



the interior design student
make a difference
project
October 26 - 27, 2007

Can interior design students use creativity to make daily existence better for human beings, other living things or the earth?

student projects from
marylhurst university

Instructor sponsor
Rebecca Abraham

The Interior Design Educator's Council Social Justice Network presents the 2007 results of the Interior Design Student Make a Difference Project.

This project involved design students in identifying a real-life problem that could be made better through a design of some kind. They then created and installed a small, meaningful design solution, either temporary or permanent, and finally observed what happened when people encountered and used their environmental idea.

In the spirit that all efforts have worth, all student projects are provided here without priority or editing.



The IDEC Social Justice Network
www.idec.org/

The Interior Design Educators Council, Inc. (IDEC)
is dedicated to:

- The advancement of Interior Design Education
- The advancement of Interior Design Research
- Fostering the exchange of information within the Interior Design Profession and related design disciplines.
- The improvement of educational standards, and
- The development of the Body of Knowledge relative to the quality of life and human performance in the interior environment.



A Helping Hand



An interior design student struggles to open the door with full hands.



With our installation, she is able to place her toolbox, and free her hand to open the door.

Designers:

Melissa Farmer and Elizabeth Brandon

Institution

Marylhurst University

Sponsored By:

Rebecca Abraham

The Problem:

The students and faculty at Marylhurst often find themselves struggling to enter BP John. The central East entrance, which was not originally designed to be a main entry point for the building, is a narrow space and hard to maneuver with full hands. In addition to missing an automatic door opener, there is no clear space designed to set items to free a hand to open the door.

The Solution:

The ideal solution would be to install an automatic door opener, which would increase accessibility for all patrons. However, due to time and budget constraints, our solution is more simplistic in nature. We opted to install a small stand that would provide a dry surface to place items for a moment while the door is opened.

The solution's impact on its users:

Our campus is undergoing construction, and because of this the pedestrian traffic is heavier through the entrance we chose to test our project. And, with our rainy weather, it also means that heavier loads are favored over multiple trips across muddy parking lots.

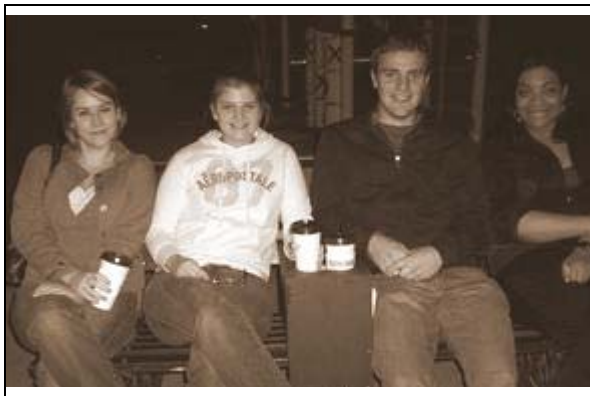
Due to ADA requirements, lack of approval to affix anything to the exterior of our building, and the small space we were working in, our free-standing structure was placed off to one side of the entry, and could easily be missed by a "free-handed". Attention was directed to our stand by placing signs in the window, along with a description of the project for those not familiar with the program.

From the completed surveys, as well as feedback from passers by, we found that most students appreciated our attempt at a solution, and even used it once they discovered it was there. The main criticism was its construction, which withstood the elements for our trial period, but it was obvious during a week of heavy rain that our design would need to be constructed with more water-resistant materials if implemented permanently.

The Bench Console



The Bench Console in use on a bench in Downtown Lake Oswego



The Bench Console was also tried at opposite a popular coffee shop.



As well as an armrest the console was often used as a message center.

Designers
Meredith Oler, Kiki Smith

Institution
Marylhurst University

Sponsored by
Rebecca Abraham

The problem

Upon resting on a park bench, we noticed there was nowhere to put our coffee/beverage while enjoying conversation. The only solution was to balance the beverage on the armrest, which was too narrow and creates a distance between two people sitting on the bench. This seemed to ruin the idea of a cozy park bench.

The solution

We created a console that gives bench users the ability to rest their arm and have a place to set their beverage in a secure setting. Enough space was provided to also be used as a table for small food items or cups and saucers. This design was creative because it makes an everyday object more functional while at the same time more enjoyable.

