

Bank Street College
Graduate School of Education

A Guide to the Integrative Master's Project



Independent Study
Portfolio
Site-Based Inquiry
Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry
Mentored Directed Essay

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Overview of the Integrative Master's Project

The Integrative Master's Project (IMP) is one of the three major components of your degree requirements. As the culminating component, it is expected to be a significant, academically rigorous body of work that integrates many facets of your experiences at Bank Street and in the field, and applies theoretical knowledge to your current and future work as an educator or educational leader. The process of writing the IMP is intended to further your professional growth through inquiry, reflection, and integration.

When you have completed a significant amount of your supervised fieldwork/advisement and course work, you are eligible to begin working on this third requirement for completing your degree. You will discuss your readiness to begin your IMP with your advisor, who can help you select the IMP option best suited to your learning style and preferences. Your advisor will guide you in securing an appropriate mentor for the Independent Study or in preparing an application for the Portfolio should you choose one of these options. The semester-based options are listed on the fall and spring course schedule each semester. See the IMP At-A-Glance Chart on the following page for an overview of each option and the registration process.

There is no credit attached to the IMP. For financial aid purposes, six credit equivalents are granted during the semester(s) you are registered. The registration fee for all IMP options is \$750.

Students in the Leadership for Educational Change program meet the IMP requirement with the three-credit Professional Seminar. Students in Leadership in Mathematics Education and Leadership in Museum Education meet the IMP requirement with a program-specific Portfolio.

All work for the Master's degree must be completed within five (5) years of the date of matriculation.

A Word About Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas, words, or theories as one's own—or without citation—in an academic submission. Students at Bank Street are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity, with all scholarship resting on honest academic effort

- All work submitted must be original.
- Any reference to another person's work (including ideas, theories, or concepts) must be cited explicitly. If you are paraphrasing someone's ideas, you need to put those ideas into your own words, use quotation marks whenever you are using the author's words, and include a citation acknowledging the source whether or not you have used actual quotes. Page numbers should be cited for actual quotes.
- Work presented as actual experience cannot be invented or fabricated.

Integrative Master's Project (IMP) At-a-Glance

Note: A graduate student should complete at least half of the required course work and be approved by his/her advisor for any IMP option. Selected Educational Leadership programs have a program-specific culminating project.

	Independent Study	Portfolio	Site-Based Inquiry (IMP 1)	Collaborative Student-Faculty Inquiry (IMP 2)	Mentored Directed Essay (IMP 3)
Time Frame	Varies: one, two, or more semesters	Two semesters (fall and spring)	One semester* (fall or spring)	One semester* (fall or spring)	One semester* (fall, spring, or summer 1+2)
Registration Process	Commence form signed by mentor; also by advisor or program director	Online application submitted in June. Registration in September.	Online or in person after consultation with advisor or program director	Online or in person after consultation with advisor or program director	Online or in person after consultation with advisor or program director
Registration Fee	\$750	\$750	\$750*	\$750*	\$750*
Faculty Mentor or Facilitator	Faculty mentor	Faculty mentor and group leader	Faculty facilitator	Faculty facilitator	Faculty mentor
Group Configuration	Individual meetings	Monthly individual and small group meetings	Four group meetings of up to 6 students: individual meetings	Four group meetings of up to 6 students: individual meetings	Individual meetings
Catalogued in Library	Yes (mentor and/or student may opt out)	No	No (with some exceptions)	No (with some exceptions)	No
Oral Presentations**	Yes (optional)	Yes (required)	Yes	Yes	No
Graduate Credit	No credit: (6 credit equivalent for financial aid)	No credit: (6 credit equivalent for financial aid)	No credit: (6 credit equivalent for financial aid)	No credit: (6 credit equivalent for financial aid)	No credit: (6 credit equivalent for financial aid)

*An additional registration fee of \$750 is required if your semester-based IMP is not completed by the end of the semester.

** Oral presentations, called Shares, occur on the following evenings:

For Site-Based and Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiries:

Fall: Second or Third Thursday in January

Spring: Monday preceding Commencement

For Independent Study: Tuesday preceding Commencement

For Portfolio: Wednesday preceding Commencement

Integrative Master's Project Options

Each IMP option is described briefly below.

Two-Semester Options

Independent Study. Student-initiated project or formal study guided by a faculty mentor. Schedule varies, generally two semesters. Register during registration period via a commence form (available in the Registrar's office) signed by advisor or program director and faculty mentor.

