Research: Analytical exposition (essay)

This sample is intended to inform the design of assessment instruments in the senior phase of learning. It highlights the qualities of student work and the match to the syllabus standards.

Criterion assessed

- Inquiring

Assessment instrument

The response presented in this sample is in response to an assessment task.

**Syllabus topic areas**

- Kitchen production
- Food and beverage services

**Context**

In Hospitality Studies, you have been encouraged to think critically and make informed decisions about issues related to food production. In addition, you have focused upon the importance of food in a social context.

**Task**

You are now required to write an analytical essay 800–1000 words in response to the following research issue.

**Research issue**

Australians are eating out more often, and it has been suggested that this changing lifestyle is contributing to the obesity epidemic. Many hospitality establishments have responded to this by offering a selection of nutritious foods, even though traditionally this may not have been their responsibility.

Respond to this issue by:

- investigating the local hospitality establishment to determine if nutritional issues have been considered when developing menus
- developing arguments and drawing conclusions as to whether it is the responsibility of the hospitality industry to consider nutrition when developing menus
- using information from sources to support your argument and conclusions
- communicating your argument and conclusions in an essay using the accepted genre and language conventions.

**Note:** Within your essay response, refer to the sources of evidence that you have used. These sources must be referenced appropriately and also listed in your bibliography. Any surveys, questionnaires, tables or graphs referred to are to be included in an appendix.
Instrument-specific criteria and standards

Student responses have been matched to instrument-specific criteria and standards; those which best describe the student work in this sample are shown below. For more information about the syllabus dimensions and standards descriptors, see www.qsa.qld.edu.au/18155.html#assessment.

### Standard A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiring</th>
<th>The student work has the following characteristics:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• in-depth <a href="#">understanding</a> and <a href="#">examination</a> of hospitality issues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <a href="#">synthesis</a> of information from a <a href="#">wide range of relevant sources</a> that support well-reasoned <a href="#">arguments</a> with valid <a href="#">conclusions</a> drawn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• effective use and sustained <a href="#">control</a> of genre and language conventions to <a href="#">communicate</a> ideas.</td>
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**Note:** Colour highlights have been used in the table to emphasise the qualities that discriminate between the standards.

**Key:** Qualitative descriptors | Cognitive words
In current society, eating away from the home has become increasingly prevalent. No longer do Australians treat visits to hospitality establishments as a special occasion, rather the foods offered outside the home are dominating diets across the country (BIS Shrapnel, 2008). The nutritional adequacy of foods offered at hospitality establishments has been questioned in the past which has created hype surrounding the role hospitality establishments play in the global obesity epidemic. A mere quarter of all Australian adults are deemed to be within the healthy weight range, which is a statistic difficult to ignore (Colagiuri, 2010). As consumers have generally become more aware of eating healthily outside the home, pressure has been thrust upon hospitality establishments to alter menus to cater for the nutritional needs of clientele. However, the question must be posed; is it the responsibility of the hospitality industry to eradicate unhealthy meals to ensure the good health of the nation, or should blame be allocated elsewhere?

Developing a menu can be an arduous task for restaurateurs as it requires tireless research to ascertain whether a range of clientele and their taste preferences will be catered for. A current trend is the diversification of restaurant menus to ensure a range of healthy and nutritious options are available (Appendix B). After surveying the local hospitality industry to ascertain whether nutrition issues are being considered, it is evident this health food trend has reached local restaurants as ninety-two per cent of eateries offer a ‘healthy options’ range (Appendix B). Highly advantageous to the health of Australians, this trend may encourage individuals to adopt healthy food selection habits. However, surprisingly only a third of establishments clearly distinguished nutritious menu options as ‘healthy’, which is unexpected considering Australia has been classified as “the most ‘fat-conscious’ country in the Asia Pacific,” (Ryan, 2006). The fact that many restaurants choose not to make nutritious menu options evident as ‘healthy’ can be perceived negatively as health-conscious patrons may decide to dine elsewhere if nutritional expectations are not met (Ryan, 2006). Furthermore, when queried about the range of “healthier options offered at establishments where employed, only a minority of staff were able to correctly specify meals which satisfied ‘healthier options’ criteria; therefore it is evident, local hospitality staff were not educated regarding the nutritional value of menu choices (Appendix B). A lack of knowledge may hinder the financial success of local hospitality establishments which fail to offer a clearly distinguishable ‘healthier options’ range as health-conscious patrons may cease to visit if nutritional needs cannot be met (The Parents Jury, 2009).

