

# Local Point

## Qualitative Research: Interviews



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Local Point

# Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Initial Plan.....	2
Interview Script.....	3
Disclosure (ethical considerations).....	4
Codebook.....	5
Coding Work.....	6
Written Analysis.....	38
Reflection.....	40
Overview.....	41
Original Transcript: Dory.....	42
Original Journal: Dory.....	51
Original Journal: Nemo.....	55
Original Journal: Rose.....	61
Original Journal: Codename Alpha Omega.....	68

# Initial Plan

## Topics of Inquiry

After observing the happenings within Local Point, I identified three prominent themes that I wish to further investigate. First, I would like to understand how visitors to Local Point view its structure and hierarchy. There appears to be a clear division between staff and customers within the space. Second, I intend to explore the underlying reasons for certain behavioral patterns related to eating. Most customers appear to act and present themselves differently in group and solitary situations. Solo-eaters especially seem to adhere to what I call the "Five Foot Rule," sitting at least a table away from others at all times. Solo-eaters also seem to gravitate towards other solo-eaters and turn themselves physically inward upon their food or electronics. I suspect that solo-eaters experience a decrease in confidence due to emotional insecurities. However, the actual reasons for these actions are still to be explored. Finally, from my observations, I found that solo-eaters tended to utilize technology while eating. Through my interviews I intend to discover what activities customers use various technologies for and why they are compelled to do so. It should also be noted that I originally expected my observations to glean more in terms of food choices and quality. This topic may be returned to now that I have a more direct means of collecting personal perspectives through the interview process.

## Obtaining Access to Settings and Informants

My plan is to gather a group of informants that is as diverse as possible. Preferably, this would mean two males and two females with varied cultural backgrounds. For the sake of time, I may use a snowball sampling after selecting my first informant. Nonetheless, I think it will be important to pull from at least one outside source to ensure that I do not find myself in an echo chamber of equivalent perspectives. Due to the more emotional nature of some of my questions (namely, those related to solo-eating and insecurity) I have decided to interview one dining hall goer with whom I have a preexisting relationship. I have reasoned that someone who is more comfortable in my presence, and is well aware of my nonjudgmental nature, would be more willing to offer up sensitive or otherwise incriminating insights than the strangers whom I will approach at their tables at Local Point.

## Timeline for Research

The scheduling and conducting of interviews will take place over the course of two weeks. Because I would prefer to conduct my interviews in a relatively quiet setting (I suspect that my recording device will primarily pick up background noise within Local Point) and because of time conflicts due to midterms, I intend to spend the first Friday walking through Local Point inquiring about possible interview volunteers and proposing to meet after midterms the following week. I suspect that each interview will take about 30-45 minutes, with an additional hour to memo, add notes and review my recordings to add specific quotations. A full transcription should take an additional 2-3 hours depending on the length of the interview.

# Interview Script

[Further probing questions asked as needed or appropriate]

1. What pseudonym would you like me to use?  
[I enjoying seeing how people characterize themselves]
2. Where are you currently living (on campus)?
3. How often do you go to Local Point?
4. Why do you go to Local Point?
5. What is it like when you enter Local Point?
6. How do you feel when you enter the space?
7. What kinds of activities do you participate in there?
8. What role does food play during your time there?
9. What role does technology play during your time there?
10. What is it like to eat in a group?
11. What is it like to eat alone?
12. How do you present yourself within the space; what is your demeanor like?
13. What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?
14. How do you feel about other people within the space?
15. How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?
16. What kinds of social norms are present within the space?
17. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience with Local Point?

# Disclosure

Ethically, it is important that all parties involved in this study understand the methods being used. A summary of contextual information is provided below:

## **To the Informants**

Before conducting each interview I explicitly summarized the intent of my project and the extent to which I would be recording information. I explained that, while I would take notes on the interview, a pseudonym would be used to protect the informant's identity. I also asked for the informant's permission to record the interview, adding that I would (and I did) erase their voice recording following the completion of my report. On the off chance that an informant would change their mind about an interview after the fact, I also gave out my email address for future contact. Though, no such incidence has arisen.

## **To the Reader**

An overview of my informants and the context in which they were interviewed is as follows:

### *Nemo and Dory*

Nemo and Dory are two roommates from a four person apartment in Steven's Court, near Local Point. Both Nemo and Dory are females; Nemo being of Indian (south Asian) decent and Dory, Vietnamese. I met them during a Steven's Court Community excursion to Local Point the week prior to their interview and initially interacted with them as a fellow Steven's Court resident. After learning that they visited Local Point semi-regularly, through conversation, I told them about my project and inquired about an interview. Both girls were extremely friendly and invited me to conduct my interviews at their apartment after midterms. At my request, neither could hear the other's interview responses.

### *Rose*

Rose is a female UW student of Chinese decent. She and I had a pre-established relationship, as she was one of my roommates during freshman year and continues to be a friend. I chose to interview her because, while I knew that she would be comfortable discussing sensitive topics with me, we were distant enough that our perspectives and experiences at Local Point had the potential to be largely different. Rose's interview was conducted at my own apartment in Steven's Court.

### *Codename Alpha Omega*

Codename Alpha Omega is an African American male, also a student at the UW. I approached him within Local Point and conducted the interview on the spot. Codename Alpha Omega was not part of my snowball sampling, rather I specifically approached him because he matched a demographic that I identified as a gap in my previous data. In other words, Codename Alpha Omega was selected because he was a male, obviously accustomed to eating alone in Local Point, utilized technology while eating and had an unexplored ethnic perspective. It should also be noted that he recently transferred from Chicago and was the only informant that had no previous experience with the former 1101 Café in Terry Hall.

# Codebook

[Colors used as convenient for visually illuminating patterns]

## 1. Hierarchy

- Students
- Student Staff
- Adult Staff

## 2. Social Interactions/ Behavior

- Seating choices
- Group eating
- Eating alone
- Technology use

## 3. Student Values

- Food
  - Quality
  - Variety
  - Healthiness
  - Cultural Identity
  - Reasonable pricing
    - Dinning account
    - No dining account
- Convenience
- Personal Space
- Social interaction/ outlets
- Conservation
- Cleanliness

[Below are tags that were identified during open coding and later consolidated during focused coding]

Interactions with people

Money and cost

Seating/location

Negative emotions/ discontentment and suggestions for improvement

Positive emotions

Food focus

Time/frequency

Activities

Technology

Hesitance to try new things/ sticking to what is known

Comparison to other experiences especially the 1101 Café

Convenience

Relates to one of the original three themes from observations

## Transcript: Dory

Ok right now it is 6:04 PM.....and... all set....

Alright so for my notes I will refer to you using a pseudonym so that you remain anonymous. Is there anything that you want to be called?

Ehh nah not really

Ok well you now have a Nemo next door

Oooh Nemo haha alright I will be Dory then

You want to be Dory, ok Dory is just fine.

Alright, so my first icebreaker question is where are you living on campus?

Oooh Stevens Court!

And how is that going?

Eh its ok....I mean it's better compared to where I lived last year....but I mean compared to like mercer or lander or you know....but I love having my own room.

Understandable. Ok Local Point questions: how often do you go to Local Point?

Not very often haha.

Can you put a rough number on that?

Ummm maybe? Well it really depends, but like.....I've been going more recently, but at least once a week.

And what time do you usually go?

It varies but I usually go during dinner time like 6:30, 7:00, or something like that, or maybe 6:00 – 6:30. Or right after class, like around 2 or something.

And why do you go to Local Point?

I usually go for like the fries or they have the grilled chicken pesto sandwich, which I personally really like so... hehe

What's it like when you enter Local Point. Like could you walk me through a typical trip?

Well, it depends on when I go but if I go like during dinner time and there's a lot of people and like really long lines and you kind of have to like navigate...see the way that Local Point is set up, it feels like a maze sometimes because you kind of walk around in circles, you know what I mean? I don't know if I really like that personally but ehhh.

**Comment [M1]:** [I decided to type up Dory's transcript because I was curious about her excessive use of "like" as a transitional word. During the interview the likes appeared to drop away at times and seemed to suggest that she had thought certain topics through more than others. After completing the transcript, however, I found that the "likes" were still there, simply less apparent as she spoke faster. These bouts of enthusiasm are thus better captured in my interviewer's journal. Curiously, I did notice that my own use of the word increased as the interview went on. One might joke that language is contagious]

**Comment [M2]:** SV: food – good sandwiches

Ok, you were just starting to go into this, but how does that make you feel when you enter the space, like emotionally?

Uuhhh well most of the time I like... go get the food...and try to like...well if there are too many people in line I'm just like uuuhhhggg...don't like that, but yeah. I don't know. I don't really have any specific emotions except for kind of an annoyance when the lines are too long.

**Comment [M3]:** SV: convenience/time

Ok so emotionally you go towards a negative extreme rather than a positive one if anything? [Leading]

Yeah, I guess

Ok. Uh what kind of activities do you participate in? You talked about buying food.

Uh while I'm there, well, buying food and finding a place to sit with Nemo. Im usually there with Nemo. Or sometimes I like run into people I know and we stop and chat. That's about it.

Do you ever study there?

Eh no I've never studied there.

Would you ever want to?

I think it would be nice towards like later in the night when there are less people there. And I mean there are like certain places that I've noticed that might be a really good place to study. But most of the time, like dinner time or whatever, there are like too many people, so I wouldn't want to study during that time.

Ok, I will skip to a related question then. What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?

Well I don't know, it really depends, umm I guess it's who I'm there with. Sometimes I follow that person and see where they want to sit. Other times its just I don't know, a different kind of seat, like the ones where... it looks like a lemon...like have you seen?

**Comment [M4]:** SV: personal space – after inspecting the lemon seats I realized that they physically close you off from the rest of the room (tall curved backings)

Are those the ones with the black?

Yeah

And they kind of like close off the table?

Mmhhmmm so I think we sat there once. I thought it was cool but haha.

What section do you usually sit in when you go?

So far I've sat in a different place every time it feels like.

Ok, and what has...driven...that action?



Well I haven't been there like too many times. But like one time it was just like....I just like sat with Nemo and she just walked over to that particular seat and I was like OK! Other times it was because I thought that one lemon seat was cool. And then other times it's just hey empty seat we'll sit here haha.

So kind of an in the moment decision? [leading]

Yeah

Uh really generally, what role does food play while you are in the space?

Well, I guess food is like the main role. Because I wouldn't ever go in there if there wasn't like...if I wasn't going to get food or whatever. But yeah, I guess I'm more focused on food. But there are kind of like side conversations. I haven't like ever gone in there to eat alone, so I don't know if my experience would be different if I were to eat alone instead of with someone else.

Hmm ok um how do you go about choosing your food?

Umm well, I don't have like a dinning plan so I tend not to spend money on food that's...kind of overpriced haha but like umm well I just know that there pho isn't good so I avoid food that looks like its not really good. Um but like there are some foods that are good like um the sandwiches. But that's only because I know that they are good. Like I tried them in Terry and they were fine. So it's mostly like what I know of and playing it safe then trying something different but might not be good I guess?

That's kind of how I am too.... umm what role does technology play during your time in the space?

Umm not really a significant role because well...see the thing about local point is that you can't really make any phone calls because there isn't any service, no service. And I guess I'm not in there long enough to really use technology soo...I mean I don't use technology but like um I mean technology does play a role in like transactions and the cash register.

Oh I see, yeah! The cash register is important. umm you mentioned that you hadn't eaten alone in Local Point, so possibly relate these questions to other experiences as well...but I'm going to ask you what is it like to eat in a group? And then what is it like to eat alone?

Like anywhere?

Yeah, let's go with anywhere so that you have something to compare it to.

Ok well when I eat alone I tend to eat like faster than when I eat with a group and it's because I don't like chat with other people so it's just like me and food and eating food haha.

That makes sense

Then when its like with other people then I tend to I don't know eat slower cuz I'm kind of side tracked and more engaged in the conversation. So sometimes it's like oh yeah food but then it's like not food, but talking to the other person I guess? But um I guess when you eat like in a group it's like I don't know it's different then when you eat alone cuz when you eat alone it's just.... personally I don't like to eat alone because I find it really depressing and when it's in a space where there's like a whole bunch of

**Comment [M5]:** SIB: group eating is a time to chat with other people

**Comment [M6]:** SIB: group eating serves as a distraction

**Comment [M7]:** SIB: solo-eating stirs up negative emotions

people around you that are in a group and you're by yourself then it's just like I'm gunna hurry up and eat this so I can get out of here. Whereas when you're in a group it's just like oh yeah like ya know hang out time, so it's a lot different I guess.

Ok so going back to the choosing a seat...uh does being around other groups or solo eaters when you are eating alone sort of influence where you decide to sit?

Um yeah. I mean I can't really relate to local point, but like in other places like Terry 1101 or whatever, I would like choose a seat that was for like a single person I guess? Like in a more isolated area where there aren't too many groups of people surrounding me.

By single person table do you mean like less chairs?

Yeah like more.....you know how there are tables...like even in Local Point there are tables that are for like four people and then there are the ones where they are just kind of like in a booth or not like a booth but it's like you have that high round table and the small chairs. I'd choose to sit in like one of those I guess.

Ok I know what you are talking about. Especially by the burger station, they have those high tables

Yeah!

Yeah, for sure. When you say isolated, how far away would you say?

Uh I mean not so far away from other people, but like, I guess I prefer an area with more people sitting by themselves because then I'm like oh hey I fit in here haha and compared to a place where it's like too many groups of people I guess.

**Comment [M8]:** SIB: solo-eaters gravitate towards other solo-eaters

So you gravitate towards other solo eaters? [leading]

Mhhhhmm

Alright how close would you be willing to sit by somebody when you were going to sit down?

Umm I find that like, when I'm by myself, then I don't really like to sit close to people. But if I'm like with another person then it doesn't really matter. But if I'm by myself I tend to be like at least a table away from them. Haha

**Comment [M9]:** SIB: Five Foot Rule

Ok do you consider that to be a social norm? The one table away? Like would you find it strange if someone sat next to you?

