



Food, Power and Social Justice
FSP 200 and HON 310
Spring 2022



Professor: Jamie Picardy

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Community Engaged Research:
Culturally Important Menu Development Project (CIMDP)

Community Partners:
Portland Public Schools, Cumberland County Food Security Council, Cultivating Community, Food Corps, Good Shepard Food Bank

<https://sites.google.com/portlandschools.org/cafeteriaclassroom/central-kitchen/taste-test-programming?authuser=0>

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Project Activity: Evaluation Strategy Design

Names: Isaiah Ricker, Tom Warren, Cassy Kane, and Payton Winslow

Date: March 9, 2022

Hello all-

Below, we (the evaluation strategies group) have put together a range of options for the taste test proceedings. With these five different options, we have tried to rank them with our most favorable option being first. We chose the printed out QR code that students scan after taste-testing as our first option because it requires very little lunch room time from the students to answer the survey questions, it is a fairly quick/efficient setup, there is instant feedback, and there is very little paper waste. We understand that some students will not have access to smartphones and therefore might feel out of place, but with some fast research, it is estimated that 69-90% of high school students have access to smartphones so we feel like this option is the best one to choose (Turner, 2022).

As a close second option, we discussed using a piece of paper with the scale and handing it out to the students along with their food. The students circle one and then put the paper in a box next to the taste test area. This would leave less room for peer pressure/bias as well as be able to include all of the students. Ultimately, this became our second option because of the amount of time that would be required to hand count each piece of paper and record all of the data seeing as these schools have hundreds of students. Alongside the time requirements, this would create a significant amount of paper waste as well.

To read the rest of the options we have come up with, you can scroll down and view options one through five below.

Option #1

Printed out QR code that students scan after taste-testing, takes them to a Google Survey consisting of 1 question;

Question - How much did you enjoy the food?

Possible responses: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (1 being 'never want to eat it again', and 5 being 'I'd eat this if it were offered as a meal')

For students without a phone to scan the QR code, or for those that don't want to, there can be an addition of option 2, 3, or 4.

Pros

Quick

Instant feedback (aside from those without smartphones)

Don't waste a lot of paper

Cons

Would have to utilize another option (paper?), to include everyone

Potential for those without smartphones to feel out of place

Option #2

A piece of paper with the scale is handed to the students along with their food, the students circle one and then put the paper in a box next to the taste test area.

Pros

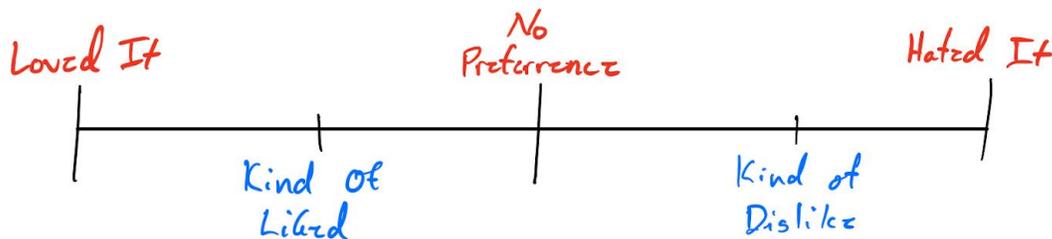
Much smaller room for influence from peer pressure
Accessible to everyone

Cons

Takes a bit longer for data collections because each piece needs to be hand counted after the taste test
Requires a bunch of print-outs/is wasteful

Option #3

Large print-out of the scale drawn below, students are given a sticky note after they try the food, and they stick it on the scale. The stickers are counted afterwards, or taken off every couple of minutes to avoid them falling, or there being a bias towards one vs another based on how much is already there.



Pros

Quick
Easy to pull data from
Doesn't require much set up

Cons

Stickers/Poster may fall off
Does not prevent peer pressure within friend groups with being able to see people vote for whichever option

Option #4

Large print-out of the scale previously pictured, students point/tap on the scale after trying the food, and a member of this class (or whoever else is there, and able to) will record the amount of times each is chosen.

Pros

Quick

Doesn't require much set up

Cons

Does not prevent peer pressure within friend groups with being able to see people vote for whichever option

Option #5

Students are given the taste tests, and once done, throw away their plastic serving cups into one of three trash cans located nearby, that are clearly labeled, 'Loved it,' 'Don't care,' and 'Hated it.' One recorder at each trash can will record how many cups get thrown into that can.

Pros

Quick

Easy if students are asked to throw one at a time

Cons

Does not prevent peer pressure within friend groups with being able to see people vote for whichever option

Would be harder to record, would either need a person there to record it as it happens, or someone to count through afterwards

Citations for outside resources:

Turner, A., Author: Ash Turner <https://www.bankmycell.com/> Ash Turner is the CEO of BankMyCell. Following university graduation in 2003, Author: & Ash Turner is the CEO of BankMyCell. Following university graduation in 2003. (2022, February 28). *How many people have smartphones worldwide (Mar 2022)*. BankMyCell. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.bankmycell.com/blog/how-many-phones-are-in-the-world>

Project Activity: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Names: Molly Eaton, Meski Wallace, Hannah Brown, and Riley Johnson

Date: March 9, 2022

Recommendations for Facilitating a Focus Group Discussion:

Welcome your focus group participants and let them know what they will be doing
Introduce yourself and have the participants introduce themselves (if there is time).
Introduce the notetaker and ensure they are prepared and ready to begin.
Make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak, take turns if necessary.
Leave room at the end for further questions and discussion.