In conjunction with these statistics, menus were analysed to determine whether foods high in fibre or low in salt, sugar or fat were present; collated results divulge that clearly distinguishable low fat options were common with seventy-five per cent of menus offering these meals (Appendix B). Due to the fact Australians possess a tendency to assess the nutritional adequacy of restaurant foods primarily based on fat content, this result was predictable (Ryan, 2006). Additionally, fifty-eight per cent of establishments analysed menus offered low sugar options; however, it was noted that foods low in sugar were predominately restricted to dessert ranges at restaurants. Options which were high in...
It has been suggested that it may be futile for restaurants to consider nutritional issues when developing menus as healthier options may be more expensive for both consumer and restaurateur (Palmer, 2009). Survey results collected from local hospitality establishments indicate sixty-seven per cent of eateries charge extra for ‘healthy options’ which may discourage patrons from visiting. “Price remains a deterrent to healthy restaurant fare,” (Palmer, 2009). Quite simply, restaurants are businesses with a clear intent of generating a profit; this feat would be considerably difficult to accomplish if restaurateurs were coerced to alter menus to facilitate healthy eating across Australia (Ryan, 2006). Without adequate weekly revenue, a domino effect could occur, which may potentially affect hospitality establishments. However this number is predicted to significantly decrease if restaurants cease to attract clientele (Queensland Tourism Industry Council, 2010). Dismissals of staff may not only generate financial issues for these individuals but narrow down opportunities for employment, and development of a highly-satisfying career, in the hospitality industry (Queensland Tourism Industry Council, 2010). Therefore, it may be considered unreasonable for restaurant menus to offer exclusively nutritious options, as ultimately negative outcomes could result.

It may be argued that hospitality establishments need not consider developing healthier menus as clientele have an individual right to choose the foods consumed. Regardless of whether Australians opt for nutritionally-inadequate foods when eating out, “people should have the right not to be penalised for their eating habits,” states Ellie Turner, hospitality and food writer for Australian online newspaper, Border Watch (Turner, 2010). Recently, hype has surrounded the campaigning of many Australian health spokespeople, including Mike Daube, Professor of Health Policy at Perth’s Curtin University, for restaurants to place extra taxes on unhealthy options in order to encourage healthy eating. Adhering to this proposed legislation would prohibit customers from making an individual choice regarding foods consumed at restaurants due to price (O’Leary, 2007). Colloquially referred to as a ‘fat tax’, this may generate various adversities for business owners. “Taxes would have a negative effect on my business and others like it,” argues Trudi Hattam, owner of a business in the hospitality industry (Turner, 2010). Ultimately, a ‘fat tax’ may discourage people from visiting eateries altogether; just because eateries may be forced to introduce a tax on unhealthy options does not indicate that healthy options will become affordable (Dutton, 2009). "Australians don't want extra pressure on their budgets because of a new [unhealthy foods] tax," states opposition health spokesperson Peter Dutton (Dutton, 2009). Through a decline in customer attraction and retention, financial ruin for restaurateurs may occur. Therefore it may be argued that individuals possess the right to choose the foods to consume and hospitality establishments should not be responsible for clients ordering nutritionally-inadequate options.

