

Writing Intense

Scaffolded Writing Across the Curriculum

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“What the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow” (Vygotsky, 1987: 211).

Source (photo):

[:https://www.google.com/search?newwindow=1&hl=en&site=img&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=1241&bih=606&q=scaffolding&oq=scaffolding&gs_l=img.3..0l10.2004.3666.0.3810.11.8.0.3.3.1.136.671.6j2.8.0...0.0...1ac.1.12.img.3bhsW8pivoo#imgrc=AuqelC4bzGh_uM%3A%3BFMuz9ZyRJ9MdfM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Faffordablehousinginstitute.org%252Fblogs%252Fus%252Fwp-content%252Fuploads%252Fimages%252Fman-small.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Faffordablehousinginstitute.org%252Fblogs%252Fus%252F2008%252F08%252Fdonors-as-scaffolding-part-2-the-value-of-](https://www.google.com/search?newwindow=1&hl=en&site=img&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=1241&bih=606&q=scaffolding&oq=scaffolding&gs_l=img.3..0l10.2004.3666.0.3810.11.8.0.3.3.1.136.671.6j2.8.0...0.0...1ac.1.12.img.3bhsW8pivoo#imgrc=AuqelC4bzGh_uM%3A%3BFMuz9ZyRJ9MdfM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Faffordablehousinginstitute.org%252Fblogs%252Fus%252Fwp-content%252Fuploads%252Fimages%252Fman-small.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Faffordablehousinginstitute.org%252Fblogs%252Fus%252F2008%252F08%252Fdonors-as-scaffolding-part-2-the-value-of-)

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Writing Intense

Writing Intense was an internal publication focused on displaying student work from WI courses and prior issues primarily featured student work. Since 2013, the focus has shifted and this publication is geared toward assisting BMCC instructors who are teaching WI courses. We want to engage faculty in dialogue about how they are and how they could be using WAC principles in the classroom.

Perspectives on Scaffolding

For this issue we chose *scaffolded writing*, which in the simplest terms are guided assignments that are given in stages. We often hear that writing is a process, and faculty can directly influence how this process takes shape. Through scaffolding, faculty can guide not only students' writing, but also their thinking about writing. Faculty can help students to hone the skills necessary to produce their best works, which may greatly improve faculty outlook on students, and reduce grumpy feelings during grading. We are happy to begin the dialogue.

The structure of this issue is as follows: First, each of us (the authors of this issue) explore *scaffolded writing* from our personal perspectives, both as students and teachers. Then, we display some scaffolded assignments from BMCC faculty. Next, we provide two BMCC students' scaffolded work. Finally, we hope to generate new ideas about *scaffolded writing*.

Scaffolded writing has many definitions. Often, *scaffolded writing* is described as a teaching tool where a series of smaller tasks lead to the completion of a greater task. Creating scaffolds is based on developmental psychologist, Lev Vygotsky's idea of *the zone of proximal development*, which is where development is the space between the student's level of independent performance and the student's level of maximally assisted performance (see

Bodrova & Leong, 1996¹; Vygotsky, 1978²). Scaffolding is a “a step-by-step process that provides the learner with sufficient guidelines until the process is learned and then gradually removes the supports in order to transfer the responsibility for completing the task to the student (Vernon, 2001:3).” The term “scaffolding” was coined by psychologist Jerome Bruner and he emphasized that scaffolds are not designed to make tasks easier, but to enable students to perform the task without support (Bodrova & Leong, 1998). Essentially, the new skill is learned with maximal teacher assistance and later when these supports are removed, the student will be able to independently perform the skill and apply it to novel problems, thereby propelling students forward in their development.

Since Bruner, there have been many pedagogical works on *scaffolded writing*. Much like any construct, teacher perspectives on *scaffolded writing* are subjective. Right now you probably have a clear idea of what you think it is and may even be recalling particular scaffolded assignments that you have used in your teaching practice over the years. This issue of *Writing Intense* will embrace the idea that the concept of scaffolded assignments should be derived from multiple perspectives.

¹ Bodrova, E., and D. Leong. (1996). *Tools of the mind: The Vygotskian approach to early childhood education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ:Prentice-Hall, Inc.

² Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Assignments Made Easier: Thinking like a Student

by **Jin Chang**

As an undergraduate, I had an experience that I am certain most of you have also had. Toward the end of the semester, my professors would remind their classes that a long paper was due at the end of the term. These reminders were sometimes accompanied by the words, “Come see me during my office hours if you have any problems coming up with a topic.” Little specification was given of the term paper besides the requirement that it reflect some topic that had been covered during the semester, the acceptable length, and the due date.

From a student’s perspective, the presentation of these assignments is probably directly responsible for the way that I fulfilled them – late at night the day before they were due, without any thought of revision, and in a state of unbroken anxiety that something, anything, be finished before class. Having now been on the other side and having graded papers that had probably been written the day before they were due, I know it can be as frustrating to read a stack of badly conceived and poorly executed papers as it is to write one. In many cases the writing done in response to the student writing is simply a way to justify a grade. In both cases it feels like a waste of time, a torturous exercise meant to fulfill some bizarre and pointless bureaucratic desiderata.

Much of the frustration felt by students and faculty over these kind of assignments could be avoided by a different format for assignments, one that worked cumulatively to engage students over a stretch of time and to offer the possibility of alerting professors and instructors earlier on in the writing process of weaknesses in their students’ thinking and writing.

Scaffolding is the technique by which an assignment is broken up into smaller assignments that cover the skills or parts leading up to a larger project. By being broken up, the assignment forces students to engage with their project for more than one night. By receiving small sections of work, instructors and professors have the possibility of making a meaningful intervention in a student's work. Below is a (fictitious) example of a high stakes writing assignment in need of scaffolding.

Example:

Kafka's story "The Metamorphosis" deals with the inexplicable transformation of a man into a bug. Because the story offers no explanation for Gregor Samsa's transformation, it is up to the reader to find a reason for it. Write an essay analyzing the causes for the transformation from the perspective of a historical, philosophical, existential, psychological, and/or biographical context. Use at least three pieces of secondary literature. The paper should be five to seven pages long, in Times New Roman 12 point font, and must MLA style citation. The paper is due on April 7.

Even a cursory look at the assignment above shows how confusing it would be to students.

Information about the essay question is combined with information about essay mechanics. The question itself is misleadingly posed, in that a student might think she is to write on historical, philosophical, existential, psychological, *and* biographical contexts. More than that, the assignment calls for a number of skills that the student might not recognize she is being called on to exercise. Again, the question being asked is essentially simple, but what is needed to produce an essay meeting the assignment's requirements might, for the average student, not be. A student would need to know:

1. how to articulate a thesis
2. how to do research and how to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable sources
3. how to integrate quotations and paraphrases
4. how to use citation styles (in this case, MLA)

These besides the skills that the student is assumed to have:

5. analytic reading to understand the primary text
6. critical thinking to develop her own topic
7. organizing evidence to support her argument

A high-stakes paper at the end of the semester without preparatory work to introduce students to the requisite skills and practice to exercise them is setting up too many students for failure and a depressing sense that they just aren't good at writing. Below are low-stakes assignments for the example above designed to support students in thinking through and writing their final papers. Accompanying each possible assignment is a discussion of its advantages.

Possible low-stakes assignments:

Step 1: Response paper 1 – Why is Gregor Samsa transformed into a bug?

[The response paper could be a journal entry or an in-class free-write. In addition to setting up the problem that will be the focus of their essay and giving students the opportunity to begin to articulate their thoughts, it is an effective way to promote class discussion. Because this is a low-stakes assignment, the professor or instructor would not have much grading beyond a check,

check minus, or check plus. If this assignment were done as an in-class free-write, there would be no additional grading and would require no more than ten minutes of class time.]

Step 2: Library research trip – Find a critical reading on *The Metamorphosis* examining Gregor Samsa’s transformation.

[A guided research assignment will ensure that students engage with the question and the skills required to write the essay.]

Step 3: Response paper 2 – In what ways did the two critical reading that you found on *The Metamorphosis* agree with your reading (draw from response paper 1)? In what ways did it disagree?

[The cumulative nature of the assignments decreases the likelihood of plagiarism and allows students to build on work they have done. Part of the goal in scaffolding an assignment is to transform work done in order to meet a syllabus requirement into work that contributes to a larger project.]

Step 4: Response paper 3 – Reflect on your original assessment of Gregor Samsa’s transformation. What is your explanation now of his transformation? Support your position with quotations from the text using MLA in-text citation. Include a Works Cited page.

[If the final assignment calls for research, students should be given the chance to exercise their use of quotations and citation styles.]

