Some Notes on the Discussion Section

It is only okay to use first person voice for the hypotheses and talking about our study. Everything else should be in third person voice.

First, you need to re-state hypotheses and then tell what the results were. How exactly are the groups different, if they are? Again, you need to explain what we found in terms of what our numbers mean (never, once a month, etc.) But, please don’t put means or t-statements in results.

For the limitations, don’t go overboard. This was a good study, overall. But there are always things you can improve.

For the number of limitations, please put at least two.

Please do not use “People may not have been honest on our survey” as a limitation! This is true for all surveys, and surveys are a very common method of research. We hope that the amount of dishonesty is about equivalent for all groups.

If you want to talk about how some of our participants went to other schools or that the incentive to participate was different across participants, that would just contribute to overall error (unsystematic variability) in our results, it isn’t a problem, per se. It would not “skew” our results.

You need to cite 4-5 articles in both the introduction and the discussion.

Suggested outline for the Discussion:

* Restate hypotheses and discuss results we found (without giving exact means or t or P values). Make sure to explain who was different than who, and in what direction, and roughly what that result means (in terms of frequency, for instance).
* Discuss our findings in comparison to what other researchers have found. Are our results in line, or different? If they are similar, restate what others found and discuss how our results are similar to this. If they are different, speculate on why this might be the case. You will have to look at the method section of previous studies and see if you can pinpoint how our study and theirs are different (size of school, exact question asked, etc.)
* Then take some time to talk about potential limitations of our study, without making it sound like it was a terrible study and that we can’t trust the results! Please do not mention honesty as a potential limitation.
* You could finish with an idea for a future study or with saying something about how more research needs to be done on…

Please look at the paper by Maria Potts that is posted on Moodle and read over her discussion. This is an excellent example that can show you how to structure your discussion.