Um no not really. I mean I just preferred that like I don't think it's really like a social norm thing. Like I don't really know, I don't really see it as a social norm but I don't know if other people do it so that it does sort of become a norm.

Ok let's go with something situational umm so you know in the open area by the burger place where there are the booth seats? And there are the tables that are kind of close to each other and then there's a space and then two other tables that are kind of close to each other...

Uhuh yeah

If you were sitting alone at one of those, how would you feel if someone sat at one of the tables that was kind of connected to yours?

Uh if I was sitting alone?

Mmhmm

Um I wouldn't really care um yeah it would be like whatever. But if they were already sitting there I wouldn't come and sit next to them. But it wouldn't matter if they like sat next to me. But like if I was by myself I probably wouldn't sit next to them unless like there weren't any other tables.

Ok and would that change at all if you were in a group?

If I was in a group I like. I don't know it wouldn't really matter I guess.

So you have more options in a group?

Yeah I find that when I'm with a group it doesn't really matter where we sit. It's kind of in the moment "I guess we'll just sit here." Or I guess we'll ask each other where we want to sit and we're like "I don't know" and we just sit down.....but I find that when I'm by myself, I don't know, I go through that process of where I'm going to sit and I'm more conscious about it. But most of the time I prefer to sit in a particular spot, like a particular area that I kind of come back to again and again.

**Comment [M10]:** SIB: group dynamic eliminates seating anxiety

**Comment [M11]:** SIB: solo-eating = lack or distraction

How would you describe your confidence level and how you present yourself within the space?

Uh like confidence level? Like what do you mean...

Oh like I guess going back to...kind of how you said you were isolating yourself a little more when you are in a solo situation and things like that. Does your demeanor change at all? Like not just where you sit but your outward appearance.

Ohh um well not really, but like....I don't know if it's really a confidence thing but I like personally don't like to eat by myself. But that's kind of just how it's been. Even when im like at home, I don't like to eat by myself. I just find it odd to just sit there and eat by myself. So when I'm in that kind of situation its already like I guess uncomfortable for me to sit down and eat by myself. I don't know, I find that I don't enjoy a meal as much when I'm eating by myself and when it gets to be more of a public situation then it's like uuggg I have to do this again. And it's in a public situation so I don't really know if it's like a confidence thing or like comfort level?

**Comment [M12]:** SIB: more comfortable in group than alone

Comfort, alright. And you can keep thinking on that and let me know if you find a word that you think describes it spot on.

Haha actually I don't know if I can find a word.

And that's fine too; it was just an interesting topic you were getting into. I will move to...how do you feel about other people in the space and how do you think they feel about you?

Well um I don't really notice the people around me; I just notice that they are there. Or if they are loud then it's just like uuggg can you just like not be so loud? But if they are just like eating away and I'm like eating my food or if I'm like talking to someone then I don't really like notice people around me I guess unless they do something to make me notice them. So I don't really like have any specific feelings towards them unless they are really annoying in some way.

How annoying do you think they would have to be to kind of burst into that bubble?

Well I guess sometimes like...I don't eves drop....but sometimes their voice like carries over to where I am and if it's something that strikes me in a way or I'm like hmmm that's interesting I guess but....I don't know.

Ok I guess the second half of that, how do you think they feel about you?

I don't know...yeah I don't know...

Ok that's fine.

I mean I don't really care so...

Ok would you assume that they feel the same way about you as you do about them?

I would think so. I mean it's just like I don't really know them, so they don't really know me so...I don't know.

Alright. Do you ever think about it?

Not really

How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?

Oh the staff? I mean...yeah their ok, I guess their pretty friendly and pretty open I guess? It's just sometimes when they like prepare my sandwich, there's a little inconsistency in how they prepare it and the quality of the sandwich. Some people make it kind of messy and others make it nice and neat and others forget to cut my sandwich. I guess it just depends on the service level but I mean overall their like good people \*clears throat.\*

**Comment [M13]:** H: views staff positively overall

Would you say that your experience is usually more positive or negative or anywhere in-between?

Um it's probably more positive I guess. But then sometimes....I mean it's not really directed towards them...but when the lines are too long it's like CAN YOU work faster please. But yeah I guess it's because of the situation, like I don't really have anything against them, it's just sometimes it's like OHMYGOD.

**Comment [M14]:** H: student staff causes customer frustration (sandwich section is dominated by student staff, no chefs)

This might sound like a strange question, but would you ever go into the kitchen?

At Local Point? Uhh I mean I think it would be cool to see what it looks like because I've never been in the kitchen before but like I don't see any reason why I would go in there. But I mean if it was like a tour thing then I might go to see what it's like.

Ok would you ever go in just like...say you order your burger and you wanted to watch the stove so you walk in?

Like out of the blue? Like if I was allowed to or.....

Ummm on a normal day at Local Point, would you ever walk into the kitchen?

Ohh probably not.

And why is that?

It would never occur to me to like want to walk in there. Yeah.. I don't know. I mean sometimes I have been kind of curious and sometimes I would like look back there and see what the kitchen is like. Especially in Terry, it used to have breakfast and a pancake place so sometimes I'd be like "oh hey my pancakes are cooking!" I don't know...I wouldn't have the need to or have the urge to walk in there I guess.

Ok um you talked about if you were "allowed" so is there anything that is keeping you from entering?

Most of the time it's like closed off so you can't just jump over the counter and walk in. there is kind of like a barrier and I feel like that's where the staff works so I don't know if its ok for me to walk back there

**Comment [M15]:** Hierarchy: wrong to enter staff space

So you are more apt to .....Assume that you are not allowed then that you are?

I guess. I mean it's more that other people don't go back there. I mean the people who do go back there work there so it's kind of like an obvious thing to assume that oh I must conform, since nobody is going back there I must not go back there also.

**Comment [M16]:** Hierarchy: behind the counter = staff

Well, that's a good Segway into one of my last questions which is: what social norms are present within the space?

Well the social norms are that you have to stand in line to order your sandwich, wait for them to take your order. They are kind of like "ok I can help the next person" and you're like "oh yeah it's my turn finally." Whereas it's not like hey I want this. It's more like ok I'm waiting for them to like help me. And I guess some norms like the kitchen thing I guess. You're kind of assuming not to go back there, and um I guess the other thing is...yeah I can't really think of anything else.

**Comment [M17]:** Hierarchy: staff helps customers

Ummm....ohhh....you mentioned that there is no cell service inside Local Point. Is that...does that apply to text messaging too or just phone calls?

Oh I don't know, on my plan I can't receive text messages and I can't send them, so I can't speak for that...so that's kind of a bummer.

**Comment [M18]:** SV: technology

Oh ok

I would add it be nice if they had a printer

A printer? Ok well Nemo listed some things that she would like so do you want to maybe talk about what you would....

....oh and for the water machine I think they should have like ice cubes there. And they should have like a desert place, like ice-cream. I don't know they should have like... something like the 1101 café... what was it called... like a Tully's, a coffee place. An actual coffee place with desert options. I haven't been in there for breakfast but it would be nice if they had like pastries as well and yeah...

Comment [M19]: SV: desert

Comment [M20]: SV: coffee

How would you say that improvements upon these items would affect your student experience?

Uh I think it would be nice. Like if there was a printer in there it would be more convenient for me to print stuff off. Like especially if it was an assignment that I need in like the morning, I wouldn't have to worry about like waking up early and like walking to the library. And it would be nice to have stuff like a coffee place in there just cuz like if I'm going to get food and I want coffee, or I don't drink coffee, but like Thai tea latte or something. And um it's just that I really like ice-cream haha

Haha so do I.

I find that there's just not a very good ice-cream place like Husky Grind doesn't have a freezer thing with the what is it called, single things like the drumsticks...

...oh ice-cream bars

Yeah cuz like if you want ice-cream bars you have to walk all the way to the District Market and they come in bulk but like I just want one.....oh and they should also include a vending machine.

Comment [M21]: SV: convenience

And why is this

Well maybe not in local point but I guess more in Lander because sometimes we go study there and get hungry but like, there's nothing.

Comment [M22]: SV: food

I know lander doesn't directly connect to local point is that....

Yeah that's true ...never mind then...

Oh, no, I mean what are your feelings on that?

Oh um I don't know, at first I thought it was annoying that I would have to walk like out and back in just cuz it was kind of nice how in Terry it was connected. But on second thought, I think that it's kind of nice that it's not connected because it's own separate thing instead of like part of Lander. It feels like we are on more equal footing with Lander because they have to go outside to enter too. And another thing is it's more safe I guess. At least for the residents who live in Lander because it's more closed off. Like in Terry it was all open so you could just go up the elevators.

Comment [M23]: SV: convenience

Alright well I've covered all of the specific questions that I wanted to hit on, but um, is there anything that just kind of pops into your mind about Local point that you'd like to put on the table or add or vent about?

Yeah they should really like do something about their pho because it is not real. It is not real pho. Like I wouldn't really mind it, but they have all the wrong ingredients in there and as someone who eats pho all the time and like it's a cultural thing, I feel kind of offended that they are calling that pho when it's not like pho in any aspects. So they should really try to make it look like pho if they are going to call it pho, you know what I mean?

**Comment [M24]:** SV: food / cultural identity

Yeah that's an interesting point, do you want to go on with that?

Yeah maybe it's also what they serve it in. they serve it in these like tiny little bowls and they can't really get any broth in there. And on second thought they put in a whole lot of vegetables that don't belong in real pho. Like they put in like carrots and cucumbers and that just does not go in like real pho. Yeah.

Is it just the pho that you find ...as you said culturally offensive?

Yeah I know they do other ethnic food or whatever. But I can't really talk to the other foods because I'm not really familiar with it. But um I mean besides that, they do have some good things, like I think their sandwiches are pretty good, and I haven't tried like some other stuff, but I bet the hamburgers are pretty good too. The only thing is, I kind of wish that some things were not as overpriced. I mean like compared to other places on campus, other things are overpriced. But compared to the Ave, things are overpriced and I feel like they are always saying like "oh yeah you have your dinning plan." And they raise the minimum amount that you can get every year. I don't see the point in that because they are already making so much money. The food is overpriced already so why can't they make it less overpriced and then not have to overcharge us more. I don't know, I feel like I kind of get cheated sometimes. Especially when I don't have a dinning plan and I want to eat something but it's like oh my gosh \$7 for a salad and I could go somewhere else like on the Ave and get a bigger meal for like almost the same amount so, I don't know.

**Comment [M25]:** SV: Cost

**Comment [M26]:** Hierarchy: someone at a higher level controls what happens with the dinning plans

**Comment [M27]:** Hierarchy: "they" are profiting off customers

**Comment [M28]:** SV: cost - no dinning plan = less willing to part with money

So would you say the Ave is more of your go to for food then?

Yeah I mean they have more choice and it's more reasonably priced and it tastes better most of the time.

**Comment [M29]:** SV: food quality

So what would be the reason that you would go to local point rather than the Ave?

Well see when I go to the Ave I never go by myself and I never eat by myself either, um so local point is just nicer if I just need to grab a sandwich. And it's just closer so I don't have to set aside a chunk of time because it's right there. And it's not a formal restaurant where you get served or whatever.

**Comment [M30]:** SBI: solo-eating less acceptable outside of dining halls

Ok any last thoughts?

Haha nope I'm good.

Then I will start by turning off the recorder....6:44.....

## Interview Journal: Dory

2/11/14

Start 6:04PM

"Dory" is a Female UW student of Vietnamese decent. She is the roommate and friend of Nemo. Dory likewise had a clownfish picture on her bulletin board, leading to the continuation of the "Finding Nemo" pseudonym theme. During the interview Dory wore sweats and a white t-shirt with fuzzy tan and white Ugg slippers. When I entered her room (right next to Nemo's) she had been working on homework at her desk and invited me to sit at the foot of her bed as she turned around in her chair. I took this as surprisingly friendly and made a point to seem as casually conversational as possible.

1. *Pseudonym?*

Dory

2. *Where are you currently living (on campus)?*

Stevens Court

[Lived in Terry by the 1101 Café last year]

3. *How often do you go to Local Point?*

Not vary

More recently

Once a week

Dinner 6:30 – 7 or 2

4. *Why do you go to Local Point?*

Fries, grilled chicken pesto

[Smiles, seems to enjoy this sandwich]

5. *What is it like when you enter Local Point?*

[Arms crossed but pleasant]

Maze

6. *How do you feel when you enter the space?*

Food

Frustrated by lines

7. *What kinds of activities do you participate in there?*

Buy food

Find place to sit

Chat

Study when quiet (?) [makes this a question]

[Thinks it would be nice but hasn't actually studied there]

8. *What role does food play during your time there?*

Food is main reason

Never eaten alone

**Comment [M31]:** NOTE: Because I decided to type up Dory's complete transcript, did not bother to go back and add specific quotations into her corresponding interviewing journal, as I did for the other journals. Likewise I coded Dory's transcript rather than her journal because the transcript was more comprehensive.



No dining plan, don't spend  
No to pho  
Gets same thing

*9. What role does technology play during your time there?*

Nothing significant  
No cell service  
Never in their long enough to use technology  
Cash register

*10. What is it like to eat in a group?*  
(merged with following notes)

*11. What is it like to eat alone?*

Eat faster alone  
Don't chat  
"Depressing"  
Single person = isolated  
Not so far – more people by themselves – fit in  
Won't sit close - a table away

*~how would you feel if someone sat next to you?*

Wouldn't care  
But wouldn't sit there unless other tables were full  
Particular spot  
[People tend to sit in a certain area]

*12. How do you present yourself within the space, what is your demeanor like?*

Don't like to eat alone even at home  
Uncomfortable  
Comfort

*13. What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?*

People  
Cool looking  
Different place

*14. How do you feel about the other people within the space?*

Don't really notice people, unless loud  
Eaves dropping unintentionally  
Don't know – could be different – don't care

*15. How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?*

"I mean" – ok – friendly – open  
Preparation Inconsistency but good people  
[Sounds like she is trying to be nice and avoid saying potentially mean things about people, seems to fit her personality profile rather than being deceptive]  
Positive

"I mean"

[Seems to be deciding if she should say something negative about staff]

[Emphasis and hand motions] "Can you work faster please?!" (Slow sandwich staff)

*~would you ever go into the kitchen?*

Kitchen? No reason, tour maybe

No

If allowed

[seems especially meek in wondering if she is allowed, fear of authority]

wouldn't occur

Closed off staff, distance

is it ok?

