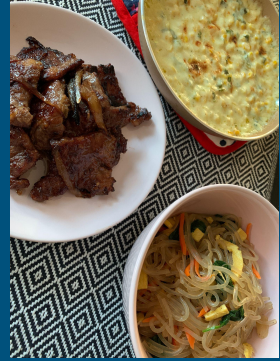




Mealtime Experiences for Occupational Therapy Graduate Students: A Photo Elicitation Study

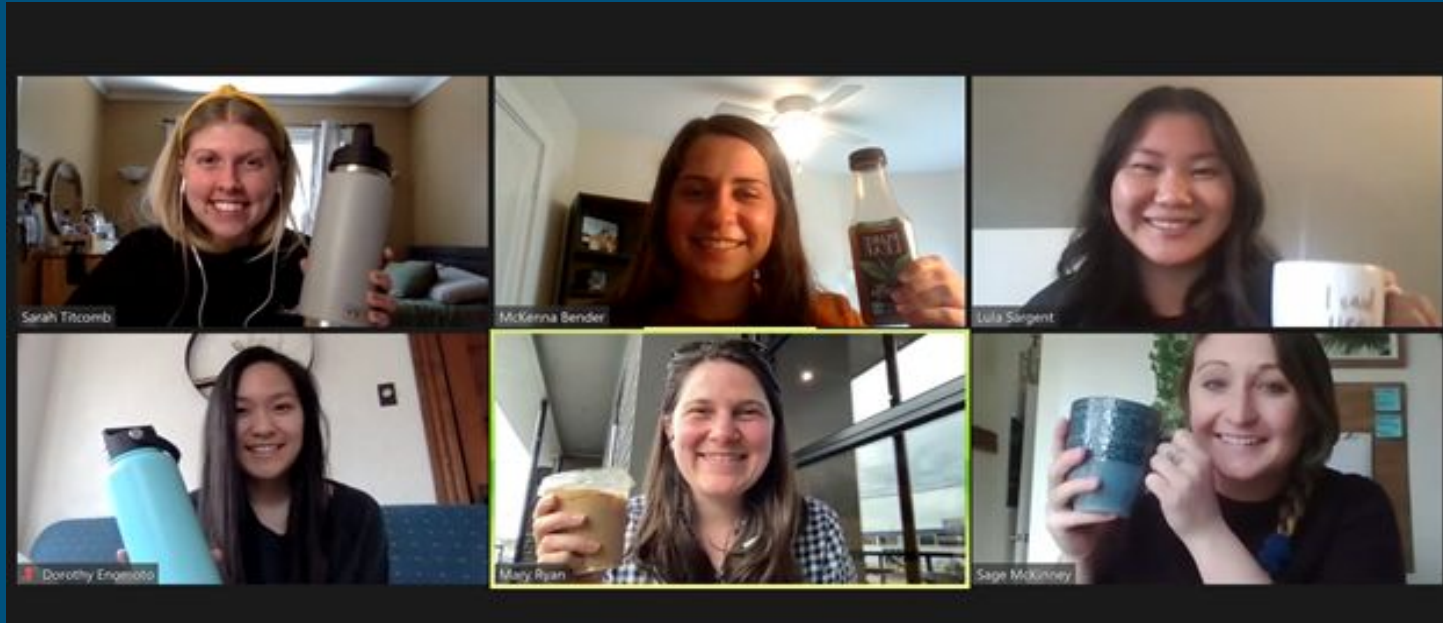


Dr. Kristin Winston PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, McKenna Bender, Dorothy Enomoto, Sarah Titcomb, Sage McKinney, Mary Ryan, and Lula Sargent

University of New England;
Westbrook College of Health Professions;
Occupational Therapy Department



Introduction: Our Research Journey



Brief Literature Review

- The *transition* to college can introduce new mealtime experiences (Hanson et al., 2019)
- *Family and past experiences* can influence performance in academics (Jannusch & Honselman, 2013)
- *Barriers* to healthy mealtime choices can widely vary (Sogari et al., 2018)
- *Perceptual changes* can occur due to drastic life changes (Keel et al., 2020)





Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

What is our interest in Mealtimes?



Purpose of Study

- Seek to explore the lived experiences of graduate students, in an occupational therapy program surrounding what the occupation of mealtimes means to them through the use of a qualitative photo elicitation study
- Primary aim: **examine individual perceptions of daily mealtime occupations**

Words that describe & influence mealtimes



Methods: Research Design

- Qualitative **photo elicitation** study
- Ethnography- coding own transcript of lived experience
- Strong interrater reliability



Methods: Participants

- 6 graduate students at the University of New England (Portland, ME campus)
 - First year Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy students
 - All live off campus
 - Age range: 23-28 years old



Methods: Instrumentation/Collecting Data

- Participants were instructed to take 5-6 photos that they felt best represented their mealtime experiences
- Photos were shared on a secure Google Drive
- Each participant was assigned to one interviewer
- Semi-structured Zoom interview



Examples of Interview Questions

- Tell me a little about what's happening/occurring in the photo?
- Talk to me about the context/location?
- Tell me a little bit about the significance of what is in this photo.
- Tell me about how you felt when taking these photos?

