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Student-Centered Pedagogy and Real-World Research: Using Documents as
Sources of Data in Teaching Social Science Skills and Methods.

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ABSTRACT

This teaching note describes the design and implementation of an activity in a 90-minute teaching session that was developed to introduce a diverse cohort of first year criminology and sociology students to the use of documents as sources of data. This approach was contextualised in real world research through scaffolded, student-centered tasks focused on archival material and a contemporary estate agents' brochure so as to investigate changes in the suburbs that surround a university in North London, United Kingdom. In order to contribute to the growing discussion on pedagogic dialogical spaces in teaching research methods, we provide empirical evidence of students' greater engagement via group work and the opportunity to draw on experiential knowledge in analysing sources. Beyond stimulating students' engagement with research skills and methods, the data also shows the value of our approach in helping students to develop their analytical skills, particularly through a process of comparison and contrast.

KEYWORDS

student-centered pedagogy; real-world research; documents as sources of data; analytical skills; students' engagement

INTRODUCTION

Skills and research methods modules are a core component of undergraduate Sociology courses, and play a central and obvious role in the acquisition of transferable skills and capabilities. This contrasts, however, with the marginal position of the teaching and learning of research methods and the ways in which this is done (Nind, Kilburn and Luff 2015). Kilburn, Nind and Wiles (2014: 194) argue that “[p]roviding learners at all stages of their academic careers with a practical understanding of a

diverse range of methodological approaches together with knowledge of their epistemological foundations presents considerable pedagogical challenges”. One of the key challenges is ensuring that students have the requisite analytical skills to interpret qualitative and quantitative data. This is made even more difficult when students often fail to see how the course is relevant, become anxious or nervous and demonstrate lack of interest, poor attitudes or misconceptions about research (Earley, 2014).

This paper is part of a broader pedagogic effort to address some of the challenges mentioned above. The following case study discusses and evaluates a teaching activity which constituted a single 90 minute session taught in a first year core module for undergraduate students studying sociology and criminology in a university in London, United Kingdom. The module entitled “Researching the City” introduces students to the study and practice of research skills and methods in ways which are intended to be relevant and meaningful to them by using the city as methodological trope.

In order to investigate the city in this session, we drew on contemporary documents and on material from local archives. In sociology, documents used as secondary sources of data present a number of methodological advantages (Bryman, 2012). More specifically in relation to “Researching the City”, Ward (2014:24) points out that “[a]n immense amount of source material for research about cities exist in archives”. The availability of archives in universities, as well as locally and nationally, offers a unique repository of useful documents for sociology courses and constitutes rich pedagogical material presenting a number of educational opportunities (Koevoets and de Jong, 2013). The work of Mar Pereira on “Using Archives to Teach Gender” is particularly exemplary of this kind of approach (<http://gender-archives.leeds.ac.uk/>). In our teaching, we also benefited greatly from the current view by archivists that “Primary source materials are increasingly being thought of as curricular resources (...)” (Carini 2009: 41). Some of the key points raised in this teaching note should be relevant to colleagues who wish to explore the use of sources from local archives, alongside contemporary sources, in order to develop their students’ analytical skills and their nascent understanding of research methods.

The activity which we describe focused specifically on introducing our students to the use of both archival and documents as sources of data in research methods as well as developing their analytical skills. Since our students were novices in their sociological understanding, we did not expect them to select and gather their own sources of documentation for research; instead, we concentrated on devising a series of student-centered, activity-based tasks relating to sources of documentation which we provided and which would engage them in collaborative group work. Wagner, Garner and Kawulich (2010) review current literature about teaching research methods in the social sciences, and describe one particular pedagogic model as being based on research as a process of knowledge construction, in which the aim is to engage students directly in research (Zamorski 2002). Proponents of this model for teaching research advocate a range of approaches including exercises, problem-based learning, experiential learning and collaborative pair or group work (Earley, 2014; see Spronken-Smith, 2005 for an example of problem-based learning; Benson and Blackman, 2003).