[values rules/ not getting in trouble]

*16. What kinds of social norms are present within the space?*

Social norms

Stand in line

Wait for order

No kitchen

*~additional thoughts~*

Does not have text messaging - bummer

Printer

Water should have ice

Dessert

1101 café

Breakfast?

Nice

Ice-cream

DM

Variety

Vending machine

Study in lander

-annoying at first

-safe and equal

Pho is not real pho!

Culturally offended

Tiny bowl

No broth

No vegetables

[Very passionate, voice raised, half laughing but annoyed]

Price

Dining plan – money extortion

Cheated

Ave

Wouldn't go to ave alone+ inconvenient

(6:43)

**[Turned off recorder but continued talking about people's special patterns; seemed more comfortable without the recorder]**

Got very excited, enjoys sociology and anthropology

- MGH ok for sharing, same with center table in Local Point
- Odd when someone sat across from her while sitting in SUZ

Wondered about how people react to strangers talking to them

Approached once in a class, found it nice but odd

- Some people don't even respond

We all have a "bubble" "individualistic society"

Sometimes feel she should give someone a hug but can't bring herself to do it

What is it? Upbringing? Stranger danger?

"Not like that in Vietnam," people get up in your space

Much closer together

"Very big difference in social norms"

**Comment [M32]:** SIB: cultural differences in behavior

We should investigate/ run social experiments and talk to random people

[The "we" surprises me; I think I just made a friend?]

**End 7:02**

**Memos:**

- Very passionate about poor food quality, especially pho, which she has a cultural connection to
- ask more questions about cultural differences
- People seem to feel very uncomfortable eating alone, get further into the why
- Theme: cost/ husky dining plan annoyance
- Both Nemo and Dory seem to have preferred the 1101 Café
- Use of "like" as a transitional word seemed to drop in some places where Dory was more confident in her answers. Consider transcribing this interview to capture those places.
- coffee and ice-cream appear desirable commodities

# Interview Journal: Nemo

“Nemo” is a female UW student of Indian decent. During the interview she was wearing a pair of grey sweats with a purple “Huskies” t-shirt, appearing casual and comfortable in her environment. Nemo and Dory are roommates who live with two other girls in an apartment in Steven’s Court, near Local Point. I also live in Steven’s Court and a proximity bond seemed to be struck. They invited me to conduct my interviews at their apartment one after the other. At my request, neither could hear the other’s interview. Nemo was interviewed in her room. I sat at her desk with my laptop while she sat cross-legged on her bed. Overall the atmosphere was calm, informal and conducive for conversation.

2/11/14

Start 5:20PM

1. *What would you like your pseudonym to be?*

Cannot decide

[I see a paper clownfish on her bulletin board and suggest Nemo]

She laughs and agrees

2. *Where are you currently living (on campus)?*

(Stevens Court)

3. *How often do you go to Local Point?*

“1-3 times a week”

4-6 PM

4. *Why do you go to Local Point?*

“cuz they have really good sandwiches”

~have you gotten anything else besides sandwiches?

Sometimes

Got a burger once

Pagliaccetti salads – like those

Got the pho once and “uh eh no, never again”

5. *What is it like when you enter Local Point?*

Come in, look at how good the pho looks and then remember it tastes really bad

Usually just get sandwiches/ go over to that side

~do you scan the other options as you walk down there?

Sort of

Usually come in already knowing what I want

If I want fries I go to the fries

6. *How do you feel when you enter the space?*

(Answered throughout)

Comment [M33]: SV: food, good sandwiches

Comment [M34]: SV: food quality – failed cultural food

7. *What kinds of activities do you participate in there?*

Just for food

Grab and go

Don't study there

**Comment [M35]:** SV: convenience

8. *What role does food play during your time there?*

"it's [food] like...the reason I go there..."

**Comment [M36]:** SV: Food focus

~how do you feel when you eat the food there?

Depends what it is

"I wish I had more options"

**Comment [M37]:** SV: variety

"Usually I go there and I'm like I don't really want to try anything else because I've learned that it always looks good but it never tastes as good as it looks"

~are there any other trends or little rules that you abide by?

"Stick with the common stuff like burgers, that's normal"

"Pho is pretty normal but not from an American place"

"If it's Asian but it's from an American place don't go for it"

**Comment [M38]:** Student values: cultural food prepared best by own culture

~is local point failing in its attempt to be cultural?

[struggles with answer]

Umm no?

"I think it succeeds in being culturally inclusive in a way, it just doesn't do it well"

~so the execution and the taste pallet....[cut off] [leading question]

"yeah like the attempt is nice but the execution is just not good..."

9. *What role does technology play during your time there?*

[makes a crinkled thinking face, takes a second trying to think of something]

"oh ok my phone doesn't work there, that pisses me off"

**Comment [M39]:** SV: technology

[Animates/ sits up more as she says this]

Mom tried calling her once while she was there but she didn't get it

The menus, on TVs

~how do you feel about that [the TV menus]?

"It's a waste of money" [responds quickly and immediately as if she has spent time thinking this over before]

**Comment [M40]:** SV: cost

"It's nice...it's stylish, but I feel like we could have put our money to better use (?)"

[Upward inflection again; looking for validation of opinion?]

~how would you describe the style of local point?  
"Modern"

~do you like modern?  
"eh sure, I mean I like Local Point"  
[Seems to slightly contradict herself]  
It's nice

~better than the 1101?  
Nooo  
Had a "connection" with the 1101  
Might make the same "bond" with local point in time

(5:29)

~what is your experience with eating in a group compared to eating alone?  
Largest group is with roommate  
Doesn't eat there that often

~what about with places other than local point?  
Ate more at 1101  
Alone: find a place that's "not too crowded"  
Group: "fine wherever I am" "doesn't matter how many people are around"

~what do you think drives that difference?  
If I'm alone I just want to be alone, have my space

**Comment [M41]:** SV: personal space

~how is your confidence level?  
[Laughs] is this like therapy now?

Concerned about people looking at her  
"Oh my god food on my face, wipe it off quickly" [half joking?]  
More "conscious" of what is going on when alone

**Comment [M42]:** SIB: Dory used the same word

~how do you present yourself within the space?

~how do you think other people view your presence?

"People probably don't care, but I don't feel that way"  
[Seems slightly embarrassed talking about her discomfort when eating alone but keeps talking]  
"I feel like even though they aren't looking, they are looking"  
"Paranoid feeling"  
"I care but I don't care"  
[More verbal contradictions about emotional response to Local Point and eating alone]

**Comment [M43]:** SIB: solo-eating stirs up negative emotions

~what goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?

"I should have thought about this before"

Going to look "stupid" eating alone

Find a seat by myself

Finding seat with a group: more enthusiastic, "casual", less "paranoid"

Do you feel more paranoid around other solo eaters or groups?

"Depends if I'm alone"

Alone: "lose"

Group: don't think about it as much

~what do you think drives that decrease in paranoia

[Confused pause]

~ is it power... or.... confidence? [Definitely a leading question]

Personality

Quiet person

Low self-esteem and paranoia

[Didn't seem particularly affected by my leading terms, lucky me]

[Note to self: be careful about how I help people understand/answer questions in the future]

"This feels like therapy"

[Talks about wanting to go into clinical psychology briefly/ working with children]

[I make a joke about me not being the best model for that, she laughs and I feel she opens up a little more to my presence/ questions]

~how do you feel about people within the space?

~have you noticed any outlying behaviors?

Groups are loud

Nothing really out of place

~how do you feel about the staff?

"Usually really nice"

Most of the time nice and "accommodate" – special requests for salad

Got "mad" once when a staff guy didn't see her trying to order a sandwich and "ignored her" until she left without it.

[Talks quickly through this part, appears to me to be a sign of emotional significance]

**Comment [M44]:** H: overall positive perception of staff

**Comment [M45]:** H: student staff causes customer frustration

~did you call out or anything?

Stood right there

Was about to say something but he walked away

Definitely saw me

[Sounded more to me like she might not have actively worked to draw his attention and over embellished but can't be sure. At least displays some sense of entitlement to service as a customer]

~Is there anywhere you would not go in local point?

Yeah the Asian place never again

"Feel bad" because I might be missing out on good stuff but not willing to waste money and take that chance

~would you ever go into the kitchen?

No??

~why not?

It's not my place to be in the kitchen??

[Makes face and tightens voice as if this is an absurd question]

**Comment [M46]:** Hierarchy: kitchen for staff only

~is there a rule that states you cannot enter the kitchen?

"No, but if I wish to adhere to...the norms of society...I would not enter the kitchen"

[Uppity inflection on "norms of society" implies that she is adhering to something she in fact finds ridiculous - more contradictions.]

**Comment [M47]:** Hierarchy: adheres to society

~if other people were going in would you?

[Really not that much to do with my original script, now I'm just curious about the line of inquiry]

No

Probably just wait to find out later

~do you clear your plate?

Definitely, want to clean it for the next person

Feel bad about confusion about where to put things on the dish return conveyor belt

**Comment [M48]:** Student values: cleanliness

~does the dish return reminder card influence your decision to cleanup?

Not really

Don't register

Wait which one?

[I show her a picture of one that I took on my phone]

Oooh...no ...I saw it but never think to read them

~any miscellaneous thoughts?

No

I wish they had a coffee place

Starbucks better than husky grind, Tully's better than Starbucks

"I love Tully's" [audibly excited about this coffee]

[Takes a sip of water from a reusable bottle]

**Comment [M49]:** SV: food - coffee

**Comment [M50]:** Student values: environment

~anything else?

No

Actually yeah

Want to know what they are doing with the empty kitchen [test kitchen]

Good place for a coffee shop

Layout confusing, have to go around

Took three visits to get used to

Dish return in back/ hard to find

**Comment [M51]:** SV: convenience

~what section do you usually sit in?

Back by burgers, where I get my food

Sat in far back once when parents came

[Seems to imply not wanting to be seen with parents]



**End (5:50)**

**Memo:**

- Felt passionate about bad ethnic foods, start looking into food choices again
- Get better at asking questions; felt rocky
- Maybe filling in questions in order is not the best approach. At least consider reordering questions for flow.
- Nemo seemed friendly and understanding
- only uncomfortable when probed about eating alone
- notable interest in availability of coffee
- possible social insecurity about having parents in a student dominated setting
- several nods to “this feels like therapy” indicates that discussing eating behaviors are not a typical occurrence and emotionally stirring

# Interview Journal: Rose

2/11/ 14

Start 10:33PM

Rose is a female UW student of Chinese decent. She was one of my roommates during my first year at the UW, and while I only see her about once a quarter, we mutually consider ourselves good friends. Interested in seeing what Steven's Court was like, she came to my apartment for a tour followed by an interview. During the interview she wore black yoga pants and a long-sleeved royal blue shirt. She had her hair up in a messy bun and was wearing a pair of rectangular framed glasses.

1. *What pseudonym would you like me to use?*

Rose

[There was a rose on the table behind me]

2. *Where are you currently living (on campus)?*

Lander

3. *How often do you go to Local Point?*

"Once a week"

~what time of the day?

"Night for dinner"

4. *Why do you go to Local Point?*

"I usually go after chem lab and they are the only place open to eat at such a late time"

Comment [M52]: SV: convenience

5. *What is it like when you enter Local Point?*

"very vast" when you come down the stairs

"Colorful" in the different sections of seating

But to the right there is a lot of white

Feels like "walking into a large banquet hall sometimes"

6. *How do you feel when you enter the space?*

"Like I have a big decision to make"

Where to sit

What food place to go to

"Very indecisive and a waste of my time [the decision making]"

"Gets under your skin"

Go in to get a salad but then "have the urge to see what they are serving that day"

Comment [M53]: SV: convenience

7. *What kinds of activities do you participate in there?*

"None of the activities except for eating"

"how should I say this"

If I'm going to meet up with someone to eat "I bring out my homework and what not and do it in the time that I'm waiting for a person"

Comment [M54]: SIB: keeps busy while alone

Talk while eating with friends

8. What role does food play during your time there?

"I see it as a symbol of...it's a break time from studying"

"Satisfies hunger"

"Energy booster" at night after studying

**Comment [M55]:** Student values: study outlets and hunger quenching

9. What role does technology play during your time there?

"Waist of electricity"

Some food sections with menu screens

"From what I've heard some of those sections aren't opened except for the weekends"

Sometimes they are blue; sometimes they just have random pictures of food

"I understand that it's brand new so they are trying to give a vibe to it"

"But personally, for me it's just a waist of electricity"

**Comment [M56]:** Student Values: conservation/ environment

~do you use electronics while you are eating?

"I look at my phone, sometimes I text"

If I need to let someone know something

Try not to text when I talk to someone so that I'm not "rude"

I don't surf Tumblr or Facebook when I eat

**Comment [M57]:** SV: technology

10. What is it like to eat in a group?

"It's a stress reliever"

Friends, jokes and stories

"Whether it makes you feel better for the rest of the day or just that short timeframe"

**Comment [M58]:** Student values: groups/ companionship

11. What is it like to eat alone?

"I haven't eaten alone at Local point"

"Part of my personality is that I don't like eating by myself"

"I see it as a downtime, everybody should have some downtime"

If I'm busy and can't have a friend "follow me as a shadow" I grab a quick salad and go back upstairs

~is there anything that you would do in a group that you wouldn't while eating alone?

Talking

"Sometimes I don't like to eat alone at local point"

"If I do, I do it while studying or think about school"

"As for a group, I would never bring homework with me or anything like that"

**Comment [M59]:** Last minute catch/New theory: students seek escape from school while eating. This may affect moral levels during solo-eating because there is nothing to distract solo eaters from the stresses of their day. This may also lead to extra sensitivity about the judgment of others as expressed by Nemo earlier.