Reflection

Sage: In coding my own transcript, I felt that I fell into a definitional drift pattern where I coded my transcript somewhat differently than the beginning of the data transcripts, due to knowing the intent behind my own statements.

Sarah: While coding my transcript, I felt as though I was unconsciously comparing my transcript to others, often thinking “I should have elaborated here” or “why didn’t I talk about how that tasted?”, etc.

Lula: Coding my transcript felt uncomfortable at first and I found that it was hard not to focus on the mechanics of my speech--“do i really say like that often?”

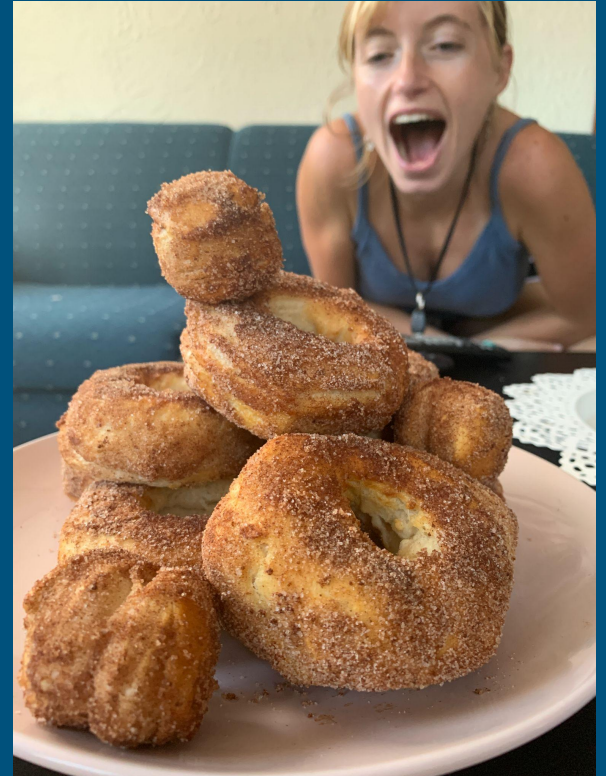
Mary: While coding my transcript, I wondered if my responses in the interview would have been different had I not been as familiar with the literature and the interview questions.

McKenna: Coding my own transcript was an uncomfortable process. It was difficult to not skip sections or read quickly based on what I considered to be important from my interview.

Dorothy: It was interesting to hear how other people interpreted my interview from what I said and how they coded it.

Data Analysis

- Line by line inductive coding of transcript
- Data reduction (started with 127 codes)
- Code consolidation into categories
- Category consolidation into themes
- Member checking of themes
- Quotes representing themes



→ when coding myself
take notes → reflect on
experience

CODES

- - healthy eating
- - skipping meals
- - time
- - making/homemade/prepping
- - taste
- - texture
- - location
- - enjoyment/happiness
- - special occasion/treat
- - clutter/mess
- - - social
- - - expectation
- - - relaxation
- - - hungry
- - - multi-tasking
- ~ tech
- ~ comfort
- ~ decoration
- ~ humor
- ~ memory
- ~ pride
- ~ culture
- ~ appearance
- ~ convenience/routine
- ~ pass
- ~ class
- ~ ease
- ~ tired
- ~ groceries
- ~ takeout
- ~ money
- ~ start/end of day
- ~ calmness
- ... frustration
- ... gathering
- ... busy
- ... ath
- ... uncertainty
- ... organization
- ... sig. other
- ... precision/control
- ... family
- ... focus
- ... amount of food
- ... desire
- ~ work
- ~ pre-covid
- ~ view
- ~ row/hates
- ~ animal
- ~ allow
- ~ hobby
- ~ friendship
- ~ snack
- ~ escape
- ~ homeless
- ~ lack of
- ~ dislike
- ~ stress
- ~ self-blame

(1) Feelings/ Emotion (Mary)	(2) Experience/ Social (Sage & McKenna)	(2) Environment/ Context (Sage & McKenna)	(3) Mechanics of Mealtime (Lula)	(3) Time (Lula)	(4) Sensory (Sarah)	(5) Culture/Memory/Sig nificance (Dorothy)
"It's all about emotional eating."	"It's not just about where you eat, but who you eat with."	"It's not just about where you eat, but who you eat with."	"It takes a village!"	"It takes a village!"	"Mealtime is a <i>sensational</i> experience." How food looks, feels, tastes, etc. + exemplars	"Taking a trip down savory lane!"
pleasant	social	location	Prep ahead of time/meal prep/thinking ahead	holiday	colors	Childhood impact
enjoyment/happiness	sharing	clutter	Money management	frequency	spicy	culture
comfort	taking care of others	decoration	budget	convenience	tasty	Memory
humor	roles	Dining room table	ingredients	ease	flavor	significance <input type="text"/>
pride	connection	tech	Grocery store	Break	taste	self-image
tired	holidays	viewpoint	planning	routine	texture	treat
calm	culture/memory/significance	Center of living	Special tools/supplies	multitasking	hunger	hobby
frustration	gathering	roommates	breakfast	busy	appearance	growth/learning
uncomfortable	family	Organization (storage)	lunch	Activity during mealtime		purpose/function
homesick	significant other	precision/control	dinner	Skipping meals		Relationship with food
dislike	roommates	challenges/barriers to meals	beverage	work		motivators

Results

After thoroughly coding transcripts, 5 themes emerged:

1. It's all about *emotional* eating
2. It's not just about where you eat, but who you eat with
3. It takes a village!
4. Mealtime is a *sensational* experience
5. Taking a trip down savory lane!