Our main objective in year one is to encourage the development of a sociological imagination while building up sociological skills in order to enable our students to begin to develop the ‘dispositions of a social scientist “whereby the student becomes a person who knows and understands specific content, which is applied to lives and society, (...)” (McLean, Abbas and Ashwin, 2013: 32). Although students are in some cases asked to collect data, in research methods teaching we particularly focus on data analysis skills and therefore generally provide them with qualitative and quantitative datasets to be analysed. Our intention is to consolidate analytical skills before students are asked to collect data in a systematic manner in year two and three for the purpose of an assessment, so that they understand how analysis and collection are intrinsically related and should be understood in conjunction with one another and in relation to ethical issues (Matthews and Ross, 2010). Concentrating on analytical skills in year one is also deemed to be essential to our curriculum design as we work with a diverse cohort of students, many of whom require a number of remedial skills that need to be consolidated.

PEDAGOGIC APPROACH

The tasks we developed invited students to investigate the ‘suburbs of the past’ and ‘the suburbs of today’ using estate agents’ brochures from archives from MoDA (Museum of Domestic Architecture), which were then contrasted with the brochure advertising the housing development in the vicinity of the university. The Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA) is based at Middlesex University in London, the collections of which include wallpapers, textiles, designs, books, catalogues and magazines from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, focusing on the history of domestic interiorsⁱ. We were not only given access to the collection, but support for copies of the primary materials in the classroom. Students were introduced to this material in a lecture on ‘Documents as Sources of Data’, which was in part delivered by one of the archivists who talked about her work and the purpose of an archive. While our pedagogy focused specifically on the use of archival and secondary sources in research methods, it was also designed to respond to the additional challenge of mobilising an effective pedagogy in a context where students are linguistically and culturally ‘super-diverse’ (Vertovec 2007). Information from the Student Record Office (2015; the year we undertook this evaluation) at our university records show that White students comprise 35 percent of the total student body, Black students 26 percent, Asian 25 percent, Arab 2 percent and Chinese 1 percent, and those describing themselves as mixed 6 percent, while 5 percent come under the unknown categoryⁱⁱ. In addition to the ethno-cultural diversity of our students, we were aware of their linguistic diversity. While no figures are available regarding the linguistic backgrounds of the students, informal gathering of data from a similar cohort (First year law students at the same university) identified thirty different languages being spoken by 32 students, many of whom were bilingual or trilingual. There is also a very wide range in students’ linguistic repertoires, including students who not only speak a number of different languages, but also a non-standard variety of English in their daily lives. Our student cohort was also diverse in terms of differing expectations and “levels of preparedness” for university study (Northedge, 2003: 17).

These challenges had implications in the way we designed our materials in that we wanted to ensure that students received sufficient support in coping with unfamiliar vocabulary or connotations imbued with socio-cultural notions. In designing these materials, we therefore drew on the notion of scaffolding (Hammond and Gibbons 2005; Sanders and Suggs 2005; Schunk 2014), arising from the work of Vygotsky (1978). Scaffolding is considered to be temporary assistance to and guidance of the learner, which is highly responsive to the learner's current understanding, but which enables the learner to move towards more independent learning. In our work, we applied this metaphor of scaffolding to design carefully sequenced tasks so that each one built incrementally on the previous one in order to facilitate student learning as a graduated series of stages, increasing in conceptual difficulty and challenge.

As such, and given the diversity of the students with whom we were working, it became apparent that a number of students were not familiar with the concepts of suburbia and the suburbs, and indeed, may have had entirely different understanding of these based on their own social and cultural backgrounds. The tasks we designed therefore needed to be cognisant of students' own understandings of suburbia while simultaneously introducing them to shared concepts of the suburbs as geographical entities, as well as to their socio-cultural distinctiveness in the Anglo-American model (Clapson, 2003). Although we see the importance of valuing students' lived experiences as a form of knowledge in the classroom, we also acknowledge the need to scaffold key disciplinary concepts (Harland 2003; Pea 2004).

CLASSROOM TASKS

The tasks we devised were delivered to 10 different seminar groups, each consisting of approximately 25 students, i.e. to a cohort of 250 students in total. As the seminars were delivered by 4 different staff members, we also provided teachers' notes for the tasks to ensure that our pedagogic intentions were transparent and that consistency was achieved in delivering the content. The tasks we describe below were subsequently followed by a fieldtrip where students worked on their ethnographic

observational skills using a multi-sensory approach (Pink, 2015), thereafter consolidating their initial reading of the changes taking place in a London suburb in the 21st century.

