General Studies 420: Disability & Society

Spring 2019

# **Assignment #3**

# **Community Accessibility Evaluation**

As we have discussed in class there are many ways to make our community more inclusive and accessible. Unfortunately, accessibility is often an afterthought in the engineering, design, and building process of community environments. This results in the exclusion of people with disabilities in life activities that non-disabled people take for granted. The hope with this assignment is to open your eyes to the ways that our community can be accessible and inaccessible for people with disabilities, and the ways that we can be proactive in ensuring that accessibility features are present within our communities.

Examples of places you can evaluate:

* Places of worship
* Public events
* Public buildings
* Public parks and walkways
* Local businesses
* Tourist areas
* Travel destinations

Respond to each question in detail to determine how this location is accessible or inaccessible to people with disabilities. (Remember: Accessibility is not only for those with visible disabilities, but also invisible disabilities such as heart conditions, anxiety disorders, etc.). You must include the question and your thorough response in full sentences, 12-point font, double spaced, with 1” margins. You must submit your assignment on Blackboard in a Microsoft Word Format. Email submissions will not be accepted.

Note: If you are an English Language Learner or if you struggle with English grammar, we strongly recommend that you use the services of the SDSU Writing Center prior to submitting assignments. Grammatical errors that interfere with comprehension while grading will result in point losses on assignments.

For this assignment you will respond to the following questions on the topic of accessibility in the community:

1. Name and location of the public place you are evaluating. Give a description of the location. (1 pt)
2. Is it accessible to some people with disabilities more than others? If so, which group of people is it more accessible to? And which group of people with disabilities is it not accessible to? Explain why you have come to this conclusion. (2 pts)
3. If you could make this location more accessible what would you change, include, remove, or alter? Explain how and why. (2 pts)
4. What are some features/qualities in this location that make it accessible? What barriers exist in this location that make accessibility more challenging? Are the features/qualities and barriers man-made in the current moment? Or are they part of the initial design? Explain. (2 pts)
5. Pictures are not included in your 3-page count and must be placed on the fourth page of your paper. You must include 4 pictures on page 4. (2 pts)

At this point in the course, you will also need to be extra conscious of using person-first language and respectful language in general when referring to people with disabilities. You will have an **automatic point deduction** if you use non-person-first language or use non-dignifying terminology (i.e., confined to a wheelchair, differently-abled, etc.). Refer to to Respectful Language Guidelines on Blackboard for guidance.

Hint: Things to consider as you answer the above questions:

1. Can a person who uses a wheelchair access all of the same areas that a non-disabled individual can access?
2. Are accessible alternatives clearly and visibly marked?
3. Are elevators and lifts in working order wherever there are stairs?
4. Are ramps located and angled in such a way that it is not overly burdensome for someone who uses a wheelchair to maneuver to them and on them?
5. Are the accessible alternatives comparable in distance such that the person using a wheelchair does not need to go far out of their way to arrive at the destination?
6. Are signs readable in Braille for people who are blind?
7. Are audio cues available for people who are blind (such as crosswalks)?
8. Are sign interpretation and/or closed captioning available for any audio or video features?
9. Are there enough accessible parking spots and are they actually accessible? If they are not accessible, is it because someone is parked in them illegally? Has someone put shopping carts or scooters or other obstacles in the spots?
10. Are there enough accessible walkways, curb cuts, and other accessibility features? If they are not accessible, is it because someone has blocked them/created barriers? Or is it due to poor design?
11. Do accessibility features that benefit people with disabilities also benefit those who do not have disabilities? If so, how?