Step 5: Paper topic proposal (one paragraph) and annotated bibliography

[The proposal gives professors and instructors the ability to make a meaningful and timely intervention if a student is struggling with the assignment. It also forces students to begin thinking about the essay before the night before it is due.]

Step 6: First draft

[The problem of reading and responding adequately to a stack of essays seems needlessly multiplied by requiring revision. However, no one spontaneously writes a good essay. If the time necessary to respond to student writing is a concern, a guided peer review offers at least some feedback to the students, as well as the opportunity for students to see what their peers are writing. It also forces students to take time to think about what they have written – a key step in writing that is often not given any thought if a student is presented with one deadline. As an additional benefit, scaffolding obviates the need to write justifications for final grades on high-stakes papers – students will have already received feedback on the strengths or weaknesses of their arguments, research, topics, etc. by the time they receive the final grade.]

Scaffolding an assignment offers students the chance to practice skills and think through the class materials in a cumulative and organic process. Oftentimes students' frustration with assignments stems from the view that pointless busywork is being asked of them. By structuring assignments to build on previous assignments and to later be incorporated into a larger project, scaffolding can reduce that frustration as well as provide a cohesive framework for thinking through course content. What must be kept in mind is that scaffolding is not additional work, but a rethinking of the work that is already called for.

Scaffolding outside the Box

by: Amber Horning

Through my experience as a WAC fellow at BMCC, I became familiar with many WAC principles such as *scaffolded writing*. My first impression of *scaffolded writing* assignments was that they were more traditional assignments. Typically, teachers use scaffolding to guide students to ultimately complete a final paper. For example, the parts of a larger assignment are 1) brainstorm 2) outline 3) annotated bibliography 4) introduction 5) literature review 6) analysis and 7) conclusion. This technique of assignments in stages ensures that students are on the right track early in the semester, it teaches them the importance of each stage in the writing process and provides them with support. While traditional forms of *scaffolded writing* are useful, I began to conceptualize scaffolding in more non-traditional and even experimental ways.

Even if we think about brainstorming (the first stage of the traditional form of scaffolding), this stage could take many forms. For instance, we may take for granted the ease that we have in choosing paper ideas. Many students struggle with choice and the process may require more than brainstorming. For instance, students may write reaction papers to readings in order to generate paper ideas. In my criminology and sociology courses, I place students into groups based on similar interests where mid-semester they present on a general topic such as white collar crime or LGBTQ youth. In a group, they are able to help one another with ideas and share references. While traditional scaffolding calls for maximal teacher support, this may be combined with student to student support, which may bolster skills and improve their solo performances. Ultimately, students are able to focus their own ideas and generally they write very different papers.

Scaffolded work can also take more experimental forms. I teach a social deviance course and students must learn principles like understanding how deviance is constructed and how people who are labeled as deviant experience stigma. Their first assignment is to either conduct a social experiment or to interview someone who is labeled as “deviant.” I give them an option because some students are shy about the public performance involved in a social experiment. One of my male students walked around New York City for one day wearing high heels to understand how people reacted to this ‘deviant act,’ that is, to see if he was labeled and socially policed. He understood what it felt like to violate gender norms. Another student chose to interview a former gang member to see how he constructed this ‘deviant’ lifestyle. This initial project situates the students in a more intimate way to the overall concepts of the course by understanding social deviance first hand or through a fieldwork interview. This assignment provides scaffolding for the final paper, which involves a more in depth framework and often a more intensive fieldwork interview. This initial smaller assignment is not necessarily a piece of the final assignment, but allows students to approach the final assignment with a deeper understanding of concepts, and therefore with greater ease.

Students may also be asked to engage in interactive exercises in class such as debates, skits, mock interviews etc. For instance, I have my students create questions that they want to use for their final projects. However, interviewing is more difficult than it seems and practice is crucial for perfecting questions, learning how to use effective probes and developing a more natural style. I pair students with similar projects and have them practice the interviews with one another. I have a few groups go in front of the class and demonstrate so that the entire class can analyze the flow of the interaction. In-class performance can provide more hands-on learning for students and make them ready for real world assignments.

I think it is important that we begin to think of innovative ways of scaffolding assignments. Scaffolding does not always have to involve writing, but may be approached using other mediums such as thinking, experiencing, interacting etc. I used a few examples from my own teaching practice to show how I conceptualized non-traditional scaffolding. There are many other tools that may be used in scaffolded assignments such as physical or thought exercises, journaling, gaming, blogging etc. and I encourage all teachers to think outside of the box in their use of scaffolding.

