2. Empathy Map

Understanding the users — *college students* — is essential to designing meaningful visual analytics. The empathy map below represents a structured understanding of their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and pain points, which inform how the data should be visualized and interpreted.

2.1 Target Persona

Attribute	Description
User Type	Undergraduate and graduate college students
Age Group	18 – 25 years
Location	Primarily living on-campus or off-campus in urban college areas
Lifestyle Factors	Busy schedules, budget constraints, frequent exams, exposure to fast food
Health Consciousness	Moderate to low awareness of nutritional content in daily meals

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2.2 Empathy Map Table

> - Unhealthy food readily available
>
> - Peers with similar poor food habits
>
> - Limited awareness campaigns about health and nutrition

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| **What they HEAR** | - "It's okay to skip meals when you're busy."
- "Junk food is cheap and convenient."
- "Healthy food is expensive."
- Health advice from family, friends, social media influencers |
| **What they THINK & FEEL**| - "I want to eat healthier but it's too hard."
- Guilt after overeating or skipping meals
- Anxiety about weight and health
- A desire for personalized and easy-to-follow nutrition guidance |
| **What they SAY & DO** | - "I don't have time to cook."
- Frequently order takeout or eat in campus cafes
- Rarely read food labels
- Share meal photos on social media |

2.3 Pain Points and Gains

Pain Points (Challenges)	Gains (Goals & Motivations)
❌ Lack of time and motivation to cook or plan meals	✅ Want to improve health and focus
❌ Limited awareness about nutritional content	✅ Prefer personalized nutrition plans
❌ High cost of healthy food options	✅ Want affordable, healthy food alternatives
❌ Irregular eating patterns due to classes, work, and social commitments	✅ Seek visual guidance and data-driven tips to form better habits
❌ Poor cafeteria options and fast food dependency	✅ Want quick insights into their diet to take corrective steps

2.4 Empathy Insights Summary

By diving into the students' perspectives, we discovered a significant **gap between intent and behavior**. Students want to eat better and live healthier lives, but lack of information, time, and affordability become major barriers. This empathy-driven understanding allowed us to design **data visualizations in Tableau that are intuitive, personalized, and directly actionable** — not just technical, but human-centered.