

Shaw Middle School Taste Test #1
March 5, 2013

Purpose

The purpose Smarter Lunchroom Design at Shaw Middle School is to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables by students who eat school lunches using behavioral economics strategies designed by Cornell University's BEN lab. The three taste tests are one of 14 activities designed to support student awareness and taste experiences as well as obtain data about student likes/dislikes.

Methods

Cafeteria manager Lynn Strahl identified the salads that students serve themselves the least often. For the first taste test, broccoli-raisin salad was prepared. 91 salads were served in small taste-testing cups with small spoons. Short, three-question surveys on strips of paper were taped to each cup. The samples and pens were handed out to two large lunch groups (seventh grade in the first lunch group and eighth grade in the second lunch group). The vice principal of the school announced why and what was being taste tested and students who wanted a sample raised their hands. There were more hands raised than samples available. Food \$ense provided an incentive (rubber bracelets with a health message) to students who turned in their surveys.

Shaw lunchroom staff count the number of salads and fruit and vegetables that are taken by students every day. Lynn will have the opportunity to review production records to evaluate if taste tests increased the popularity of these salads.

Results: Taste Test

Broccoli-Raisin Salad

1st Lunch 7th Graders: 35/48 surveys returned.

	5 (excellent)	4 (good)	3 (fair)	2 (so-so)	1 (yuck)
How much did you like this salad?	14	10	4	2	5
% Like or dislike salad	24/35 69%		6/35 17%		5/35 14%
How likely are you to eat it again?	13	5	2	5	6
% likely to eat salad again	18/35 51%		7/35 20%		6/35 17%

Comments:

Positive:

"I like it's taste" "I like the salad I like it all" "I like the unique of the salad!)"
 "I like the flavor and I like how I know its good for me and it is good" "It was sweet!"
 "Its green dude!" "amazing" "I liked it all" "I liked the raisan"
 "It'syumma I love it" "(I like) the taste and mixture with stuff I don't like" "I liked most of it"
 "I liked the brocolie and the raisins" "good" "(I didn't like) the onions but it was good"
 "I liked everything" "Yes, I did like it! It is very taste!" "I like it! Its good" "cool"
 "I like the brockley" "(I like) the sweetness of the raisins, and the bitterness of the onions"

Negative:

"I don't like raisins" "kinda blan" "tastes like roten apple" "It tast like onions! ☹"
 "I don't like raisins" "It taste like onion" "(I didn't like) onions but it was good"
 "It tasted so slimy and grose" "(I didn't like) how it tastes!! It tastes like onions!"
 "Never ever (likely to eat it again)"

2nd Lunch 8th Graders: 37/43 surveys returned.

	5 (excellent)	4 (good)	3 (fair)	2 (so-so)	1 (yuck)
How much did you like this salad?	10	11	3	3	10
% Like or dislike salad	22/37 59.5%		6/37 16%		10/37 27%
How likely are you to eat it again?	6	10	6	3	10
% likely to eat salad again	16/37 43%		9/37 24%		10/37 27%

Comments

Positive:

“I liked it all” “The flavor” “It was good” “the broccoli” “It was good”
 “(I liked the) raisins” “(I liked the) Ranch” “(I liked the) seasoning” “I liked everything”
 “I like the salad sauce” “(I liked) the raisins” “It was good” “Liked everything”
 “It was good and sweet” “(I liked) the raisins or cranberries (whatever it is)”

Negative:

“(I didn’t like) the seasoning” “I like the taste but its too sweet” “No raisans please”
 “(I didn’t like) the raisens” “(I didn’t like the) raisins” “I didn’t like the raisins things”
 “(I didn’t like) the taste” “(I didn’t like) the broccoli” “uhhh it was unique”
 “I don’t like the raisins” “It’s gross I don’t like it!!!!” “It is gross” “nasty”
 “(I didn’t like) everything” “was nasty like really bad” “(I didn’t like) the dressing”
 “(I didn’t like) raisins” “I don’t like cranberries/raisins whatever it is”
 “onions were gross” “(I didn’t like) the taste”
 “Taste like my grandmas kind of food go ask her it might taste good to her”

Results

Overall 91 Shaw students participated in the March 5th Broccoli-Raisin salad taste test during the 2nd and 3rd lunch periods. This represents approximately 91/400 or about 23% of the students who eat lunch in the cafeteria on a daily basis.

Based on the taste test survey results the 7th grade students liked the salad more than the 8th grade students. Twenty four out of 35 participants or 69% of 7th graders rated the salad as excellent or good and 51% said they would likely eat it again. About 15% of the students who participated said they did not like it or would not eat it again.

In contrast to the 7th grade students, the 8th grade students did not like the salad as much. Ten out of thirty-seven participants, or 60% of 8th graders rated the salad as excellent or good and 43% said they would likely eat it again. About 27% said they did not like it or would not eat it again.

Comments ranged from “I like the salad I like it all” to “it tasted so slimy and grosse”. Several students liked the sauce, the ingredients and the flavor while some disliked the onions or the raisins. The most common complaint from the 7th graders was the onions. The most common complaint from the 8th graders was that it contained raisins.

Discussion

This is one of three taste tests. We were surprised with how many students were interested in participating in this taste test. We offered incentives (bracelets) for participating but these were not announced to the students. Regardless, we did not have enough salad tastes to accommodate the number of students who wanted to participate. We decided that we will not provide incentives at each taste testing. This decision is based on evidence that a randomized reward system is much more effective than a predictable one. We are considering an incentive for the third taste test and increasing our number of samples if there seems to be unmet interest at this second taste testing. We did not evaluate waste so are not able to make any conclusions about consumption.

Conclusions

7th graders appeared to like the broccoli salad more than 8th graders. Students were more positive about the new salad than expected based on production records. It may be that raising awareness can have an impact on fruit/veg selection and possibly consumption. We plan to have a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness and student involvement and therefore may not be able to identify the effectiveness of any one factor. This early test however shows us that taste testing should be an activity used to raise student awareness and possibly consumption of new foods. Once students have tasted a salad in a taste-testing, they may discover they like the taste and may be more likely to choose it in the lunch line in the future.