Source: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-run-a-focus-group>

Proposed Questions:

- Do you think it is important to have culturally diverse food in school meals?
- On a scale of 1-10 how fun was this experiment? Do you think everyone else in the cafeteria enjoyed the experience?
- Did you like the food? Would you want to eat it again? Would you want to eat it outside of school?
- Did you notice any negative judgments or reactions that arose because of the culturally diverse food that you witnessed?
- Did you know about what you were eating or have any prior knowledge of it? If it is a part of your own culture, is it reflective of the food you eat at home? If it is not part of your own culture, what would you want to learn about it?
- Did you notice more students in the cafeteria than usual? Did you notice anyone who wanted to try out the new food instead of going out to eat?
- Were there any specific spices or ingredients in the food that you or the other students disliked? Also, are there any aspects of the food you ate that you think could be improved?
- Would you like to see more culturally diverse food in your school? Any specific kind?
- Did the voting process go smoothly? Is there anything that could be improved for next time?

Project Activity: Taste Testing at Casco Bay High School
Names: Matthew Brown and Paige Davenport
Date: March 24, 2022

Voting Results:

Loved It = 34
It Was Ok = 6
Did Not Like It = 0
Samples served: ~75

Summary:

Things that went well: Many people were excited for the taste test. Students were coming early trying to get samples before it was even prepared. It was well advertised over school announcements, even though not everyone knew what was going on many people came looking for us during their lunch time. For feedback I think that a lot more people than I expected gave written feedback even if it was just one sentence. We had more than enough food for the students and chef Sam now has a better estimate for how much food to bring for samples. Things that could be improved: I think that we had our table backwards so we should switch the feedback table with the food table. The way we had it, people took samples and went straight into the lunch room and would have had to backtrack to get to the feedback table. We missed a lot of people walking in from leaving campus for lunch, next time we should encourage these students to try the food as they are a target audience that we wanted to get to try the food and give feedback. Finally to get more feedback we should have walked around the lunch room with a clipboard asking for feedback from students that didn't go to the voting board.

Question #1: Did you enjoy the meal today during the taste testing? Why or why not?

- Very nice flavor! Enjoyed :)
 - I enjoyed the meal because it was a lot of flavors
 - YES! Healthier, no gluten, and flavorful. Exposure to new foods.
 - I liked it, something different.
 - Beans need more spices but I love the mashed idea! So yummy
 - It was really good, reminded me of tacos.
 - Loved it, good flavor-mild but interesting. Classic comfort food.
 - Yes because it had the perfect amount of beans and slaw and they were good together.
 - Yes! So tasty!
 - I did enjoy the taste. As a vegetarian it needed something else to compliment.
 - Yes the taste and texture stood out
 - It was great, I loved that it wasn't just beef, and the beans helped a lot. The slaw is super good and goes well with the beef.
 - The meat was great. The beans sort of muted the flavor, but that's minor. Love the cabbage.
- 7/10

- The beans were a bit tasteless, however the meat complimented it very well. The greens balanced the meat well. 8/10 it is very good.
- I enjoyed everything, the taste was unique.
- Tasted different but nice.
- Yes, absolutely. Yummy surprise
- I liked the new menu items. They were cooked very well. I liked the seasoning.
- It tasted delicious.
- It was fine but not much flavor.
- I enjoyed it
- I really liked it. It reminds me of meatloaf mixed with chili.
- I didn't really enjoy the beans but I did like the meat and the lettuce. I don't think that those 3 things mix together, I also think that more seasoning could be added to make it more enjoyable.

Question #2: If this was on the school lunch menu, would this food make you more invested in getting school lunch?

- Yes
- Yes!
- Yes
- Hell Yes!
- Yes
- I would definitely eat this if it was offered.
- Absolutely
- Probably
- I would absolutely be more interested in school lunch, especially if this dish was served.

Additional Comments:

- More coleslaw
- Vegan/ vegetarian option?
- Definitely better than most anything we typically have. Thank you!
- The slaw set the dish off. Very good.

Project Activity: Taste Testing at Deering High School

Names: Emilie Nyagatoma, Alain Igiraneza and Charlotte Colson

Date: March 24, 2022

Voting Results:

Loved It = 80,

It Was Ok = 8,

Did Not Like It = 0

Samples served: Unfortunately unknown, not recorded

Summary:

This part of the class wide project was the taste tests. Our group went to Deering High School to pass out the samples of some new food options and gather the students' feedback regarding the food that was being sampled by the students. This aspect went smoothly for the most part. However, there were some bumps along the way. One major bump was that the students were hesitant to try the food samples as they had no idea what was going on. All the groups were told that the students would know what was going on because there would be school wide announcements and posters with the information being provided to the students. When we started serving the students though it became apparent that they had no clue what was going on as they were not told about the taste tests. Overall though the day was a great success, and we gathered a lot of student feedback of whether or not they enjoyed the food or not as well as from some students more in-depth feedback of their thought.

Question #1: Did you enjoy the meal today during the taste testing? Why or why not?

- I enjoyed the meal because it was a lot of flavors
- YES! Healthier, no gluten, and flavorful. Exposure to new foods.
- I liked it, it is different
- Beans need more spices, but I love the mashed idea! So yummy
- It was good, reminded me of my mom's food.
- Loved it, good flavors.
- Yes because it had the perfect amount of beans and slaw and they were good together and so tasty!
- The food is better than what we eat at school
- Needs more salt
- Rice was dry

Question #2: If this was on the school lunch menu, would this food make you more invested in getting school lunch?

- Overall, YES. Most of the students shared that they would be more interested to eat school meal and even stay at school for lunch if it was offered. Some of the students shared that the food they tried is healthier than the food they usually eat and explained that it is more flavored and diverse from their usual. They also shared that they would be more interested to try cultural food.

Additional comments:

- I would eat this if it was offered.
- Absolutely
- Probably
- I would absolutely be more interested in school lunch, especially if this dish was served.

