

Tikrit University  
College of Education  
English Department  
Class:2<sup>nd</sup>



## Select Readings

Lecture Title: **“Students Won’t Give Up Their French Fries”**

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## **“Students Won’t Give Up Their French Fries”**

### Introduction

The article “Students Won’t Give Up Their French Fries” by Elizabeth F. Farrell discusses the eating habits of college students in the United States. Despite increasing awareness of healthy eating, students continue to choose high-fat, high-calorie foods such as French fries, pizza, burgers, and sugary drinks. Farrell explores why university initiatives aimed at promoting healthy food choices often fail to significantly change student behavior.

The article highlights the tension between knowledge and action: students may know what is healthy, but this knowledge alone does not always influence their daily food choices.

### **1. A Real-Life Example**

Farrell begins the article with a real-life scenario at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, where Debra Lee-Cadwell, the director of dining services, observes students checking food labels. Students often ask whether a particular food is “green, yellow, or red” in terms of fat content:

Green: low-fat

Yellow: moderate-fat

Red: high-fat

These color-coded labels are meant to help students make healthier choices. However, Farrell notes that even when students are aware of the nutritional content, they often still choose foods they enjoy, regardless of health ratings.

### **2. Providing Nutritional Information in Universities**

Universities have implemented several strategies to provide students with nutritional guidance:

-Detailed Food Information

Programs such as NetNutrition allow students to access information about the ingredients, calorie content, and fat levels of campus meals online.

-On-Site Nutritional Tools

Some universities, like the University of Southern California, have installed computers in dining halls so students can check the nutritional content of meals while deciding what to eat.

For example, students can compare a low-calorie Thai salad to a high-fat burger or pizza, seeing the exact nutritional differences.

### 3. Student Behavior vs. Healthy Information

Despite the availability of detailed information, many students continue to prefer traditional comfort foods:

French fries

Pizza

Burgers

Soda

Experts, such as Robin L. Porter, note that while students may be more health-conscious, consciousness does not automatically lead to healthy behavior. Taste preferences, convenience, and habits often outweigh nutritional knowledge.

## **4. Divergent Eating Habits**

The article highlights two contrasting patterns among students:

-Overeating

Some students indulge heavily in fast foods and high-calorie snacks.

-Extreme Restriction

Others become obsessed with eating “healthy” to the point of consuming very little, which can lead to nutritional deficiencies or digestive issues.

Farrell gives the example of a student proud of eating only one piece of bread in a day, demonstrating how excessive focus on healthy eating can become harmful.

## **5. Reasons behind These Habits**

Nutritionists and university health experts explain that:

- Information Alone Isn't Enough

Eating behavior is influenced by emotions, childhood habits, and social culture, not just knowledge.

-Moderation is Key

Experts stress that balanced eating—neither overeating nor complete deprivation—is essential for maintaining good health.

- Excessive Information Can Backfire

Too much information may lead some students to develop anxiety over food choices, causing stress or unhealthy avoidance of certain foods.

## **6. Student Perspectives**

Farrell also shares students' opinions:

Some students wish they had access to nutritional information earlier in college, as they gained weight during their first year.

Others feel that even with information, their personal food preferences often take priority.

This demonstrates that knowledge can be helpful but is not the only factor in shaping eating habits.

## **7. Conclusion**

The article concludes that:

-Universities provide extensive nutritional information.

-Students are more aware but not necessarily healthier in their food choices.

-Some students overeat, while others practice extreme restriction.

- Information alone does not change behavior; moderation and balance are crucial.

Farrell emphasizes that healthy eating is not just about knowledge, but also about learning to balance enjoyment and nutrition, developing sustainable habits, and understanding the emotional and social dimensions of food.