Scaffolding: A Cure for Professional Procrastination?

By: Bernadette Ludwig

I admit I am the queen of procrastination. Although I really dislike how stressed I am minutes before a deadline, I have not been able to conquer procrastination. Being a graduate student and teaching between two and four classes at different schools per semester I have had to deal with quite a number of deadlines. As a PhD candidate I am now in the process of writing chapters for my dissertation and articles for journals, books, and conferences. The dissertation alone is such a daunting project. Unlike a research paper it is so much longer and requires more dedication and time commitment. But while I stress about my dissertation, I also dread midterms and finals times. Then most assignments are due and many students, in a desperate attempt, also turn in any additional work they have failed to submit when it was due earlier in the semester. Part of this I recognize is self-made. What I mean by this is prior to being a writing fellow at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), I never had heard about scaffolded assignments. But now it seems to be a cure for at least some of my own, but also my students', procrastination.

Recognizing that most students struggle with deadlines like I do scaffolding is an excellent way to provide mini-deadlines during the semester. This strategy allows for the students to breakdown the assignment into more manageable portions and also helps them keep on track with the task. Ultimately they avoid writing a term/research paper in the final hours before it is due. Another advantage to scaffolding assignments is that it allows students to earn multiple grades throughout the semester. For example, my students obtain a grade for their individual sections, outline, their research section, their first draft and their final paper. This way the students themselves also know where they stand in the class and the final grade is not a total surprise to them.

At the same time I as an instructor also benefit from scaffolded assignments. Most instructors do not look forward to grading assignments. It is time consuming and can often be repetitive—especially if you have 30 or more students. In addition, reading long papers can sometimes can be (very) depressing, when we notice the students did not follow the instructions, did not proofread their work, had no idea how to cite, etc. Before I started to incorporate scaffolded assignments in my syllabi, I dreaded the idea of a stack of papers that needed to be dealt with. I approached it just like writing and other tasks; I procrastinated, grading it minutes before I had to return the work to the students. Scaffolding assignments have provided a cure to that.

First, I have shorter assignments to read and grade. So, I no longer spend a week of agony thinking of the task ahead and then a last minute rush to get it done. It should also be noted, that not all assignments need to be graded. For example, for an outline a simple check (done/not done) is often sufficient. Incorporating peer review is another way to reduce the grading load while at the same time engaging students.

Second, because I am asking students to hand in parts of the final project, outlines, and/or drafts over the course of the semester the amount of time spent grading is spread more equally over the semester and I am not bogged down at the end of the semester. At that point I receive the final project, I already have some idea what to expect, and by giving regularly feedback I ensured that the students followed the instructions.

Third, I can see where the students are with their work. It allows me to check if they are following the instructions. If they are not, I can intervene and give suggestions on how to make changes. For example, in one class I had students put together background information on a specific country from which the U.S. currently resettles refugees. While most of the students cited books, journals, and credible web sources, others listed Wikipedia as their only source. At this point I informed the students that Wikipedia is not an acceptable source for a research paper. Had this not been a scaffolded assignment, I would have received an entire term paper that lacked proper sources. Being able to guide students in the process therefore leads to better papers. As an instructor you can provide feedback as they go about their assignment which makes grading at the end of the semester a less gruesome task.

To conclude, learning about scaffolding has been a great blessing for me as an instructor and as a student. As an instructor I am able to provide continuous feedback to the students and also make sure they are handing in the work. In addition, I have made the task of reading and grading papers more productive and enjoyable. As a writer myself I have learned different techniques to break down my own dissertation into smaller more manageable pieces and thus have been moving closer to the defense.