Project Activity: Taste Testing at Portland High School
Names: Annelise Tom and Maliea Cross-Robertson
Date: March 24, 2022

Voting Results:

I LOVE IT = 100

IT'S OKAY = 27

NOT FOR ME = 2

Samples served: Unfortunately unknown, not recorded

Questions #1 and #2: Did you enjoy the meal during the taste test, why or why not? If this was on the school lunch menu, with this food make you more invested in eating at school?

- I would eat it if it was in school lunch 100%. I would rate it a three.
- I would eat it again.
- I liked the flavor it needs more spice.
- Yes very much! And yes!
- Yes but it needs more salt. Yes if you allowed rice with it.
- It's great and eat it at lunch.
- More salt
- There's no flavor
- It was a little cold, would be better hot.
- I would definitely eat this as a school meal. I loved it!
- The food just need more salt and seasoning! But I loved it.
- I liked the coleslaw.
- It was good! It was a lot more flavorful than school meals usually are!
- More spice.
- Coleslaw was good and not soupy, liked that it wasn't too salty unsure of other components.
- Yes, it taste like something I would eat at home. Yes I would maybe less beans more meat.
- Yes I would enjoy it looks good taste good. It melts in my mouth so good! Yes it should be on the menu!
- I liked it! I would definitely get this if it were on the menu.
- Preferred chicken, more veggies, slaw isn't good, not much flavor.
- I like the beach a lot it's very good.
- Oh my goodness please make again more!!!
- I think it was OK! :-)
- I loved it the only thing I would change is more ground beef.
- Needs more sauce.
- Les beans or no beans.

- The beef and beans are great, go a little less on the coleslaw but definitely add a side with the beef and beans and coleslaw.
- Yes, I would eat it every time would be very tasteful and clear for if there was more sauce.
- It was delicious. I would eat it if it was a school lunch.
- Yes! I love it. Maybe try fresh tomatoes.
- I would pick this as a meal for lunch.
- I feel like it needs a little more sauce and cheese. But yes it's really good.
- It needs a little bit more salt.
- It has a lot of flavor!

Project Activity: Focus Group
Names: Justin Beiler and Raha Daud
Date: March 30th, 2022

Recommendations for conducting future Focus Groups:

For future focus groups, we would recommend trying to recruit more students to join the focus group so we could gain more insight. It may help to space out the focus group from the taste test to allow more students to get their consent forms in. I would also suggest for us to help students expand on their thoughts a little more for each of the questions so we have even more information to take notes of. I would also suggest asking more follow up questions and having sub question so students can think more and give more helpful feedback. Maybe creating breakout groups so students can share their thoughts among themselves where they might feel more comfortable.

1) If this was offered as a part of the school lunch menu, would you get it?

- I would get it I really liked it, the beef had the most flavor solid 9/10, would eat again
- Agrees with beef was the best part, did not like the beans 6.5/10
- He and his friends liked it, African dish
- I liked the food, the beans were very good

2) How important is it for you for meat to be halal? Do you think it would affect your classmates and teachers' likelihood to choose it? Can you explain why or why not?

- It would impact a lot if it was halal food because many people cannot have food that is not halal
- there are a lot of Muslim students at school, halal food would be important and they would really like it.

3) Were there any specific spices or ingredients in the meal that you or the other students liked or disliked? Is there anything about the meal that you would like to be different?

- It would be even better if it was served with rice
- Coleslaw was meh, not many people like coleslaw. Would prefer a salad instead, presentation is key, if the food looks good, more students would be willing to try.

- No issue with the meal
- Everything was fine, would make no changes to the meal

4) Beyond more representative meals, what else could be done to make the cafeteria and school meals more inclusive and inviting?

- Make the food look more appetizing. Make it look good or else people won't get the food. Presentation is the most important, if students know that they like the food they will keep getting it
- Current food looks like it's a week old (improve on that)
- Food looked much better at taste test in comparison to current school lunches

5) Do you think it is important to have culturally diverse food in school meals? Why? Do you think a lot of students agree?

- Other cultures foods are usually the best
- Usually most school meals are American foods. American food isn't very healthy (burgers, chicken nuggets, etc.), people want variety of cultural foods are better; would be good to add more culturally diverse foods
- He liked everything at the taste test, so many people from different backgrounds were open to trying the new food. Would like to see some more culturally diverse foods

6) Do you feel like the foods that you eat at home are represented in the school meals? What do you eat at home that you would like to see at school?

- Lives in an African household and prefers eating African food, does not want to shy away from his culture at home. Suggested Mobokey as a dish in the schools. Also likes tacos and saka madesu
- Suggested empanadas, quesadillas, rice & beans (with better flavor) (chopped onions, citrus), plantains; school cafeterias serve rice but it looks old
- Tambusu
- Likes rice & beans and tacos

Project Activity: Taste Test #1 Evaluation
Names: Chelsea Rose and Thomas Watt
Date: April 13, 2022

Overview:

This report summarizes the experiences of 4 teams: 3 Taste Test groups for each of the 3 high schools and the Focus Group team. We facilitated feedback sessions shortly after each group completed their task for the project. In this report, we provide recommendations for future Taste Test events to introduce high school students to new menu items.

One of the biggest issues that our groups faced was that many students were very hesitant to try the food. This hesitance was due to the fact that they were not aware of what was going on. Once the Taste Test and its purpose were explained to the students, they became very enthusiastic. Another issue was the physical location of the taste test tables. Our groups found that their location restricted how many students interacted with this experience. This could be due to the fact that some students left school for lunch and never passed the table, or students who ate in certain areas of the cafeteria never passed by. Additionally, our groups experienced issues keeping the food hot.