Portfolio. Reflective essays on artifacts (documents, student papers, videos, objects, etc.) from your professional and academic experiences, organized and presented thematically. Individual mentoring and monthly small peer group meetings at Bank Street. September – May (application due preceding late June).

One-Semester Options

Registration procedures and policies for the semester-based IMP options are the same as those governing regular classes. Enter the course number and section you want, the same as for classes. See pages 27 for details on registration and completion policies for one semester options.

Site-Based Inquiry. Student-initiated projects with faculty facilitator and small peer group. Student provides the inquiry topic based in an educational setting.

Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry. Student-initiated projects with faculty facilitator and small peer group. Specific inquiry topics are posted each semester.

Mentored Directed Essay. Individually mentored by program faculty with program-specific, pre-existing questions available on my.bankstreet.edu.

The Independent Study Option

The Independent Study is a significant original work that you initiate. This option provides an opportunity to extend an assignment in a course or pursue in depth a question, project, or topic that is particularly meaningful to you. You are expected to integrate scholarship and reflection with creativity in a work of academic excellence (see *Criteria for Successful Completion of the Independent Study*, p. 11).

Independent studies are catalogued as part of the library collection and are downloadable via a live link on the catalog entry, making them accessible to Bank Street faculty and students as well as beyond the college. They will also be entered into an international database for wider circulation.

A link to directions and forms for electronic submission is on the graduate school website under academics/integrative masters project/independent study.

Before you begin your work, it is important to familiarize yourself with policies regarding copyright compliance (pp. 36-38) and permission for using names, photographic images, and/or work produced by individuals (p. 37). Students are invited to participate in an Independent Study Share (p.14) to share their work with faculty, family, peers, and friends the Tuesday evening preceding graduation

Types of Independent Studies

The following descriptions of Independent Study options provide guidelines to be adapted, as student and mentor feel best, to suit the nature of the particular study.

Important Note: If you are engaged in a research study involving human participants, you must apply to the IMP Committee and get a letter of approval prior to beginning this work. See *Research Involving Human Participants* (pp. 38-48). Please note that the name of the school/institution may be used only with the prior approval of the director or principal. In addition, before names of staff may be used, their permission is required. If observational material is used, it is imperative that any names be thoroughly disguised and the director or principal be advised that such material is being incorporated into the study.

Creativity is encouraged. *Please note: If you are engaged in a research study involving human participants, you must apply to the IMP Committee and get a letter of approval prior to beginning this work. See Research Involving Human Participants (p. 38).*

A. Thesis: Systematic study using an appropriate research method. You are expected to identify a significant problem or focus of inquiry; develop suitable methods for investigating the problem and/or better understanding the focus of the inquiry; gather sufficient data/information as well as analyze and comment upon them; draw conclusions;

and make informed recommendations that emerge from the study undertaken. A variety of case studies are included in this option. Various modes of research may be considered: historical, qualitative/ethnographic, quantitative, philosophical. Ideas for a thesis may be stimulated by course content or situations you encounter in the field.

In the first part of the study, it is also expected that you will provide a thoughtful reflection on the reason for taking up this study, including how this particular research interest emerged from a specific setting, set of circumstances, and/or social context. It is expected, as well, that you will consider the particular biases and/or values with which you come to the study; define important terms; provide a brief overview of the research methodology; and discuss the limitations of the study. While it is necessary to include a discussion of relevant literature for all modes of research, it is not necessary to provide a separate section for the review of the literature. This would depend upon the type of study undertaken and your judgment, in consultation with your mentor.

In a second section, you are expected to provide a detailed discussion of the methodology employed. In other words: How do you plan to gather information to answer your research question and/or understand more deeply the focus of your inquiry? For instance, will it be through interviewing, observing, survey, questionnaire, site documentation, and/or reviewing the literature? Evidence might include integrated digital video or other multimedia materials. Depending upon the mode of research, over what period of time do you plan to gather your data/information and on what basis did you select your research sample?

In a third section, you are expected to present, analyze (i.e., What sense can I make of the findings? What categories, patterns, themes emerge from the findings?), and comment upon your findings.

In a fourth section, you are expected to draw conclusions and discuss recommendations that emerge from the data/information gathered. A bibliography and possible appendices would follow.

