most important aspects of
future dining hall nutrition interventions to be the type of information included and the
location of the intervention.

Type of nutrition information available is important. There are three types of
nutrition education information students want to see present in the dining halls. These
types include healthy alternative ideas, food preparation and cooking methods used, and
the importance of good nutrition for your health.
Students would like to see examples of healthy alternatives for the more unhealthy choices of food available in the dining halls. One student, Claire, suggested, “In the burger line, put like instead of fries, grab a salad, like a picture. If you’re trying to do healthy alternatives and stuff like that, that would be pretty neat.” Several students also suggested information about how to choose an entire healthy meal in the dining halls. It is important for the students to be presented with information regarding healthy alternatives to the more unhealthy foods in the dining halls.

Students would like to see information about the cooking or preparation methods of foods available in the dining halls. Many students find it difficult to determine the cooking methods of different foods just by looking at them. Ellie said of the current dining hall, “You see broccoli and you’re like, oh you know, I think that’s a good thing, and so then I get back to the table and realize that it appears that it’s been either cooked in butter or oil.” Additionally, students stated that if the cooking or preparation methods of food in the dining halls were available, it would help them make healthier food choices. In order to make healthier food choices, the students would like to have information about the cooking or preparation methods of foods available in the dining halls.

Students would like to see information about the importance of good nutrition to their health. Several students felt that the signs from the study needed more in-depth nutrition education information on them. Ellie stated, “If there was maybe a little bit of explanation particularly the fruit sign just explaining why eating a fruit of different colors is helpful.” Several other students stated that they would like to know why certain nutrition information is important for their health.
Overall, students think that the type of nutrition information contained in an intervention is important. They would like to see information regarding healthy alternatives to available foods, cooking methods used, and the importance of nutrition to overall health.

*Means of distribution of nutrition education information within the dining hall is important.* The students provided three reasons regarding the importance of the way nutrition information is distributed within the dining hall. The students said it was important for the information to physically be in the dining hall versus online, to place the information close to its corresponding foods, and for the information to be visually pleasing.

The students would prefer any nutrition education information that is available online, also be placed within the dining halls. Gabriella said, “The little sheet that’s online with the numbers and stuff, I think if that was placed in the dining hall where the food areas were, I think that would be more helpful if we would see that instead of just have to look at it at home.” The majority of students reported that they would make healthier food choices if the nutrition information that was available online was also available within the dining halls. Placing nutrition information within the dining halls, as opposed to online only, could help students to make healthier food choices.

The students would prefer nutrition information to placed next to, or close, to its corresponding food item. Ellie stated, “So when you had them up [near the food items] it was like, you know, when you’re scooping peanut butter or something, it’s like oh that’s right ping pong ball. So that was just kind of helpful, because while you were like actively serving yourself you could really be thinking about how much you’re putting on
your plate.” Another student suggested putting nutrition information on top of the food counters because there is so much unused space; therefore the information would be next to the correct foods. By placing the information next to its corresponding food item, students can instantly learn more about the nutritional details of the item. Knowing more nutrition information may allow students to make healthier food choices within the dining halls.

Finally, the students would prefer the nutrition information to be displayed in a visually pleasing format. Bella stated, “Maybe some cool pictures. It sounds bad, but you do want to like catch people’s eyes and make them think, okay, maybe I will go look at that.” Claire noted, “I think I want to see it, it’s visual. I want to be quick, because I want to sit down and eat.” Several other students reported that they would be more apt to pay attention to a nutrition intervention if it contained visually pleasing images. If nutrition interventions contain visually pleasing images, students may be more inclined to use the information to help change their food choices.

In addition to type of information included on interventions, students think that the means in which the information is distributed is important. Students would prefer nutrition information to be placed directly in the dining halls near the corresponding foods, and for the information to be visually pleasing.
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore college students’ thoughts regarding three types of nutrition intervention models that were placed throughout campus dining halls. Analysis of the data revealed three main themes: there are barriers that influence food choice among college students, the intervention models generally received positive responses, and the students have a preferred means of obtaining nutrition information in the dining halls. The findings will be discussed in terms of their relationships to the study’s main research questions, relevance to the current literature, and justification for future research.

A primary finding of this study is that there are barriers that influence food choice among college students. The students found it difficult to make healthy, informed food choices in the dining halls for several reasons. Students reported that the dining halls had an extremely limited selection of healthy food choices, and little to no nutrition information available. The students’ varying levels of nutrition knowledge also served as a barrier for making healthy food choices. Both students with shallow, and intermediate levels of nutrition knowledge found it difficult to make healthy food choices in the dining halls. Finally, the students’ willingness to be informed about proper nutrition proved to be a barrier when trying to make healthy food choices in the dining halls.

This finding provides insight into two of the study’s main research questions; how do college students make daily food choices, and what are the factors that influence food choice among college students. As mentioned earlier (11), there are several factors that can influence students’ food choices in the dining halls, such as taste, convenience, time limitations, health concerns, weight control, and physical and social environments. Not
only does this finding support the previous notion regarding students’ food choices, it allows for a more detailed understanding of how and why students make their choices. We can now understand that college students may be choosing less healthy foods in the dining halls due to a perceived lack of availability and variety of healthful foods. This is particularly consistent with the idea that convenience and time limitations influence student food choice. If students are pressed for time and convenience, they most likely will not seek out the most healthful food options within the dining halls, especially if they perceive the selection as limited. Additionally, this finding offers new information regarding students’ food choice and dining hall nutrition information. We can see that students may be making less healthy food choices due to a lack of nutrition information in the dining halls. Furthermore, students’ varying levels of nutrition knowledge, coupled with lacking nutrition information, makes it difficult for students to make healthy food choices in the dining halls. It is important to note that the campus dining halls did have an adequate selection of healthy food choices, but that the students perceived it as lacking. This could be because of their varying levels of nutrition knowledge, or several other social or environmental factors that have not yet been identified. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that students want to make healthier food choices, but need more support from the dining halls in the form of increased awareness of available healthy foods, and distribution of student-tailored nutrition information.

The study also found that students generally had positive responses to the three intervention models. This finding specifically addresses the study’s research sub-question and main purpose, regarding how participants respond to the three nutrition intervention models. This finding is consistent with current literature in that students do not generally
have negative responses to nutrition interventions. However, this finding offers new insight into which components of the nutrition models they prefer, and why.

Although all of the intervention models received positive feedback, the portion size icons were the clear favorite of the students. The majority of the participants reported that remembering correct portion size is something they struggle with, especially in a self-serve dining hall setting. For example, students found it difficult to remember how much 3 ounces of meat is, or 1 ounce of cheese is. The participants did not mention problems with remembering to eat enough fruits and vegetables or correct proportions of food groups on their plates, which suggests students prefer intervention models with information they think is difficult to remember when making food choices. The students also responded positively to the commonplace images on the portion size icons. They noted that having recognizable objects represent correct portion sizes of the foods helped them to make better food choices. This suggests that students who can relate to the images or information contained in a nutrition intervention have the ability to make healthier food choices. Finally, the students reported they liked the attention-grabbing placement of the portion size icons. The portion size icons were placed directly at the corresponding food’s point of selection, in keeping with the successful intervention placement found in several current studies. However, this study shows that students liked the point of food selection placement because it instantly reminded them of the portion size information they found difficult to remember. Overall, this finding suggests that certain nutrition information is difficult for students to remember, and they would like intervention models that are able to help them remember the information as they are making food choices in the dining halls.
The third main finding of the study is that college students have preferences regarding the method of distribution and type of nutrition information they would like to be available in campus dining halls. This finding provides insight into the study’s research questions regarding factors that influence students’ food choices, and how students make food choices in the dining halls. This information is unique because the students were able to express their own ideas, separate from the intervention models, regarding what nutrition information they would like in the dining halls.

The students would prefer the dining halls to include more than one type of nutrition information, such as cooking methods used, healthy alternatives to available foods, and the importance of good nutrition to overall health. This demonstrates the students’ desire for different forms of nutrition information, other than simply posting the nutrient content of the dining hall foods. Second, the students would prefer the nutrition information to be placed near the point of food selection within the dining halls. This shows that unless the nutrition information is placed directly in front of the corresponding foods, the students will most likely not go out of their way to seek it out. We can understand now that even if dining halls place nutrition information throughout other areas of the dining halls, students may not use the information when making their food choices. Finally, students would like nutrition information to be presented in a large, visually pleasing format. The students suggested this presentation technique because it fits with their unique college lifestyles, allowing them to quickly and easily assess the nutrition information for the food choices. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that only the students know what type of nutrition intervention would be best at helping improve their food choices in the dining halls.
The findings from this study provide insight into previously unaddressed issues in the current body of literature. From these findings two conclusions can be made. First, the students are simply unaware of pertinent nutrition information for the foods in the dining halls. This is understood by the idea that students reported trouble remembering correct portion sizes and that they perceived the dining halls as having an inadequate selection of healthy foods, when in reality the dining halls actually did contain adequate healthy selections. Second, students are willing and open to receiving help with making better food choices in the dining halls. This can be shown by the fact that students had positive responses to the intervention models, and that they have a defined idea of what nutrition information they think would be most helpful in changing their food choices. Although the study did not define the precise components of a successful nutrition intervention for college students, it did hint at a few components that may be more helpful to the students than others. A successful nutrition intervention for college students in a campus dining hall may be one that contains easy to understand, but often forgotten nutrition information, relatable images, and should be placed at the point of food selection.