As far as positive experiences are concerned, all of our groups expressed that working as a team went smoothly, each member of the group had a specific task that they mastered with time. Also, the groups were able to smoothly interact with students, from serving to voting, during the event.

Aspects of the Taste Test to keep for the future:

1. Creating an assembly line set up for the Taste Test volunteers, to ensure the process is as efficient as possible.
2. Bringing samples to those who brought lunch from home so all are included.
3. Portion the samples accordingly so there is enough for everyone to try.

Our recommendation for future events:

1. Prior to the Taste Test, ensure each member of the group has been assigned a role and understands their contribution to the step-by-step process.
2. Ensure that posters are placed around participating schools well in advance and ensure the event is announced on that day's announcements to increase student awareness. It is important to reinforce that the food is free to try, there is no cost or risk to students.
3. Place tables in areas that maximize how many students will pass by, and ensure that stations are positioned in places where students who leave school for lunch or usually bring their own lunch can participate. For example, we recommend placing a table near the main

entrance/exit of the building. It may be necessary to have multiple tables in multiple locations to achieve this recommendation.

4. Explain the process of taste testing and voting to students BEFORE they are served.
 5. Use a method of voting that is anonymous. For example, give students a multiple choice ballot with degrees to which they liked or disliked the food. Keeping ballots secret will ensure students answer honestly and are not affected by how their peers vote.
 6. Find a way to keep the meals warm for students as the temperature of the food affects the taste and texture.
-

Raw data:

Notes from interviews with our groups who conducted the Taste Tests

Interviewee Name(s): Maliea (samples), Annaliese (samples and stickers), high school Anna (encouraging to vote), Zoe from cultivating community (encouraged giving written feedback and tried to get people to participate).

Location: Portland High School

Food served: Spiced beef, smashed kidney beans, cabbage slaw

Date/Time of Interview: 03/29/2022 @2:00

Could you please give us a general overview of your procedure?

- Unsure going in on what the plan was
- Give stickers while giving samples
- Had other helpers directing students to vote on the board
- 140ish responses at least 200 individual participants

What were the biggest issues you ran into?

- Many kids left campus for lunch, the location of table means those kids never saw the opportunity to try the food.
- Not enough advertising to student, they didn't know what was going on
- Some people voted before they tried the food
- Some people wouldn't try it because they had some basic dislike with the food

What parts of your experience worked well?

- Having all helpers have separate jobs, like an assembly line.
- We were able to get the attention of all students who did come into lunch
- Taking a tray to kids with home lunch allowed to access more people

What changes would you make and how would you suggest implementing them?

- Posters and fliers in the school did not get attention, make them brighter
- Make sure it's on morning announcements
- 2 tables in different spots to get access to all students
- Voting should be more anonymous
- Food got cold fast, so it was as good for later students
- Kids more inclined to take it if they knew it was free, make sure students know it's free.
- Went well overall, people were enthusiastic about it, supported and excited about the idea of what we are trying to achieve. Students needed to be better educated.

Group: Brown and Paige Davenport

Location: Casco Bay High School

Taste Test Dish: Spiced beef with mashed kidney beans topped with slaw

Could you please give us a general overview of your procedure?

The layout for the taste test was one long table with the food being tested one on end and voting on the other side. We set the table up between where people grab their school lunches and the cafeteria where people sit to eat. We were also in a spot so people were entering the school after leaving the campus for lunch, so all in all we were in a spot where every student would see us and had the opportunity to try the food. We had 4 people at this taste test, Paige and Matt volunteering from USM and Chef Sam who designed the meal and Lily from cultivating community. We each had one job. Chef Sam handed out the dish to students while explaining the dish and answering any questions. I [Matt] was in charge of scooping the food into cups and making sure that they were portioned in a way that we didn't run out too fast. Paige was in charge of talking to students and getting them to vote and write down their feedback. Lily was in charge of signing up people for the focus group and explaining what the focus group was to the students in general. Overall it went well and we got a lot of feedback.

What were the biggest issues you ran into?

The biggest problem that we ran into was keeping the food warm. We tried to solve this problem by not scooping too many samples at once and keeping them in the pans but near the end it was inevitable. One recommendation that Sam made was that we could use sternos next time to help

keep the food hot. The beans we served were also a little dry and Sam even admitted that they got dryer than she wanted them. This could possibly be because they were getting cold.

What parts of your experience worked well?

I think that we had good teamwork as everyone had their own role and no one was stepping on another's toes, meaning that we all knew what we had to do and stuck to it which was really efficient. We also had a big turnout as it has been announced over the intercom the days leading up to the event. It was known enough that students were coming to the table before we were even finished setting up wanting to try the food. Many staff walking by also were interested in what we were doing so we filled them in as we were setting up. I think that talking to staff was helpful because it helped get the word out by word of mouth and the teachers telling their students. The voting also went well, I think that it was a super simple and visual way to vote that didn't take much effort. Although not as many people wrote feedback as who voted with stickers, I was surprised at how many students actually took the time to write some comments down.

What changes would you make and how would you suggest implementing them?

One change that I would make next time would be to switch the tables around, like put the food where the voting is and the voting where the food was. This is because we had it set up that people came to test the food and then went straight into the cafeteria because that is how the flow of traffic was. If we switched the order people would be able to try the food, then vote on the way to the cafeteria. One other way to improve the number of votes that I heard another group did would be to give out a sticker with each sample served so that people felt more obligated to vote. Stickers could even be replaced on the side of each cup so that it didn't require the time to hand a sticker to each person. For the people that didn't vote, someone could be sent to walk the cafeteria with a clipboard with a smaller version of the voting board collecting votes from the people who tried the food after they sat down.

Group: Alain, Charlotte, Emilie

Location: Deering High school

Could you please give us a general overview of your procedure?