While, for purposes of clarity, the framework for a research study is separated into discrete sections, this need not necessarily be the case with all research studies. In discussion with your mentor, you will determine the most suitable way to proceed.

B. Design and development of original professional material. The focus in this study is the design and development of material to be used by or with educators, administrators, caregivers, related service providers, and/or children. Some examples of original materials are stories (fiction or nonfiction for children), curricula, reading materials, cookbooks, classroom materials, learning games, parent guides, original song collections, visual materials, digital resources, and staff development manuals for teachers or administrators.

A study that concentrates on the creation of original, professional materials has three essential components:

Rationale. You must provide a written rationale regardless of the form in which the material is presented. The rationale establishes the need for the proposed new material by an examination and critique of existing materials of the same type and by identifying the differences between the new and existing material. In addition, the rationale must include a discussion of the developmental appropriateness of the material. It must also reflect awareness of the sociocultural context(s) that informs your own perspective, as well as those of the children or other populations for whom the material is designed.

The original material. An original work must include a presentation—e.g., film, video or audiotape, constructed game, book, integrated digital resources, curriculum, or manual.

Applications. This section suggests ways in which this material may best be used by teachers, children, and other groups, and the age level for which the material may be most appropriate (or modifications that make the material appropriate for various age levels and cultures). If the material has been used with teachers, children, or other groups, the results (findings) from this implementation should be described and additional uses suggested.

C. Case study of a project or program. The case study may be of a project or program initiated and developed by you or an analysis of one that is developed by others. This type of study combines elements from other types—in particular, *A. Thesis* and *D. Analysis of an Educational Setting and its Community*. The study should establish the organizational/institutional context and how the project relates to the mission and goals, responds to a particular need, and enhances the work of the setting. A discussion of similar projects or programs in other settings and reference to relevant literature will establish the larger set of ideas that frame this project (e.g., service learning, inter-institutional partnership). If the project has been developed for a specific audience, a discussion of developmental and sociocultural appropriateness must be included.

Awareness of the sociocultural context(s) informing your own perspective should also be reflected in the study. A description and analysis of the process of developing and implementing the project will illuminate issues of relevance to others interested in implementing a similar project. The perspectives of as many as possible of those involved should be included. See *A. Thesis* for information on including a small research component that might examine the effects of the program on participants and/or staff. The conclusion will emphasize lessons learned and recommendations for other projects of a similar nature. The appendix will include all relevant documentation of the project.

D. Analysis of an educational setting and its community. The framework presented for research methods in *A. Thesis* may be used for this analysis. The analysis might include discussion of:

1. The values, expectations, norms, vision, and mission of the educational setting;
2. The school community;
3. The families and children;
4. The theory and practice of the curriculum;
5. The physical environment;
6. The administration, staff, and faculty; and
7. Summary and conclusions

E. Critical review of literature. In order to follow the development of an idea or concept, this type of study requires you to identify a significant educational problem. You are expected to analyze and examine the problem through a critical reading of both current and past literature and research. Also, you are expected to elaborate and defend or critique the resulting conclusions or point of view in the text. A sufficient number of sources must be cited to give a comprehensive view of the history, dimensions, and varying perspectives on this educational problem.

F. A policy study in education. A policy study is research that involves the identification of a problem or issue, and includes investigation, analysis, findings, and recommendations. The student must:

- Set the problem in a sociopolitical context, identify present policies or the absence thereof, investigate the problem or issue, and determine its causes and dimensions.
- Analyze the data collected during the investigatory phase of the study.
- Make policy recommendations based on findings that address or resolve the problem or issue.

Getting Started on Your Independent Study

Finding and Working With a Faculty Mentor who has expertise in the proposed area of study. Before approaching a potential mentor, it is strongly recommended that you prepare one or two paragraphs describing the proposed study to serve as a basis for discussion.

You and your mentor begin your work together by clarifying the type of study you are doing and developing an outline. Mentors provide guidance and support throughout the research, development, and writing process, guiding you with the shape and scope of the study and the overall approach to the material, suggesting appropriate readings and resources, and helping you to achieve depth and intellectual coherence. You are responsible for initiation and completion of the study and for the quality of writing, including editing and proofreading the study with the utmost care. (See *Criteria for Successful Completion* [p. 11] and *Assistance With Writing* [p. 36]). You work directly with your mentor until the study is completed. Although this is an independent process, you are required to stay in ongoing contact with your mentor, sharing drafts of sections as they are completed.