Scaffolding on the ground

BMCC professors: Scaffolding on the ground

(Examples of BMCC Professors' Scaffolded Assignments)

Example 1

Department of English

Professor Francesco Crocco

The Neighborhood Project

Due Dates:

Date: Complete the Research Worksheet in the computer lab

Date: Submit a first draft of the essay

Date: Mock up an outline version of your power point presentation in the computer lab

Date: Deliver your presentation to the class and submit your final essay

I. Assignment

- Form groups of three and pick a New York City neighborhood.** *It cannot be one in which a group member currently lives.* Go to <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/neighbor/neigh.shtml> for a map and complete listing of NYC neighborhoods.
- Prepare a 15-minute group presentation on the neighborhood in which each presenter speaks for 5 minutes.** Go to <http://bmcceng095.wordpress.com/neighborhood-project/> for helpful resources.
 - DESCRIBE** the neighborhood. Focus on aspects of the neighborhood that make it unique or interesting, such as the local people (culture, class, ethnicity, etc.), food, entertainment, tourist attractions, and industries. Some of this research can be done online (for instance, if there is a website, blog, or wiki about the neighborhood). But it will probably also require taking field trips to the area for pictures, video, and interviews with locals.
 - NARRATE** the history of the neighborhood. When was it founded? By whom? How did it develop? Highlight important people who lived there and important events that occurred there. Focus on the most interesting parts of its history. Use libraries and the internet to do this research.
 - ARGUE** a position on a major issue currently facing the neighborhood. This part will be set up like a CATW essay. You will (1) find one or more articles (online or in newspapers and magazines) that discuss a problem facing the community, and then (2) write a CATW-style essay that (a) summarizes the article(s) and (b) develops a position on the issue.
- Write up the Argument section as a 1-2 page typed CATW-style essay and submit a final draft on the day of the presentation**

II. Tips

1. Decide what to do together and what to do individually.
2. Space out the work so that it doesn't all pile up at the end. Do research early, schedule trips now, and make time to write multiple drafts of the CATW-style argument essay.
3. Use multi-media whenever possible because it makes your presentation more interesting. This includes pictures, posters, slideshows, videos, music, even food! For instance, you might show a narrated video tour, show a power point slideshow, or play music from the local culture.

III. Grading

1. On the day of the presentation, groups will rate each other using a scale from 1-5 for each category below:
 - a. Quality of Information
 - b. Quality of Delivery
 - c. Persuasiveness of Argument
 - d. Group Coordination
2. The professor will average the scores and divide by two to determine a final score from 2-10. This number = the number of Homework points each group member will receive for the presentation.
3. The group with the highest final score will receive an additional 5 Bonus points per member.
4. The CATW essay will be collected and graded by the professor. A passing essay will earn the group 10 Test points; a failing essay will earn them 5 Test points.
5. The total point value for this project will range from 7 points to 25 points.
6. Late presentations will lose 5 points and groups that fail to present and/or turn in the essay will lose 5 points from their total points for the class.

Example 2

Sociology Department

Professor Elizabeth Miller

Neighborhood Portfolio

For this project, you will be applying what we learned in class to everyday, tangible life in New York City. You will be comparing and contrasting two New York City neighborhoods. The aim of this paper is to use the knowledge you have accumulated (your sociological imagination) to understand and explain why similarities and differences exist between the two neighborhoods through quantitative and ethnographic research.

Quantitative data on New York City neighborhoods can be gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau (visit <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>). Please see the visual directions on blackboard if you missed class on the day we discuss how to collect statistical data, or if you have forgotten.

Collect data on the two following categories, plus five or more statistical categories that you find to be relevant. Be sure to convert raw numbers into percentages (see the visual directions on blackboard if you don't know how to do this):

- Two largest racial/ethnic groups
- Median household income

Then collect the same information for the second neighborhood.

Next is the qualitative part. Go to each neighborhood, make observations, and find out more information that the data couldn't tell you. For example, you could make note of the following:

- The ethnic or racial groups appear to be living in the neighborhood (based on languages you hear spoken or displayed on signage, presence of flags or other ethnic/national symbols, services being provided, etc.)
- Religious groups which are represented (houses of worship, stores with religious significance, like botanicas or kosher establishments)
- Educational facilities (public vs. private schools, institutions of higher education, trade schools, driving schools, beauty schools, etc.)
- Gender roles (presence of nannies vs. stay-at-home moms, modes of dress, interaction between men and women, etc.)
- Family structure (parents with many children, grandparents accompanying children, same-sex couples, etc.)
- Housing stock and the condition of the streets, sidewalks, subway stations/bus stops
- Presence of police and military recruitment
- Community or cultural institutions
- The foods or other amenities available in stores and on the street (ethnic products, quality of produce, health food vs. junk food, etc.)