Although current trends indicate menus are diversifying by offering a range of healthier alternatives, many customers are still cautious when it comes to ordering these foods. A significant collection of clientele still value taste of food over health benefits and may choose meals...
Synthesis of information from a wide range of relevant sources that support well-reasoned arguments with valid conclusions accordingly; seventy-three per cent of restaurant-goers would not choose healthier options if taste was compromised (Ryan, 2006). It is predicted that client retention may be difficult to achieve if palates are dissatisfied by healthier meals. Furthermore, Peter Wright, of the Australian Culinary Federation notes that when visiting restaurants "some people are interested in a good time and are not too concerned with healthy eating as a priority. They want to treat themselves," (Ryan, 2006). Additionally, hospitality establishments have been increasingly viewed as social hotspots offering patrons a chance to enjoy a hassle-free meal (which may not be able to be recreated at home) in the company of others; “Cafés, clubs and hotels becoming venues for people to socialise with friends," (Charles Sturt University, ND). If restaurants replaced unhealthy menu items with nutritious alternatives, would the iconic casual social event that is coffee and cake be replaced by celery sticks and carrot juice? If so, it may be argued that it is probable that restaurateurs may witness business (and hard-work) depreciate as customer attraction (and retention) becomes too arduous (Warren, 2010).

Experts agree that it is the responsibility of hospitality establishments to consider nutritional issues to ensure evasion of legal issues regarding allocation of blame for obesity (Dunn, 2010). In recent times, many have blamed the hospitality industry's lack of nutritionally-adequate options for the rising epidemic of obesity (Minchin, 2002); this has resulted in clientele (who are obese) taking legal action against eateries (which serve nutritionally-poor fare) blaming these restaurants for an addiction to the energy-dense food and for failing to offer wholesome alternatives (Minchin, 2002). The obese plaintiffs suing four fast-food giants for health issues associated with poor eating behaviours claim that these restaurants are "knowingly selling meals that cause obesity [and] have misled consumers," (Minchin, 2002). Not only has legal action against these hospitality establishments generated financial loss, defamation of business has occurred thus tarnishing the reputation of the eatery (Minchin, 2002). Therefore, it may be argued that it is vital for hospitality establishments to reassess the nutritional adequacy of menu options and introduce healthier options in order to evade blame for the obesity of patrons. If minimal changes occur to menus, it is predicted that these eateries may face legal action and subsequently financial loss (if plaintiffs are successful) (Rundle-Thiele, ND).

Evidently, the current healthy eating trend is certainly not a brief one due to the significant majority of local hospitality establishments that offer healthier alternatives. Many would agree that introducing healthy menus in restaurants is a positive, and necessary, move in tackling the obesity epidemic. However, it is neither the sole responsibility of individuals or restaurateurs to introduce and consume nutritionally adequate fare; both are equally accountable. It is obvious that patrons are entitled to individual choice regarding the foods consumed and individual health. However, restaurants must ensure that blame is evaded in terms of obesity and, at least, offer nutritious foods. If neither party attempts to combat the perceived link between obesity and eating out, it is predicted that an abundance of negative outcomes will result including financial loss and defamation resulting in a decline in customers and adverse health issues associated with excess weight. Despite this, there is a variety of recommendations which could be adopted to thwart the likelihood of negative outcomes.

Hospitality establishments are able to offer a menu, which entails a diverse range of ‘healthy options’ that are clearly distinguishable as nutritious. As well as place important nutritional information next to menu options to ensure customers are aware of nutritional value of chosen
foods. This will hopefully influence clientele to choose healthier options. Additionally, it would be beneficial for eateries to encourage individuals to choose from the ‘healthy options’ to avoid legal action.

Health-conscious individuals may ask to view nutritional information of foods offered. The Australian Government is encouraged to introduce a ban on clientele taking legal action over obesity associated with consumption of foods from hospitality establishments. This will hopefully encourage individuals to take responsibility for healthy eating. Restaurants should also be encouraged to offer a diverse range of menu items from a ‘healthy options’ range. With the placement of nutritional value tables next to menu options, clientele will be able to make informed choices when eating out.

Acknowledgments

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