Homework Assignment # 4
Assessing the Nutritional Environment with NEMS

In this assignment you will learn the methods and strategies for assessing the Nutritional environment in the neighborhood where you live. Again as with HW #2, you will choose your own UHF neighborhood area as the subject of this exercise. To conduct your assessment you will follow the guidelines summarized in the course lecture and materials called, “Nutritional Environmental Measurement Survey,” (NEMS) created by the University Pennsylvania’s Built Environment Assessment Training Institute or BEAT. The BEAT institute offers an online training in assessment both the nutritional environment and the physical activity environment. We will focus our attention on the nutritional environment for this HW #3 and borrow some of the strategies and tools presented in the BEAT institute course. First an introduction to the NEMS pilot study will be presented in class, along with a PowerPoint slide file that will be available in the HW Folder in BlackBoard.

After we had an opportunity to discuss the NEMS tool and pilot study in class and review the materials that explain how NEMS is used, you are ready to conduct an analysis of your chosen Food Service Establishment (FSE). You may choose either, a Fast Casual or Sit-down Dining, as defined in the learning module and discussed in class). You will select a FC or SD food establishment in your residential neighborhood. (Suggest that you Do Not choose a FSE that you have patronized in the past or are very familiar with, as there is a chance of injecting your own opinion and bias in the survey measure and not be completely objective or scientific about your analysis. Use the assessment tool or survey (check-off list) provided in the HW Folder, print out, and follow the guidelines presented in Instructions (also in the HW Folder) to assess your chosen food establishment. Any questions, feel free to email me at michelle.congo@liu.edu

After you conduct your NEMS assessments of your chosen FSE you should submit the following with this HW assignment:

1. Locate your chosen food establishment on one of the online mapping programs (Google Maps, MapQuest, Yahoo Maps, etc.) and print out a copy of the map and identify your food establishment, along the surrounding streetscape. Include the Names, Addresses, Phone # or Website (if available) of your study restaurant.

2. Include an original copy of the menu showing the name and address of the FSE

3. Include an original hand written copy of your completed NEMS- R score/data sheet with your HW submission.

4. Proved a maximum one page, typed summary of your findings, and based on the results of the NEMS tool, about the nutritional value of your chosen establishment. Explain where the FSE supports wholesome nutrition and contributes to local food security and also areas where it does not contribute to neighborhood food security, and provide justification for your answers. You may submit any other supportive information or data that you collect in your “field investigation” (think of yourself like a “detective”, so photos, interviews, and other evidence that supports your conclusion may be added to your paper write up). Also suggest a rating or grading (A, B, C, etc.) using the NEMS tool results, and all of your supportive evidence, to determine how you rate or grade your chosen FSE? What’s your justification for the grade?

5. Please upload an electronic copy of your one-page summary into a drop box created on blackboard, and credit for this assignment will then be given when all 5 requirements are met,
Student 1:

IHOP (International House of Pancakes) is a United States-based multinational restaurant. IHOP serves mainly breakfast foods such as Pancakes, French toast and omelets. IHOP also offers menu of lunch and dinner items as well. The FSE restaurant I chose is located in 2101 Ralph Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11234. The restaurant opens seven days a week. It is open 24/7 on Friday and Saturday, and open on Sunday through Thursday from 7am to 11pm.

There are nutrition information pages that explain how much calories. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting saturated fat to 20 grams and sodium to 2,300 milligrams for a typical adult eating 2,000 calories daily. Recommended limits may be higher or lower depending on daily calorie consumption. Based on the IHOP nutrition information the French banana bread French toast contains a total of 1060 calories, 350 calories from fat, 39g total fat and more. The Egg Combo has much different option to choose from. The Eggs Combo has the banana combo, which has a total of 540 Calories.

The IHOP I went to do not have a take-out menu however they do have online menu. The prices range from two dollars to fifteen dollars. It is located in a small mall and it has a parking lot for customers. Seating capacity is up to take person per table. The restaurant is a medium size not to small not too big can hold approximately 150 people. The restaurant does not have a bar. They do not have a drive thru window. However, they do have take out if a customer wish to order to place a to go order. They have a full menu with a variety of foods such as salads, burgers, sandwiches, entrees, combos, French toasts, waffles, crepes, apps, sous, burger bar, deserts and beverages. They also have a kid menu, which consist of mac and cheese, cream sundae, silver 5, funny face pancake, Jr. chicken and waffles and more.
Assessing the Nutritional Environment with NEMS – Applebee’s Flatbush

First, the Flatbush Applebee’s location supports wholesome nutrition in that it has a special section of its website displaying entrees that have less than 600 calories. While this supports wholesome nutrition to an extent, this part of the website only shows 5 entrees. If a well-intentioned Applebee’s patron does not want any of these few choices, they will choose something more appetizing but with less impressive nutrition information. Second, this Applebee’s location supports wholesome nutrition by posting the nutrition information for all of their menu items on their website. While this supports wholesome nutrition to an extent, it would be more beneficial to Applebee’s patrons if this information were disclosed directly on the physical menu or at least on the descriptions of the specific items on the website. While the nutrition information for all items is available, where it can be found is not immediately evident. Lastly, this Applebee’s location support wholesome nutrition by offering several entrees that may not be calorie-conscious, but are strong in their vegetable/other healthful ingredient content. Examples of this include the four salads offered by Applebee’s as entrees, the several meal options centered on grilled chicken and lean turkey, and the menu’s Classic Burger which is offered with lettuce, tomato, and onion.

There are three components to the concept of food security, and I would like to look at each of these components separately when evaluating the contribution of the Flatbush Applebee’s location. First, food security means that all persons within a community have access at all times to a sufficient supply of safe food. The only thing I can think of that would make this location of Applebee’s unsafe in terms of the food it serves is an occasional case of food poisoning. Because Applebee’s is a chain restaurant, I am very sure that the food they offer is safe and comes from reliable sources, and therefore contributes to the food security of the surrounding community. Second, food security means that all persons within a community have access at all times to a sufficient supply of wholesome food. This location of Applebee’s both does and does not provide access at all times to a sufficient supply of wholesome food; these nuances are discussed above. Third, food security means that all persons within a community have...
access at all times to a sufficient supply of nutritious food. This location of Applebee’s both does and does not provide access at all times to a sufficient supply of nutritious food; these nuances are also discussed above. The “at all times” portion of the definition of food security also reflects on the operating hours of the Flatbush Applebee’s location – with weekly hours of 11am-12am and weekend hours of 11am-1am, this food service establishment provides access to wholesome food options for longer hours than many of the surrounding restaurants.

Using the NEMS tool results and my supportive evidence, I suggest that the Flatbush Applebee’s contribution to the nutritional environment is given a grade of B. While nutritious and wholesome food items are not in abundance, they do exist. While the caloric content of most menu items is nothing to brag about, calorie information is disclosed, even if this disclosure is not easy to locate. This location of Applebee’s shows effort towards being secure in its food and nutrition, but not enough effort to be worthy of an A grade.

Comments:

3) While the take-away menu contains nutrition information, this information is only provided for the items denoted “Under 600 Calories”.

11f.) I did not observe any low-carb promotion on the website, menu, or during my visit but I did not ask staff.

17c.) I did not find any information on the salad dressings offered.

21) Unsweetened iced tea.

1. Uploaded to BlackBoard– summary of my findings