Before asking students to read the relevant texts for the seminar, we asked them to engage in a brainstorming task, designed to activate their understanding of the difference between the inner city and the suburbs (see Appendix Task 1). While such a task might seem very simple for university undergraduates, our aim was to unpack the highly divergent meanings that both locations might have for our heterogeneous group of students, in terms of their ethnic, linguistic and class backgrounds. We believe that such brainstorming tasks help to make explicit the tacit assumptions students may have regarding the content of archival material being examined so that these can then be interrogated and questioned.

We then made use of two main types of reading texts. The first one was the use of very short extracts from a book on suburban style in the British home (see Barrett and Phillips 1987, pp. 14 – 15), which pinpointed key socio-cultural features which influenced the design and architecture of homes built in the 1920s and 1930s. These included factors such as the need for smaller, more convenient houses that could be maintained easily without many servants, as well as the paradoxical inclusion of modern kitchens and bathrooms in mock-Tudor semi-detached houses, which otherwise aspired to be romantic and cottage-like. Our aim was to ensure that both the material manifestations of British suburbia, as well as its complex meanings in the national imagination, could be explicitly discussed with our students, many of whom may not have had the same underlying assumptions about the meaning of suburbia, and was thus a way of further bringing to the fore the tacit assumptions which were explicated in the brainstorming activity. We regard this approach as a form of scaffolding in that it enables students' views of suburbia to be explicitly acknowledged and then developed further by interrogating the shared notions of suburbia in the chosen texts. To make the classroom activities as interactive as possible, each student in a pair was given a different text to read, and then had to report back to their classmate in order to answer some basic comprehension questions. (See Appendix Task 2)

The next task made use of the actual brochures from 1930s estate agents (See Appendix Task 3). This archival material provides a unique insight into suburban expansion in London during the 1930's, and more specifically in North London. Since our aim was to allow students to explore contemporary issues, extracts from these brochures were contrasted with the extracts from the glossy promotional material produced by the developer of the large housing development being currently built in an area in close proximity to the University also situated in North London. Unlike the 1930s suburban estates of tree-lined street of detached or semi-detached houses, this development is constituted of high rise buildings and is exemplary of what could be described as vertical suburbs (Mace, 2013). Comparing archival material with contemporary documents which have the same purpose throws into relief the differences between historical periods and enables students to begin to evidence claims they can begin to make regarding these differences.

The task for our students was to extract the unique selling points from both brochures, to consider how the selling points for the housing in the two periods differed and to use these concrete details to reflect on any changes in society that could be construed from this (see Appendix Tasks 3 and 4). In addition, the students were asked to link these ideas to the more general meanings for suburbia considered at the start of the seminar in the brainstorming and reading activities. They were also to consider the value of using archives and secondary sources to gain data which could then be used to support particular claims which they might wish to make. A key objective of our activity was to highlight the value of secondary and archival resources in providing supporting evidence for particular sociological knowledge and theories. Such mining of authentic data from everyday cultural artifacts has been described by Upright (2015: 214) who used cover images from the magazine *TV Guide* between 1953 and 1997 with his students as “an opportunity to apply theoretical insights”.

Students worked on all the tasks previously mentioned in pairs or small groups before a plenary discussion on the key themes which arose. Following on from these specific classroom tasks and in order to evaluate them, students were asked to complete their reflective diaries in response to question

prompts (See Appendix Task 5). The reflective diaries for this session were part of an already existing process of assessment. Throughout the year and on weekly basis, students were asked to reflect on the different methods they were experiencing via their on-line diary. Our rationale for the use of reflective diaries relates to the importance of reflexivity in the discipline of sociology, which is widely discussed in pedagogy for sociology (see, for example, Davis and Robinson 2006; Rushe and Jason 2011). Furthermore, Hosein and Rao (2017) link “student-centered pedagogies” to the way students are assessed on research methods. In this respect, they argue for a reflexive approach that fosters students’ “research developmental process” so that they are able to reflect on research as “holistic and analytical” (Hosein and Rao, 2017: 4). To facilitate this, Hosein and Rao (2017) adopted the use of the reflexive essay in their teaching, and our intention was similar in asking students to complete a reflective diary throughout the year where they could engage with research as a process (Earley, 2009). In our case, the reflective diary was a form of private journal, read only by the module leader and the seminar tutors, and could thus be characterised as a “low-stakes reflective writing assignment” which, according to Foster (2015), enables a student to take more personal risks and engage in more emotional labour than the more public genre of a blog, typically read by peers.