Working with an outside mentor. If an appropriate faculty mentor is not available, you may work with a recognized professional in your chosen area/topic of study who is approved by a Bank Street faculty member familiar with the topic.

This faculty member must:

- approve the outside mentor,
- co-sign the commence form,
- provide the outside mentor with a copy of the IMP Guide and orient him/her to the expectations and requirements for the Independent Study,
- approve the student's overall plan, and
- read a draft and give feedback at both midpoint and completion.

At completion, the faculty member must:

- see that the study meets all relevant items on the Checklist of Requirements,
- sign the Approval Form,
- help the students select subject headings on the Cover Sheet, and
- submit the PDF.

You are responsible for submitting your study to this faculty member in sufficient time for the study to be read and any necessary revisions to be made before graduation.

Registering for your Independent Study

Registration procedure. You must register for the Independent study during one of four regular registration periods, including the Add/Drop period, according to the *Independent Study Registration Chart* on the Registrar's Office website. Please note that Independent Study registration period for the Fall semester begins immediately after the end of the Add/Drop period for Summer II.

1. Secure the *Commence Independent Study Form* from the Registrar's Office (1st floor, Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM).
2. Secure your advisor or program director's signature and your mentor's signature on the *Commence Form*.
3. Pay the \$750 fee to the Business Office (7th floor, Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM) or, if you want the fee to be covered by Financial Aid, bring your *Commence Form* to the Financial Aid Office.
4. Submit the completed form to the Registrar's Office.

Registration and completion timeline. We strongly recommend that you plan on spending a full academic year (fall/spring) or the equivalent on your Independent Study and that you complete it within one year. Please visit the Registrar's Office website to see available times to register and the deadlines for Independent Study completion and corresponding graduation.

Although no formal academic credit is granted, in recognition of the significant time

involved in conducting independent studies, you are granted—for financial aid purposes—a six-credit equivalent for the term(s) in which the study is taking place. The six-credit equivalent is used to determine your financial aid half-time status.

Each term you continue working on your study beyond the initial term in which it was registered, you must submit a *Continuation of Independent Study Form* available on the Registrar's Office website to have the credit equivalents indicated on your record. Continuation forms must also be submitted within one of the four registration periods

Students have one year to complete the study before an additional \$100 fee is charged.

For exact registration and completion dates for the current year, see the Registrar's Office > Registering for Integrative Master's Project webpage.

Criteria for Successful Completion of the Independent Study

All Independent Studies must demonstrate graduate-level scholarship guided by the criteria below and follow the style guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). These studies contribute to the intellectual life of the College. You and your mentor should give careful attention to these criteria before submitting the final version of the work to the College.

Content and scholarship. This area includes demonstrated knowledge of the field, the ability to analyze and synthesize that knowledge and make clear theoretical and creative connections to personal experience and practice, consideration of varying points of view, sensitivity to individual differences, and attention to issues of equity and diversity.

1. The paper draws upon relevant examples of the writer's personal experiences in the field and integrates them with multiple theorists by:
 - demonstrating a professional, self-reflective approach to practice.
 - showing clear connections between theory, research, and practice.
2. The writer has included extensive current, classic, and seminal reference materials to support the paper's findings and perspectives by:
 - providing sound, scholarly and practice-based reasons for choosing particular perspectives.
 - incorporating reference citations that enhance and extend the writer's ideas.
3. The paper presents a clear, thoughtful analysis and synthesis of important theoretical perspectives and research findings that are relevant to the topic by:
 - including perspectives/findings that represent multiple points of view in a way that clarifies commonalities and differences.
 - identifying the implications of these perspectives and findings for current and future educational practice.

4. Original, professional material is imaginatively conceived and professionally developed and presented.
5. The writing reflects sensitivity to and awareness of issues of cultural diversity and relevance by:
 - respecting and appreciating differences in race and ethnic identity, gender and sexual orientation, age, religion, and abilities.
 - adhering to *General Guidelines for Reducing Bias (APA Manual, p. 71)*.

Organization

1. The writer structures the paper so that its organization may be easily understood and followed by the reader.
2. The writer uses transitions that reinforce essential points and guide the reader in constructing meaning.
3. The writer uses APA style headings and subheadings as described in *A Writer's Handbook*.