12. How do you present yourself within the space, what is your demeanor like?

"When I'm eating alone I definitely retreat back into my dorm room"

"Maybe there is a little bit of loneliness eating alone in a public area, despite the fact that I witness a lot of people doing that"  
"I think for me I don't want to feel lonely publicly I guess" [emphasizes "publicly"]

**Comment [M60]:** Student values: social interaction/ companionship – but not from similarly situated strangers

Rarely eats alone, but does during midterm times for study purposes

**Comment [M61]:** Student values: school comes first for the most part. Eating/enjoyment can be put off.

Group:

"I try to be funny or talk a little more because I'm not the only one in school. Not everyone is going to say they are stressed, but you know they are, because you know exactly how they feel going to school"

13. *What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?*

"If I'm alone I always go back to my room"

"The first few times I ate at local point...the person I'd sit with... we purposely chose a different type of seating"

They have booth seating, tall tables, etc.

But now we just see what's free and sit down

"it usually tends to be the middle though" [middle area down from the chairs with a long table, by the sandwich stand]

14. *How do you feel about the other people within the space?*

"I don't really go when it is busy"

Everybody is there, it's a hassle finding food, moving around, finding a place to sit

"It's almost like ODE during finals week" [the library is VERY busy during finals week]

I "avoid" eating there when it's busy

**Comment [M62]:** SV: convenience

When it's toned down my friend and I avoid sitting down around people

We "avoid" other people

**Comment [M63]:** Student value: personal space

~how do you think other people view you?

"I don't know how to answer that question"

"They avoid us"

"They are in their own little corner by themselves so I assume they appreciate people not coming near them to eat"

**Comment [M64]:** Student value: personal space for others

15. *How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?*

"a lot of them are students"

"Occasionally one of them will start a conversation: oh did you just get out of lab?"

"What kind of lab, what kind of classes are you taking?"

"The only other kinds of conversations are questions like if you see they made a mistake; pricing or something like that"

**Comment [M65]:** Hierarchy: staff also students

~do mistakes happen often?

Not often

"The mistakes are usually made by the students who just recently got trained"

"The adult staff is really nice, very approachable"

**Comment [M66]:** Hierarchy: young staff less competent

**Comment [M67]:** Hierarchy: adult staff viewed positively; respected

"Sometimes if you have a question about what something is or price you don't want to go to the student employees because they are not always on top of everything"

16. *What kinds of social norms are present within the space?*

"There are a couple of sections that are more...not intimate... but for smaller groups, so I see couples sit in those areas vs the buffet tables"

Occasionally a large group of people or club that all eat together

"Asian section that is open a lot"

"A lot of Asians go there, I think because they miss the cultural food"

"Salad bar not as popular as I thought it would be"

Fewer lines

"The burger place is popular and it seems like a lot of guys go there"

"A lot of girls waiting in the deli sandwich lines"

"Clicks" international students, white people, black people, sports people

**Comment [M68]:** Student value: cultural identity

**Comment [M69]:** Female preference for deli sandwiches supported by last two cases. Male informant also preferred the burger section, but sampling is too small for confirmation

*~what cultural differences effect these group interactions?*

Language barrier

Groups "in their own little world together" can't just interrupt

"It seems like people know what they want. This kind of food for so and so reason"

**Comment [M70]:** Student value: personal bubble

*~do you know what you want before you walk in the door?*

Not really

If I'm not in a hurry I "peek around"

If I have a busy day or a tight schedule I go to the salad bar

More salad variety then Terry

Convenient to grab and go

**Comment [M71]:** Student value: convenience

**Comment [M72]:** SV: convenience

Fancy dishware, a symmetrical bowls and gray trays

[Rolls eyes as she describes dishware]

"I feel like they are trying to give customers a dinning feel"

For the salad bar you get a plastic container and can stay or go

**Comment [M73]:** SV: practicality

*~You rolled your eyes as you described "grey trays," do you feel like Local point isn't succeeding in what it's trying to do?*

"I think I'm just a little bitter" [laughs]

"Local Point is the new 1101"

1101 was "smaller," "convenient" and "connected"

Lander safety is good but not convenient

"Might as well just go to the district market"

Quality of food is "similar" if not exactly the same"

**Comment [M74]:** SV: convenience

Trying to be "fancy" but food is still of poor quality

"Did not make any effort to improve the quality of the food"

Does have more cultural effort/food

Relates as an Asian

**Comment [M75]:** SV: quality food

**Comment [M76]:** SV: cultural identity

1101 only had a temporary Asian section

~how important is food quality to you?

Not a picky eater

"UW likes to cook things in bulk and stalk"

Incidents with food not thoroughly cooked

Don't have time to confront someone about it

Overpriced

\$8 for a sandwich that's not worth it

"How should I say this?"

Comment [M77]: SV: affordability

Using the cheapest materials is not good for our bodies

Not good for studying

Constantly oily

"UW doesn't emphasize making food choices that are good for studying"

Comment [M78]: SV: health and academics

~would having a better quality of food improve your academics and student experience?

"I guess they do have the salad bar"

"But for student experience, definitely"

Would go there more for better food

People that aren't dorming would be more likely to come over to eat if "the food didn't suck"

(11:03)

~do you utilize other food options?

Other options:

District market – "because most of their stuff isn't made by the UW"

Cafés – any place that sells coffee

By George

SUZ

Starbucks

Hub

Comment [M79]: SV: coffee

Has a dining plan

Would not eat on campus otherwise

Comment [M80]: SV: Food - dining plan = binding

~would you ever walk into the kitchen at local point?

"Probably not"

"You can kind of already see the kitchen"

"Sure why not" – as long as long as I don't get in trouble

~is there any explicit rule why you can't go in the kitchen?

In America, there are restaurants staff only sigs. If you don't work there then don't go in.

Comment [M81]: Hierarchy

~how would you feel if someone sat directly next to you?

Initially, strange

Fine if it was the only table  
Question why they sat so close

~would you ever sit directly next to someone?

No unless it was the only table  
Or if I know the person

~when you are alone are you more likely to use a cell phone?

When alone uses technology  
Call phone or homework

Why:

Lonely – “maybe I don’t want to admit it”  
Sometimes I get busy and have to catch up on texts

**Comment [M82]:** SIB: solo eating stirs up negative emotions

**Comment [M83]:** SV: pride

17. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience with Local Point?

Don’t understand the to go charge of 35 cents  
No one actually gets charged for it  
Never asked

**Comment [M84]:** SV: cost

Nice dishware system

Some people still do it wrong – in a hurry or lazy-  
Multiple dish returns might help?

Feel bad for “adult staff” they are the ones making the food  
Local point janitors also work at Lander

**Comment [M85]:** H: sympathy for adult staff

People should learn how to pick up trash  
“I always try to be as clean as possible”  
Only two trash areas

**Comment [M86]:** SV: cleanliness

Public bathrooms?? By dish area? Not sure

See-through glass is cool but strange when you see people pass by – strange street walkers

Wants a coffee place

Biology major – conservative

DON’T NEED all those lights  
[very passionate about the lights]

**Comment [M87]:** SV: conservation/environment

High prices

Nice looking overall but some odd designs

Some chairs are inconvenient to walk through when busy

(11:26)

[Turned off recorder]

[We continued to discuss some of the trends that I had found during my observations at local point. Rose became very interested about the correlation between culture and personal bubbles and gave me her perspective on Chinese culture. I took a few notes as seen below:]

Chinese people, have an “individual society”

Eat by themselves

“I think that’s international students in general”

“Maybe because there are so many people in china”

High population, crowded

“Asians don’t quite grasp that in American society there is something called a personal bubble”

“I’m gunna do what I want to do” [speaking as a different person]

“No one is going to confront them”

Food quality

“Sometimes you just don’t want to try the things that you would like to try”

“it takes a lot of courage to try something you know is going to taste bad”

Curious about sales statistics

Lots of flirtation in the kitchen

“I don’t want to see people being lovey dovey”

“You have one job, make my sandwich, and don’t go talk to people”

The food:

“It’s just bad”

I don’t hear people say “I’m going to local point” anymore

**End 11:38**

Memo

- People seem to have a lot to vent about Local Point
- All overall dissatisfied with food but still return for convenience or dinning plan related ties
- “overpriced” is a common theme
- TV menus as a “waste of electricity rings similar to earlier claims (“waste of money”)
- Comparisons to the 1101 Café very prominent
- Distinct aversion to eating alone – negative emotions
- Cultural ties to behavior
- Staff split into two groups: students and adults.
- More sympathetic to adults

**Comment [M88]:** SIB: cultural differences in values/interactions

**Comment [M89]:** H: young staff more friendly with one another



# Interview Journal: Codename Alfa Omega

Codename Alfa Omega is an African American male and student at the UW. I approached him while he sat alone at a table at Local Point, surfing his laptop while eating the last of his fries. He seemed more relaxed than other solo-eaters I have seen. After checking the time, he took pity on me and agreed to the interview. He wore a blue t-shirt with a patriotic peace sign design and matching American flag print sneakers.

2/12/14

Start 6:40

1. What pseudonym would you like me to use?  
Codename Alfa Omega

2. Where are you currently living (on campus)?  
Mercer → Lander [recently switched dorms]

3. How often do you go to Local Point?  
One to two times a day  
Alternates between dinner and lunch  
Lunch - 12:30  
Dinner - 6-7

4. Why do you go to Local Point?  
"I wish I knew"  
"It's because it's convenient I guess. It's just there"  
Has dining account – "don't want to waste that money"

Comment [M90]: SV: convenience

Comment [M91]: SV: food- cost- dining plan = binding

5. What is it like when you enter Local Point?  
"It's pretty chill"  
Fills water bottle and walks around finding something to eat  
Gets ice from soda machine  
(6:44)

Comment [M92]: SV: conservation/environment

6. How do you feel when you enter the space?  
"I guess neutral to hungry sometimes"  
"I get hungrier once I smell the food"

Comment [M93]: SV: food/ quench hunger

7. What kinds of activities do you participate in there?  
Eating  
Standing in lines  
Surfing Reddit on laptop after sitting down

Comment [M94]: SV: tech

8. What role does food play during your time there?  
"It's the only reason why I go there"

Comment [M95]: SV: food focus

"Sometimes I go to full my water bottle and then leave"

9. *What role does technology play during your time there?*

"I will be on my laptop if I have it"

"Otherwise I don't really use it"

Ice machine

*~is there a reason you use a laptop instead of other kinds of technology?*

Most "convenient" for surfing reddit

"The mobile app is pretty bad"

"Occasionally homework"

"I procrastinate"

"It's not a very good study environment"

"I'd rather chill and look on my laptop or look around than focus on reading"

**Comment [M96]:** SV: convenience

7. *What is it like to eat in a group?*

"I don't think I've ever eaten in a group at local point"

"no wait yes I have"

Three friends

"pretty chill"

Talked and hung out

8. *What is it like to eat alone?*

"it's pretty chill"

Observe people

Productive internet surfing

12. *How do you present yourself within the space, what is your demeanor like?*

"I don't know, I walk in and I put on a mean strut" [joking?]

I don't know I usually go fill up my water bottle

"Walking with conviction? Determined?"

Annoys me when people are slow and looking around

Then I sit around and look around "but not creepy" just "casual"

**Comment [M97]:** SV: appearance

**Comment [M98]:** SIB/ SV: annoyed by other students/ inconvenience

13. *What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?*

Corner

Smaller three person table so that I don't take up seats

Corner is better for looking out

14. *How do you feel about the other people within the space?*

"I don't have anything against the people there"

"Neutrally?" "Don't care"

I don't ever really remember anything about specific people there

15. *How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?*

They are pretty nice

**Comment [M99]:** H: overall positive perception of staff

Nothing bad that I've observed

"The boss people seem chill"

Today I saw one let a guy on a thirty minute break

"Another chill dude talked to me about the hot plates they use; they have these magnets in them"

**Comment [M100]:** Hierarchy: staff is friendly/ interacts with customers

16. *What kinds of social norms are present within the space?*

People eat and hang out

"Discuss stuff"

**Comment [M101]:** SIB: talking = group activity

People compost their stuff

Generally polite while in line and parting when people need to get by

~how long does it take you to decide what you want to eat for the day?

Less than a minute

At the beginning of the week I look around to see what's new and then I generally know what I want when I go in.

~What do you usually eat while you are there?

"Grilled chicken from burger place"

"It's not even that good but chicken is healthier than other meats"

**Comment [M102]:** SV: health/ convenience

~how do you feel about the food selection?

"Pretty boring"

"I was excited the first day but then I slowly realized that there's not that much"

Nice that they rotate one dish

They have cultural food

**Comment [M103]:** SV: variety

~can you talk more about how you feel about the cultural food?

Pretty nice

Had a Teriyaki beef bowl

Adds more variety every two weeks

"Not as good as the actual food"

"Rather just go to the Ave and get pho or something like that"

**Comment [M104]:** SV: authentic food/ quality

~so you feel like they don't effectively prepare the cultural food?

They don't have the chefs for it

Not as familiar with the food

"But it would be so hard to master something new every week"

**Comment [M105]:** H: low expectations for chefs but not blame

~whats your overall impression of the food?

It's not good

The cultural food is always mediocre

Grill is average

Don't like salad - Have to pay for box not by the ounce

"Greasiest pizza I've ever had!"

[Gets extremely passionate about how pizza could possibly be that greasy]

~ how do you feel about the healthiness of the food?

Not that healthy

Not many vegetables

Anything that's not salad or a sandwich doesn't have any vegetables

~is having vegetables important to you?

Yeah for sure

I was actually really excited when they had collard greens one time

~would you be more likely to eat there if there were more vegetables?

Probably

Then I wouldn't feel like I'm always eating "bad food"

~so if you aren't thrilled with the food quality why do you keep coming back?

Just convenience

Want to use the money on my dinning plan

"Might go to the DM more now that I'm in lander, but even the DM doesn't have that good of food anyway"

~What would you change about local point?

"oooh man" [laughs/ beams as if excited to express a multitude of things he wishes to change]

"First there is an area that they aren't even using!"

"Weird and annoying"

Not any vegetarian options [used to be vegetarian]

"They don't have any desert, I don't get that"

If you go to the DM you have to get a whole tub

(7:05)

~how do you feel about cost?