Implications

Now that we have a better understanding of the components of a nutrition intervention that might best help students change their food choices, several populations stand to benefit. In addition to college students; nutrition professionals and dietitians, and campus dining halls directors can all benefit from these findings. Nutrition professionals and dietitians generate most of the nutrition education information that is distributed to numerous different populations in the general public. Therefore, these professionals
should use the findings when creating nutrition information that is to be specifically tailored for the college student population. Additionally, the study should allow nutrition professionals and dietitians to realize there is a strong need for specifically tailored nutrition information for every population type in the country, and to create materials accordingly.

Campus dining hall directors are responsible for choosing the nutrition information that is placed within their respective dining halls. Based on the findings regarding the type of nutrition information students would find most helpful in the dining halls, directors should consider choosing simple, understandable, nutrition information to place near each food selection area. If nutrition information is delivered in this fashion, students may be more inclined to choose healthier food options in dining halls. Additionally, dining halls directors should consider further heightening awareness of the current healthy food selection. Although there are adequate healthy food choices in the dining halls, the students do not have the same perception and therefore need to be made more aware of the healthy choices that are already there. These actions could have the potential to positively influence food choice among students, regardless of their time or convenience restrictions.

The group that stands to benefit the most from the findings of this study is college students, more specifically; college students who would like to make a change in their food choices. If dining hall directors place nutrition interventions that contain components identified in this study in dining halls, students could be more inclined to change their food choices when in the dining halls. In addition to helping change food
choice in the dining halls, students could use the intervention information and apply it when making food choices outside of the dining halls.

Limitations

Although the study adds several new ideas to the current literature, it does contain limitations, thus providing insight on areas for future research. The most limiting factors in this study were the small sample size, short intervention period, and the gender of the participants. A larger sample size would allow for more variety in participant response, potentially revealing information regarding the nutrition interventions that other participants did not contribute. In addition, the intervention period of the study was 3 weeks, a relatively short period compared to other intervention studies. Having a longer intervention period would allow the students to further be exposed to the nutrition information contained in the interventions and determine if they realized any long-term changes in food choices. Having a larger sample size and longer intervention period would ultimately provide more insight into the intervention components that students find most helpful when trying to change food choice in the dining halls. The original intent of the study was to include both males and females, but only females participated for the full duration of the study. Although it is not currently understood if gender has a significant effect on students’ responses to nutrition interventions, there may be room for gender response bias in this study. Addressing these limitations in future studies may provide more insight into the intervention components that students find most helpful when trying to change food choices in the dining halls.

Future studies ought to focus on further investigating what nutrition information students find to be most effective at helping to change their food choices in dining halls.
To accomplish this, researchers should consider addressing the specific needs of college students. First, gathering more information regarding factors effecting students’ food choices could provide a better understanding of students’ needs. Using different types of intervention models not included in this study or current studies could supply researchers with more feedback pertaining to the likes and dislikes of students. Although quantitative studies provide essential information about the ability of nutrition interventions to change food choice, they do not provide direct student feedback regarding their detailed thoughts on the interventions. Without knowing the students’ detailed thoughts on interventions, it would be harder to determine their specific needs. I believe that without an unstructured qualitative approach, researchers will have difficulty determining what nutrition information students find to be most effective at helping to change their food choices in dining halls.

Conclusion

Though the specific purpose of the study was to explore college students’ thoughts on nutrition interventions and attempt to determine what they consider most helpful in changing food choices, the ultimate goal was to positively effect students’ choices, thus helping them to lose weight. Based on the results of this study, if a nutrition intervention contains easy to understand, but often forgotten, nutrition information, relatable images, and is placed at the point of food selection, students may be more inclined to change food choices, lose weight, and reduce the prevalence of obesity among college students.
APPENDIX

Transcription 1 – “Allison”

Me: So first I’ll just ask you a little bit about like what your regular diet is like or what you do for physical activity

A: Um so previously to like nutrition or even your experiment, it was kinda just in a hurry. So I would probably go to Dobbs, grab the grill, grab fries, and then just head out the doors, because it was the easiest and fastest to eat. So yeah that was before.

Me: Um, would you consider your diet to be healthy?

A: Um now I would say it was, before it wasn’t. And I was kinda like oh, freshman 15 it’s not gonna happen. And I didn’t really realize it until I went home, of course my mom pointed it out and all that. So, um, I’d say that now it is because I’ll take the time to like grab a salad, if I’m gonna leave and just put that in a box and have that as my main thing and like a smaller side of something else.

Me: Ok, sounds not that bad. Um, and then I just wanna talk about um if you noticed that there wasn’t any nutrition information in the dining halls at all? Um, how does that.. So obviously did you notice that there wasn’t anything in there, at all? Like there’s no labels, there’s nothing really.

A: I didn’t notice until I started seeing your cards around. So it’s like, I wasn’t, I never noticed that there wasn’t anything there, but then like when they were there I was like “oh, where have these been?”

C: Um so actually the only stuff they had before was just is you go online you can just look at straight like calorie counts and just different nutrients but it’s just numbers. Do you think that you or like your peers would take the time to do something like that, before every meal?

A: I really only know one person looks that up.

Me: Yeah, ok. So, we’re gonna go on to the first one that I put up which was, I’ll just remind you of what it was, it was like a plate and it had like half of the plate was fruits and vegetables, and a fourth was like lean meats, and then a fourth whole grains. Um, did that do anything for you?

A: I tried to apply it, I don’t like grains, so that’s kinda the only one I ignored. But um I definitely tried to apply it when I was gonna get a to go box. I would be like alright well there’s a section right here that’s exactly half the box, so I’ll fill that, so yeah it would work.
Me: Ok, um next one was a couple signs that I made about fruits and vegetables. There was one that was like a rainbow of fruits and vegetables and one was like a vending machine that had fruits and vegetables in it.

A: I saw the rainbow

Me: Yeah, those were my gimmicky ones. Um, how did those make you feel?

A: I mean I already ate fruits and vegetables so it didn’t really affect me. It was just kinda more like while im standing in line like I would look at it. so it definitely like caught your attention, because it was right behind the counter when you go through so. I think everyone kinda saw it cause I saw people commenting on it. but me personally it didn’t really affect me, it was just something to look at.

Me: Ok, um so those were the ones that were more like gimmicky. Do you think that those have more effect on people than just would like numbers or do you think the pictures are nicer?

A: I like the pictures cause it’s like we’re college kids we don’t wanna do much reading anyway. So it’s like the little cards it’s like this serving should equal this size.

Me: Ok yeah, those were the ones I was going to talk about next. So did what did those do? The little serving size ones?

A: I like those a lot, yeah. I like those ones. Like getting a dessert or whatever this should be this big. And getting like chicken, chicken is the normal size anyway, but I liked them cause it was like you could just kind of check your portion size while you’re eating.

Me: Yeah, um I tried to make them so that they were more popular things that people ate, I wasn’t gonna put them on everything. Um, so overall, which ones did you feel like were most effective, as in like you’ll continue on with those practices and you’ll keep that stuff with you.

A: Definitely the portion size ones

Me: The portion size ones, ok. And why do you think that was?

A: Um because it was like everyday things that you can relate to so it’s like I can remember oh I saw a picture of a card I know what a card looks like, I know how big it is, so.

Me: Ok, um and what do you think I could do to improve the other ones?
A: Um, I thought the other ones were fine, it was just like me personally, maybe like the more gimmicky ones as you called them, would work for someone else, but I thought they were fine. Just like, I know people noticed it.

Me: And um, do you have any suggestions of something that would be good for a dining hall or a different way of delivering the information, or do you think?

A: Um I would do it, like if I was in charge of a dining hall, put it like on the trays, like how like McDonald’s and stuff will have their information on the trays, cause everyone gets one, you look at it, you look down, so that’s what I would do.

Me: And so you said that you think that people your age and people that are eating in the dining halls would prefer pictures and more recognizable images rather than just like how it looks on a food label, like calories, fat, sodium

A: Yeah, nobody is gonna read

Me, Ok yeah, that’s what I’m getting at. Um, let me think of anything else. Ok, this is just a question I’m going to make up. Um, do you think that it’s important to have this information in the dining halls?

A: Yeah, I mean it’s not like they can really get in trouble, like if we gain weight it’s our own fault. But, I don’t know, I feel like people, someone would try to blame the school for gaining weight. So it’s kind of like a good liability tactic I guess, to be like well like this is how much you should have. Cause they have it online I guess it’s like you have to have it somewhere, but it’s kind of like mean just to have it online where no one’s gonna see it.

Me: Yeah, um, ok I guess that’s it. Um, and then I’m supposed to ask you if there’s anything else you would like to add about anything.