There are numerous aspects of neighborhoods that you can examine and compare and your questions should not stop at what I have suggested. Every neighborhood is unique, so you will find other things not listed here that you find to be sociologically telling of the neighborhood which you should also include. Think critically and make some inferences with the information that you gather. Also, you might find it helpful, insightful, and interesting to speak with people who live or work in the neighborhood, so if you have questions that can't be answered through observation alone, ask someone! Most people are happy to talk about their neighborhood.

Keep in mind that you are both comparing and contrasting, so what is similar about these neighborhoods, and what is different? Why?

Most importantly, your paper must include **reference to material we have covered in class and in readings**. Apply what you have learned to everyday life in New York City. For example, if you find that there are stark differences in the housing values or upkeep of the streets in your neighborhoods, use your sociological knowledge to explain why that may be the case. Are the people in one neighborhood wealthier and, thus, could afford higher rents or more expensive apartments? Why would the city clean the streets more thoroughly in one place than another? In other words, what sociological explanations can you find that account for these differences and how do they impact the lives of the people in the neighborhood?

The paper you write should be 5 full pages long (double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins). In addition, it is not required, but feel free to also turn whatever additional materials you find that may be relevant to your neighborhood comparison (i.e. newspapers, pamphlets, or photos—photos must be your own, not copied from the internet).

Aside from the statistical data, this paper is entirely self-generated. There is no reason to search online for information about your neighborhoods, nor should you. If you feel as though you must include an outside source (which is unnecessary for this project, with the exception of the statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau), you must cite it properly within the body of your paper and include a bibliography with the source at the end. Plagiarism of any kind, including fragments of sentences that are the work of an author other than yourself, will result in a zero (0) for the paper.

This assignment is designed to be a fun way of earning a grade, so pick a neighborhood that is of interest to you and enjoy yourself.

Students Giving it a Try

(An Example of a BMCC Student's Scaffolded Work)

Marlene Almanzar

Professor Miller

SOC 100-912

Proposal: Part 1

The two neighborhoods I've decided to use for my Neighborhood Portfolio are Saint Marks Place and the Upper West Side (Columbia University). I decided to analyze these two locations, because they both attract a diverse group of people and I feel as though these areas are constantly changing. Whether the changes are caused by the various groups of people, events that take place, different stores, restaurants, etc., I think it would be great to see the similarities and differences between these two locations.

I expect to find very opinionated people, different groups of people, interactions between all kinds of people, various social behaviors, range in age groups, etc. I also expect to see more college students or teenagers than adults or younger children because I feel that these locations are more oriented towards the youth no matter what time or day it may be. Saint Marks Place is filled with various stores, food spots, and hidden night scene locations that no one really knows about. I believe this makes the neighborhood an interesting place to venture around in. On the Upper West Side, primarily the Columbia University location on 116th and Broadway, there is a vast majority of people ranging anywhere from young children to senior citizens, all there for different purposes. I would love to get to know both these areas a lot better than I do now, and learn more by studying the people that constantly surround and shape these locations.

Marlene Almanzar

Professor Miller

March 7, 2013

SOC 100-912

Part 2: Descriptive Statistics

In my proposal, I stated the two neighborhoods I wanted to observe for my Neighborhood Portfolio. I chose Saint Marks Place which is located near the Lower East Side (L.E.S), and Morningside Heights surrounding the Columbia University area on 116th street and Broadway. I

suspected that I would find a diverse group of people ranging from different age groups, cultures, and behaviors. I also stated that I had predicted to find a larger number of college students or teenagers compared to adults or younger children. After conducting some research using the U.S. Census Bureau website, I was able to find out a lot more about these two neighborhoods that I would not have known just by observing the people and places nearby. Through my research, I was able to validate and backup some of my previous assumptions/ expectations of these neighborhoods.

I decided to focus on the aspect of education, because in both neighborhoods there are a vast number of different schools ranging from pre-schools to graduate schools. One thing these two neighborhoods had in common was the high number of students enrolled in school starting from kindergarten all the way to graduate school. The only difference I noticed in this category was when the school was either public or private. It seems as though both neighborhoods had a high number of enrolled students in private schools (Morningside Heights exceeding the L.E.S.), then those compared to the public schools. I got a little curious as to why the number of enrolled students was so high in private but not public, this led me towards the economic and social characteristics of my research. The economic factors for Morningside Heights showed that 19.6% of a total household's income was less than \$10,000 while 12.9% were in the \$100,000-\$149,999 range. When compared to the household income of Saint Marks Place, 13% is less than \$10,000 while 16% were ranging from \$50,000- 74,999. I then considered the social characteristics and noticed that Saint Marks Place has 79.1% students enrolled in college/graduate school, while 89.6% were enrolled in Morningside Heights. These percentages showed me that, the comparison of these two contributing factors, had an effect on whether or not a child receives a certain kind of education, despite the variety and availability of various education centers.