"Some stuff isn't too bad"

"Some of the stuff is expensive like clam chowder in a bread bowl. They just gave me one scoop and I was pretty bummed about that"

Too much for poor quality

But with my dinning account I get things that I wouldn't normally get

If I played cash I probably wouldn't spend that

~So you feel differently about husky money?

Yeah I have to spend it all

Can't make/ save food because no fridge

~how do you feel about the TV menus?

**Comment [M106]:** SV: health/ healthy food and variety

**Comment [M107]:** SV: convenience

**Comment [M108]:** SV: husky money = monopoly money; easier to spend

**Comment [M109]:** SV: convenient because of parameters of living situation

"They are pretty cool" looks glossy  
[Uses "cool" in a casual non excited manor]

Annoyed that they are not regularly updated, feels deceived  
Should be easy to change

**Comment [M110]:** SV: accurate information

~have you tried the pho?

Heard it was very bad so I didn't  
Old school made bad pho too [transferred from Chicago this quarter]

~how would you feel if someone sat directly next to you?

I wouldn't really mind  
The tables are spaced in a way that makes them feel separate  
Make sure I'm not looking at anything weird or gory

**Comment [M111]:** SIB: Local Point's design actually does well to encourage solo-eaters/ satisfy the five foot rule

~how do you feel about the design of local point?

Good seating design  
Hub is annoying because the chairs aren't laid out as well  
Why bleachers? No one uses them  
Like design

Chairs recline, not quite functional for eating  
Different seating options: bar, booths etc. are nice  
[Large hand gestures while describing tables]

~would you ever sit directly next to someone?

Not if there was other space open  
"Even one chair over is not as weird"  
[Reference to a movie where two guys pee in the woods, which he tries to connect to spacing. Is this a guy thing? I think I made a weird face but he didn't notice]

**Comment [M112]:** SIB: five foot rule

Wouldn't want to invade people's space if they are working  
Wouldn't want people looking at his laptop if something comes up on reedit

**Comment [M113]:** SV: personal space

~what do you think has brought about your tendency to keep a personal bubble?

"Introvertedness"  
Hub interaction: stranger came to talk to him while he was trying to eat – there was no space left  
Just want to eat and have space, not talk

**Comment [M114]:** SIB/ SV: Alfa Omega actually values alone time (introverted = needs time to recharge)

(7:19)

17. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience with Local Point?  
Nope nothing I can think of

**End 7:20**

**Memo:**

- Not as conversational/ open as the informants that I interviewed after more established contact. Could be due to lack of personal relationship, personality or less formal/noisier atmosphere
- Seems to be a confident solo eater
- Wonder if Chicago contributed significantly to assertiveness/ behavioral patterns
- No previous experience with 1101 café
- Still had seemingly premeditated suggestions for dining hall improvement
- Seemed to invalidate theory that solo eaters experience lack of confidence (at least on a general/ universal scale)
- Also expressed connection to adult staff members
- Priority = food
- Quality important
- Seating design favorable to five foot rule/ appreciated by solo-eater

# Analysis

## Hierarchy

Through my observations, I identified three major components of Local Point's hierarchical structure: Chefs, servers/cashiers and customers. My informants all took the perspectives of customers. From this perspective, they generally characterized these positions equivocally, but by naming different identifying characteristics than I had as an observer. "Chefs" were described generally as "adult staff" and servers/cashiers as "student staff" or sometimes simply as "students," suggesting that student customers draw a line between current age and educational status rather than physical work or job descriptions. Similarly, several informants explicitly expressed sympathy or respect for adult staff, stating things like "the adult staff are really nice; very approachable." On the other hand, mistakes were often attributed to "student" staff members. In this regard, student staff members appear to be seen as less competent and reliable than adult staff members.

Despite general agreement that the staff members are "nice" and "good" people overall, customers seem to hold a subtle sense of entitlement when it comes to receiving service. For example, Nemo described frustration during an instance when a student staff member failed to notice her at the counter. Dory likewise articulated annoyance when faced with slow service, and subpar sandwich making in the deli section. Ultimately, these narratives suggest that despite a customer's connections to student staff members as peers, student staff members tend to be the source of customer frustration during the food ordering process.

## Social Interactions/ Behavior

During my observations, I noted that customers tended to sit at least one table away from each other while eating, a statement that was further supported when Dory explained "If I'm by myself I tend to be like at least a table away from them," in reference to her seating habits. All four informants described "isolating" or "distancing" themselves from people while eating alone. However, not all informants seemed to view this separation in a negative light as I had suspected. Codename Alfa Omega especially appeared to appreciate eating alone as an outlet, a time to "look around at people" and "surf the internet." Nemo, Dory and Rose, on the other hand, openly "avoided" solo-eating in public because it stirred up emotions including "loneliness" and "depression." Even so, Rose brought up a curious point by explaining that if she eats alone she studies or "think[s] about school." Earlier she had summarized her view of food as a "break time from studying," suggesting that eating alone actually contradicts what she intends to accomplish through eating; namely, taking her mind off of studying.

Further to the point, none of the informants indicated displeasure when eating with a group. Related group activities including "talking" and "joking" seemed to play an important role in lifting morale. As Rose puts it, "Not everyone is going to say they are stressed, but you know they are, because you know exactly how they feel going to school." Evidently, social interaction serves as a vital "stress reliever" for students (the primary customers at Local Point) and when this interaction is not provided, students fall victim to their own discontents. From these incites, I speculate that this heightened stress increases sensitivity to external factors such as "loud groups" and the fear of "judgment" that Nemo highlighted during her interview. This may then lead to the introverted mannerisms exemplified by solo-eaters during my observations.

## Student/Customer Values

From the standpoint of the observer, food related trends within the space appeared minimal. However, after talking with customers in person, it became immediately clear that food is, in fact, a central focus for Local Point's customers. As Codename Alfa Omega frankly exclaims, "It's the only reason why I go there." Clearly, students utilize the dining hall first and foremost as a source of food. Nonetheless, one should not mistake use of the dining hall as an indication of overall contentment with its services. To the contrary, each informant passionately addressed several disappointments and concerns, especially in relation to food quality. Although food is the focal point of Local Point visits, customers seem to find much left to be desired.

Overall, Local Point's food is described unanimously as "just bad" or of "poor quality," with the exception of salads and sandwiches, which appear to be relatively fool proof as far as preparation goes. Concerns about the healthiness of food were also addressed. Codename Alfa Omega talked about a lack of vegetables and the "greasiest pizza I've ever had!" Similarly, Rose specifically accuses the UW of not putting enough thought into quality ingredients, preferring instead to distribute subpar-products that are "not good for studying." In this, a correlation between food quality and academic performance begins to take shape.

Cost also plays a role in student dissatisfaction. Of those interviewed, all described food as "overpriced" in some capacity. However, threats to pursue better, cheaper food on the Ave appeared largely empty. Despite heated dismissal of Local Point's catering, each student returned to the vicinity, suggesting that they valued something greater than food quality or cost put together. In time this factor presented itself explicitly as "convenience." While the District Market and other dinning locations remain at a feasible distance from West Campus dorms and apartments, students seem more willing to sacrifice other values for the sake of convenience. Even so, it is put forward that even the District Market "doesn't have that good of food anyway," further minimizing access to agreeable student dining options. In light of these statements, it seems reasonable to assume that Local Point and other West Campus eateries are not actually satisfying the wants and needs of the students which they serve. Whether or not this is due to indifference on the part of Housing and Food Services (HFS) or a genuine misrepresentation of the student body remains to be explored.



# Reflection

## Eliciting Data

It was my aim, over the course of this study, to acquire insider information about Local Point in an environment as conducive to conversation as possible. As a result, I attempted to conduct interviews outside of Local Point and to present myself favorably to my informants. In the case of Rose, this was not difficult because we had a preexisting relationship. Nemo and Dory's interview likewise worked out in the way that I had hoped. I was able to meet them before and establish a connection through our mutual apartment community. Because of this bond, I was able to conduct the interview where it was both quiet and comfortable. Codename Alpha Omega's interview, on the other hand, was conducted on the spot and in a less private setting. In consequence, I feel that he did not open up or elaborate on his opinion as much as my other informants. This being said, overall, I was extremely pleased with both the depth and breadth of information that I was able to acquire through four interviews. I found that, even with little introduction, people were surprisingly open to helping out a fellow peer. Granted, it probably helped that I presented myself in as friendly a light as humanly possible and avoided being mistaken as "creepy" in any way.

## Room for Improvement

If I were to conduct the interviews again I would certainly give myself more time to work around my midterms and schedule each interview to be conducted outside of Local Point, or at least not at peak hours. Additionally, I would have liked to have interviewed another male in order to round out the gender balance in the data. Codename Alpha Omega had halfheartedly offered up his roommate but never emailed me about an interview. I had not collected his personal information for further contact and, having already interviewed four people, decided to go on to coding my data as it stood. In the future I will attempt to collect an email address when handing out my own.

Although I know it simply takes time and practice, I also wish that I had conducted my interviews more smoothly. In my attempts to ask clarifying questions I often found myself accidentally prompting my informants with vocabulary that I did not want to influence their definitions. Luckily, this usually passed unnoticed and the informants used their own words. Nonetheless, I find that one generally seems more respectable as an interviewer when they do not have to pause for a moment to reevaluate their question. I may have struggled slightly in this regard.

## Future Questions

As far as further questions go, I am still extremely curious to see how Local Point is viewed by the kitchen staff. The accounts of obviously discontented customers likewise lead me to wonder how HFS interprets and responds to student requests. In regards to social behavior and seating, I feel that my informants contributed valuable insights. Even so, my speculations are based entirely on the words of Americanized students and likely do not adequately represent the entirety of the human perspective. I am curious to look further into the underlying drives of social behavior; chiefly, why do Americans come to value personal bubbles? Why is this not as evident in other cultures? And how do these opposing norms affect interactions in culturally mixed groups?

# Overview

**Location:** Local Point, West Campus dining hall

**Data collection:** Interviews

**Informants:** Nemo, Dory, Rose and Codename Alpha Omega

**Dominating theories:**

1. customers distinguish staff members by age and student status rather than by job description and are more likely to become frustrated by student staff members
2. Students value eating as a break from studying and are more likely to become emotionally distraught when deprived of a social interaction or distraction from studying
3. While students are not thrilled with their dining options, they utilize Local Point for the sake of convenience.

**[The following is a copy of my transcript and interview journals free of coding details]**

## Transcript: Dory

Ok right now it is 6:04 PM.....and... all set....

Alright so for my notes I will refer to you using a pseudonym so that you remain anonymous. Is there anything that you want to be called?

Ehh nah not really

Ok well you now have a Nemo next door

Oooh Nemo haha alright I will be Dory then

You want to be Dory, ok Dory is just fine.

Alright, so my first icebreaker question is where are you living on campus?

Oooh Stevens Court!

And how is that going?

Eh its ok....I mean it's better compared to where I lived last year....but I mean compared to like mercer or lander or you know....but I love having my own room.

Understandable. Ok Local Point questions: how often do you go to Local Point?

Not very often haha.

Can you put a rough number on that?

Ummm maybe? Well it really depends, but like.....I've been going more recently, but at least once a week.

And what time do you usually go?

It varies but I usually go during dinner time like 6:30, 7:00, or something like that, or maybe 6:00 – 6:30. Or right after class, like around 2 or something.

And why do you go to Local Point?

I usually go for like the fries or they have the grilled chicken pesto sandwich, which I personally really like so... hehe

What's it like when you enter Local Point. Like could you walk me through a typical trip?

Well, it depends on when I go but if I go like during dinner time and there's a lot of people and like really long lines and you kind of have to like navigate...see the way that Local Point is set up, it feels like a

maze sometimes because you kind of walk around in circles, you know what I mean? I don't know if I really like that personally but eh.

Ok, you were just starting to go into this, but how does that make you feel when you enter the space, like emotionally?

Uuhhh well most of the time I like... go get the food...and try to like...well if there are too many people in line I'm just like uuuhhhhggg...don't like that, but yeah. I don't know. I don't really have any specific emotions except for kind of an annoyance when the lines are too long.

Ok so emotionally you go towards a negative extreme rather than a positive one if anything? [Leading]

Yeah, I guess

Ok. Uh what kind of activities do you participate in? You talked about buying food.

Uh while I'm there, well, buying food and finding a place to sit with Nemo. Im usually there with Nemo. Or sometimes I like run into people I know and we stop and chat. That's about it.

Do you ever study there?

Eh no I've never studied there.

Would you ever want to?

I think it would be nice towards like later in the night when there are less people there. And I mean there are like certain places that I've noticed that might be a really good place to study. But most of the time, like dinner time or whatever, there are like too many people, so I wouldn't want to study during that time.

Ok, I will skip to a related question then. What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?

Well I don't know, it really depends, umm I guess it's who I'm there with. Sometimes I follow that person and see where they want to sit. Other times its just I don't know, a different kind of seat, like the ones where... it looks like a lemon...like have you seen?

Are those the ones with the black?

Yeah

And they kind of like close off the table?

Mmhmmm so I think we sat there once. I thought it was cool but haha.

What section do you usually sit in when you go?

So far I've sat in a different place every time it feels like.

Ok, and what has...driven...that action?

Well I haven't been there like too many times. But like one time it was just like....I just like sat with Nemo and she just walked over to that particular seat and I was like OK! Other times it was because I thought that one lemon seat was cool. And then other times it's just hey empty seat we'll sit here haha.

So kind of an in the moment decision? [leading]

Yeah

Uh really generally, what role does food play while you are in the space?

Well, I guess food is like the main role. Because I wouldn't ever go in there if there wasn't like...if I wasn't going to get food or whatever. But yeah, I guess I'm more focused on food. But there are kind of like side conversations. I haven't like ever gone in there to eat alone, so I don't know if my experience would be different if I were to eat alone instead of with someone else.

Hmm ok um how do you go about choosing your food?

Umm well, I don't have like a dinning plan so I tend not to spend money on food that's...kind of overpriced haha but like umm well I just know that there pho isn't good, so I avoid food that looks like its not really good. Um but like there are some foods that are good like um the sandwiches. But that's only because I know that they are good. Like I tried them in Terry and they were fine. So it's mostly like what I know of and playing it safe then trying something different but might not be good I guess?