A: I’m all good. That was like the easiest study I’ve ever done. All you have to do is like eat like you normally do.

Me: Yeah but I mean the goal wasn’t to like, I mean if it did change the way that you ate then that’s great, but that’s not the point. The point is for me to interview everyone and then like analyze the results and then hopefully keep some of those in there permanently.

A: Yeah, I like the portion ones the best.

Me: Yeah, I like those the best too. Ok, well thank you so much for responding and helping me.
Me: Ok, um so first I just want to see if you could describe some of your typical current eating habits.

B: Um, are you looking for where do I eat the most, as far as dining halls go?

Me: No, just what you eat

B: Well it does depend on where I go. When I go to Plaza I find myself a little more healthier, because they do kind of have like that giant grain and breakfast bar over there. So I eat a lot of bagels, and like stuff when I go there. But you know when I go to Dobbs it’s a lot harder, I think it just kinda, that’s why I asked what location. I find myself when I go to different places that kinda impacts how I eat. Like if I go to Rollins yeah I’m probably gonna have to get pizza, so it’s not good always. But yeah if I go to Plaza I’ll get like there’s even a huge salad bar, I get a lot of like celery and peanut butter. And like I said at Dobbs I find myself eating like cheese fries and hamburgers and so you know it just kinda depends on what day it is and where I decided to go.

Me: Um, do you think that’s because it’s just what they have out there, are you eating based on what’s in front of you or what display looks the nicest

B: It’s kind of along that. Like, I know there’s a salad bar at Dobbs but it’s just not as appealing to me as the one at Plaza. So I mean, that’s kinda like a dumb thing to say but it is actually like way more appealing there, so like oh I’ll eat some celery today.

Me: Um, so the next question is do you wish you could change anything about those habits?

B: Well yeah, I’ve of course thought about it before. I would like to eat more fruits and veggies on a daily basis cause I know that just like we learned in class like everything is fine in moderation, but I do need to add definitely more dairy and vegetables to my diet, so yeah I wish that no matter where I went I would find at least one extra vegetable to put on my plate, but I guess that sometimes that just doesn’t happen.

Me: Ok, um, the next question is how would you describe the current or like the original kind of baseline nutrition information in the dining halls?

B: Other than seeing your little things at Dobbs, I really haven’t ever seen anything. Um, and I wouldn’t even know where to go to find it actually.

Me: Um, so basically they don’t have anything in the dining halls at all. Um, they have, you can actually go online, like everyday and look at just like straight numbers like it looks on a food label kind of, just like calories, fat, protein, sodium. Um, do you think that that is helpful? Just having it online and just having straight numbers.
B: No, because it’s like that thing we did in class. We kind of did it for a week or however long we did it, we’d track our food and then we’d go see the calories and so it was really eye opening to be like oh wow I eat this food like every other day, maybe I should tone that down. But, if I wasn’t forced to do it, I probably really won’t do that, so I’m probably never gonna be like oh I wonder how many calories or how much sodium is in this and just based off the dining halls food. I wouldn’t say it helps much unless you’re really really like tracking it.

Me: Um, but do you think if there was something actually in the dining halls you would be more apt to maybe pay attention?

B: To even walk up and look at it occasionally, I think I would be way more apt to and I think that’s true for everybody actually. It’s just kind of a hassle to remember what you ate or write it down or just go look it up, it’s kind of like an effort thing.

Me: Ok um, since you didn’t the two other ones, we’ll skip to this one. Um, so talking about the portion size ones where it had like a kind of everyday object and then like um the food. Um how, I have to word things in a weird way to not persuade you, how did those make you feel?

B: They were a bit intimidating cause it was kinda like, I’m sorry I can’t really remember what was what, but if say one was a cookie I was like oh that’s the portion size, I normally get like three of those and walk back to my table. So, I mean it was definitely helpful, and like I said if I would’ve been more on track I’m sorry

Me: No, it’s ok.

B: But yeah, it was definitely like eye opening

Me: And so did that maybe influence of the food choices you made, would you have like…

B: Well like I said it kind of made me realize, ok maybe I do eat too many cookies. But like honestly I feel like if they were to have something like that in the dining halls all the time, you know, if people kind of got the idea of what this is, like it was a little confusing at first, I remember my boyfriend asked me what’s that, and I was like I don’t know. Um, but I feel like if you had something in there and everyone kinda had a general knowledge about it like ok so this is just your general healthy serving size that it would definitely help out and like you could catch people’s interest and kind of expand that more.

Me: Um, and you think something like that where it has like recognizable images, um would be more helpful than just like…

B: Like a cup or an ounce
Me: Labels

B: Oh ok

Me: Or something like that. Or just saying like a cup or an ounce

B: Well, I personally feel like when you go to like Burger King or McDonald’s and they have that giant thing up on the wall with like mini fine print. So, I know they have to post that in most cases, but I mean I don’t think that’s necessarily a good idea for the dining halls, I think you need kind of interesting print, or maybe some cool pictures, it sounds bad but you do want to like catch people’s eyes and make them think ok maybe I will go look at that. So, I mean I think definitely yeah, a chart would help. And then also like I said I really like the little recognizable everyday idea because, not that people don’t know what ounces are, or like what half a cup is, but sometimes like when you’re talking about an ounce of cheese and normally ounces is like a liquid, it’s like oh ok well how much is that? Yeah, so recognizable objects definitely a plus.

Me: Ok, so my last is are there any like, if they’re not gonna put my stuff in there permanently, um just in general, are there any changes that you would like to see in the dining halls, just in general with their nutrition information or just signs or just anything that you would like to see in there, regardless if it’s my stuff or not.

B: Um, yeah not in particular. I feel like for the most part they do a good job. This whole concept that you’re doing I think it’s a really good idea. Cause like I said, when you go to any typical restaurant, like which is offering the same kind of things at our dining halls do, they have to post it. So, I feel like it’s a good idea if you can try to get them to do that.

Me: Ok, um, so the last question I have to ask is just is there anything else you want to say about anything?

B: Nope
Transcription 3 – “Claire”

Me: Ok, um so first I’m just gonna ask you, um if you could just describe a little bit like your current typical eating habits.

C: Ok, um, typically I eat like, do want like what I eat, or when I eat or…

Me: Everything

C: Ok, um usually I eat like a nutrigrain bar, or like an orange, or some cheerios or something for breakfast. Um, a couple days a week I do go to Starbucks and have like their coffees and stuff but, lunch I eat in the dorm and dinner most of the time I eat in the dorm. I try to do like a lighter lunch, and then like a more hearty dinner. But, other than that um, I try to like be knowledgeable of what I eat, but it’s not really my top priority like I want to eat something that tastes good over something that doesn’t, like healthy or not.

Me: Ok, um, would you want to change anything about your current eating habits?

C: Um, I think I would like to be more knowledgeable about like how many like calories are in things, like what stuff is in what I eat. Um, the class helped me with that like a little bit knowing like protein and stuff like that, but other than that I would just like to know I guess like if what I’m eating is normal, or like abnormal, or if like this is what I’m supposed to be eating… maybe healthy alternatives that taste good too. Cause I know like, this actually happened to me yesterday, um, I was making a salad and like I did light ranch but it’s really gross…

Me: It is pretty gross.

C: I would like an alternative to ranch that’s not you know two hundred calories for how much I put on my salad, and stuff kind of like that I guess, is that what you’re looking for?

Me: Yeah! Yeah, I’m not here to persuade you, I have to word things in kind of a weird way. You’ll probably see that I’m just asking you and not trying to persuade you or anything. Ok, um next, um, how would you describe the current nutritional information that’s available in the dining halls?

C: I see like the pamphlets and stuff, but I don’t think it’s very good. Um, I think it could definitely improve with like they have the signs of like what’s for like dinner and breakfast and lunch, but maybe have like, I guess just more information. Like the bowls and stuff they have, I guess are pretty portion friendly, but they don’t really say like a good meal today would be, like instead of a burger and fries like, have a burger and a salad. Because whenever they display it it’s always what’s like right next to each other,
instead of like you know different combinations. As far as information goes I feel like like it’s there but it’s not very well known.

Me: Um, so yeah, actually the only nutrition information they have right now is online and it’s just straight like, basically it looks like a food label, or you know something they would have at a fast food restaurant where it’s just numbers. It’s just numbers. And so you didn’t even know that so it’s like…

C: Yeah, I’ve just seen like the colorful pamphlets and there’s like two or three of them.

Me: Um, so the online thing and just like the straight numbers, is that something that you would use… well obviously you don’t use it but…

C: Um, I didn’t even know about it.

Me: Yeah, exactly.

C: So, it would be something I would use but I think a lot of people don’t know how to interpret it. Like I can see that there are 40 grams of sodium in something and like I probably shouldn’t eat that. Or I probably shouldn’t eat something with like 50 grams of sugar or something like that. But if you don’t understand the numbers, you’re not gonna be able to use it effectively.

Me: Ok, um, next I’m just gonna talk about the things individually. Um, so the first one that I put out was like um a plate and it was divided into like a pie graph and it had like one half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables, and then like a fourth should be grains and a fourth should be lean meats.

