



InDesign Mind Map

- Ciara Fraser -

Improving the Cafeteria Experience

The Problem

Students need the cafeteria experience to be more efficient because there is little time for students to eat healthy and be able to study during the day, but the cafeteria experience is too lengthy and complex for busy students with packed schedules.

by Ciara Fraser

The cafeteria experience takes too long

“To get the fastest experience, be sure to show up around 11:15, so you get a good spot in line.”
- Jeff, Culinary Arts Student



Several students have lamented that hot food takes too long. Students often worry that they will not be able to order hot food and make it to class on time.

In experiments run at both campuses, it took 30 minutes at Landsdowne, and 1 hour at Interurban to complete the entire cafeteria experience. We left feeling very rushed during both visits.

The Interurban Campus Cafeteria is only open until 1pm. This is frustrating for many students, because they have classes during busy lunch hours. For example, the IMD students only have 1 day where they are not in class over lunch rushes.

The cafeteria experience is too confusing

“The amount of time’s I’ve gotten in line (at the cafeteria) and heard someone say “I don’t know what I’m doing” is a lot!”
- Amy, Accounting Student



At the Landsdowne Campus, there is no indication of where to order. This makes students feel frustrated and confused.

At the Interurban Campus, it is unclear to students if the lineup is for hot food only, or if the lineup is for all food inside the cafeteria (desserts, salad bar, etc.)

If there were signs indicating where to order, this would prevent confusion, put students at ease, and simplify flow of traffic. A sign indicating that the lineup is for hot food only would also prevent students from standing in line

Easily accessible food options are not healthy or filling

Sometimes I forget to pack my lunch, and don’t have much time between classes, and there’s only snacks or desserts near me! I’d love to be able to get an easy, healthy snack.”
- Sam, ICS Student

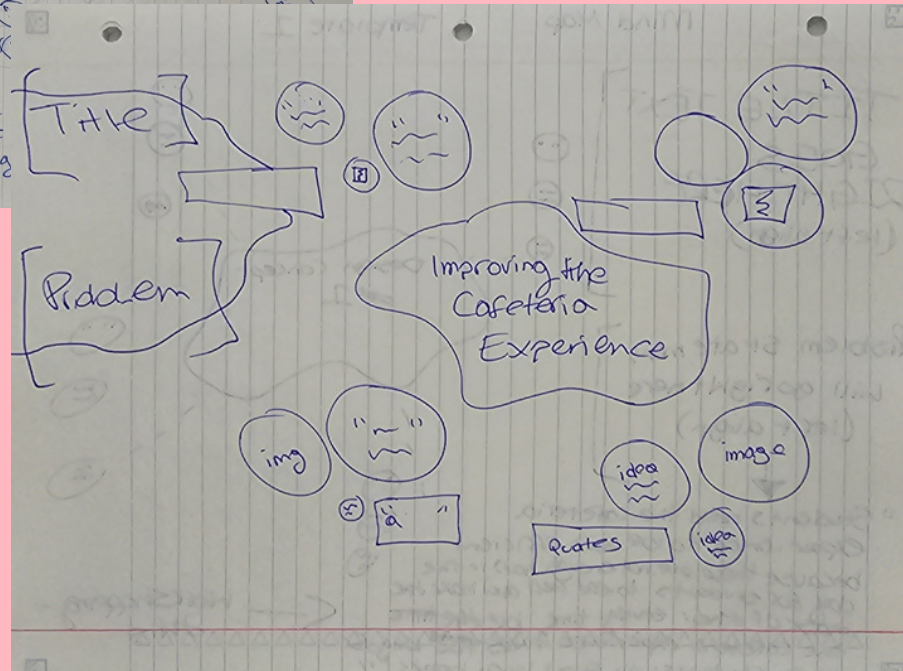
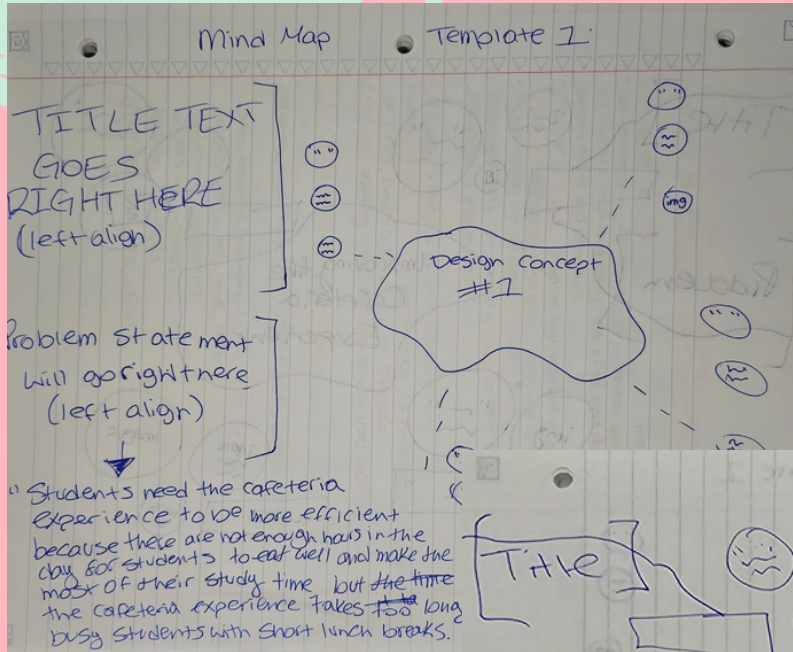


