The following assignment and schedule demonstrate scaffolding leading up to a high-
stakes assignment. This project was designed by Professor Jane Levitt for her LEH 301
course, “Health Disparities in the United States.” Writing Fellow Tina Harris worked
with her to develop the assignments and assist students during class time.

I. Guidelines for the assignment

Your paper must reflect the focus of this course on health disparities. You are expected
to relate three variables such as socio-economic characteristics (e.g. income, education,
access to insurance), personal/demographic characteristics (e.g. race, ethnicity, age,
gender) and a health condition or disease (e.g. asthma, diabetes, obesity, substance abuse)
to examine why a health disparity exists.

You must read at least two articles from academic, peer-review journals. In addition, you
are welcome to use more articles or other materials, like books, newspaper articles, and
information from reputable websites. Also include the perspective of someone you
interviewed. Including some statistical data would be a good idea.

The paper is not a summary of the articles and other information you have read, but
rather a synthesis and analysis of what other writers have said about the topic you have
chosen. The paper should go beyond description of your topic to analyze (critically
evaluate) your topic.

I am looking for a clear thesis statement, supporting arguments and logical thinking. The
paper must be typed, double-spaced, using font size 12. The footnotes and references
should be in APA style. Read the paper aloud to be sure it is coherent and says what you
want it to say. Review and edit your paper for English grammar and spelling.

This is an opportunity to do some independent research and explore a subject on your
own. I value an interesting topic, a thoughtful approach to an issue and a paper based on
data from appropriate professional literature put into your own words.

I hope you enjoy the assignment. If you find the material interesting, I probably will too.

II. Scaffolding toward the high-stakes assignment

Mar. 7 Developing a research topic. Class meets in the library.
In class: Begin your five page research paper by identifying a health
condition you are interested in finding out more about. Focus on
one population (e.g. by gender or race/ethnicity) and a socio-
economic factor (e.g. income, education, occupation, geography).
With the help of the librarian you will use the library time to
explore resources for your topic. You will also have a chance to
meet in pairs to review your research question. For homework,
you will need to choose one article to read and write a summary –
one paragraph giving the main ideas in the article.
           Reading: article from library
           Writing: (1) One paragraph summary of article chosen from last week’s
                     class in the library. (2) In one sentence, identify your research
                     question.
           Class Exercise: clarifying the research question and writing a thesis
                     statement – students work in pairs, share three foci and your
                     research question. Then meet in group and turn that question into a
                     thesis statement. Then asking each other questions; identify
                     supporting ideas – result: outline for paper
           Reflective Writing: For you, what is the most difficult part of writing a
                     paper?

Mar. 21    Tina and Jane review progress with individuals.

March 28   No class

March 30   First draft of paper due

Apr. 4     Return first draft of paper

April 11   Paper due, accompanied by first draft