

## English 316: Disability Studies Final Project – Video Transcript

Opening screen shows an animation of hand drawing the title of the project “Physical Disability and Accessibility: A Social Experiment at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor”. Underneath it reads “Created for English 316: Disability Studies and Activism” followed by “Abhinav Appukutty, Sawan Dutta, Trey Lundmark, Phillip Yang”. The University of Michigan logo is in the upper left of the screen. Music begins.

Voiceover: “Have you ever thought about accessibility? 1 in 6 Americans are considered disabled, yet so much of our online and physical space is inaccessible to many people. Our goal was to dive deeper into disability and provide you with a look into accessibility. How did we do this? We asked our peers and mentors at the University of Michigan to go just one single day without taking any steps, stairs, or curbs. If you are thinking ‘How does that show what it means to be disabled?’, the answer is it doesn’t. It provides just the tiniest glimpse, of what people with physical disabilities may have to deal with while on campus. It is a small, albeit important first step, towards spreading awareness to our colleagues on campus. We are not attempting to speak for the disabled in any way. We simply are trying to make the public aware of issues surrounding accessibility.” During voiceover, drawings of a girl, computer, book, bus, and professor appear.

Daniel Berger, Microbiology Major, Class of 2017 appears on screen. Daniel begins speaking: “The first time that it happened for me was I got injured playing soccer actually, and I had to be on crutches for a pretty long time, like about 6 weeks or probably even longer. But I found that a lot of the classes that I had to go to often had, I had a lot of difficulty like finding places that I could get in that wouldn't require a long time. For example, like climbing up a bunch of stairs.”

Side by side view of inaccessible (left side, 1x speed) vs. accessible (right side, 2x speed) entrance to Michigan Union. In the background, Daniel is speaking: “I think another place that was, I found to be difficult, was the Union. Not only because of the steps that I had to go up, like the main staircase is just pretty tall and then just going back downstairs. But also, if there was a handicap accessible area, you often had to open a door once you got to the bottom of the ramp, or the top of the ramp, and that was even more difficult than climbing up the stairs, which was very slow to begin with. So it often wasn't even a big increase in mobility or anything like that.”

There is an animation of hand writing “100% of participants said they did not make it through the day without using stairs. The average number of flights of stairs taken was 6.2”. Voiceover says: “100% of participants said they did not make it through the day without using stairs. The average number of flights of stairs taken was 6.2. Common reasons were not being able to find ramps/elevators or it being too inconvenient to use them.” During voiceover, drawing of three footsteps appears.

Anna Schnitzer, Disability Studies & Outreach Librarian appears on screen. Anna begins speaking: “I don't know, I just think that things have got to change, consciousness has got to be raised. People have got to just pay more attention to everybody's needs. There are a lot of needs that are being fulfilled and yet, there are some that are not.”

There is an animation of hand writing out “50 % of participants admitted to have never have thought of accessibility options on campus before this challenge”. Voiceover says: “50 % of participants admitted to have never have thought of accessibility options on campus before this challenge.” During voiceover, drawing of train station appears.

Robert Adams, Assistant Professor of Architecture appears on screen. Robert begins speaking: “I think another key point, and this is a general mantra within disability studies by many people. But it's a simple idea that you know, what if in difference to the perception of disabled bodies as a life of hardship, challenge, pain, 'oh poor you', you know. This kind of pity party around disability. Rather than do that, what if we said disability, like other kinds of cultural production, makes unique types of knowledge that are really incredibly useful and insightful in ways that we should study. And so, that's just not like a positivist statement, like 'oh disability is going to produce new knowledge, let's pay attention'. It's to go at that, okay, let's say 'yes, it is doing that. What kind of knowledge is it producing?' Let's really draw that out. I think within disability theory that's our word to build that up even more so. So that's also been a big part of the thinking and the work. It produces knowledge, of course, but what is that knowledge? Can that knowledge be, how does it get articulated? Where does it come from?”

There is an animation of hand writing “Only 13% of all participants asked agreed to even attempt the challenge”. Voiceover says: “Only 13% of all participants asked agreed to even attempt the challenge. People mainly refused due to inconvenience.” During voiceover, drawings of 3 kids appear.

Side by side view of inaccessible (left side, 1x speed) vs. accessible (right side, 2.5x speed) entrance to GG Brown Building. Voiceover says: “Because of poor design, people with physical disabilities may have to face these challenges every day. Too often, people assume the biggest problem disabled people face is themselves and their disability- but to do so utilizes a strict medical model of disability and ignores the voices of the disabled. Instead, the challenges disabled people may face often comes from societal barriers placed around them- such as the lack of physical access to different spaces around campus. And while our challenge only applies to a very narrow aspect of physical disability and accessibility, the results show much broader implications in terms of radical empathy, universal design, and increased inclusiveness. But this video is just a tiny first step. How can we find a solution and stop the isolation and segregation of the disabled? One way is to be aware and actively think about inclusion. This can mean showing empathy to all people around us and designing spaces with disability in mind. To our peers on campus and everyone else watching, we hope that you will look out for accessibility accommodations as you continue on with your lives. For professors, we hope that you will plan your courses and class content with disability in mind rather than making changes and accommodations on the fly. For students, this could be as simple as having accessibility options available at events you plan, or choosing venues that are universally designed. We want you to advocate for accessible spaces. And we hope these thoughts carry with you into your professional lives and careers, so that our cars, our buildings, our websites, and our future is more accessible.” There is an animation of hand writing out “Although I abstractly knew [accessibility] was an issue,

this [project] helped to convey how much of a daily struggle accessibility might be to many people' – Student, University of Michigan". Near the end of this monologue, drawings of a man and woman appear.

"Thank You For Watching" appears over a black screen as music fades out and video ends.