The solution's impact on its users

We installed the bench console on a busy Saturday at an outdoor market. This was the perfect opportunity for people to sit and enjoy their food purchases from the market. Prior to this day, we had visited the location to observe the lack of functional sitting/eating space in the area. On the days we installed the console, we observed people's reactions from a nearby restaurant. Once people came to sit, we let them stay a while before approaching them for their input on our design. "We love the design! Great idea!" was one older gentleman's sentiment, after resting his arm for a while, as well as his cup of coffee and saucer. Another person suggested an improvement "You should put beer in the cup holders for people to enjoy." We agreed that would be a fun addition, but with OLCC regulations (and the added cost) that was a dead end idea. Some people stopped to look at our project, while others actually used it on the bench. To make our project more inviting, we could have a more organic shape, rather than an imposing box form. However, this design still made the bench users time a lot more enjoyable and even prompted them to spend more time relaxing on the bench than they usually would. Thus, we are convinced our project was a success.

The Magazine and Message Unit



Our student lounge needs more activities for student leisure and communication.



The magazine and message board unit helps to create a relaxed and student focused atmosphere in the lounge- it facilitates student interaction and provides a break from homework.

Designers

Mayumi Rogers and Tejara Brown

Institution

Marylhurst University

Sponsored by

Rebecca Abraham

The problem

With a generous gift, our student lounge was recently remodeled. While it is now very beautiful and sophisticated, we discovered that there is nothing in the space for students to communicate with each other, or to look at or read while in between classes or as a break from homework.

The solution

We created a magazine stand and message board combined in a simple unit and placed it in the student lounge. We stocked the two-shelf case with a variety of magazines and posted the option for students to contribute to the stack. On either side of the unit, we added a strip of foam core for easy pin-up of information about school events and activities. Now students can use the lounge for breaks and communication.

The solution's impact on its users

We installed our magazine and message board unit at the end of September and have observed it for a month. Also, we created a short questionnaire for students to fill out and leave comments for us about our instillation.

For the most part, students said that our instillation was a good contribution to the lounge and even said that something like it, but permanent would be a beneficial. At the same time, though many people said that being able to post messages on the sides of the unit was helpful, it really was not used as much we thought it would be. One person suggested that the whole side of it should have a surface for tacking messages. There were also a few people who felt that it was not useful to post messages there at all; perhaps there are enough places on campus to do so.

Another observation was that if a permanent unit similar to the one that we created were installed, it should "be more formal, in order to better fit the rest of the room." In addition to this, there was a concern about the appropriateness of the selection of magazines and the need for the bulletin board to be "well managed to avoid clutter."

Overall, our instillation was well received, though it may not be the perfect solution. Ideally, a design like this would be as user friendly as possible and compliment the space it is installed in. The key, we learned, is to design for the user *and* the location.

Limiting Negative Environmental Impact



*Main Recycling Center/North Wall,
As You Exit Commons Dining Hall*



Recycling Bins are Labeled and Color Coded



*Cans/Glass Bottles Bin
Mayer Building*



Replacement of Microwave



Recycling Center-West Wall, At the Exit of the Cafeteria

Designers

Jenny Skoien & David Villa

Institution

Marylhurst University

Sponsored by

Rebecca Abraham

The problem

Ineffective placement and non-existent labeling for trash/recycling receptacle units located in main dining hall at entrance including Mayer Hall common area are resulting in these units overflowing with trash that perpetuates unsanitary conditions. Currently trash and recycling materials are being mixed together requiring extra man-hours to clean and separate for proper disposal.

The solution

One underutilized trash/recycling receptacle unit has been installed with existing unit located in main dining hall at the entrance wall where high traffic flow and main use occurs. Two units are now available to accommodate high use, eliminate trash overflow and mixing of recycling materials. Temporary placards have been installed for easy recognition and to assist people where to properly dispose their items. An additional recycling receptacle with appropriate placard has been installed at Mayer Hall to address same issue.

The solution's impact on its users

Installation took place Thursday, 10/10/07 giving us a full weekend for initial observation of the system we installed. Our primary sources for documenting the progress of our project was through the cleaning staff, kitchen staff and our own personal observations. Twice each week we viewed recycling material content within the units we installed in both locations and noted an immediate positive result. The cleaning staff commented that our installation made an enormous difference by decreasing the extra time previously required for cleaning and separation of materials. When we made our weekly inspections of the units, we noted that people were disposing their items in the correct receptacles we designated with the placards. We also received unsolicited favorable feed back from students and the kitchen staff; adding that they would like to see what we installed as a permanent fixture.

We have concluded from the information obtained that this installation was a success and exceeded our immediate expectations. This is an excellent example of how simplicity of design through subtly combining pictures, color and text can command some ones immediate attention that also guides the individual through a process without confusion.