- Alian - scoop food into containers
- Charlotte - Sticker board
- Emilie - bringing people in and serving food
- Mercia was also there, Leatecia signing people up for the Focus Group

What were the biggest issues you ran into?

- Students didn't know it was happening so they were hesitant to try it.
- There were no posters or announcements

What parts of your experience worked well?

- The organization, knowing what our jobs were.
- Splitting up roles to play to people's strengths.

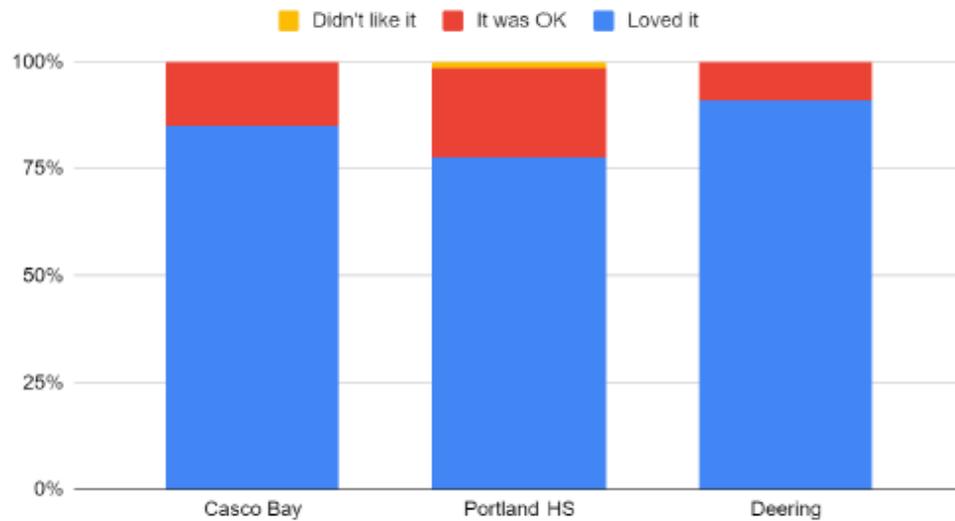
What changes would you make and how would you suggest implementing them?

- Let people know what's going on by making announcements and hanging posters.

Project Activity: Taste Test #1 Data Analysis and Conclusions
 Names: Henry Falatko and Noam Osher
 Date: April 13, 2022

Taste Test Analysis

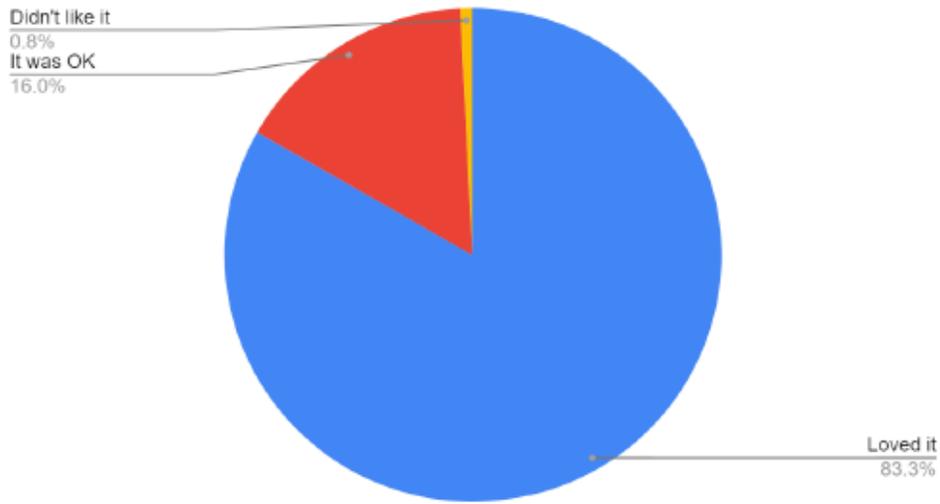
Responses by School (As Percentages)



Raw Percentages (Number per response in parentheses):

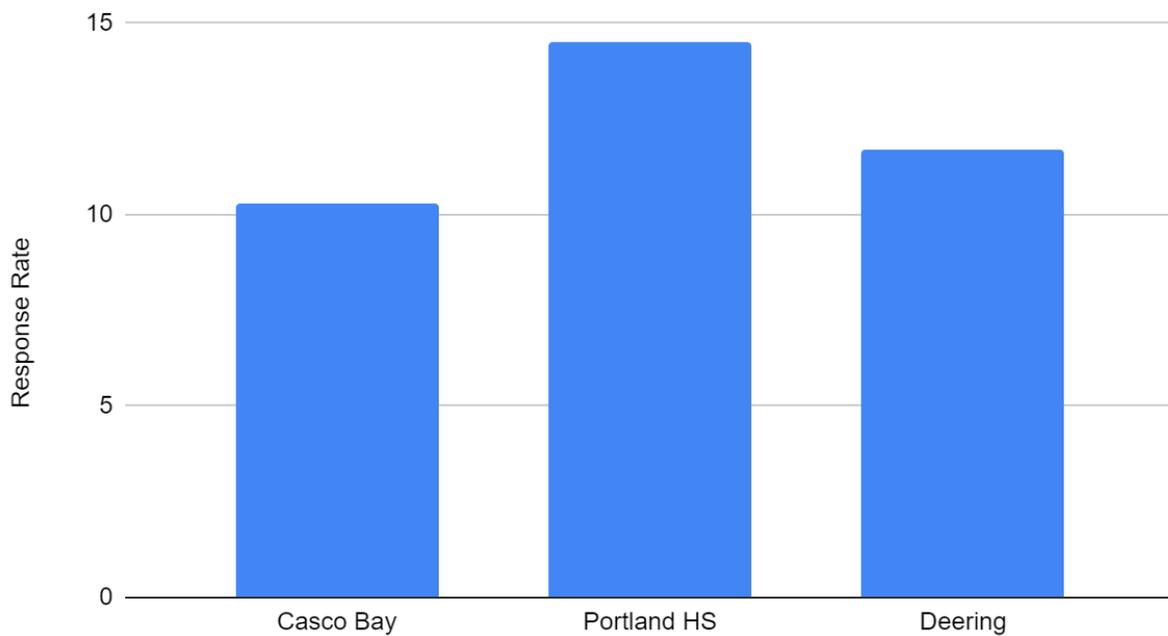
	Didn't like it	It was OK	Loved it
Casco Bay	0 (0)	15 (6)	85 (34)
Portland HS	1.6 (2)	20.9 (27)	77.5 (100)
Deering	0 (0)	9.1 (8)	90.9 (88)