EVALUATING THE ACTIVITY

Overall, we recognise the imperative to evaluate and assess innovative teaching materials in an empirical and systematic fashion (Wagner, Garner and Kawulich, 2011; Nind, Kilburn and Wiles, 2015; Benson and Blackman, 2003) in order to contribute to a pedagogical culture (Wagner et al., 2011; Kilburn et al., 2014; Nind, Kilburn and Wiles, 2014). Thus, in order to assess the students’ responses to our activities, we undertook a qualitative analysis of the relevant reflective diaries. We ourselves also undertook a reflective exercise, writing a diary after co-teaching some of the seminar groups. Reflective teaching is widely used by way of developing pedagogical knowledge (Nind et al, 2015) and in the development of “professional knowledge” (Loughran, 2002) but in this paper we focus on the

qualitative data analysis of students' diaries. The diary entries were collected across all of the 10 seminar groups and did not demonstrate any discrepancies in students' feedback with key themes being repeated throughout. We argue that this consistency is partly due to the fact that the seminar tutors were provided with a "tutor pack" (Edwards and Thatcher, 2004) detailing how to use the materials in order to ensure parity of learning and teaching across the seminar groups.

The study was passed by the University Ethics Committee and students were individually emailed in order to get their consent. We received a positive response by 73 students out of 90 who agreed for their diaries to be used for research purposes. Students were keen for their work to be of value and to matter by way of an evaluation. Using Nvivo for coding, we conducted a thematic analysis of the 73 diary entries. Using computer software was particularly useful as it allowed us to store and work on a substantial amount of data that was easily accessible to both of us.

The purpose of a thematic analysis is to "identify similarities and differences between accounts" (Harding, 2013: 135). Building on our coding, we identified a number of key emerging themes. In the next section we concentrate on two central aspects of the analysis: students' engagement and students' development of analytical skills. We illustrate this discussion with verbatim quotes from our students' diaries, and therefore, given the linguistic diversity of the group, there are some grammatical variations.

Students' Engagement

Overall, students expressed a clear and positive engagement with this session, even if we have to take into account that they might have written some of their answers with the teacher or tutor in mind (Hosein and Rao, 2016). However, they were not graded on their answers, only on completion, which we hope diminished the bias effect. A particularly positive aspect was that students could see the relevance of the activity to their studies. For instance:

The most useful thing about this activity was seeing the different resources which is available to me when producing my work, in order to get a better understanding of what I am looking at.

Using these resources would help in my third year, for my dissertation. (Diary Entry 64)

In their diaries, students also valued the opportunity to work in small groups or in pairs through the different tasks:

What I find most useful in these activities is that we are active participating, it's not just listen to the teacher, but the opportunity to discuss and learn from each others' thoughts and opinions. You get the chance to be active and it's easier to see what you really have understood or not understood when you are doing the activity. (Diary Entry 55)

Empirical work on teaching social science research methods highlights the benefits of a student-centered approach to the teaching of social science (Hosein and Rao, 2017; Edwards and Thatcher, 2004). We add that in order to engage students (Benson and Blackman, 2003), there are benefits in grounding this approach in a context that enables them to draw on their own knowledge in interpreting and making sense of sociological concepts and methods. Although the majority of our students originated from London, their experiential knowledge of the city was socially and culturally diverse. This, we argue, makes the connection between research skills and methods, and the social world students are asked to explore, more potent. With such a socially and culturally diverse student population, making greater use of students' positionality activated a form of tacit knowledge which they could mobilise to make the learning meaningful for them, as can be seen in the following comment:

I learnt from the seminar in relation to the British suburbs that, living in a suburb is often referred to as boring or dull. In fact I have lived in a suburb since the 1980's and I find it the complete opposite to boring. In the suburbs there is a difficulty of getting your child into the school of their choice as schools seem to be oversubscribed. The image of suburbia being safe goes rather

beyond this. There is a crumbling infrastructure and populations have increased. There are more people living in the suburbs compared to the past of the 1930's. (Diary Entry 20)

Tapping into this experiential knowledge proved to be an effective way to engage students in a culturally responsive learning environment (Farfan et al, 2009). This chimes with the view that cross-cultural encounters in the classroom need to be considered in the teaching of research methods (Farfan et al', 2009) and the choice of topic is one of the central aspects of this kind of pedagogy (Farfan et al., 2009: 9-8). Despite their diversity, the students all experience living and working in London albeit in different ways.

Comparison and Contrast: Developing Analytical Skills

When analysing the diary entries we found that students' engagement with documents as sources of data was mostly evidenced in the ability to compare and contrast the suburbs of the past and the suburbs of the present. In line with our research purpose operationalised in the question asked to the students, this was the highest occurrence in terms of coding. This could be qualified as a more obvious finding from the data considering that we foregrounded this when designing the activity, but it should nonetheless be noted, as we consider this to be a significant pedagogical benefit of the activity in building their analytical skills.

At this stage, most of the students' comments relating to comparing and contrasting data remained quite descriptive. Ward (2013:30) reminds us that "[i]n archival work, you are essentially interpreting and deriving meaning from other people's representations of various sets of circumstances (Scott 1990: esp. 28-35)". Therefore, critical reading of documents as sources of data is a complex skill that requires experience (Ward, 2013). However, in some cases, substantial progress was made in their ability to conceptualise the changes happening in the suburbs. For instance:

It is interesting to see that people use to buy houses with the sole intent of living in an ideal home, whereas nowadays the property market causes people to consider the resale value of their house as critical factor. (Diary Entry 29)

In many cases, students were able to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and notions around the suburbs and suburbia, but also their ability to begin to analyse this data in relation to sociological issues. In other words, they were starting to develop a meta-reading of the documents beyond their promotional intentions so as to analyse the changes in suburbia in a sociological manner. The diary entries highlight both “methodological literacy” (Nind et al., 2014), most evident when students affirmed learning something new (in this case learning about different types of research methods and data) and “methodological competence” (Nind et al., 2014) in demonstrating students’ nascent development of analytical skills as part of a research process (in this case via a process of comparison and contrast). These findings also suggest that our efforts to carefully scaffold the materials enabled students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to engage reflexively with our classroom tasks. Building social research methods activities around real world issues and documents presents potential as it helps students to see greater applicability and relevance, but only if students are able to draw on key disciplinary concepts and practices.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of research methods presents a number of recurring challenges that have clearly been identified in the literature. In response to these challenges, we sought to actively engage students in research methods through the use of real-world material available in local archives and as publically available contemporary brochures. To exploit this material we devise a series of carefully sequenced tasks and it is our contention that providing scaffolded tasks for classroom is a helpful way to introduce students to authentic material in order to explore sociological issues. Mining this material for data enabled them to make some evidenced sociological claims, thereby developing their analytical skills. A

Careful evaluation asking students to reflect in their diaries was a useful way for us to assess the extent to which they were doing so.

Our thematic analysis of the students' reflective diaries indicates that students were not only beginning to develop their analytical skills by using data to both question and strengthen hypotheses ("Methodological competence") (Nind et al, 2014), but were also able to understand the value of such practices in developing a deeper understanding of the discipline they were studying ("Methodological literacy") (ibid, 2014). The positive evaluation students ascribed to the activity we devised suggests a high level of student engagement.

Nevertheless, while our data provides evidence both of our students' engagement and emergent understanding of sociological research practices, it would be useful to track the development of this understanding through the use of reflective blogs over a longer period of time (for example, the three years of the degree). This might enable us to answer key questions relating to pedagogy, such as how much scaffolding might be required at different stages of the course, and how we could best support our students in developing the independent critical thinking skills which enable them to be more analytical. In addition, the impact of students' cultural background and linguistic facility could be explored more fully, for example, by gathering data on these factors in the particular cohort being studied and asking students to reflect on how culture and language might be shaping their understanding.