Form

1. Writing is clear and fluid, with an engaging and authentic voice.
2. Vocabulary is rich and varied, indicative of a broad understanding of the field.
3. Syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct throughout.
4. The writer has appropriately credited all sources in correct APA format.

A Writer's Handbook, available as a PDF on the Bank Street library's website, will answer many of your questions about correct APA format. You may also consult the Research Tools links on the Bank Street library's website, and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* available from the reference librarian. A good Internet source for APA style is <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

Permissions

1. A copy of the documents granting permission to use any of the following material is included in the study:
 - copyrighted material (see pp. 36-38 and 49-50)
 - names of individuals or institutions whose identities are not masked (see pp. 37-38)
 - recognizable photographic images of individuals (see pp. 37-38).
2. For research studies, all requirements relating to confidentiality and the rights and protection of human participants have been met and all relevant permission forms are included in the appendix of the study (see pp. 38-46).

Abstract and Format Requirements for the Independent Study

Format requirements

Margin requirements: 1 1/2" left margin, 1" right margin, 1" margin at top and bottom of page.

Spacing: Typing is to be double-spaced, using only one side of the page of 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Other digital formats must be pre-approved and are encouraged.

Page numbers: All pages beginning with the title page should be numbered consecutively in the upper right-hand corner of each page. Pagination continues throughout every page, including any appendices or children's stories.

Headings and subheadings: APA style as described in *A Writer's Handbook*.

Running head: should NOT be used.

Acknowledgement of original visual material: If you have included original visual material (graphics, artwork, photographs, etc.) by yourself or others, acknowledge their authorship in a brief statement in the abstract or first chapter

Proofreading: The final copy must be proofread and corrections made prior to submission.

The components of the study, each on a new page, should be in the following order:

- **Title Page** (see sample of correct format on p.15)
- **Abstract** (see below)
- **Dedication page** (optional)
- **Table of Contents:** (including page numbers for sections)
- **Text**
- **References**
- **Tables** (optional)
- **Figures** (optional)
- **Appendices** (all material that is supplementary to the body of the paper)
- **Permission Letters** (unsigned sample[s] if utilized)
- **Copyright letters and responses** (if copyrighted material included)

Abstract. The study must include an abstract. The abstract should not exceed one page in length, must include the student's name and the title of the study, and is to be typed, double-spaced. The abstract should be placed immediately after the title page. An abstract briefly summarizes the thesis and the contents of the paper. The abstract should be:

Accurate: Make certain that the abstract correctly reflects the purpose and content of the manuscript.

Concise: Be as brief and specific as possible. Make each sentence maximally

informative, especially the lead sentence (which should not repeat the title).

Non-evaluative: Describe rather than evaluate. Do not add to or comment on what is in the body of the paper.

If the thesis is other than empirical research (e.g., a theoretical study, a curriculum, or other original material, case study, etc.), the abstract can include: the topic, in one sentence; the purpose of the thesis; a brief description of the project; and conclusions.

If the thesis is an empirical study, it can include: the problem or focus of inquiry under investigation; the participants in the study (ages, number, etc.); the methods of research (observation, interview, etc.); the findings; and conclusions.

Preparing and Submitting Your Independent Study Electronically

Before you submit your completed independent study to your faculty mentor, review the *Criteria for Successful Completion of the Independent Study* (pp. 11-12) and the *Checklist of Requirements for Independent Studies* (p. 16) and make sure you are in compliance with all relevant items. Discuss any questions with your mentor. A link to **instructions and forms** is on the Graduate School website under Academics > Integrative Master's Project (bankstreet.edu/imp). You will submit a signed copy of the *Checklist of Requirements and Cover Sheet* along with the PDF of your study to your mentor, who will forward your PDF and forms, including an approval form, to IMPdatabase@bankstreet.edu.

If you and/or your mentor decide that your study is not appropriate for circulation, your mentor will sign a form indicating that you have completed the IMP requirement, and your study will not be submitted to the library.

