

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.*

- Mar. 14 Developing a thesis statement.
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