From a practical point of view, it is important to recognise that the development and design of these types of activities is particularly time and labour intensive. Furthermore, research methods modules generally involve large cohorts and therefore the delivery needs to be coordinated and harmonised across a number of teaching staff in a form of "tutor packs" (Edwards and Thatcher, 2004). This preparation should be appropriately resourced.

Our findings have already fed back into the redesign of the module assessment for the following year. The activity is now more directly linked to the final assessment as students are now asked to do a

small research project on the housing development as a case study, using a combination of methods. As such, students are able to use the analysis of documents as sources of data, in combination with statistics and ethnographic observations, to explore the changes in suburbia.

This approach can be adopted in different contexts by exploiting local or national archives creatively to introduce the use of secondary data into the teaching of research methods. Grounding sociological methods and concepts in real-world material appears to have particular benefits in engaging students and developing their analytical skills.

EDITOR'S NOTE

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APPENDIX

Task 1: Brainstorming activity

In pairs or groups, brainstorm as many differences as you can between the city and the suburbs.

Consider some of the following themes:

- Population density
- Health

- Leisure
- Family life
- Social status
- Types of housing
- Transport
- Symbolic meaning for inhabitants

Also, note down three adjectives to describe life in the suburbs.

Task 2: Jigsaw Reading

Work in pairs. One student read text A, while the other should read Text B. Tell each other what you have read and then answer the questions which follow:

1. *According to the different texts, what were the key factors which influenced the design of suburban houses in the 1930's?*
2. *What kind of evidence could the writers of the texts have used to identify these key factors?*

Task 3: The Enfield West Estate and the Southgate Estate

The material:

INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this Brochure is not to persuade you that you ought to possess your own home—we leave that to the Press, the Building Societies and your own good judgment—but we do want to convince you that the Estates presented to you in the following pages are the best situated of those which are at present being developed in North London, and that the properties we offer represent the best values that can be given at the prices asked.

Presented With The Compliments Of

GEORGE REED & SONS, LTD.

Builders and Estate Developers

THE ENFIELD WEST
— ESTATE —

Adjoining Enfield West
(Tube) Station
N.14

ENFIELD 1441/2

THE SOUTHGATE
— ESTATE —

Winchmore Hill Road
Nr. Southgate (Tube) Stn.
N.14

PALMERS GREEN 2277/8

THE FIRS LANE
— ESTATE —

Firs Lane
Winchmore Hill
N.21

PALMERS GREEN 4444

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THE ENFIELD WEST ESTATE

Actual Photographs of the Estate



LEFT. The Enfield West Tube Station, on the left of which are the "REED" houses.



RIGHT. A pair of "J" type houses recently erected on the Estate.

RIGHT. A pair of "M" type houses—that on the left has 3 bedrooms and garage, while that on the right has 4 bedrooms and garage.



BELOW. Here we have one 3-bedroomed "T" type house next to a 4-bedroomed house with garage.



LEFT. Photograph of houses in Belgrave Gardens on the Enfield West Estate. This gives some idea of how the various types are mixed so that the "mass-production" aspect is eliminated.



THE ENFIELD WEST ESTATE

Adjoining Enfield West (Tube) Station, N.14

NORTH LONDON'S PREMIER ESTATE

THE ENFIELD WEST ESTATE is situated in the most delightful of positions and is only a few yards from the ENFIELD WEST (Oakwood) TUBE STATION (Piccadilly Line).

THE ESTATE, which is 270ft. above sea level, has a character all its own, and few places can boast of such fine scenery and a freshness of atmosphere which is both healthy and invigorating. Really pleasing features of the locality are the large open spaces. Trent Park is a delightful stretch of Parkland, over 1,400 acres in extent, and is well worth a visit, whilst adjoining the Estate to the south is Oakwood Park (58 acres), which is open for the public's enjoyment.