That's kind of how I am too.... umm what role does technology play during your time in the space?

Umm not really a significant role because well...see the thing about local point is that you can't really make any phone calls because there isn't any service, no service. And I guess I'm not in there long enough to really use technology soo...I mean I don't use technology but like um I mean technology does play a role in like transactions and the cash register.

Oh I see, yeah! The cash register is important. umm you mentioned that you hadn't eaten alone in Local Point, so possibly relate these questions to other experiences as well...but I'm going to ask you what is it like to eat in a group? And then what is it like to eat alone?

Like anywhere?

Yeah, let's go with anywhere so that you have something to compare it to.

Ok well when I eat alone I tend to eat like faster than when I eat with a group and it's because I don't like chat with other people so it's just like me and food and eating food haha.

That makes sense

Then when it's like with other people then I tend to I don't know eat slower cuz I'm kind of side tracked and more engaged in the conversation. So sometimes it's like oh yeah food but then it's like not food, but talking to the other person I guess? But um I guess when you eat like in a group it's like I don't know

it's different then when you eat alone cuz when you eat alone it's just.....personally I don't like to eat alone because I find it really depressing and when it's in a space where there's like a whole bunch of people around you that are in a group and you're by yourself then it's just like I'm gunna hurry up and eat this so I can get out of here. Whereas when you're in a group it's just like oh yeah like ya know hang out time, so it's a lot different I guess.

Ok so going back to the choosing a seat...uh does being around other groups or solo eaters when you are eating alone sort of influence where you decide to sit?

Um yeah. I mean I can't really relate to local point, but like in other places like Terry 1101 or whatever, I would like choose a seat that was for like a single person I guess? Like in a more isolated area where there aren't too many groups of people surrounding me.

By single person table do you mean like less chairs?

Yeah like more.....you know how there are tables...like even in Local Point there are tables that are for like four people and then there are the ones where they are just kind of like in a booth or not like a booth but it's like you have that high round table and the small chairs. I'd choose to sit in like one of those I guess.

Ok I know what you are talking about. Especially by the burger station, they have those high tables

Yeah!

Yeah, for sure. When you say isolated, how far away would you say?

Uh I mean not so far away from other people, but like, I guess I prefer an area with more people sitting by themselves because then I'm like oh hey I fit in here haha and compared to a place where it's like too many groups of people I guess.

So you gravitate towards other solo eaters? [leading]

Mhhhhmm

Alright how close would you be willing to sit by somebody when you were going to sit down?

Umm I find that like, when I'm by myself, then I don't really like to sit close to people. But if I'm like with another person then it doesn't really matter. But if I'm by myself I tend to be like at least a table away from them. Haha

Ok do you consider that to be a social norm? the one table away? Like would you find it strange if someone sat next to you?

Um no not really. I mean I just preferred that like I don't think it's really like a social norm thing. Like I don't really know, I don't really see it as a social norm but I don't know if other people do it so that it does sort of become a norm.

Ok let's go with something situational umm so you know in the open area by the burger place where there are the booth seats? And there are the tables that are kind of close to each other and then there's a space and then two other tables that are kind of close to each other...

Uhuh yeah

If you were sitting alone at one of those, how would you feel if someone sat at one of the tables that was kind of connected to yours?

Uh if I was sitting alone?

Mmhmm

Um I wouldn't really care um yeah it would be like whatever. But if they were already sitting there I wouldn't come and sit next to them. But it wouldn't matter if they like sat next to me. But like if I was by myself I probably wouldn't sit next to them unless like there weren't any other tables.

Ok and would that change at all if you were in a group?

If I was in a group I like. I don't know it wouldn't really matter I guess.

So you have more options in a group?

Yeah I find that when I'm with a group it doesn't really matter where we sit. It's kind of in the moment "I guess we'll just sit here." Or I guess we'll ask each other where we want to sit and we're like "I don't know" and we just sit down.....but I find that when I'm by myself, I don't know, I go through that process of where I'm going to sit and I'm more conscious about it. But most of the time I prefer to sit in a particular spot, like a particular area that I kind of come back to again and again.

How would you describe your confidence level and how you present yourself within the space?

Uh like confidence level? Like what do you mean...

Oh like I guess going back to...kind of how you said you were isolating yourself a little more when you are in a solo situation and things like that. Does your demeanor change at all? Like not just where you sit but your outward appearance.

Ohh um well not really, but like....I don't know if it's really a confidence thing but I like personally don't like to eat by myself. But that's kind of just how it's been. Even when im like at home, I don't like to eat by myself. I just find it odd to just sit there and eat by myself. So when I'm in that kind of situation its already like I guess uncomfortable for me to sit down and eat by myself. I don't know, I find that I don't enjoy a meal as much when I'm eating by myself and when it gets to be more of a public situation then it's like uuggg I have to do this again. And it's in a public situation so I don't really know if it's like a confidence thing or like comfort level?

Comfort, alright. And you can keep thinking on that and let me know if you find a word that you think describes it spot on.

Haha actually I don't know if I can find a word.

And that's fine too; it was just an interesting topic you were getting into. I will move to...how do you feel about other people in the space and how do you think they feel about you?

Well um I don't really notice the people around me; I just notice that they are there. Or if they are loud then it's just like uggg can you just like not be so loud? But if they are just like eating away and I'm like eating my food or if I'm like talking to someone then I don't really like notice people around me I guess unless they do something to make me notice them. So I don't really like have any specific feelings towards them unless they are really annoying in some way.

How annoying do you think they would have to be to kind of burst into that bubble?

Well I guess sometimes like...I don't eves drop...but sometimes their voice like carries over to where I am and if it's something that strikes me in a way or I'm like hmmm that's interesting I guess but....I don't know.

Ok I guess the second half of that, how do you think they feel about you?

I don't know...yeah I don't know...

Ok that's fine.

I mean I don't really care so...

Ok would you assume that they feel the same way about you as you do about them?

I would think so. I mean it's just like I don't really know them, so they don't really know me so...I don't know.

Alright. Do you ever think about it?

Not really

How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?

Oh the staff? I mean...yeah their ok, I guess their pretty friendly and pretty open I guess? It's just sometimes when they like prepare my sandwich, there's a little inconsistency in how they prepare it and the quality of the sandwich. Some people make it kind of messy and others make it nice and neat and others forget to cut my sandwich. I guess it just depends on the service level but I mean overall their like good people \*clears throat.\*

Would you say that your experience is usually more positive or negative or anywhere in-between?

Um it's probably more positive I guess. But then sometimes....I mean it's not really directed towards them...but when the lines are too long it's like CAN YOU work faster please. But yeah I guess it's because of the situation, like I don't really have anything against them, it's just sometimes it's like OHMYGOD.



This might sound like a strange question, but would you ever go into the kitchen?

At Local Point? Uhh I mean I think it would be cool to see what it looks like because I've never been in the kitchen before but like I don't see any reason why I would go in there. But I mean if it was like a tour thing then I might go to see what it's like.

Ok would you ever go in just like...say you order your burger and you wanted to watch the stove so you walk in?

Like out of the blue? Like if I was allowed to or.....

Ummm on a normal day at Local Point, would you ever walk into the kitchen?

Ohh probably not.

And why is that?

It would never occur to me to like want to walk in there. Yeah.. I don't know. I mean sometimes I have been kind of curious and sometimes I would like look back there and see what the kitchen is like. Especially in Terry, it used to have breakfast and a pancake place so sometimes I'd be like "oh hey my pancakes are cooking!" I don't know...I wouldn't have the need to or have the urge to walk in there I guess.

Ok um you talked about if you were "allowed" so is there anything that is keeping you from entering?

Most of the time it's like closed off so you can't just jump over the counter and walk in. there is kind of like a barrier and I feel like that's where the staff works so I don't know if its ok for me to walk back there

So you are more apt to .....Assume that you are not allowed then that you are?

I guess. I mean it's more that other people don't go back there. I mean the people who do go back there work there so it's kind of like an obvious thing to assume that oh I must conform, since nobody is going back there I must not go back there also.

Well, that's a good Segway into one of my last questions which is: what social norms are present within the space?

Well the social norms are that you have to stand in line to order your sandwich, wait for them to take your order. They are kind of like "ok I can help the next person" and you're like "oh yeah it's my turn finally." Whereas it's not like hey I want this. It's more like ok I'm waiting for them to like help me. And I guess some norms like the kitchen thing I guess. You're kind of assuming not to go back there, and um I guess the other thing is...yeah I can't really think of anything else.

Ummm....ohhh....you mentioned that there is no cell service inside Local Point. Is that...does that apply to text messaging too or just phone calls?

Oh I don't know, on my plan I can't receive text messages and I can't send them, so I can't speak for that...so that's kind of a bummer.

Oh ok

I would add it be nice if they had a printer

A printer? Ok well Nemo listed some things that she would like so do you want to maybe talk about what you would....

....oh and for the water machine I think they should have like ice cubes there. And they should have like a desert place, like ice-cream. I don't know they should have like...something like the 1101 café...what was it called...like a Tully's, a coffee place. An actual coffee place with desert options. I haven't been in there for breakfast but it would be nice if they had like pastries as well and yeah...

How would you say that improvements upon these items would affect your student experience?

Uh I think it would be nice. Like if there was a printer in there it would be more convenient for me to print stuff off. Like especially if it was an assignment that I need in like the morning, I wouldn't have to worry about like waking up early and like walking to the library. And it would be nice to have stuff like a coffee place in there just cuz like if I'm going to get food and I want coffee, or I don't drink coffee, but like Thai tea latte or something. And um it's just that I really like ice-cream haha

Haha so do I.

I find that there's just not a very good ice-cream place like Husky Grind doesn't have a freezer thing with the what is it called, single things like the drumsticks...

...oh ice-cream bars

Yeah cuz like if you want ice-cream bars you have to walk all the way to the District Market and they come in bulk but like I just want one.....oh and they should also include a vending machine.

And why is this

Well maybe not in local point but I guess more in Lander because sometimes we go study there and get hungry but like, there's nothing.

I know lander doesn't directly connect to local point is that....

Yeah that's true ...never mind then...

Oh, no, I mean what are your feelings on that?

Oh um I don't know, at first I thought it was annoying that I would have to walk like out and back in just cuz it was kind of nice how in Terry it was connected. But on second thought, I think that it's kind of nice that it's not connected because its own separate thing instead of like part of Lander. It feels like we are on more equal footing with Lander because they have to go outside to enter too. And another thing is its

more safe I guess. At least for the residents who live in Lander because it's more closed off. Like in Terry it was all open so you could just go up the elevators.

Alright well I've covered all of the specific questions that I wanted to hit on, but um, is there anything that just kind of pops into your mind about Local point that you'd like to put on the table or add or vent about?

Yeah they should really like do something about their pho because it is not real. It is not real pho. Like I wouldn't really mind it, but they have all the wrong ingredients in there and as someone who eats pho all the time and like it's a cultural thing, I feel kind of offended that they are calling that pho when it's not like pho in any aspects. So they should really try to make it look like pho if they are going to call it pho, you know what I mean?

Yeah that's an interesting point, do you want to go on with that?

Yeah maybe it's also what they serve it in. they serve it in these like tiny little bowls and they can't really get any broth in there. And on second thought they put in a whole lot of vegetables that don't belong in real pho. Like they put in like carrots and cucumbers and that just does not go in like real pho. Yeah.

Is it just the pho that you find ...as you said culturally offensive?

Yeah I know they do other ethnic food or whatever. But I can't really talk to the other foods because I'm not really familiar with it. But um I mean besides that, they do have some good things, like I think their sandwiches are pretty good, and I haven't tried like some other stuff, but I bet the hamburgers are pretty good too. The only thing is, I kind of wish that some things were not as overpriced. I mean like compared to other places on campus, other things are overpriced. But compared to the Ave, things are overpriced and I feel like they are always saying like "oh yeah you have your dinning plan." And they raise the minimum amount that you can get every year. I don't see the point in that because they are already making so much money. The food is overpriced already so why can't they make it less overpriced and then not have to overcharge us more. I don't know, I feel like I kind of get cheated sometimes. Especially when I don't have a dinning plan and I want to eat something but it's like oh my gosh \$7 for a salad and I could go somewhere else like on the Ave and get a bigger meal for like almost the same amount so, I don't know.

So would you say the Ave is more of your go to for food then?

Yeah I mean they have more choice and it's more reasonably priced and it tastes better most of the time.

So what would be the reason that you would go to local point rather than the Ave?

Well see when I go to the Ave I never go by myself and I never eat by myself either, um so local point is just nicer if I just need to grab a sandwich. And it's just closer so I don't have to set aside a chunk of time because it's right there. And it's not a formal restaurant where you get served or whatever.

Ok any last thoughts?

Haha nope I'm good.

Then I will start by turning off the recorder....6:44.....

## Interview Journal: Dory

2/11/14

Start 6:04PM

“Dory” is a Female UW student of Vietnamese decent. She is the roommate and friend of Nemo. Dory likewise had a clownfish picture on her bulletin board, leading to the continuation of the “Finding Nemo” pseudonym theme. During the interview Dory wore sweats and a white t-shirt with fuzzy tan and white Ugg slippers. When I entered her room (right next to Nemo’s) she had been working on homework at her desk and invited me to sit at the foot of her bed as she turned around in her chair. I took this as surprisingly friendly and made a point to seem as casually conversational as possible.