Qualitative Themes

It's All About *Emotional Eating*



“We both had like a really tough week... He had a long, hard week at work and I at school... I was tired and we just decided to get a bunch of sushi... and also some noodles and we just kind of indulged in sushi. So yeah, it was a nice way to end the week.”

It's Not Just About Where You Eat, But *Who* You Eat With



“Yeah so this one is like where the magic happens, like this is our kitchen I feel like with this one like there’s usually like one or maybe two roommates sitting at the island while one cooks. And it’s pretty routine, it was like we kind of take turns we just hang out it’s kind of like social hour.”

It Takes A Village!



"I always say I just don't know how to make like a meal for one like for one time, so I thought this [picture] represented really well how I just don't know how to cook for one sitting, it has to be like multiple days...If it's just me, I will box them up and like eat them for lunch and for dinner throughout the week."

Mealtime Is A *Sensational* Experience

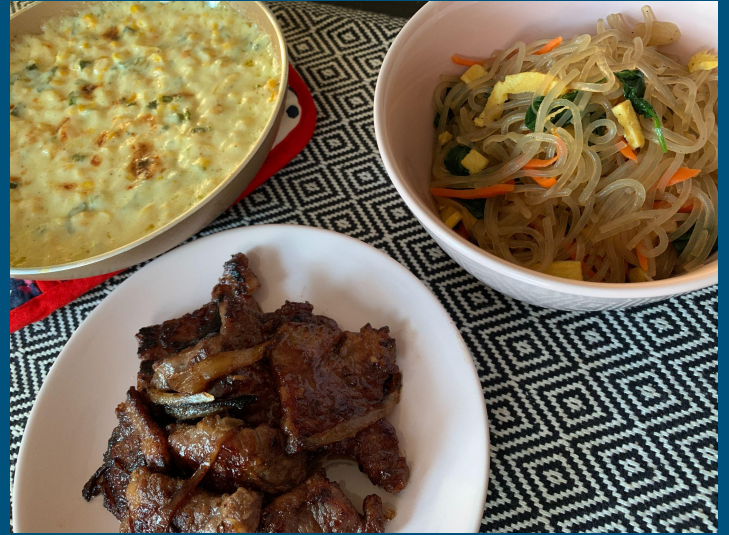


"It doesn't have to be spicy but I love it like really spicy"

"I just don't like breakfast stuff, so more savory stuff is better"

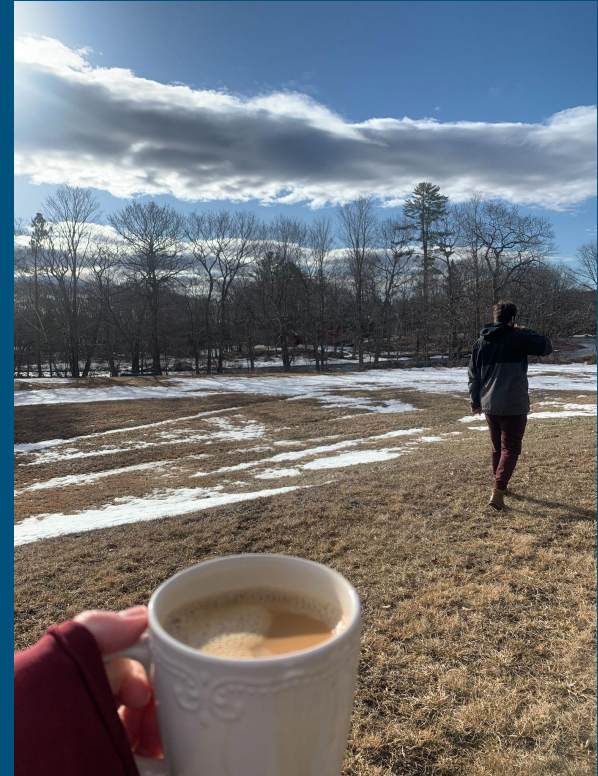
Taking A Trip Down Savory Lane!

“I feel like it’s very reflective because yes I’m always alone, but I don’t find it lonely; it’s time that I take and think back on my life.”



Discussion

- Form, Function & Meaning
- Occupational Analysis
 - Consider culture, timing, resources
 - Learn a lot through observing a mealtime
 - Themes emphasize individualized mealtimes
 - Importance of qualitative data
- Client-centered
 - Intimacy of mealtimes
- Comfortable asking open ended questions in OT practice



Recommendations for the Future

- Replicate the study but with more participants of different demographics
- Share a meal with fellow researchers :)
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