C: Ok

Me: Um, do you remember that?

C: I do not, I’ve heard that before, but I don’t remember it from this.

Me: Ok, well, we can skip that one. Um, and then the next one that I had was um, like I made this rainbow and it had all these fruits and vegetables in it, and I had another one that was like a vending machine and it had fruits and vegetables in it.

C: I remember seeing the vending machine one

Me: Um, so the ones that are about fruits and vegetables, and the ones that I think are a little more gimmicky, with like cute slogans and stuff, um, how would those or did those make you feel.
C: Well I feel like I always like I love like grape day. Um I think they’re very attention grabbing, like they make you notice it which is a good thing. Like you know, you need to be aware that this is here and that you need this. Um, I don’t think gimmicky is bad, I think that if they had stuff like that they would really help. Or like a sign, like in Plaza they have like the glass thing where all the fruit and stuff is, if they had like a sign on top of it that was maybe like a bright yellow pineapple, like hey we have this today, because a lot of people like steer away from that. I think that if you’re talking about like the colors of signs and stuff and like having them there then that would definitely help.

Me: Um, and did those signs, the fruits and vegetables one, make you do anything differently?
C: If definitely made me take a look, like at what was there, like even more than I normally would.

Me: Ok, next one, um I had were the portion size ones

C: Yes

Me: Where it was like the little icons, where it had like a light bulb, or like a baseball

C: Like a floppy disk, did you have a floppy disk one?

Me: Uh huh

C: I remember seeing that one, I don’t remember what it was for, but I remember being shocked, like wow.

Me: Um, so how did those make you feel?

C: I think they’re really like jarring. Like if you say, like I know that we talked in class, like the average like meat size is like a deck of cards and if you think about like what you get to eat, that’s like way more. And it’s definitely like hey you’re probably eating way too much. It definitely hit me hard; I remember the floppy disk one like very clearly.

Me: Um, did those influence you to do anything differently?

C: Kind of when you’re eating, like I’m eating I’m like well I should only eat this much, instead of you know just eating what’s on my plate. You should pay attention to how much you’re eating, just not try and finish everything.

Me: Um, and why do you think that those are the most attention grabbing or for you?

C: I just think because they’re relatable. Like everyone knows how big a floppy disk is. Not everyone knows how big 6 ounces is, or 4 ounces, and stuff like that. I know I
struggle with that a lot. Like how many servings have you had, I don’t know, I mean I ate like one piece of pizza, but I don’t know how many servings that is, and stuff like that.

Me: Ok, good. Um, so do you think that there’s anything differently that I could do for those serving size ones or for the fruits and vegetables ones that would make it better or more effective?

C: Um, probably just quantity.

Me: Yeah

C: Just put like more, anywhere you can stick them I think. With fruits and vegetables it’s like a really good thing. Or like maybe, I don’t know if they would let you but like in the burger line, put like instead of fries grab a salad, or something like that, like a picture. Like if you’re trying to do healthy alternatives and stuff like that, that would be really neat. People respond really well to suggestions, I think.

Me: Ok, um, my last question is um, regardless of my signs and stuff do you think that there’s any other changes that the dining halls could make to more effectively distribute nutrition information?

C: Definitely. Um, they do like the weekly menu, they could like attach it to that, like the nutritional information. That way it’s right there and you don’t have to go looking for it. I mean if it’s there you’re gonna use it. So, um they have a lot of counter space, so maybe they could utilize that. For plaza like today’s sandwich, maybe put it on there because they already have those printed up. And, I don’t know, just make serving size and stuff.

Me: Um, so this is a question I probably shouldn’t ask because it’s not really in the right format, um, would you say that you and other people that eat in the dining halls would respond better to something like I’m doing or something where it looked just like a food label stuck on everything… like calories.

C: Definitely something more relatable and not like a food label

Me: Like where it just had straight numbers, like where you had to add up your calories and just do it like that

C: No, I don’t think so. I think that I wanna see it, it’s visual, I wanna be quick, because I wanna sit down and eat. So, If I have to sit there and do math I’m not gonna wanna pay attention. And you know I think with the sign if you’re going to be doing that just like changing them or moving them around too, so it’s not just oh that’s a picture of a banana I see everyday, it’s like you know a banana and then an apple, or like carrots or something like that. I definitely think that there are a lot of things the dining halls could change.
Me: Yeah, me too.

C: Like, make better. A big concern for me, I don’t know if this matters to you, is like the meat in like the burgers and stuff, I know there’s a big difference between location, like at Dobbs they seem to have better quality meat cause they cook it like on a real grill, then anywhere else. I don’t know if that is a big deal, but that influences where my friends and I eat a lot. Like we go to Dobbs, I live in Hudson, so we go to Dobbs, like even that far walk just to get better stuff.

Me: Yeah, that’s weird. They told me, cause I met with the head of all of the dining halls, and they said that their recipes differ for every single dining hall. Like, he was like, we have like 5 different chili recipes. I’m like, why don’t you just make them all the same. I don’t know.

C: I mean, obviously some places are better at some things, but. You know I don’t know if you did anything with Baja, um I don’t remember seeing anything but I feel like a lot of nutritional information should be available there just because I feel like a lot of it’s really bad for you. Because they don’t like drain the fat off their meat or like the grease off their meat or anything. I think that would be a good one, cause people eat there all the time and gain a lot of weight.

Me: Yeah, I’m not familiar with any of the dining halls really. I’ve only been in two, I’ve only been in Plaza and Dobbs.

C: Oh really?

Me: Where I put the signs

C: Yeah, I mean they’re good, there are definitely like difference between each one, but those are definitely the two hardest hitting I would say.

Me: Yeah, ok, um and then I’m just supposed to ask you if there’s anything else you want to say about anything

C: Um, I don’t think so. I think the signs were a really good idea. I think it’s a really good undertaking and I think that people respond to it if you do it in the correct way. Just make them like interesting and like attention grabbing and all of that.

Me: Ok, well thank you so much.
Transcription 4 – “Delilah”

Me: Um, so first I just want to ask you um, if you could just describe some of your typical eating habits.

D: Typical eating habits. Um, I don’t know, I usually eat like, I never really eat like main meals, I eat like a little bit throughout the day and just snack on things. But, since I know I know I do that I kind of like try and still get in the necessary requirements of each thing.

Me: So, like what would you eat on a typical day?

D: Um, cereals like

Me: And you eat everything in the dorm?

D: No, I eat in the dining halls too. I just eat not very much

Me: Well, that’s what I meant, like you eat, you live in the dorms

D: I do live in the dorm, yeah

Me: So you eat in the dining hall in the dorm?

D: Yes

Me: Ok, um, is there anything that you would want to change about your current eating habits? Or do you like them or do you think they’re good or…

D: Um, I guess they’re, I mean I could eat more, there’s always room for improvement. So, I guess like more vegetables and things. I think I would if I had more opportunity to get to them but I don’t really.

Me: Ok, um next questions is how would you describe the current nutrition information that’s in the dining halls?

D: Ok

Me: Like just what was there

D: Without your signs?

Me: Yeah, that was just there without them, that was just there at the beginning, the first day you went

D: Not really anything
Me: Um, so basically the only nutrition information they have is online, um everyday you would have to go everyday and look at it, and what it is is just like just numbers, just like calories, like how it looks on a food label, or how you go to a fast food and they have that huge sign with all the like grid thing with all the numbers… it just looks like that. Um, is that something that you would do…if it was online only?

D: No

Me: Why do you think that is?

D: I don’t, I don’t know. I just kind of like go when I’m there. I don’t really plan ahead what I eat, I just kind of go off of what it looks like and if it looks good.

Me: Um, so you think that just straight numbers in general, like even if they were there in the dining halls, like if they had little labels on every single thing with like the calories, would that, do you think that’s helpful?

D: Um, yeah, actually I think I would utilize those and look at those. Cause like, I mean I wouldn’t completely read it, but I might like check a few quick like numbers.

Me: Ok, um next I’m just gonna go into individually like about the things that I made. Um, the first one that I had was a sign that was like a picture of a plate and it had like, it looked like a little pie chart. And it had like half was fruits and vegetables, and then a fourth was like lean meats, and then a fourth was whole grains. Do you remember seeing that?

D: I do vaguely, yes.

Me: Ok

D: Sounds familiar

Me: So, what did you think about that one?

D: Um, I actually like that one. It kind of, with the having it compared to a like a normal plate, just I could visualize it better…so.

Me: Uh huh. So, would you say that that sign had any effect or influenced anything that you did in the dining halls?

D: Hmmm I don’t know, I feel it may have a little bit, but my plate, like when I go to a dining hall, I usually kind of looks like that anyway. So, I mean maybe not as much meat or something but that one I don’t think really did much.
Me: Ok, then next one I had were about fruits and vegetables, and there was one that had like a rainbow of fruits and vegetables. And then there was one that was like a vending machine that also had fruits and vegetables in it and it said… do you not remember those?

D: I don’t, I, the rainbow one sounds familiar, but I don’t remember the vending machine.