Combined Responses from All Schools



The data was broadly consistent across all schools, with the percentage of students loving it ranging from 77.5% at Portland HS to 90.9% at Deering. Out of all the students surveyed, 83.3% said they loved it.

Response rate by School (Percent of total Student Body)



Response rate by school (out of total enrollment):

Casco Bay: 10.3%

Portland HS: 14.5%

Deering: 11.7%

All schools had relatively high response rates, with more than 10% of the student body evaluating their experience with the Taste Test. For each school, we can calculate a 95% confidence interval for the percent of the student body who would love the food. We cannot reliably calculate the other values because of their low sample size, but knowing the percentage that would love it will give us a good indication of the food's popularity. The formula for calculating a confidence interval is

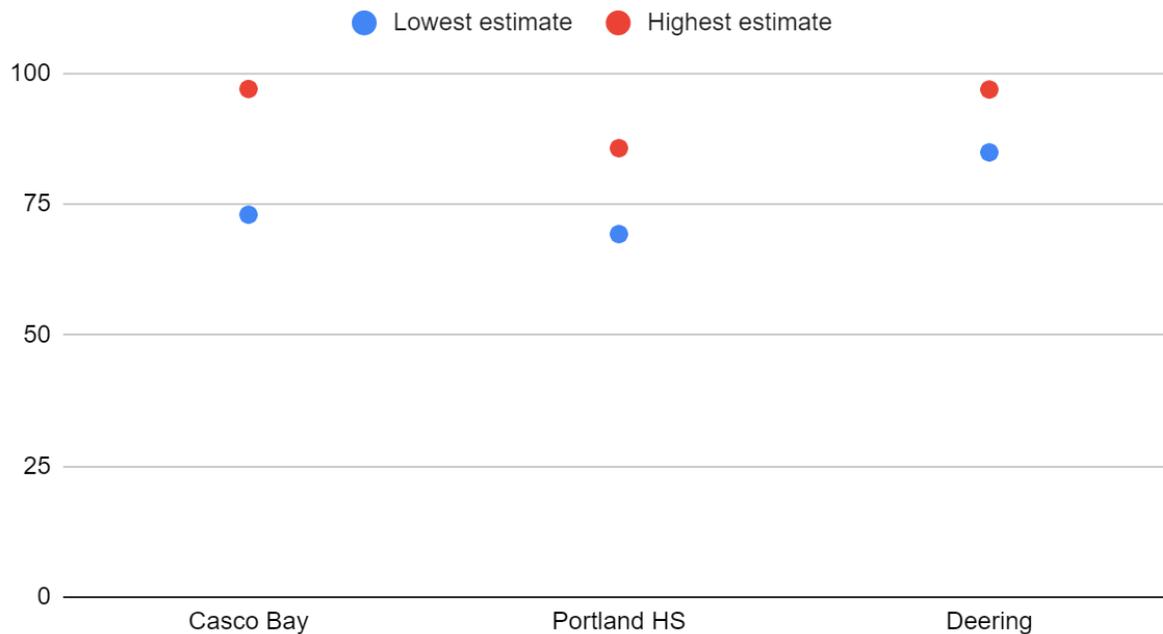
$$p \pm z (\sqrt{(p \times (1 - p)) / n})$$

p = proportion who gave a particular response

z = a number to adjust for the level of confidence needed (1.96 in our cases, for a 95% interval)

n = sample size (size of the whole sample, not just those who gave the response used for p)

Estimated Percentage of the Whole School that will Love it



95% Confidence Interval for the Percentage of the School *who will love it*:

Casco Bay: 73 to 97%

Portland HS: 69.3 to 85.7%

Deering: 84.9 to 96.9%

This means that we can say with 95% confidence that the percentage of students at Casco Bay HS *who will love it* is between 73 and 97%, that the percentage for Portland HS is between 69.3 and 85.7%, and that the percentage for Deering HS is between 84.9 and 96.9%.

These results are fairly positive. In all schools, we can say with at least 95% confidence that at least two thirds of the students will love the food. Some of the schools, especially Casco Bay, had a high margin of error due to the small sample size, but even with this error the 95% confidence interval still indicates a strong result.

