

ENGL 1001-143

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Unit 2 Paper

When you walk into Starbucks on campus, you hear the loud buzz of conversations around you, intermixed with the pouring and steaming of drinks. You see all the people light up with satisfaction as they drink from their hot cup of delight. You feel at home as you look at all the Marquette posters that line the wall. Looking at the establishment as a whole, you think nothing could be wrong with it. However, as you look deeper, you can see many design flaws. You notice the layout isn't user-friendly. The tables and chairs are tightly packed together. You have to walk all the way across the room to order, weaving in between people standing and sitting. And, although many of us get the drinks we are familiar with, what if we want to branch out and get a new drink? The menu doesn't provide a description of what is in each drink. Even though most of us feel more comfortable surrounded by Marquette paraphernalia, what if you're not affiliated with Marquette? Do you feel excluded? These design flaws create an inaccessible environment for the majority of its users. Inclusivity, equitable use, and perceptible information all combine to support my claim that the Starbucks on campus is not accessible for everyone.

When you walk into Starbucks, you instantly notice all the Marquette posters and logos that line the walls. This blatant display of Marquette paraphernalia, may make others who aren't associated with Marquette, feel excluded. According to the PowerPoint in class, inclusivity can be defined as "the intention of including people." Although Starbucks may not intentionally exclude people, they do intentionally cater to the Marquette population. This, in

turn, does actually exclude the general public. Especially if you aren't a student, the lack of inclusivity increases. You are surrounded by Marquette students and/or staff. And although Starbucks is technically placed off central campus, the influx of Marquette students and décor make the general public feel unwelcome. Even as a student, some still might feel excluded. Everyone there is studying in groups or if they are alone, they have their headphones in. This makes them seem unapproachable and makes you feel excluded.

Starbucks does not have equitable use because the space is designed very poorly. Equitable use is a space who's "design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities" (Connell). For students carrying big backpacks and books, weaving in between a crowd of people waiting for their drinks and closely placed tables and chairs is a challenge. Also, when ordering, the counter is in the middle of the shop. Normally, there is a very long line so you have to walk all the way to the back of the café just to get in line to order. This is hard for a person with no disabilities, but almost impossible for a person with a physical disability. For example, if someone in a wheelchair wanted to go to Starbucks, they would be faced with many obstacles and challenges just to get into line. The space between the tables and the ordering counter is hardly wide enough for a wheelchair when no one is there. But, Starbucks is usually very busy, and the line of people waiting to order closes the pathway for a wheelchair. Customers would have to move to allow the physically disabled person to pass through. There is a back entrance to Starbucks that would put you right at the back of the ordering line, however, you would have to go around the whole building complex to reach this back entrance. This would make people with disabilities not want to go Starbucks because of all the hassle.

This can also connect to the lack of inclusivity, because a disabled person would feel that the space is not equitable for them.

Starbucks does not provide basic signs and depictions that would make the store have perceptible information. Perceptible information is when “the design communicates necessary information effectively to the user” (Connell). For example, there are no signs to locate the bathroom; if you had to use the restroom, you would have to ask the staff. Also, when ordering, there are no descriptions or list of ingredients beneath each drink. If you were curious about what was in a drink, you would have to ask. However, since there is a long line of people waiting behind you, you might feel like you couldn’t ask. There are also pastries with no indication of ingredient so you don’t know what inside. Perceptible information can relate to equitable use because those with allergies would not want to go because they don’t know what is in the food or drink. It can also connect to inclusivity because, since you don’t know what’s in the drinks, you could feel excluded.

Starbucks’ design makes for a lack of inclusivity, equitable use, and perceptible information. Whether intentional or not, Starbucks isn’t accessible for most. Whether you are disabled or not, it is still challenging to navigate the shop. It is primarily catered to Marquette students without any disabilities. This makes those not from Marquette and those who are disabled, feel unwelcome in Starbucks. It also provides more challenges for the disabled to overcome to just order a drink. I hope more people will recognize that Starbucks’ design is not convenient. Further, I hope that Starbucks realizes how inaccessible and exclusive their store is and change it. This would allow everyone to feel included and be able to navigate the store seamlessly.

Works Cited

Connell, Betty Rose, et al. "The Principles of Universal Design." Center for Universal Design, Version 2.0, NC State University, 1 April 1997, www.design.ncsu.edu/cud, accessed: 10 October 2016.