Me: Um, ok, we can just skip those. Um, and then the next ones I had were the portion size ones, that had like pictures of like, a deck of cards and then like that’s the serving size of like a piece of meat. And then like a computer mouse was like a baked potato. And then like a softball was like the serving size of a cup of vegetables. Do you remember those?

D: I do remember those

Me: Um, so, how do you feel about those? Did you like them?

D: I liked those a lot. I actually, they actually did affect my choices a little bit even. Um, I don’t know, because if you compare it to like the plate one, I don’t know you could just kind of visualize it better I think, with the comparative sizes. And cause you when make like a sandwich or something, you’re not really putting it like on your plate in that way, but when you when you think oh how much of this is that, then that really definitely helped.

Me: Ok, um, so you think that’s because, why do you think that was? Cause they were more recognizable images, or, why do you think it was helpful in general? Or why did you like those the best?

D: I don’t know, like they were more, they were recognizable, and you could just kind of just imagine like replace the meat with a deck of cards and like really the comparative, how much you were supposed to be getting, to how much you were getting.

Me: Ok, um, so you think that’s because, why do you think that was? Cause they were more recognizable images, or, why do you think it was helpful in general? Or why did you like those the best?

D: I don’t know, like they were more, they were recognizable, and you could just kind of just imagine like replace the meat with a deck of cards and like really the comparative, how much you were supposed to be getting, to how much you were getting.

Me: Um, ok, next um, do you think that there’s anything I can change about the ones that I made to make them more effective or make students pay attention more, or any suggestions about even new ones that I could make, or what you think would be most affective?

D: I don’t really think like, I realize I knew they were there but I could, they seemed pretty noticeable and I definitely paid attention to them. And even if I weren’t looking out for them I think I would’ve been like oh well I should do that, so. Maybe like I don’t know, maybe like a little fact about where you can find more information on serving sizes or nutrition information, or just like a quote from a credible source or something like that might help.
Me: Ok, um, so that’s something that you would want to see in the dining halls? What I’m just getting at is what would be your ideal thing for nutrition information to be in the dining halls?

D: I think actually, I really do think that the comparable serving sizes, like with the deck of cards and the softball, is a really good idea and really helpful. And even, I’d still appreciate it even if the like the numbers were up like the chart thing that you find like just at somewhere by where it says what food options are available that day or something.

Me: Ok, um, those are all the questions I have.
Transcription 5 – “Ellie”

Me: Ok, um, so first I maybe want you to describe some of like your current typical eating habits.

E: My current what?

Me: Typical eating habits

E: Um, I try to eat pretty healthy. Um, sometimes I like have a few sweets but mostly I, like especially since taking that nutrition class I’ve been trying to make sure I have you know the majority of my plate vegetables or fruits, then um some grains that’s like whole grain and um a little bit of meat. Um, but I find like it’s especially at school I tend to eat more of a vegetarian lifestyle without even realizing it just because the uh, when you’re on the dining hall plan, it like, they tend to fry a lot of the meat offerings or you know, so it’s harder to find the fresh, not fresh but you know not deep fried offerings. And so I end up just eating a lot of vegetables.

Me: Um, so do you, would you want to change anything about your current habits, or do you think they’re pretty good?

E: I think they’re pretty good

Me: Compared to other people

E: I think they are pretty good. I think um, I probably need to learn how to eat like smaller portions still, like I’ve been working on it but um, smaller portions would probably be better cause I think the variety of food I’m getting is good, nutrition wise, but it’s just I’m probably eating too much of it, still.

Me: Ok, um, next um, how would you describe like the nutrition information that’s just in the dining hall, that was there like the first day you got there.

E: I think it’s pretty lacking. Um, I know they have the nutrition information cards, but you know it’s like you have to go seek them out and I don’t think they include all of the different meal options, that are offered. I really wish that they would, especially with like their entrees, just post a sign everyday with some basic nutrition information. I know recently, I mainly go to Plaza 900, and recently they’ve started um, like posting nutrition information for their soups which I find really helpful and I wish they would do that for all of their entrees, because otherwise it’s like I can guess what’s in everything but it’s hard to know how they’ve prepared it, and you know what you’re getting out of it.

Me: Um, so I don’t know if you know this but they have actually everything posted online for everything.
E: Yeah, I have used that

Me: They just, you have used that? Ok. They just have like straight calorie counts. Like, like it looks on a food label, calories, fat, sodium, um, so do you like the numbers or do you think that’s a good things or helpful or does it affect you just looking at straight numbers?

E: Um it does help me because I pay a lot of attention to I guess the calorie count cause you know it’s just easier for me to you know just see it and know how far I am cause I have a better idea of how many calories I’m supposed to be getting than I do like, you know how much fat or something, and so I pay more attention to the straight calorie counts but I do like to see like what kinds of fat are in something, or if it does seem to have a lot of sodium and in that case I tend to pay some attention to the daily value percentages.

Me: So you are saying that you’d prefer those to be in the dining halls than online?

E: Um, yeah, I would

Me: Ok, um, I’m just gonna go into these individually. So the first one that I had was like um a sign of a plate and half of it was like fruits and vegetables and then like a quarter whole grains, and a quarter um lean meats. Do you remember that one?

E: I do remember that one

Me: Ok, um how did you feel about that one? Sorry I have to word things to where I don’t like persuade you and it sounds kind of weird

E: It’s ok. Um, I thought it was helpful, it was something we had already learned in nutrition class, so it just kind of reinforced that and I like I initially forgot that it was probably you posting it and so I thought oh that’s interesting that the dining hall like follows that same philosophy but then I remembered oh it’s probably for the study. But, still you know it was like a nice reminder to have you know that’s how your plate should hopefully look like most days.

Me: Um, do you think that those helped you or affected you or anything?

E: Um, I think it was just a good reminder like of knowledge I already knew. I think it would be interesting to see what students think who hadn’t gone through the nutrition class, like if that really impacted them, um cause me it was just a good reminder of what I had already learned and what I believed to be true. And so it was I was already trying to follow it but it was good to see it.

Me: Cool, ok, um the next one that I made were the two signs that were about fruits and vegetables. One was like a little rainbow of fruits and vegetables and one I made one with like a vending machine with fruits and vegetables in it
College Students Responses to Three Nutrition Interventions Placed in Campus Dining Halls at a Midwestern University

E: Ok, I remember the rainbow one and I think I remember the vending machine one

Me: Yeah, people haven’t been, I don’t know if maybe someone knocked them over or something I don’t know.

E: I remember the rainbow better though

Me: So what did you think about those?

E: Uhh, um I thought it was maybe a little bit less of an impact than like say the plate one had been. Um, just, I mean I felt like it was a lot of knowledge like I think we’re always told, like you know eat lots of different colors of vegetables and stuff and I don’t know for me I learn better when I know why. And so, for, I knew why and I was like ok you know phytochemicals and that kind of thing and so um, I guess it had less impact on me then I think the other ones did for some reason but um still helpful. I mean I just feel like it’s better when there are more signs in the dining halls.

Me: Ok, yeah, ok um, and then the third one I had were the portion size ones, um what did you think about those?

E: I thought those were nice cause I mean some of those are hard to just remember like, you know that meat should look like a deck of cards, it’s just kinda hard to remember those conversions so when you had them up it was like you know when you’re scooping peanut butter or something, it’s like oh that’s right ping pong ball, you know shoot to have it look like that and so that was just kind of helpful cause while you were like actively serving yourself you could really be thinking about how much you’re putting on your plate.

Me: Um, so why do you think those were helpful?

E: Um, I think they were helpful just from the portioning standpoint, just cause it’s easy to go into the dining hall and be hungry and just pile everything on the plate and not really think about how much you’re putting on there. And so it was nice to just like have that little reminder or like if you were trying to like for me, like I love peanut butter, but I’m always like trying to think don’t eat a rediculous amount of it, and so it was good like to have that little reminder to be like oh this is the appropriate size, and so then I could try to put that on my plate. Cause you know I eat whatever it on there, so if I put less on initially I will eat less.

Me: Ok, um, so do you think there are any changes I could make to any of the ones I made, like including all of the signs and the icons. Do you think there’s any changes I could make to make them more affective to the students that eat in the dining halls?

E: I think possibly, I mean I know students aren’t like going to the dining halls to sit and read posters, but if there was maybe a little bit of explanation on like particularly like the fruit
sign just explaining why eating a fruit of different colors is helpful. Um, I think that could just you know just encourage people to do it more, like just explaining that each different color has like a different benefit you know for you and maybe list some of them, although you know, I’m the kind of person who will stand there and read it, but I’m not sure about other people.

Me: Ok, um the last one I have is just um, regardless of my stuff that I made, do you think that there’s any changes that the dining halls could make to their nutrition information?

E: I really, I really wish they would post like with every one of the entrees that they’re serving that night just you know what’s in it or even if they talked about how it was prepared. Cause you go and you see broccoli and you’re like oh you know, I think that’s a good thing and so then I get it but then I get back to the table and realize that it appears that it’s been either cooked like in butter or oil or it’s like I don’t really know exactly what it was cooked in but I can tell it wasn’t just steam. And so it’s like oh well I feel like this is less healthy now and it’s, it would be nice to know exactly how they prepared it, so I could be better about picking options. Cause right now you know I mean you go in there and you really want to look up the nutrition information you can but it’s such a hassle, it would be nice if it was just right there.