Your Own Bound Print Copy

If you would like to have a personal bound copy of your IMP, bring a print copy and two blank pages, along with \$20.00 (in cash, or a check made out to the Bank Street College Library) to arrange for a journal-quality binding. Details, including colors available for binding, are on the Bank Street College library website in the *How Can I... Have an IMP Bound* section

Independent Study Share

Students are invited and strongly encouraged to present their Independent Studies at a share session scheduled for the Tuesday evening before graduation. This is a chance to be publicly acknowledged for your work by faculty mentors, peers, family, and friends who are there to celebrate your accomplishments. The opportunity to describe what you have learned and to hear about the work of others is a meaningful culmination of your experience at Bank Street.

Sample Title Page for Independent Study

1

A Study of Relationships in the
Primary Grades

By

Jane Doe

Early Childhood and Childhood General Education
(Name of academic program of study as listed
in the graduate school catalog)

Mentor:
Jack Smith

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
(use the appropriate degree)
Master of Science in Education or
Master of Education or
Master of Science
Bank Street College of Education
20__

Checklist of Requirements for Independent Studies

Both students and faculty mentors are responsible for verifying that all of the applicable requirements have been met.

Content, Scholarship, and Organization

- Study meets criteria for completion for the particular IMP option as outlined in *A Guide to the Integrative Master's Project*.

Style and Form

- Independent Studies and Portfolios must have a one-page abstract with the student's name and title of study on an unnumbered page inserted immediately after the title page.
- Starting with the title page, all pages are numbered consecutively, including the pages of any appendices. If the IMP study contains unnumbered inserts, pagination accounts for these pages and resumes on the correct number.
- The table of contents includes page numbers.
- The left margin is 1½ inches wide.
- All citations in the text and list of references are in correct APA style.

Permissions

This material should be in a permissions section of the appendix of the study.

- If any copyrighted material is used, a copy of document(s) granting permission is included.
- If names of individuals or organizations are not masked, signed document(s) granting permission to use the names is included.
- If the study includes recognizable photographs of individuals, a sample consent form is included. (The student keeps the signed copies.)
- If the study involves research involving human participants, a copy of the letter from the IMP Committee granting permission to commence the research is included.
- Copies of consent letters and forms for participation in a research study are included.
- I have fulfilled all of the requirements applicable to my study as checked above.

Student's Name

Date

Faculty Mentor's Name

Date

FACULTY: After signing this form, please email it to IMPdatabase@bankstreet.edu with the approval form, cover sheet, and Independent Study PDF

The Portfolio Option

The Portfolio option allows you to work closely with an assigned mentor and, in monthly group meetings, also with a small group of peers over the course of a full academic year. You must submit an online Portfolio Application by the end of June. If you are selected as a participant in the Portfolio project, you work with your mentor and peer group to identify a theme that is highly relevant to your personal growth and professional development. The Portfolio is developed through an emergent process of collecting documents and objects, called artifacts, which are significant markers of pivotal experiences in your professional and personal development. You will write a reflective essay to introduce the five artifacts and themes, a caption to accompany each artifact, and a conclusion. All students present their Portfolios to mentors, peers, friends, and family the evening before graduation.

What is a Bank Street Portfolio?

A Portfolio is a collection of documents and artifacts that provides evidence of your knowledge, skills, dispositions, and reflections. The artifacts in the Portfolio, collected over the course of an academic year, represent your professional development and reflect your growth and change through course work and classroom experiences as well as through related personal journeys. Creating a Portfolio involves all of the following processes, but not necessarily in this order.

- identifying five pivotal experiences in your professional development, and selecting artifacts to represent them;
- finding a Portfolio theme;
- reflecting on the artifacts and the theme;
- writing those reflections in a caption for each artifact;
- identifying connections to theory and research
- writing an introduction and conclusion to the Portfolio;
- emailing PDF version of Portfolio to your mentor; and
- presenting the completed Portfolio publicly.

Each Portfolio includes three main sections:

1. Introduction: The first part of the Portfolio is an introduction, four to five pages in length, containing a clear statement of the Portfolio theme, the ways in which your educational philosophy relates to the theme, and a clear theoretical framework that supports the theme, including specific references to the research literature. It also contains a brief introduction to the five artifacts.
2. Artifacts and Captions: The second part of the Portfolio consists of five artifacts with their accompanying captions. Each caption is two to three pages in length.
3. Conclusion: The third part of the Portfolio (five to seven pages in length) should provide a synthesis of the information included in the Portfolio and a statement of

future goals. The question that might frame this section is:

How does the work completed to date establish the groundwork for my future growth and development as an educator?