Yes, there are accessible food options; however, they are either quick and lacking nutrition, or nutritious but few in number, and often out of stock.

There is a cafe located on each campus. Both are easily accessible, but lack a variety of nutritious foods. They are both mostly stocked with bakery items, and sometimes a few salads or sandwiches.

A potential solution brought up by Sam was to introduce protein snack packs, similar to what is provided at Starbucks. This would provide busy students with a quick and fulfilling meal on the go.

Designs, Thoughts, Sketches



THE DESIGN THINKING PROCESS

Documenting the stages of the design thinking process proved invaluable, keeping my focus on the user's needs. By engaging users through surveys, I swiftly defined the problem. It highlighted that user feedback is paramount in design thinking. Initially overwhelmed, I found clarity by empathizing with users. I learned that rushing through stages led to vague problem statements. Next time, I'd allocate more time to the empathy phase for a stronger foundation.



Insights

Through discussions with students, I discovered that their main grievances boiled down to inefficiency. Cafeteria waits, unclear menus, and crowded spaces highlighted the need for enhanced efficiency in both Interurban and Landsdowne campuses. Additionally, students expressed disappointment in easily accessible food places offering only snacks, lacking substantial meal options. This revealed a common struggle among students—juggling time, fatigue, and stress while seeking a quick, nutritious meal. Understanding these frustrations clarified the universal need for streamlined, nutritious cafeteria experiences



Interviews

AMY, ACCOUNTING STUDENT

Amy used to use the cafeterias all the time but stopped due to her classes swapping to a mostly online format.

"For a newbie the line up organization is unobvious at interurban café. Could use a big ol sign saying "start here for x, start here for y, go around for items in the case, etc."

"The amount of times I went in line and someone said "I don't know what I'm doing" is a lot."

"The cafeteria is also really cramped - I've never seen the annex open during lunch. Knock out the wall and make the cashiers over there (in the annex) and stretch the food out. Less disorganized and chaotic with more space."

When asked why she no longer uses the cafeteria:

"It's too far and I don't want to do all those stairs again."

"It's noisy and chaotic and sometimes there's not a table."

"Some days the offerings just didn't appeal, especially since the prices went up in one semester."

JEFF, CULINARY STUDENT

When asked if he had many experiences using the cafeteria at Interurban:

"I haven't. I've only cooked at this one, but I'd recommend showing up around 11:15 to make sure you get a good spot in line."

"I'm usually cooking or cleaning whenever the cafeteria is open."

SAM, ICS STUDENT

"Sometimes I forget to pack my lunch, and don't have much time between classes, and there's only snacks or desserts near me. I'd love to be able to get an easy, healthy snack."

"It'd be cool to turn the cba café into more of a Starbucks thing. It has the coffee, breakfast sandwiches, wraps, salads, protein boxes, so busy tech and business students don't have to trek all the way down to the cafeteria when they have 30 minutes between classes."

"I have several 10-minute breaks, a couple 30 minutes, one or two hour breaks, and one 2 hour break during the week. I don't ever find the time to eat at a slow or relaxed pace by running to the cafeteria and back."

"Also, as a student who has physical activities outside of a full-time school schedule, I have literally zero options for a healthy snack or meal."

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