My research has led me to believe that there is much more than just the city, people, and locations that make these neighborhoods what they are today. There are many different factors that shape our communities and influence our ways of viewing the world around us. I hope to continue learning more about these two neighborhoods, and develop new or different ways of viewing them.

Part Three: Field Notes

In my neighborhoods, Morningside Heights and Saint Marks Place, I had previously assumed that there would be a diverse group of people, because of the amenities in the area which attract a younger audience. When I went and observed both locations I noticed a few things that proved my assumption to be correct and incorrect. In terms of the location, Saint Marks Place is surrounded by various kinds of restaurants and food joints, which bring together a variety of crowds. Around the Morningside Heights area, it was about the same but more focused

towards families of different sizes, young folk to old folks, etc.

During my observation in Morningside Heights, I noticed that there were many schools all within walking distance from each other or short bus and train rides away. The Manhattan School of Music is a couple of blocks away from Barnard College, which is across the street from Columbia University. I decided to go further down and noticed Bank Street College and School of Education which has children as well as adults learning in the same building. I thought it was great to see all of these people with different purposes all in the same area. There were establishments such as restaurants, delis, pharmacies, etc. all along the same route. This showed me that it was indeed a diverse community that ranged in various aspects. Also from my statistical findings, I did notice the ethnic percentage to prove somewhat true. Morningside Heights is 67% White and 21% Asian. I noticed this more along the Columbia University region rather than further uptown, where I noticed more Hispanic and Black residents which didn't make a very big percentage.

My observation in Saint Marks Place showed similar yet different results than those of Morningside Heights. There were young teens and young adults everywhere I looked, along with quite a few elderly passerbys and adults. In the Saint Marks Area, there are many cheap food spots that students like to indulge in as well as a few adults. Surrounding this, are restaurants, bars, small shops, theaters, etc. which bring about a wide range of people to the area, resulting in such a busy and active community. I didn't notice many children or families walking together or about the streets while I observed, just a lot of students, young adults, and working adults getting by and trying to get to their location.

Overall, I enjoyed doing this observation. I was able to really look at my surroundings and pay attention to the people and places that make up both communities. This changed the way I see and interpret things around me. Instead of automatically assuming something just by what I see, it's good to actually take the time and found out what you can about the places you've been.

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Professor Miller

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Final Draft

If someone were to ask you for a few facts about your neighborhood, would you be able to inform them? In a society where everything is constantly changing, it's always best to observe and learn more about our surroundings. The two neighborhoods I decided to use for my Neighborhood Portfolio were Saint Marks Place and the Morningside Heights. I decided to analyze these two locations, because they both attract a diverse group of people and I feel as though these areas are constantly changing. Whether the changes are caused by the various groups of people, events that take place, different stores, restaurants, etc., I thought it would be great to see the similarities and differences between these two locations. I had expected to find a diverse grouping and interactions between all kinds of people, various social behaviors, range in age groups, etc. I also expected to see more college students and teenagers than adults or younger children, because I feel that these locations are more oriented towards the youth no matter what time or day it may be. I soon realized that Saint Marks Place is filled with various stores, food spots, and hidden night scene locations that no one really knows about. It was because of this, that led me to believe that the diversity of makes this neighborhood makes it an interesting place to venture around in and learn about. In Morningside Heights, there is a vast majority of people ranging anywhere from young children to senior citizens, all there for different purposes. By observing the people and researching information about these neighborhoods, I learned so much more about these two areas than I had expected.

After conducting some research using the U.S. Census Bureau website, I was able to find a lot of interesting facts about these two neighborhoods that I would not have known just by observing the people and places nearby. Through my research, I was able to validate and backup some of my previous assumptions/ expectations of these neighborhoods.