Me: Um, so you personally think that you would benefit more from seeing like the calorie just numbers over something like portion size or the plate thing?

E: Um, like the calories would benefit me a lot, but I really did like seeing the portion sizes. Um, those were my favorite signs definitely, seeing those.

Me: Yeah, so if we could just kinda like do all of the things at once

E: I know, it’s so difficult to just say yes just do it all. Cause I know that I’m the kind of person who would pay attention and read that, but probably…

Me: People would if it was there it’s just like

E: It’s just you’re not sure if like everybody’s gonna sit there and read it, but at the same time I guess it can’t hurt to put up signs, really.

Me: And I was gonna do that, do the whole number thing but they told me that every different dining hall has a different recipe for every single food. Like they were like we have 5 chili recipes, I’m like I have to go through, I think that’s why they don’t do it, is cause it’s so much work to, you’d have to change around every day and then analyze everyone, it’s like…. This should be easier than this.

E: I know
Me: Cause that’s what I wanted to do, but it’s like, I would have had to been there at breakfast, lunch and dinner.

E: Yeah, it’s just, I just wish that was something that CDS would put together

Me: Exactly yeah

E: Cause each dining hall tends to like rotate the same food options, so if they you know just made one set of signs, they could just stick them out there for every meal, you know, if it could be like a summer project, I don’t know. It’s just like it would hard for any single person to go through and do that and that’s why it’s like I feel the nutrition information on the website just isn’t that accurate, cause they don’t break it down by dining hall. It’s just like oh this option and you’re really not sure if that’s the exact option that is in the dining hall you’re going to.

Me: Yeah, ok and then I just have to ask you if there’s anything else you want to say at all about anything?

E: Um, I don’t think so
Transcription 6 – “Faye”

Me: Ok, um so the first question I want to ask is just if you could describe some of your current like typical eating habits.

F: Um, ok well, I usually eat, I try and eat really healthy during the week. I try my best to, lately I have been. Um, trying to eat like um not like as much like fat and stuff. Um, more like whole grains, um fruits and vegetables, lean meats, um but during the weekends I always like go off track sometimes like really easily, um and eat like a lot of fatty foods, so I’m trying to work on that.

Me: Um, so do you eat in the dining halls only?

F: Um

Me: Like during the week?

F: Well, yeah I eat in the dining halls, but I also eat like in my room.

Me: So you have food that you like get form the grocery store?

F: Uh huh. Yeah and I also eat like, I can get stuff at the student center, um and then I can eat at my sorority house sometimes.

Me: Ok, um so is the different between the weekday and the weekend is that because you’re not eating in the dining hall? Like are you going out?

F: The food in the dining halls on the weekend is like really bad. Cause I feel like it’s like in the mornings, it’s like, if you like go in for the mornings they have like this brunch and it’s all like pancakes, uh bacon, sausage, all this really bad stuff and it’s just there’s really not much options for good stuff. Uh huh, like the only really fruit I ever see during the weekends is bananas, sometimes oranges, um so there’s really not that many options for like a healthy breakfast. You could get cereal, um oatmeal, like instant oatmeal, but it’s hard to like pass up all that stuff in there. There’s like omelets, everything like that, so.

Me: Ok, um do you wish that you could change anything about your current habits?

F: Um, yeah I wish that I could like control the portion sizes that I ate. Um, cause I feel once I start, once I like start into something it’s hard for me to control my portions. Um, what else? Yeah, and once I like start eating bad too it’s kind of like a cycle. Like this weekend I ate really bad and um so then like I’ll try and like be better um. I guess I like go in waves with my eating, like I haven’t really eaten that much today. Um, but like I ate a ton yesterday. So, I wish I could be more consistent, cause I feel guilty, so.

Me: Ok, um so next is how would you describe the current or just kind of like baseline nutritional information that was in the dining halls, like the first day you got there.

F: In the dining halls? Um, I didn’t really see anything in there.
Me: That’s a trick because there isn’t anything in there! So, but you noticed there wasn’t anything in there?

F: Uh huh

Me: Ok, so basically the only nutrition information they have is online. You would have to go online everyday, look at it, um and the only thing they have on there is like just straight numbers, like it looks like um a food label. Like calories, fat, whatever, whatever. Um, is that something that you would find helpful, like the number thing?

Me: Say if like that was in the dining hall

F: I don’t know. Um, I would probably just chose to ignore it. Um, but I think it would be helpful to have that like by the foods that you’re eating so you know, it can be very deceiving, like what you think might be good for you. But for the most part I feel like, like for me personally, like I know when I’m eating bad, like I know that having like chicken nuggets isn’t good, like I know that. And I know, um, I should be getting better options. So, but I think it would be helpful for a lot of people who don’t really like think about it that way.

Me: And how do you feel about it being online only?

F: I think that’s just kinda like, it’s kinda stupid. Like they should have something in there, because a lot, no like normal college kid is gonna be like “oh I need to go look up the nutrition facts on line.” Like they should have, like pamphlets or something that would be like easy to grab in there, like something next to the food, like because aren’t going to take the time to do that most of the time, especially in college.

Me: Ok, um so next I’m just gonna talk about the things that I did individually. Um, so the first one I had, I told you, was like the plate thing, that was divided like one half, one fourth

F: Oh yeah yeah yeah

Me: How did you feel about that one?

F: That one? I guess that it just kind of makes you think more about what you want to eat. Um cause, usually like if I do eat and I’m not thinking about it, like I’ll eat good maybe, but I won’t get the balance that I’m supposed to get. So, seeing that is like really helpful in terms of like “Ok, I need to get like this much on my plate of like fruits and vegetables or like this much of lean meat or this much of whole grains.” So it puts like that picture in your head, you know?

Me: Ok, um did that change anything about the way that you ate after you saw that?

F: Yeah, definitely I think so just cause it’s like proximity too, like it’s close, so it’s not like you’ve seen it like a couple of hours before, it’s like right before you want to eat. So, it’s like ok I need to like look around the dining hall for kind of like what the suggestions on here are.
Me: Ok, um the next one that I had was the fruits and vegetables one, with the rainbow and the vending machine. How did you feel about those?

F: Those ones, um I think that’s really good because I don’t think they offer enough fruits and vegetables in the dining hall. Like you see that and you look at like the fruits and vegetables they have and it’s like this doesn’t really, there’s like, I always see like bananas, and then I never see like apples, or like pears, but I see like bananas and oranges. But like vegetables I see like the salad bar, but no like, I’ve never seen like broccoli or anything. Um, so, I think that’s an issue.

Me: Ok, um the third one that I had were the portion size ones. Like the recognizable object with the amount it’s supposed to be. Um, how did you feel about those?

F: Those are definitely good too. Cause like I said before portion is like something I really struggle with. Um, so having that there is like a reminder like “ok you know you’re only supposed to eat like this much,” like, it’s kind of like instant, it’s like more instilled, like it’s not like, like I said like a couple of hours before, it’s like oh, I should only be eating this much, like this is the correct portion.

Me: Um, so you said that portion size is like your biggest issue. Um, do you think that’s true of most college students? Or people that eat in the dining halls?

F: Um, probably, just because it’s so easy at the dining halls to get as much as you want, like um and yeah. Yeah, I think so.

Me: Ok, um do you think there’s any changes that I could make to the ones that I made, to make them more effective in changing people’s eating habits in the dining halls?

F: I think maybe give like more suggestions, like kinda like if you pair this and this and this together like this is a good meal, you know what I mean. Or like stuff that’s like in the dining hall, cause I feel like it’s hard in the dining hall just to know like what’s good, like what you can make healthy out of, so.

Me: Ok, um and then last um, are there like any, besides mine, do you think that, or what overall changes do you think that the dining halls could make to their nutrition information?

F: To their nutrition information?

Me: Or just an example of like something completely different from what I did. If there’s something you would like to see in there?

F: I don’t know, I just think that they should like, there’s too much like fried stuff I think. Um, yeah, I think they should definitely like try and make it more healthy, and like do more, like they could still like keep some of the bad stuff, but have like a section maybe for like healthier stuff, like I said before kind of like suggestions of what to eat, you know?
Transcription 7 – “Gabriella”

Me: Um, so first I just wanna ask you a little bit about your current eating habits, if you could describe them a little bit

G: Um, I guess they are ok, they’re not like the best. I don’t get like right servings of like fruits or vegetables each day, and like the lean meats and stuff like that, I don’t get the serving size each day.

Me: Um, what would you say that you, so do you eat all of your meals in the dining hall?

G: No

Me: No, but most of them? Or?

G: Um, I usually eat about two meals a day in the dining halls

Me: And what like what would you eat on a typical day? Like an example

G: Ok, well for breakfast I would eat maybe like a granola bar and um a bottle of orange juice, or maybe a muffin and some orange juice or apple juice or something like that. And um, for lunch I go to the dining hall and I get a turkey sandwich and um some fruit or like some jello. And then for dinner I’ll get uh just whatever they have that day, like whatever the little special is.