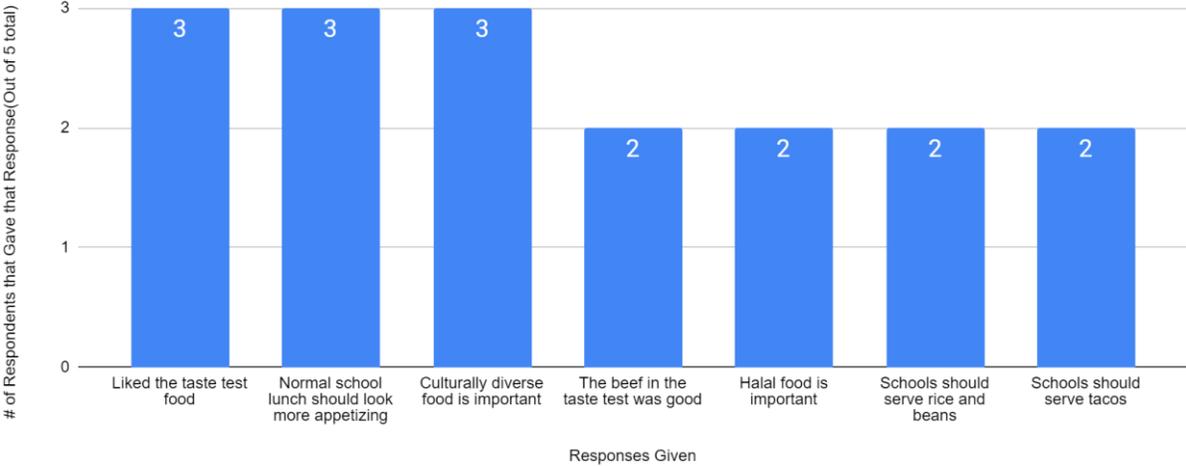
The responses received in the more open-ended feedback questions seem to mirror the positive results from the voting portion of the survey. Many of the respondents simply said how much they loved the meal and how much they would like to see it on their lunch menu. There were, however, many issues raised and suggestions about how the meal could have been better. The most common issue that people had was that the beans were not very flavorful. There were 17 responses that either critiqued the beans, mentioned a lack of flavor, or suggested ways to add more flavor to the meal. The most common suggestions were to add more salt or to add more spices/seasoning. On the other hand, there were 9 or 10 respondents that said there was a lot of flavor or that they liked the flavor in particular.

Focus Group Analysis

Analyzing the data from the focus groups is more difficult for several reasons. One general issue is false consensus → students may hesitate to disagree with others out of a reluctance to appear rude. Another problem is sample size- → even if the students are being honest and are willing to vocalize disagreement, it is difficult to draw many conclusions from just five students.

Luckily, false consensus appears not to be an issue for the Focus Group. Although the students agreed on most of the questions, there were cases where they disagreed or gave different responses, indicating that the consensus they did reach were genuine. Small sample size is still an issue, but we can still draw some conclusions from the focus group results. When asked if they liked it, three students responded that they did, and one student had mixed feelings (liking the beef but not the beans, and giving the meal overall 6.5/10). One student did not respond, but in a later question they said that they would not change anything about the meal, so we can assume they liked it. This result is consistent with the Taste Test data, with 4 of the 5 students loving it and 1 student having mixed feelings, similar to the 83.3% of overall students liking the dish. In terms of qualitative data, the following points were raised. Only points raised by multiple students in the focus group are included here, to avoid including irrelevant data.

Focus Group Responses



Project Activity: Community Partners Presentation
Names: Emma Alder, Jillian Collins and Ella Nason
Date: April 28, 2022

Link to presentation video:

https://video.maine.edu/media/Public+ClipA+Food%2C+Power+and+Social+Justice+Spring+2022+Project+Presentation/1_qldlg911?st=1176





*To my class, Food Power and Social Justice of Spring 2022,
YOU ROCK!*

*Thank you for your dedication to this involved project.
I learned so much working with you.
I hope our paths cross again at USM or in the community.
Please keep in contact and have a wonderful summer.*

*Sincerely,
Jamie Ann Picardy*

This report concludes with Student Reflections from their experiences with this project.

Personally, I was not a fan of school lunches when I was in high school. The ingredients were not quality, the food didn't taste great, and overall there were only a few decent options on a monthly basis. So, when I heard about this project with Portland Public Schools, it brought a huge smile to my face knowing that the schools were trying to put in more of an effort to make food tastier for the students while still remaining healthy. I am so honored to have been a part of this project, and I am glad to be a part of such a monumental movement within the school system.

I think that I have a much bigger view on the whole school lunch programs. I went to a high school with very little diversity so there wasn't much of a demand for more culturally diverse foods, the food didn't really get more diverse than nacho Mondays. All the food that was served in my school was food that I would eat on a regular basis so I can now understand that if I went to a school that didn't serve food that I was used to I might be less likely to try the food. This class has opened my mind up to a world that I never even knew excited from farmworker welfare to non diverse school food to supply chains and monopolies. The class was just so diverse and eye opening and I am glad that I chose to sign up for this class.

I did love this project. I come from a country where there is no school meals program and seeing that there is an option for that and even better we are working on adding more diverse food options. It is a great initiative as we live in a diverse country and for most of us what we eat matters the most and most of us will not eat something that we are not used to or did not grow up eating. We tend to also eat cultural food or dishes that our parents or family members used to cook for us and it might hard to go to school and not have a dish that you are used to.

I, personally, didn't have a huge role when it comes to the taste test. However, I feel like I gained a lot of knowledge on how to work on a project with so many people. I feel like this is the first time I got experience working on a project that could be similar to something I will be doing when I am older and have a job. I also think this has opened my mind to how much our school lunch systems need to be improved, and how kids are sort of waiting for this change to happen. Especially when it comes to different cultures, we really need to work towards a shift.

I really liked this project because it made a direct impact on the community. Many of the projects that I do in my other classes are just hypothetical. However, this assignment was actually "real" and effected real people, which is awesome! I also loved being able to connect with all my classmates and work together. My view on schools has also really changed after this project, as I went to a very sheltered high school. To the best of my knowledge, we didn't really have an immigrant community where I used to live. It has been amazing to see the diversity in Portland! I love that the project forced me to grow and learn new things that can be applied to my life after school is finished.