I decided to focus on the aspect of education, because in both neighborhoods there are a vast number of different schools ranging from pre-schools to graduate schools. One thing that these two neighborhoods had in common, was the high number of students enrolled in school starting from kindergarten all the way to graduate school. The only difference I noticed in this category was when the school was either public or private. It seems as though both neighborhoods had a high number of enrolled students in private schools (Morningside Heights exceeding the L.E.S.), then those attending public schools. What these two neighborhoods also had in common was their ethnicity/ race. Both neighborhoods are heavily White and Asian populated. Saint Marks Place's ethnic percentage is 70.5% White and 18.7% Asian, while Morningside Heights is 67% White and 21% Asian. This is something I would've never known, since I expected this location to bring together different kinds of people, it was safe to assume that the population would be diverse as well.

I got a little curious as to why the number of enrolled students was so high in private but not public, this led me towards the economic and social characteristics of my research. The economic factors for Morningside Heights showed that 19.6% of a total household's income was less than \$10,000 while 12.9% were in the \$100,000- \$149,999 range. When compared to the household income of Saint Marks Place, 13% is less than \$10,000 while 16% were ranging from \$50,000- 74,999. I then considered the social characteristics and noticed that Saint Marks Place has 79.1% students enrolled in college/ graduate school, while 89.6% were enrolled in Morningside Heights. I then took the demographics/ housing estimates into consideration and noticed that, Saint Marks Place has a slightly higher percentage in the 24 to 34 age range (32.5%) than that of Morningside Heights (23.1%). These percentages showed me that, the

comparison of these two contributing factors, had an effect on whether or not a child receives a certain kind of education, despite the variety and availability of various education centers.

When I went and observed both locations I noticed a few things that proved my assumptions to be correct and incorrect. In terms of the location, Saint Marks Place is surrounded by various kinds of restaurants and food joints, which bring together a variety of crowds. Around the Morningside Heights area, it was about the same but more focused towards families of different sizes, young folk to old folks, etc.

During my observation in Morningside Heights, there were many schools all within walking distance from each other or short bus and train rides away. The Manhattan School of Music is a couple of blocks away from Barnard College, which is across the street from Columbia University. I decided to go further downtown and noticed Bank Street College and School of Education which has children as well as adults learning in the same building. I thought it was great to see all of these people with different purposes all in the same area, it showed the diversity amongst ages and people. There were also establishments such as restaurants, delis, pharmacies, etc. all along the same route. This showed me that it was indeed a diverse community that ranged in various aspects. Also from my statistical findings, I did notice the ethnic percentage to prove somewhat true. Morningside Heights is 67% White and 21% Asian. I noticed this more along the Columbia University region rather than further uptown, where I noticed more Hispanic and Black residents which didn't make a very big percentage.

My observation in Saint Marks Place showed similar yet different results than those of Morningside Heights. There were young teens and young adults everywhere I looked, along with quite a few elderly folks and adults. In the Saint Marks Area, there are many cheap food spots

that students like to indulge in as well as a few adults. Surrounding this, are restaurants, bars, small shops, theaters, etc. which bring about a wide range of people to the area, resulting in such a busy and active community. For example, TKettle is a popular bubble tea location for the young audience, Mamoun's Falafel Restaurant had a range of customers entering and exiting, 2 Bros Pizza was a "hot spot" from high school students to men in suits and ties, and my personal favorite called Pommes Frites. This location offers decadent French fries, served in a cone shape container offering tons of palette friendly dips. I didn't notice many children or families walking together or about the streets while I observed, just a lot of students, young adults, and working adults getting by and trying to get to their location.

I had also noticed that in Morningside Heights there were a number of establishments that weren't common in the Saint Marks area. Places such as bodegas, delis, hair salons, weren't very common in this area you were more likely to see stores like Duane Reade, Walgreens, sandwich shops, high end hair salons, and just overall more expensive or "high end" places. I believed this to be apparent because of the location and attraction to these locations. Downtown is seen as a more tourist attracted spot compared to the scene in neighborhoods located uptown. More attention is put into making these more popular locations look better, then compared to other locations where there might not be much to catch the non-native New Yorkers eye.

I was able to really look at my surroundings and pay attention to the people and places that make up both communities. This changed the way I see and interpret things around me. Instead of automatically assuming something just by what I see, it's good to actually take the time and found out what you can about the places you've been. My research has led me to believe that there is much more than just the city, people, and locations that make these

neighborhoods what they are today. There are many different factors that shape our communities and influence our ways of viewing the world around us.

WAC Website

If you are interested in participating in WAC training or WAC refresher courses, please see our website: http://socrates.bmcc.cuny.edu/wac/WAC_at_BMCC/Home.html