Me: Ok, um do you wish you could change anything about your current habits or do you think they’re pretty good or what would you want to change about them?

G: Um, I do want to change it cause like I eat like a lot of snacks and stuff during the day, so I wish I could stop, cut that little portion out. And um maybe if I eat like a more filling lunch or breakfast then I wouldn’t be snacking so much throughout the day.

Me: Ok, um next um could you just describe like the current nutrition information in the dining halls or like what was there on the first day that you were there.

G: Like the serving size pictures?

Me: No, just like before I put anything in there.

G: Oh

Me: What was it like?

G: Nothing

Me: Yeah, you’re right, ok so yeah. They don’t have anything in there right now. Um, the only things they have are if you go online they just have like just straight numbers, like calories, fat, blah blah blah. That’s all they have. Um, have you ever used that or do you think that’s helpful at all? To just have it online?
G: I think it would be more helpful if they put it inside the dining halls, because I didn’t know at first and I was just looking online, and I did find it online, and I was looking at like what’s some better options and stuff.

Me: And like the way they have it with just all in numbers and stuff, um do you think that just having the numbers is helpful? Like if they did have that in the dining halls? Or do you prefer like pictures, or like the numbers?

G: Um, the numbers are helpful, pictures would make it like even more like easier to go by and stuff. So, um, either or, just whatever

Me: Yeah, yeah. Ok, um, so I’ll skip the other two because you don’t remember them, so um so the portion size ones that I made…how did you feel about those?

G: Um, I think they were great. I actually did like use them and stuff like that when I was, even when ok, even if they give you like um a portion that you like can see on the picture, like this is like way too much or whatever. Although they use like a standard spoon or something like that, I’ll look at the picture and like this is not a serving, this is two servings, and stuff like that. So, I really did think they were really helpful.

Me: Um, so why did you think they were helpful? Because it was like a recognizable object or was it….?

G: Yeah, I would say that. It was like an object that I could kind of see and like think about.

Me: Um, so did those change anything about the way that you ate, just that day or have they permanently changed anything or?

G: I think um, I think it just depends on what I’m eating. Like when I get like um, a cup of fruits and stuff, I like think about the pictures and think like what’s a serving like that. As far as changing like my whole eating habits just based on serving size, I don’t think I really changed much.

Me: Ok, um so like in regards to my things, the things that I made, do you think that there’s anything I could change about them to make them more affective to people that are eating in the dining halls? Or something I could do better? Or just any suggestions?

G: Um, no I think they were really helpful

Me: Ok, and then like um, is there anything you would like to see in there like separate from those like, something totally different from what I did or what do you think would be the most helpful thing to you?

G: Um, I think like um, like the thing that’s online like the little sheet with the numbers and stuff, I think if that was placed in the dining hall like around like how you was putting the um diagrams where like the food areas were, so I think that would be more helpful if we would see that instead of just have to like look at it at home and go …? It would be like really helpful.
Transcription 8 – “Holly”

Me: Ok, um so first I was just gonna see if you could describe some of your current typical eating habits.

H: Uh, well I eat breakfast everyday. Usually I eat in my dorm, and I eat two pieces of toast with some light, smart balance light butter. Uh, and then I have a glass of skim chocolate milk. And then for lunch I usually get whatever is fast at Dobbs or Plaza. Um today for example, I had parmesan chicken with uh, grapes and blackberries, and some clam chowder, so that was my lunch. And usually I have like a cookie or something just to like take on the road with me. And then for dinner I’ll try to do something like kinda fast so, um, a hamburger or a sandwich, turkey sandwich most of the time is what I get, so yeah.

Me: Um, so do you always eat breakfast in your dorm? Do you ever eat it in the dining halls?

H: I eat in the dining halls um, a lot on the weekends for breakfast. But, during the week I try to just eat in the dorm because I have fourteen meals a week, so I’ll try, then I’ll eat lunch and dinner at the dining hall. So, but every now and then I’ll go get up and eat breakfast. If I do I usually get like pancakes or something like that.

Me: Ok, um do you wish you could change anything about your current habits? Or do think they’re ok or?

H: Um, I mean it’s not terrible. I eat a lot of dessert though that I could probably cut back on. I’m actually giving up ice cream for lent, so. Yeah, it’s gonna be really hard. So, um that’s probably my weakness is just sweets and stuff like that. But, I’m pretty good at eating fruits and vegetables and a variety of that stuff.

Me: Ok, um next um I was gonna see if you could just describe the current nutrition information they have in the dining halls, like before I put my stuff out. Just like what was there when you got there.

H: Before you put your stuff out? There wasn’t much there. I’d never noticed it, anyway. Um, especially at Dobbs, it’s weirdly arranged, it’s a big circle, and so when you’re walking around you don’t really notice that, you just notice the food areas. So, I never noticed any signs beforehand.

Me: Ok, yeah that’s a trick, that’s because there aren’t any. I’m glad you noticed that there weren’t any. Um, so basically what they have is, they have everything online, um where you would have to go and know which dining hall you’re gonna go to, and then know what you’re gonna get before you get it, which nobody does that, um and they only have like numbers, like how it looks at like a fast food restaurant, calories, fat, protein, whatever. Um, is that something that you think is helpful?
H: Having it online? No, I mean no one is going to look it up before they go eat. I mean if, it would be better if it was available right there, but then again if it was there I don’t know if people would actually look at it. So, it would have to be at a place that was really noticeable.

Me: Um, and how do you feel about the number thing, like just calories?

H: Um, I mean, if that’s what you were worried about, if you’re worried about calories it might be important to you. But, I mean I think it’s all about overall nutrition more than just counting calories. Um, but it would be helpful especially for some really fatty foods, like hamburgers, and stuff like that that might have higher content of fat or content of calories in general. It might be nice just to know how much you are actually eating.

Me: Ok, um so next I’m gonna go into individually the ones that I made. So the first one was the plate one, which was divided. So how, what did you think about those?

H: Um that one, I thought it was helpful, I mean they always say have a variety of color on your plate and that kind of stuff. I don’t know, it wasn’t as effective as maybe the later posters. Like I noticed while I was walking around the dining hall the first one didn’t make much of an impact on other people. But then when I was standing in line, I was standing at the grill, it had like the token ones, people were like oh what’s this and like actually noticed it, whereas the first one they didn’t. Um, just because it was serving size, like it was like describing.. it probably wasn’t as effective as the other ones but it was still nice to see that.

Me: Um, so personally did that have an effect on you, I know you said other people didn’t really.

H: Probably not, I mean I’m gonna eat what I’m gonna eat. I mean, and especially when they offer like the set meal, they give you a certain amount, you can’t chose how much you get of, say they have a chicken fried steak, you can’t chose the size variance, you know.

Me: Ok, so now we’re going to talk about the portion size ones. Um, what did you think about those?

H: Um, I really liked those. They really helped me, especially with the fruits and vegetables, and stuff like that that I can get myself that I have control over, I thought that was really helpful. Um, it definitely made me rethink my like, oh this is one cookie, oh, you know.

Me: So what do you think made those so helpful?

H: Because they were realistic, I think you used good variances, I guess like the way you portrayed it.

Me: Recognizable obehcts?
H: Right, it was recognizable objects and so you’re like oh that’s how much I should be eating of this, you know. Um, it was definitely noticeable, and like I said people were actually seeing those and being like what is this for, and I was like oh it’s for nutrition.

Me: Well I’m glad other people were noticing them.

H: I noticed especially at Dobbs. I don’t know, I don’t eat at the other dining halls as much, but Dobbs especially I noticed it.

Me: Um, ok so, do you think that those influenced your choices at all?

H: They did a little, but I mean especially on um like the desserts and the fruits and vegetables, those portions I was kinda like oh, that’s a little bit too big or a little too small.

Me: Ok, um next do you think that’s there’s any changes that I could make to the ones that I made to make them more effective or just more helpful in general?

H: Um, well the first one maybe put it in a different spot. I think at Dobbs you had it on the bottom of the ready to order stuff, and it was just a bad location where people didn’t see it. Which it might make a difference if it was by a window or something. Um, but otherwise that one was fine. And then the other ones were just like, maybe make them bigger, they were a little small, but they were effective, so other than that.

Me: Yeah, what I would like to do and what I should have done, but it would be too expensive is to get like little stands and then put them on top of the window thing or whatever that is, the sneeze bar, the cough guard.

H: Yeah, I know what you’re talking about.

Me: Ok, um then last um, so other than my, the things that I made, um do you think there’s any changes the dining halls can make with their nutrition information? Or something you would like to see in there that’s completely different from what I did?

H: Um, well I would like to see more fruits and vegetables in general at the dining halls. I feel like they don’t offer as many as they could. There’s always salad you know, but it would be nice to have other options besides just you know bananas, apples, and oranges all the time. And even at that sometimes, especially Dobbs is really bad about having a variety of fruits and vegetables also. But I think like maybe posting the calories or something like that, that might be helpful for some people, um so something like that maybe.