ON THIS ESTATE there are several different types of houses from which to choose. If you are seeking something really up-to-date, study the Modern House; or if you prefer Tudor style, we have this in two designs; also our famous Exhibition House of 1932 and 1933—the "C" type (circular bay), larger and with many improvements. Most types are available with four or five bedrooms and garage, with independent car runs if required. There are no terrace houses, only detached and semi-detached, and the whole Estate has been designed and planned to give a pleasing aspect to each house, making it indeed THE PREMIER ESTATE OF NORTH LONDON.

ADJOINING THE ESTATE there are a number of first-class shops, and it is only a short ride to Southgate, or Enfield, with its old-world market. Wood Green is also only a short journey on the Tube, and here will be found one of North London's finest shopping centres. The same can be said of Palmer's Green, which is also close at hand.

LIVING so close to the Tube brings the whole of London's amusements within easy reach, while near to the Estate there is cricket, tennis, football and bowls. Bathing enthusiasts will find their every need supplied at Enfield open-air baths. There are also three golf-courses quite near—Hadley Woods, Old Fold Manor and the White Webbs Public Golf Course.

FULL PARTICULARS OF TRAVELLING FACILITIES WILL BE FOUND ON PAGE 17.

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THE SOUTHGATE ESTATE

Winchmore Hill Road, Southgate, N.14

NEAR SOUTHGATE TUBE STATION

SITUATION.

REED'S SOUTHGATE ESTATE is the nearest building estate to the SOUTHGATE TUBE STATION (Piccadilly Line), occupying approximately 22 acres. Situated only about 300 yards from the station, it is in the centre of an area which, since the extension of the Underground Railway, has rapidly developed into a modern suburb, consequent upon the splendid transport now available. All other modern incidental facilities have followed the railway, and there are abundant other forms of travel. The fact that the estate is so near the Tube station shows that the whole of London is accessible by the very quickest and up-to-date means.

Particulars of all travelling facilities are given on page 17.

SHOPPING.

Shops of every description are to be found adjoining the Underground Station, and a splendid shopping centre has sprung up there. It is only a short 'bus ride to Palmer's Green, a favourite London shopping district, where there are stores for all needs.

SPORTS AND AMUSEMENTS.

Many parks and open spaces are available, among them being Oakwood Park (which actually adjoins the Estate), Grovelands Park and Broomfield Park, where tennis, bowls, boating, golf and cricket can be enjoyed. For serious Golfers there are three golf courses nearby—viz., Hadley Wood, Old Fold Manor and Enfield. There are a number of modern cinemas, including the splendid recently-erected "Odeon;" also several dance halls within close proximity.

SCHOOLS.

Council and private schools are right at hand and there are no long distances for children.

For specifications and financial particulars see pages 10 and 11.

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Read the texts about the Enfield West Estate and the Southgate Estate written by the developer of the estates in the 1930's, and look at the photographs of the main types of houses on the Enfield West Estate. In groups, answer the following questions:

1. *What are the unique selling points for these estates? Make a list of these.*
2. *What do you think the selling points tell you about the society of that period?*
3. *Do the brochures and photographs provide any evidence for some of the main points mentioned in Task 2 with regards to the suburban house? If so, which ones?*

Task 4: XXXX (Modern Housing Development)

Read the texts about xxxx (name of the development) from the developer's brochure. In groups, discuss the following questions:

1. *According to the developer, what are the unique selling points for the estate?*
2. *In what ways are these selling points the same as, or different from, the selling points mentioned in the Enfield West Estate and the Southgate Estate of the 1930's?*
3. *What do these selling points tell us about our current society?*

Task 5: Changing suburbia

Complete your reflective blog for this week:

1. Using the information from the archives as well as xxxx (name of the development) brochure as evidence, write a short text about how suburbia might be changing in the 21st century. Post this text up in your reflective blog.
2. Answer the following questions in your reflective blog:
 - What did you learn from this seminar in relation to the British suburbs?
 - What did you learn from this seminar in relation to the advantages of using archives and secondary sources?
 - What did you learn that will help improve your academic writing skills?
 - What did you find most useful about these activities?

ⁱ Digital archives available online at <http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk/home>

ⁱⁱ Although we did not keep any statistics on the demographics in terms of ethnic origins of the students in our cohort, we believe that they were reflective of figures for the university as a whole. We recognise that this is a possible limitation in our study, but hope to investigate this further in future.