1. Pseudonym?

Dory

2. Where are you currently living (on campus)?

Stevens Court

[Lived in Terry by the 1101 Café last year]

3. How often do you go to Local Point?

Not vary

More recently

Once a week

Dinner 6:30 – 7 or 2

4. Why do you go to Local Point?

Fries, grilled chicken pesto

[Smiles, seems to enjoy this sandwich]

5. What is it like when you enter Local Point?

[Arms crossed but pleasant]

Maze

6. How do you feel when you enter the space?

Food

Frustrated by lines

7. What kinds of activities do you participate in there?

Buy food

Find place to sit

Chat

Study when quiet (?) [makes this a question]

[Thinks it would be nice but hasn’t actually studied there]

8. What role does food play during your time there?

Food is main reason

Never eaten alone

No dining plan, don't spend

No to pho

Gets same thing

9. What role does technology play during your time there?

Nothing significant

No cell service

Never in their long enough to use technology

Cash register

10. What is it like to eat in a group?

(merged with following notes)

11. What is it like to eat alone?

Eat faster alone

Don't chat

"Depressing"

Single person = isolated

Not so far – more people by themselves – fit in

Won't sit close - a table away

~how would you feel if someone sat next to you?

Wouldn't care

But wouldn't sit there unless other tables were full

Particular spot

[People tend to sit in a certain area]

12. How do you present yourself within the space, what is your demeanor like?

Don't like to eat alone even at home

Uncomfortable

Comfort

13. What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?

People

Cool looking

Different place

14. How do you feel about the other people within the space?

Don't really notice people, unless loud

Eaves dropping unintentionally

Don't know – could be different – don't care

15. How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?

"I mean" – ok – friendly – open

Preparation Inconsistency but good people

[Sounds like she is trying to be nice and avoid saying potentially mean things about people, seems to fit her personality profile rather than being deceptive]

Positive

"I mean"

[Seems to be deciding if she should say something negative about staff]

[Emphasis and hand motions] "Can you work faster please?!" (Slow sandwich staff)

~would you ever go into the kitchen?

Kitchen? No reason, tour maybe

No

If allowed

[seems especially meek in wondering if she is allowed, fear of authority]

wouldn't occur

Closed off staff, distance

is it ok?

[values rules/ not getting in trouble]

16. What kinds of social norms are present within the space?

Social norms

Stand in line

Wait for order

No kitchen

~additional thoughts~

Does not have text messaging - bummer

Printer

Water should have ice

Dessert

1101 café

Breakfast?

Nice

Ice-cream

DM

Variety

Vending machine

Study in lander

-annoying at first

-safe and equal

Pho is not real pho!

Culturally offended

Tiny bowl

No broth

No vegetables

[Very passionate, voice raised, half laughing but annoyed]

Price  
Dining plan – money extortion  
Cheated  
Ave  
Wouldn't go to ave alone+ inconvenient

(6:43)

[Turned off recorder but continued talking about people's special patterns; seemed more comfortable without the recorder]

Got very excited, enjoys sociology and anthropology  
- MGH ok for sharing, same with center table in Local Point  
- Odd when someone sat across from her while sitting in SUZ

Wondered about how people react to strangers talking to them

Approached once in a class, found it nice but odd  
- Some people don't even respond  
We all have a "bubble" "individualistic society"

Sometimes feel she should give someone a hug but can't bring herself to do it  
What is it? Upbringing? Stranger danger?

"Not like that in Vietnam," people get up in your space  
Much closer together  
"Very big difference in social norms"

We should investigate/ run social experiments and talk to random people

[The "we" surprises me; I think I just made a friend?]

End 7:02

Memos:

- Very passionate about poor food quality, especially pho, which she has a cultural connection to
- ask more questions about cultural differences
- People seem to feel very uncomfortable eating alone, get further into the why
- Theme: cost/ husky dining plan annoyance
- Both Nemo and Dory seem to have preferred the 1101 Café
- Use of "like" as a transitional word seemed to drop in some places where Dory was more confident in her answers. Consider transcribing this interview to capture those places.
- coffee and ice-cream appear desirable commodities

## Interview Journal: Nemo

"Nemo" is a female UW student of Indian decent. During the interview she was wearing a pair of grey sweats with a purple "Huskies" t-shirt, appearing casual and comfortable in her environment. Nemo and Dory are roommates who live with two other girls in an apartment in Steven's Court, near Local Point. I also live in Steven's Court and a proximity bond seemed to be struck. They invited me to conduct my interviews at their apartment one after the other. At my request, neither could hear the other's interview. Nemo was interviewed in her room. I sat at her desk with my laptop while she sat cross-legged on her bed. Overall the atmosphere was calm, informal and conducive for conversation.

2/11/14

Start 5:20PM

1. What would you like your pseudonym to be?  
Cannot decide  
[I see a paper clownfish on her bulletin board and suggest Nemo]  
She laughs and agrees
  2. Where are you currently living (on campus)?  
(Stevens Court)
  3. How often do you go to Local Point?  
"1-3 times a week"  
4-6 PM
  4. Why do you go to Local Point?  
"cuz they have really good sandwiches"
- ~have you gotten anything else besides sandwiches?  
Sometimes  
Got a burger once  
Pagliaccci salads – like those  
Got the pho once and "uh eh no, never again"
5. What is it like when you enter Local Point?  
Come in, look at how good the pho looks and then remember it tastes really bad  
Usually just get sandwiches/ go over to that side
- ~do you scan the other options as you walk down there?  
Sort of  
Usually come in already knowing what I want  
If I want fries I go to the fries



6. How do you feel when you enter the space?  
(Answered throughout)

7. What kinds of activities do you participate in there?  
Just for food  
Grab and go  
Don't study there

8. What role does food play during your time there?  
"it's [food] like...the reason I go there..."

~how do you feel when you eat the food there?  
Depends what it is  
"I wish I had more options"  
"Usually I go there and I'm like I don't really want to try anything else because I've learned that it always looks good but it never tastes as good as it looks"

~are there any other trends or little rules that you abide by?  
"Stick with the common stuff like burgers, that's normal"  
"Pho is pretty normal but not from an American place"  
"If it's Asian but it's from an American place don't go for it"

~is local point failing in its attempt to be cultural?  
[struggles with answer]  
Umm no?  
"I think it succeeds in being culturally inclusive in a way, it just doesn't do it well"

~so the execution and the taste pallet....[cut off] [leading question]  
"yeah like the attempt is nice but the execution is just not good..."

9. What role does technology play during your time there?  
[makes a crinkled thinking face, takes a second trying to think of something]

"oh ok my phone doesn't work there, that pisses me off"  
[Animates/ sits up more as she says this]  
Mom tried calling her once while she was there but she didn't get it

The menus, on TVs

~how do you feel about that [the TV menus]?  
"It's a waste of money" [responds quickly and immediately as if she has spent time thinking this over before]  
  
"It's nice...it's stylish, but I feel like we could have put our money to better use (?)"  
[Upward inflection again; looking for validation of opinion?]

~how would you describe the style of local point?  
"Modern"

~do you like modern?  
"eh sure, I mean I like Local Point"  
[Seems to slightly contradict herself]  
It's nice

~better than the 1101?  
Nooo  
Had a "connection" with the 1101  
Might make the same "bond" with local point in time

(5:29)  
~what is your experience with eating in a group compared to eating alone?  
Largest group is with roommate  
Doesn't eat there that often

~what about with places other than local point?  
Ate more at 1101  
Alone: find a place that's "not too crowded"  
Group: "fine wherever I am" "doesn't matter how many people are around"

~what do you think drives that difference?  
If I'm alone I just want to be alone, have my space

~how is your confidence level?  
[Laughs] is this like therapy now?  
  
Concerned about people looking at her  
"Oh my god food on my face, wipe it off quickly" [half joking?]  
More "conscious" of what is going on when alone

~how do you present yourself within the space?  
~how do you think other people view your presence?  
"People probably don't care, but I don't feel that way"  
[Seems slightly embarrassed talking about her discomfort when eating alone but keeps talking]  
"I feel like even though they aren't looking, they are looking"  
"Paranoid feeling"  
"I care but I don't care"  
[More verbal contradictions about emotional response to Local Point and eating alone]

~what goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?  
"I should have thought about this before"  
Going to look "stupid" eating alone

Find a seat by myself

Finding seat with a group: more enthusiastic, "casual", less "paranoid"

~Do you feel more paranoid around other solo eaters or groups?

"Depends if I'm alone"

Alone: "loser"

Group: don't think about it as much

~what do you think drives that decrease in paranoia

[Confused pause]

~ is it power... or.... confidence? [Definitely a leading question]

Personality

Quiet person

Low self-esteem and paranoia

[Didn't seem particularly affected by my leading terms, lucky me]

[Note to self: be careful about how I help people understand/answer questions in the future]

"This feels like therapy"

[Talks about wanting to go into clinical psychology briefly/ working with children]

[I make a joke about me not being the best model for that, she laughs and I feel she opens up a little more to my presence/ questions]

~how do you feel about people within the space?

~have you noticed any outlying behaviors?

Groups are loud

Nothing really out of place

~how do you feel about the staff?

"Usually really nice"

Most of the time nice and "accommodate" – special requests for salad

Got "mad" once when a staff guy didn't see her trying to order a sandwich and "ignored her" until she left without it.

[Talks quickly through this part, appears to me to be a sign of emotional significance]

~did you call out or anything?

Stood right there

Was about to say something but he walked away

Definitely saw me

[Sounded more to me like she might not have actively worked to draw his attention and over embellished but can't be sure. At least displays some sense of entitlement to service as a customer]

~Is there anywhere you would not go in local point?

Yeah the Asian place never again

"Feel bad" because I might be missing out on good stuff but not willing to waste money and take that chance

~would you ever go into the kitchen?

No??

~why not?

It's not my place to be in the kitchen??

[Makes face and tightens voice as if this is an absurd question]

~is there a rule that states you cannot enter the kitchen?

"No, but if I wish to adhere to...the norms of society...I would not enter the kitchen"

[Uppity inflection on "norms of society" implies that she is adhering to something she in fact finds ridiculous - more contradictions.]

~if other people were going in would you?

[Really not that much to do with my original script, now I'm just curious about the line of inquiry]

No

Probably just wait to find out later

~do you clear your plate?

Definitely, want to clean it for the next person

Feel bad about confusion about where to put things on the dish return conveyor belt

~does the dish return reminder card influence your decision to cleanup?

Not really

Don't register

Wait which one?

[I show her a picture of one that I took on my phone]

Oooh...no ...I saw it but never think to read them

~any miscellaneous thoughts?

No

I wish they had a coffee place

Starbucks better than husky grind, Tully's better than Starbucks

"I love Tully's" [audibly excited about this coffee]

[Takes a sip of water from a reusable bottle]

~anything else?

No

Actually yeah

Want to know what they are doing with the empty kitchen [test kitchen]

Good place for a coffee shop

Layout confusing, have to go around

Took three visits to get used to

Dish return in back/ hard to find

~what section do you usually sit in?

Back by burgers, where I get my food

Sat in far back once when parents came

[Seems to imply not wanting to be seen with parents]

End (5:50)

Memo:

- Felt passionate about bad ethnic foods, start looking into food choices again
- Get better at asking questions; felt rocky
- Maybe filling in questions in order is not the best approach. At least consider reordering questions for flow.
- Nemo seemed friendly and understanding
- only uncomfortable when probed about eating alone
- notable interest in availability of coffee
- possible social insecurity about having parents in a student dominated setting
- several nods to “this feels like therapy” indicates that discussing eating behaviors are not a typical occurrence and emotionally stirring

## Interview Journal: Rose

2/11/ 14

Start 10:33PM

Rose is a female UW student of Chinese decent. She was one of my roommates during my first year at the UW, and while I only see her about once a quarter, we mutually consider ourselves good friends. Interested in seeing what Steven's Court was like, she came to my apartment for a tour followed by an interview. During the interview she wore black yoga pants and a long-sleeved royal blue shirt. She had her hair up in a messy bun and was wearing a pair of rectangular framed glasses.

1. What pseudonym would you like me to use?  
Rose  
[There was a rose on the table behind me]
2. Where are you currently living (on campus)?  
Lander
3. How often do you go to Local Point?  
"Once a week"  
~what time of the day?  
"Night for dinner"
4. Why do you go to Local Point?  
"I usually go after chem lab and they are the only place open to eat at such a late time"
5. What is it like when you enter Local Point?  
"very vast" when you come down the stairs  
"Colorful" in the different sections of seating  
But to the right there is a lot of white  
Feels like "walking into a large banquet hall sometimes"
6. How do you feel when you enter the space?  
"Like I have a big decision to make"  
Where to sit  
What food place to go to  
"Very indecisive and a waste of my time [the decision making]"  
"Gets under your skin"  
Go in to get a salad but then "have the urge to see what they are serving that day"
7. What kinds of activities do you participate in there?  
"None of the activities except for eating"

"how should I say this"

If I'm going to meet up with someone to eat "I bring out my homework and what not and do it in the time that I'm waiting for a person"

Talk while eating with friends

8. What role does food play during your time there?

"I see it as a symbol of...it's a break time from studying"

"Satisfies hunger"

"Energy booster" at night after studying

9. What role does technology play during your time there?

"Waist of electricity"

Some food sections with menu screens

"From what I've heard some of those sections aren't opened except for the weekends"

Sometimes they are blue; sometimes they just have random pictures of food

"I understand that it's brand new so they are trying to give a vibe to it"

"But personally, for me it's just a waist of electricity"

~do you use electronics while you are eating?

"I look at my phone, sometimes I text"

If I need to let someone know something

Try not to text when I talk to someone so that I'm not "rude"

I don't surf Tumblr or Facebook when I eat

10. What is it like to eat in a group?

"It's a stress reliever"

Friends, jokes and stories

"Whether it makes you feel better for the rest of the day or just that short timeframe"

11. What is it like to eat alone?

"I haven't eaten alone at Local point"

"Part of my personality is that I don't like eating by myself"

"I see it as a downtime, everybody should have some downtime"

If I'm busy and can't have a friend "follow me as a shadow" I grab a quick salad and go back upstairs

~is there anything that you would do in a group that you wouldn't while eating alone?