Me: Ok, that is it
Transcription 9 – “Isabelle”

Me: Um, so first I was gonna see if you could sort of just describe your current typical eating habits?

I: Um, I go, like I go to the dining halls probably like for one or two meals a day and then I just have like a snack in my dorm, so.

Me: Um, like what would you eat on a typical day?

I: Um, it like depends on the day of the week. Like during the week I probably eat healthier than on the weekends. And on the weekends I usually eat out too, like at a restaurant or something. And um, yeah like I try, usually I try to eat healthy, but then on the weekend I probably eat like more junk food and stuff.

Me: Um, could you like maybe just give me like a specific example of what you mean when you say you eat healthy? Like what would you have for like a meal, like lunch or dinner or something?

I: Yeah, for dinner I usually get like a salad and then like a sandwich or soup. And like for breakfast I love getting like the omelets from Dobbs, so.

Me: Ok, so you said that you would describe your eating habits as pretty healthy, um is there anything you wish you could change about them or do you think they’re ok?

I: Um, probably just like the amount of junk food I eat like on the weekends.

Me: Is that because you don’t eat in the dining halls on the weekends?

I: Yeah, probably. Like last night my friends went to like La Siesta, um we ate like nachos and um quesadillas and stuff, so.

Me: Well it’s not that bad if you’re only doing it on the weekends. Ok, um so next I was gonna see if you could describe like the original or current nutrition information that’s available in the dining halls. Like what was there the first day you ate there?

I: Um, for your study?

Me: No, just like without my stuff

I: Oh, um I have no idea

Me: Yeah, well it’s a trick question. There isn’t anything in there. So basically all they have is you can go online to like each different dining hall and you would have to know what you wanted to eat before, which is, nobody does that. And they basically just have like calorie counts. Like the calories, the fat, the protein, whatever. Just numbers, nothing else explaining anything. Um, do you think that something like that would be helpful to you? Just having it on the internet?

I: No, not really.
Me: And what do you think about the number thing? Just having the numbers?

I: Um, like I’ve never gone on the website and seen like what the calorie content is, but um one of my friends did and she just like mention there’s like this sandwich that Dobbs has sometimes and she was like there’s like 500 calories for like a half of one, which I didn’t realize. But, I never would have looked it up.

Me: Um, but do you think, let’s say if that put that kind of stuff like in the dining hall, like next to the food it was, do you think something like that would be helpful?

I: Yeah, definitely

Me: With the numbers or like would you prefer like an explanation or like just the numbers would be ok?

I: Um, I think just the numbers would be really helpful

Me: Ok, um so I’m just gonna go into each one individually. Um, so the first one I did was the plate one that was divided up into the fractions, um so what did you think about that one?

I: Um, I thought that one was like less helpful than the one where it’s like the picture of the serving size, um I thought that one was the most helpful.

Me: Um, what made it unhelpful?

I: Um, probably, I don’t know, I mean it did help in that I realized that I definitely wasn’t getting like as many vegetables as I should be getting. But um, I don’t know, I think like the little pictures just like visually it like caught my eye more.

Me: So, did the plate one effect anything about what you did in the dining halls or?

I: Um, actually it did, at first cause I did realize that I wasn’t getting like as many fruits and vegetables, so yeah.

Me: Ok, um and so then the next one I did was the rainbow one with the fruits and vegetables and the vending machine. Um, what did you think about those?

I: Um, I like that one too. Just because, like that one and then the one with the serving sizes were just like more colorful. And I don’t know when I was like in the dining halls I didn’t really notice the plate one as much as the other signs.

Me: Ok, um and did those effect anything or influence anything?

I: Yeah, they did. Um, they just kind of like made me pick like maybe healthier choices and uh sometimes I get like French fries and stuff and then I decide to get like an orange or something instead of that.

Me: Ok, um last one is the portion size ones. Um, what did you think about those?
I: Um, I thought it was the most helpful. Especially because you had one by the tray of cookies, which that one like definitely influenced me a lot, cause like they’re so small and my friends are I just like take a couple of cookies and stuff and um so that one like definitely helped a lot, cause I realized I was taking a ridiculous amount of servings of cookies.

Me: Um, so why do you think it was helpful to you?

I: Um, probably just like the picture and um yeah.

Me: Um, ok let’s see. So you said that it did effect you or influence you?

I: Yeah, I think it did.

Me: Was it just certain things like the cookies or more stuff?

I: Yeah, the cookie one and then the one with like meat. The cookie and the meat one helped me a lot.

Me: Ok, um next do you think that there’s any changes I could make to each one or just any of the them to make them more effective to people the eat in the dining halls?

I: Um, I think if you put like the calorie content on them that would be really helpful.

Me: Um, so why do you think that’s helpful?

I: Um, just because like I never realize how many calories I’m eating and um, so I just think if it was like right there I would realize if something had more calories than other things.

Me: Ok, um last question is, do you think that there’s any overall changes the dining halls could make to their nutrition information, like regardless, like maybe you would like to see something completely different than what I had, like just any ideas you’ve thought about… other than like the calories and stuff?

I: Yeah, aside from that not really, I just think that would be really important.

Me: Ok, that’s it.
Transcription 10 – “Jessica”

Me: Ok, so first I’m going to see if you could just describe some of your current typical eating habits.

J: Well, um, ever since I kind of basically set restrictions for what I eat, because I went through a weight loss process, it’s actually very hard to find what I feel like eating versus what I want to eat. Usually it’s just maybe a sandwich, turkey, um sometimes, well I’m supposed to limit the cheese, but depending on what I feel like for the day. It’s usually a sandwich or a salad or broccoli or something like that. I try to incorporate a lot of vegetables in my diet, but other than that very little pasta. No red meat, hardly, sometimes chicken, but you know.

Me: And do you eat most of your meals in the dining halls?

J: Um, for the most part yes. Sometimes if I’m getting sick of eating the same thing over and over again I’ll go to the market and possibly pick up something there. Maybe some carrots or some grapes or something like that, or I’ll eat cereal in my room, or lean cuisines from Wal-Mart.

Me: Um, you don’t have to answer this is you don’t want to but um, if I could just ask you if you were doing your weight loss while you were eating at the dining halls, or if that was before you came to here?

J: The major major dieting was done before I came to college, and then seeing what the options were at Dobbs, which is where I usually eat cause it’s closest to my room, um I kinda try to use my better judgment on what I should and should not eat, otherwise…

Me: But, you’ve been able to do it?

J: It’s hard, it’s very hard, cause I get sick of eating the same thing over and over again but it’s do-able.

Me: Well, that’s great. Um, ok do you wish that you could change anything about your current habits? Or, I guess for you it’s just what’s available, I mean you obviously have good habits, you just maybe wish there was a different selection of food.

J: Well, I think they should put carrots out instead of broccoli all the time. I tend to eat broccoli a lot. I do see that they put out whole grain pasta and meatless sauce, so that’s good. I don’t know, just depending on if I’m in the mood for pasta. Um, bread, I have my own choices per say about bread. I usually get these little hundred calorie buns from the store. Um, I actually do wish they served turkey burgers or turkey based products, instead of just a burger. Because I do find myself wanting a burger every once in a while, but I’m like no, I kind of want a turkey burger or turkey based product. But, I mean, I guess what they have is ok.
Me: Ok, so next I just want to see if you could sort of describe the current or like the original nutrition information that was in the dining halls, like before I put anything in there.

J: Um, well I actually noticed the other day that they have pamphlets stating like what’s in what they have there at the hall. But I never really looked at them until the other day, I was just standing in the back of the line, it was really crowded, I saw it and I picked up one for sandwiches cause I eat sandwiches all the time, so. I didn’t really notice it until the other day, which is sad to say cause it’s kind of far back.

Me: Yeah, so I didn’t even know they had those, um.

J: I got really excited when I saw it, but then everyone was just kind of there… maybe I shouldn’t be so excited… I tried to pick up all the pamphlets.

Me: What’s in those pamphlets? Is it just like the calories?

J: Yeah, calories and um, carbs, and percentage of fat, and what’s in everything.

Me: So do you like those pamphlets? Do you find them helpful?

J: I do. I have to look into them more since I just recently discovered them. I wish that they were maybe a little more visible, or a little bit more, I don’t know, updated I guess.

Me: Um, did you like the way that they presented the information in it? Like, you said that they just had, basically numbers.

J: Right. Yeah, I mean I guess it was easy to follow, yeah.

Me: Ok, um so other than that all they have is the nutrition information online, which is they have it for everything single they have at every single dining hall. Um, but you would have to go on there everyday and write down what you ate or pick what you ate first.

J: I had no idea it was even online.

Me: Yeah, see, exactly. That’s the point. Um, is that something that you would find helpful?

J: Yeah, if I had knew about it earlier. I struggled with the counting thing cause basically when I started choosing more healthier ways of eating, I was restricting myself to a twelve hundred calorie intake. And I was constantly, constantly, counting and it actually worked and I got here and I was like ok I can count the things in my room, I just can’t count the things in the dining hall, cause I didn’t know there was the brochures or the thing online.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