This project made me consider what it would be like going to a school where the meals served were mostly foreign to me. As the person of European descent, school meals always closely resembled the food I consumed at home. However, many of our minority community members do not have that privilege. Food is a big part of most cultures and particularly important for students to be effective learners. I had never considered the impact of being surrounded by almost exclusively foreign food in school until participating in this project.

I found that this project really aided in gaining a deeper comprehension of food security within the school. I found it super interesting to learn that so many students are opening to trying new foods from cultures that may be different to theirs, it really made me think that there definitely needs to be a shift for school lunches that gives students the opportunity to try foods from different cultures in a school setting.

I am from California. I say this because I am not from Maine. I miss the food in California and that is still a part of the US. So if I was one of the Mainers from another country it would make me so happy to see my culture and food represented in my school. I know when authentic Mexican food places pop up in Maine as a California girl it makes me so happy. I recommend luchador! It's amazing. The reason I say all this is because I am taking this course for my social justice minor. I think that doing this project was a perfect example of what a social justice minor should look like. I actually got to go out and maybe make a little difference for the different cultures represented in the US and I also got to help educate Mainers along the way. I think it was a great project and the most involved I have ever been in a class at USM. So great Job professor Jamie!

Overall I think this project is a really great way to get involved with the surrounding community, I think a lot college courses are fairly isolated from the outside world and sometimes exist only in the world of theory and academia, this class, aided by this project, is a strong turnaround from that. I personally feel like I did not have as big of a part as some of the other groups but that is ok, there are a lot of moving parts in something this big. It is also both nice and frustrating to see the basis of PPS being so much better than what I grew up with anyways, and then for them to even be open to expanding upon that is fantastic.

This project was an unexpected but very positive experience for me. It caused me to grow stronger bonds with my classmates and learn more about the community. Because of this project, I realized how possible it is for me to be a part of the community and a part of other cultures. As someone who likes to cook lots of different types of cultural foods, this was very special to me. I wish I could have tasted the food they made for the students! I believe that school meals should be as inclusive as they are delicious, as building positive relationships between children and food is very important. Before this class I did not know anything about food insecurity and am so happy that I now can educate the people around me about it. Although my learning of how to cook cultural meals is important, ensuring that those cultures can afford and access the food for themselves is 10x more important. I have always chosen to eat at cultural family-owned restaurants over larger companies, but this class really solidified why I should be doing that. Thank you so much for giving me such a positive experience in this class and with this research project!

I never knew quite how much effort truly goes into making school lunch and meals possible! Everyone works so incredibly hard to give these students healthy, delicious, and nutritious foods for lunch. I'm so grateful to have been a part of a project that was so hands on - I really feel like I've made a difference in my community. This project, and this class in general, has taught me so much about the food system and how many students actually face food insecurity. I'm happy to leave with all of this knowledge, and hopefully I (and my fellow classmates) can use it to make the community-and the world! - A better place! Thank you so much Jamie, you have been absolutely amazing!

I really enjoyed the course project. I was aware of food insecurity before this class, but this class has taught me so much about the food system and the inequalities within it as well. I wasn't aware so many children relied on daily school meals and programs. I think this project is amazing because it's supporting the community by reflecting culturally diverse foods to the kids that go to the schools. Although some colleges try to create diverse food, trying this project at the college level would be interesting. The project has also inspired to be more involved in topics that interests me like food security and helping out in any way I can.

This course project has shown different resources and businesses to support in this area. I believe it is beneficial to show diversity in food in different schools, especially introducing younger students to a brand new culture. Bringing a newer and different perspective surrounding food is important; it helps kids who don't have the opportunity to try new foods, the opportunity.

I think this highlighted a lot of issues in the food systems of the public schools that I have really never considered before this class. Not only was able to learn so much throughout my time this semester in FSP 200, but it was applied to the real world end I think that is extremely important. What I have learned in this class will stay with me throughout my whole life and has change my views on so many social justice cases within the food industry, many of which I was not even aware about.

In my previous classes, I had some project here and there, mainly stuff in like an Excel sheet that I worked on, on my own, turned it in to the professor, and then never thought about it again. This class project was very different than that, as it was a collaboration with everyone in the class, as well as people beyond the school system, which makes me believe that this will go well beyond what we did as a class.

I really learned so much while working with my classmates on this project. I learn how important cultural food items is to high school students and how much they want to see food that they are familiar with and food they eat at home. I also learned how important it is working with individuals from different backgrounds and the advantages that come with it such as different perspectives, ideas and learning styles. I have learned so much from classmates by sharing their experiences with food, culture, race, and many more. I truly enjoyed working on this project and learning from my classmates.

My views on school lunches have drastically changed. As someone who grew up with the privilege to either bring a healthy lunch from home or in high school I had the financial means to go off campus and spend money on food. Seeing how truly essential the school meals are to so many children, I must commend the efforts of not only our community partners and Portland public schools but all schools who are striving to make school meals tasty and allow students to experience different cultures in a comfortable environment. After going on our tour and seeing the amount of food they have and limited resources, it really opens my eyes to see all the work it takes to go into preparing all these meals. My eyes have just been opened completely and it makes me have a deeper appreciation for what I have.

I really enjoyed this project. I didn't realize how important it was for the community or that it was actually going to be implemented until about a month ago and that really changed my perspective on it. I had never considered the need for culturally diverse foods until we started this project and I am grateful for it.

Before this project I never really thought about school lunches. Now looking back I can see how bad they are. School lunches need to have more diversity.

Being in this class has thought me a lot when it comes to the importance of food and animal and just are whole environment in general. It has made me want to help out more when it comes to giving others food and has made me aware on how important watching the things you eat is important.

Before this project, I didn't realize how important it is to have culturally representative and diverse food in schools. I now see that food that represents the cultural backgrounds of the student body will make people feel more welcome and comfortable in their school.