Talking

"Sometimes I don't like to eat alone at local point"

"If I do, I do it while studying or think about school"

"As for a group, I would never bring homework with me or anything like that"

12. How do you present yourself within the space, what is your demeanor like?

"When I'm eating alone I definitely retreat back into my dorm room"

"Maybe there is a little bit of loneliness eating alone in a public area, despite the fact that I witness a lot of people doing that"

"I think for me I don't want to feel lonely publicly I guess" [emphasizes "publicly"]

Rarely eats alone, but does during midterm times for study purposes

Group:

"I try to be funny or talk a little more because I'm not the only one in school. Not everyone is going to say they are stressed, but you know they are, because you know exactly how they feel going to school"

13. What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?  
"If I'm alone I always go back to my room"  
"The first few times I ate at local point...the person I'd sit with... we purposely chose a different type of seating"  
They have booth seating, tall tables, etc.  
But now we just see what's free and sit down  
"it usually tends to be the middle though"[middle area down from the chairs with a long table, by the sandwich stand]
14. How do you feel about the other people within the space?  
"I don't really go when it is busy"  
Everybody is there, it's a hassle finding food, moving around, finding a place to sit  
"It's almost like ODE during finals week" [the library is VERY busy during finals week]  
I "avoid" eating there when it's busy
- When it's toned down my friend and I avoid sitting down around people  
We "avoid" other people
- ~how do you think other people view you?  
"I don't know how to answer that question"  
"They avoid us"  
"They are in their own little corner by themselves so I assume they appreciate people not coming near them to eat"
15. How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?  
"a lot of them are students"  
"Occasionally one of them will start a conversation: oh did you just get out of lab?"  
"What kind of lab, what kind of classes are you taking?"  
"The only other kinds of conversations are questions like if you see they made a mistake; pricing or something like that"

~do mistakes happen often?  
Not often  
"The mistakes are usually made by the students who just recently got trained"  
"The adult staff is really nice, very approachable"



"Sometimes if you have a question about what something is or price you don't want to go to the student employees because they are not always on top of everything"

16. What kinds of social norms are present within the space?  
"There are a couple of sections that are more...not intimate... but for smaller groups, so I see couples sit in those areas vs the buffet tables"  
Occasionally a large group of people or club that all eat together  
"Asian section that is open a lot"  
"A lot of Asians go there, I think because they miss the cultural food"  
"Salad bar not as popular as I thought it would be"  
Fewer lines  
"The burger place is popular and it seems like a lot of guys go there"  
"A lot of girls waiting in the deli sandwich lines"  
"Clicks" international students, white people, black people, sports people

~what cultural differences effect these group interactions?

Language barrier  
Groups "in their own little world together" can't just interrupt  
"It seems like people know what they want. This kind of food for so and so reason"

~do you know what you want before you walk in the door?

Not really  
If I'm not in a hurry I "peek around"  
If I have a busy day or a tight schedule I go to the salad bar  
More salad variety then Terry  
Convenient to grab and go

Fancy dishware, a symmetrical bowls and gray trays  
[Rolls eyes as she describes dishware]  
"I feel like they are trying to give customers a dinning feel"  
For the salad bar you get a plastic container and can stay or go

~You rolled your eyes as you described "grey trays," do you feel like Local point isn't succeeding in what it's trying to do?

"I think I'm just a little bitter" [laughs]  
"Local Point is the new 1101"  
1101 was "smaller," "convenient" and "connected"  
Lander safety is good but not convenient  
"Might as well just go to the district market"  
Quality of food is "similar if not exactly the same"

Trying to be "fancy" but food is still of poor quality  
"Did not make any effort to improve the quality of the food"  
Does have more cultural effort/food  
Relates as an Asian

1101 only had a temporary Asian section

~how important is food quality to you?

Not a picky eater

"UW likes to cook things in bulk and stalk"

Incidents with food not thoroughly cooked

Don't have time to confront someone about it

Overpriced

\$8 for a sandwich that's not worth it

"How should I say this?"

Using the cheapest materials is not good for our bodies

Not good for studying

Constantly oily

"UW doesn't emphasize making food choices that are good for studying"

~would having a better quality of food improve your academics and student experience?

"I guess they do have the salad bar"

"But for student experience, definitely"

Would go there more for better food

People that aren't dorming would be more likely to come over to eat if "the food didn't suck"

(11:03)

~do you utilize other food options?

Other options:

District market – "because most of their stuff isn't made by the UW"

Cafés – any place that sells coffee

By George

SUZ

Starbucks

Hub

Has a dining plan

Would not eat on campus otherwise

~would you ever walk into the kitchen at local point?

"Probably not"

"You can kind of already see the kitchen"

"Sure why not" – as long as long as I don't get in trouble

~is there any explicit rule why you can't go in the kitchen?

In America, there are restaurants staff only signs. If you don't work there then don't go in.

~how would you feel if someone sat directly next to you?

Initially, strange

Fine if it was the only table  
Question why they sat so close

~would you ever sit directly next to someone?  
No unless it was the only table  
Or if I know the person

~when you are alone are you more likely to use a cell phone?  
When alone uses technology  
Call phone or homework  
Why:  
Lonely – “maybe I don’t want to admit it”  
Sometimes I get busy and have to catch up on texts

17. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience with Local Point?

Don’t understand the to go charge of 35 cents  
No one actually gets charged for it  
Never asked

Nice dishware system  
Some people still do it wrong – in a hurry or lazy-  
Multiple dish returns might help?

Feel bad for “adult staff” they are the ones making the food  
Local point janitors also work at Lander

People should learn how to pick up trash  
“I always try to be as clean as possible”  
Only two trash areas

Public bathrooms?? By dish area? Not sure

See-through glass is cool but strange when you see people pass by – strange street walkers

Wants a coffee place

Biology major – conservative  
DON’T NEED all those lights  
[very passionate about the lights]

High prices  
Nice looking overall but some odd designs  
Some chairs are inconvenient to walk through when busy

(11:26)

[Turned off recorder]

[We continued to discuss some of the trends that I had found during my observations at local point. Rose became very interested about the correlation between culture and personal bubbles and gave me her perspective on Chinese culture. I took a few notes as seen below:]

Chinese people, have an “individual society”

Eat by themselves

“I think that’s international students in general”

“Maybe because there are so many people in china”

High population, crowded

“Asians don’t quite grasp that in American society there is something called a personal bubble”

“I’m gunna do what I want to do” [speaking as a different person]

“No one is going to confront them”

Food quality

“Sometimes you just don’t want to try the things that you would like to try”

“it takes a lot of courage to try something you know is going to taste bad”

Curious about sales statistics

Lots of flirtation in the kitchen

“I don’t want to see people being lovey dovey”

“You have one job, make my sandwich, and don’t go talk to people”

The food:

“It’s just bad”

I don’t hear people say “I’m going to local point” anymore

End 11:38

Memo

- People seem to have a lot to vent about Local Point
- All overall dissatisfied with food but still return for convenience or dinning plan related ties
- “overpriced” is a common theme
- TV menus as a “waste of electricity rings similar to earlier claims (“waste of money”)
- Comparisons to the 1101 Café very prominent
- Distinct aversion to eating alone – negative emotions
- Cultural ties to behavior
- Staff split into two groups: students and adults.
- More sympathetic to adults

# Interview Journal: Codename Alfa Omega

Codename Alfa Omega is an African American male and student at the UW. I approached him while he sat alone at a table at Local Point, surfing his laptop while eating the last of his fries. He seemed more relaxed than other solo-eaters I have seen. After checking the time, he took pity on me and agreed to the interview. He wore a blue t-shirt with a patriotic peace sign design and matching American flag print sneakers.

2/12/14

Start 6:40

1. What pseudonym would you like me to use?  
Codename Alfa Omega
2. Where are you currently living (on campus)?  
Mercer Hall Lander [recently switched dorms]
3. How often do you go to Local Point?  
One to two times a day  
Alternates between dinner and lunch  
Lunch - 12:30  
Dinner - 6-7
4. Why do you go to Local Point?  
"I wish I knew"  
"It's because it's convenient I guess. It's just there"  
Has dining account – "don't want to waste that money"
5. What is it like when you enter Local Point?  
"It's pretty chill"  
Fills water bottle and walks around finding something to eat  
Gets Ice from soda machine  
(6:44)
6. How do you feel when you enter the space?  
"I guess neutral to hungry sometimes"  
"I get hungrier once I smell the food"
7. What kinds of activities do you participate in there?  
Eating  
Standing in lines  
Surfing Reddit on laptop after sitting down
8. What role does food play during your time there?

"It's the only reason why I go there"  
"Sometimes I go to full my water bottle and then leave"

9. What role does technology play during your time there?  
"I will be on my laptop if I have it"  
"Otherwise I don't really use it"  
Ice machine

~is there a reason you use a laptop instead of other kinds of technology?  
Most "convenient" for surfing reddit  
"The mobile app is pretty bad"  
"Occasionally homework"  
"I procrastinate"  
"It's not a very good study environment"  
"I'd rather chill and look on my laptop or look around than focus on reading"

7. What is it like to eat in a group?  
"I don't think I've ever eaten in a group at local point"  
"no wait yes I have"  
Three friends  
"pretty chill"  
Talked and hung out

8. What is it like to eat alone?  
"it's pretty chill"  
Observe people  
Productive internet surfing

12. How do you present yourself within the space, what is your demeanor like?  
"I don't know, I walk in and I put on a mean strut" [joking?]  
I don't know I usually go fill up my water bottle  
"Walking with conviction? Determined?"  
Annoys me when people are slow and looking around  
Then I sit around and look around "but not creepy" just "casual"

13. What goes through your mind when you go to choose a seat?  
Corner  
Smaller three person table so that I don't take up seats  
Corner is better for looking out

14. How do you feel about the other people within the space?  
"I don't have anything against the people there"  
"Neutrally?" "Don't care"  
I don't ever really remember anything about specific people there

15. How do you feel about the staff and your interactions with them?  
They are pretty nice

Nothing bad that I've observed  
"The boss people seem chill"  
Today I saw one let a guy on a thirty minute break  
"Another chill dude talked to me about the hot plates they use; they have these magnets in them"

16. What kinds of social norms are present within the space?  
People eat and hang out  
"Discuss stuff"

People compost their stuff  
Generally polite while in line and parting when people need to get by

~how long does it take you to decide what you want to eat for the day?  
Less than a minute  
At the beginning of the week I look around to see what's new and then I generally know what I want when I go in.

~What do you usually eat while you are there?  
"Grilled chicken from burger place"  
"It's not even that good but chicken is healthier than other meats"

~how do you feel about the food selection?  
"Pretty boring"  
"I was excited the first day but then I slowly realized that there's not that much"  
Nice that they rotate one dish  
They have cultural food

~can you talk more about how you feel about the cultural food?  
Pretty nice  
Had a Teriyaki beef bowl  
Adds more variety every two weeks  
  
"Not as good as the actual food"  
"Rather just go to the Ave and get pho or something like that"

~so you feel like they don't effectively prepare the cultural food?  
They don't have the chefs for it  
Not as familiar with the food  
"But it would be so hard to master something new every week"

~whats your overall impression of the food?  
It's not good  
The cultural food is always mediocre  
Grill is average  
Don't like salad - Have to pay for box not by the ounce  
"Greasiest pizza I've ever had!"

[Gets extremely passionate about how pizza could possibly be that greasy]

~ how do you feel about the healthiness of the food?

Not that healthy

Not many vegetables

Anything that's not salad or a sandwich doesn't have any vegetables

~is having vegetables important to you?

Yeah for sure

"I was actually really excited when they had collard greens one time"

~would you be more likely to eat there if there were more vegetables?

Probably

Then I wouldn't feel like I'm always eating "bad food"

~so if you aren't thrilled with the food quality why do you keep coming back?

Just convenience

Want to use the money on my dinning plan

"Might go to the DM more now that I'm in lander, but even the DM doesn't have that good of food anyway"

~What would you change about local point?

"oooh man" [laughs/ beams as if excited to express a multitude of things he wishes to change]

"First there is an area that they aren't even using!"

"Weird and annoying"

Not any vegetarian options [used to be vegetarian]

"They don't have any desert, I don't get that"

If you go to the DM you have to get a whole tub

(7:05)

~how do you feel about cost?

"Some stuff isn't too bad"

"Some of the stuff is expensive like clam chowder in a bread bowl. They just gave me one scoop and I was pretty bummed about that"

Too much for poor quality

But with my dinning account I get things that I wouldn't normally get

If I played cash I probably wouldn't spend that

~So you feel differently about husky money?

Yeah I have to spend it all

Can't make/ save food because no fridge

~how do you feel about the TV menus?

"They are pretty cool", looks glossy



[Uses “cool” in a casual non excited manor]

Annoyed that they are not regularly updated, feels deceived  
Should be easy to change

~have you tried the pho?

Heard it was very bad so I didn't  
Old school made bad pho too [transferred from Chicago this quarter]

~how would you feel if someone sat directly next to you?

I wouldn't really mind  
The tables are spaced in a way that makes them feel separate  
Make sure I'm not looking at anything weird or gory

~how do you feel about the design of local point?

Good seating design  
Hub is annoying because the chairs aren't laid out as well  
Why bleachers? No one uses them  
Like design

Chairs recline, not quite functional for eating  
Different seating options: bar, booths etc. are nice  
[Large hand gestures while describing tables]

~would you ever sit directly next to someone?

Not if there was other space open  
“Even one chair over is not as weird”  
[Reference to a movie where two guys pee in the woods, which he tries to connect to spacing. Is this a guy thing? I think I made a weird face but he didn't notice]

Wouldn't want to invade people's space if they are working  
Wouldn't want people looking at his laptop if something comes up on reddit

~what do you think has brought about your tendency to keep a personal bubble?

“Introvertedness”  
Hub interaction: stranger came to talk to him while he was trying to eat – there was no space left  
Just want to eat and have space, not talk

(7:19)

17. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience with Local Point?  
Nope nothing I can think of

End 7:20

Memo:

- Not as conversational/ open as the informants that I interviewed after more established contact. Could be due to lack of personal relationship, personality or less formal/noisier atmosphere
- Seems to be a confident solo eater
- Wonder if Chicago contributed significantly to assertiveness/ behavioral patterns
- No previous experience with 1101 café
- Still had seemingly premeditated suggestions for dining hall improvement
- Seemed to invalidate theory that solo eaters experience lack of confidence (at least on a general/ universal scale)
- Also expressed connection to adult staff members
- Priority = food
- Quality important
- Seating design favorable to five foot rule/ appreciated by solo-eater