This section of the Portfolio should be grounded in theory and include appropriate references. A reference list of all works cited in the Portfolio must be included.

What is an artifact? An artifact is a physical representation of something the student has thought, researched, done or created that is related to his/her professional development. An artifact generally is something already completed; however, an artifact may be created specifically for the Portfolio to represent an important idea. An artifact can be almost anything that represents a significant experience in the student's learning and professional development. Artifacts that do not fit into the PDF format (e.g.; size, shape) may be photographed, described, or otherwise represented digitally in the final form submitted to the mentor.

Examples of artifacts include:

- paper written for a course
- lesson or series of lessons planned and/or done with children
- curriculum material
- examples of children's work
- video or audio tape of classroom experience with children
- interview(s)
- journal
- photo montage
- original artwork (painting, collage, construction, music, etc.)

To ensure that every Portfolio participant will take a sufficiently broad view of his/her experience, four of the five artifacts in the Portfolio must each represent one of the following educational domains:

- **Human development:** This artifact represents the student's understanding of the ways in which child/adult development (e.g., physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, linguistic, social) is significant to the process of teaching and learning.
- **Curriculum:** This artifact represents the student's understanding of curriculum and its role in education.
- **Philosophy/history:** This artifact represent the student's understanding and personal synthesis of historical or philosophical foundations of education.
- **Social context of learning:** This artifact represents the cultural dynamics of the teaching-learning interaction, including the social and cultural background of children and families in their transactions with the school community.

What is a caption? Each artifact in the Portfolio is introduced by a caption, two to three pages in length. The purpose of the caption is to serve as a connector to the Portfolio theme. To make this connection clear, the caption explains why the artifact is meaningful to you and how the artifact relates to the Portfolio theme. Captions should include both personal and clearly referenced theoretical insights.

In writing the caption, the student should answer these questions:

- What did I learn from the experience represented by the artifact?
- What are the implications of this learning for my work with children?
- How has this learning shaped or been shaped by my educational vision and/or values (educational philosophy)?
- How does this learning connect with the theory I have studied?

What is a Portfolio theme? The theme of your Portfolio is the big idea that ties together all of your artifacts and serves as the map of your personal learning journey. It represents the common thread that characterizes your particular professional work across different contexts.

A theme emerges as you identify your artifacts and notice similar ideas, questions, or concerns that are contained in each one. You will find that your theme is related to your educational philosophy—your values concerning teaching and learning—and will be supported by theorists you have read. The theme usually becomes evident by the time you are writing your third or fourth caption.

Examples of themes include:

- Classroom as community
- Listening at the center of teaching and learning
- Control and power in the classroom
- Engagement in learning

The Portfolio Process

Application and registration. If you are interested in doing a Portfolio, you must submit an online application, located in the Portfolio section of the IMP website, to the Portfolio Committee in June – a year before you plan to graduate. By the end of July, you will be emailed an acceptance letter with instructions for registering for the Portfolio. You will be asked to commit to monthly meetings with a peer group. You will also receive a timeline of due dates for each part of the Portfolio process.

Overview. Portfolios are created and written over the course of an academic year, from September to May. In September, you will be assigned to a faculty mentor with whom you will work during the year. It will be your responsibility to contact your mentor and set up a schedule of monthly meetings. You will also be assigned to a peer group, with which you will meet monthly over the course of the year.

The culmination of the process occurs at the Portfolio presentation that is generally scheduled for early evening on the day before graduation.

Peer-group meetings. The collaborative nature of the Portfolio process requires that you commit yourself to a series of monthly peer group meetings as well as to individually scheduled meetings with your Portfolio mentor.

You will be expected to attend your peer group meeting each month. Dates for these meetings are listed in the Portfolio timeline and you must remain in the same group for fall and spring semesters. You should plan your schedule accordingly.

At these peer group meetings, you will share your experience of developing the Portfolio and ask for help with questions that may arise. Each month you will share with your group the newly written draft of your Portfolio. The suggestions and constructive feedback you and your group receive and give allow you all to serve as “critical friends” for each other. At least one faculty member is present at these meetings as a facilitator.

During the last scheduled meeting, you will present the completed first draft of your entire Portfolio to your peer group and those faculty mentors who attend. Their feedback will guide you in preparing your final draft, which will be read by your mentor and a second reader and assessed according to the expected standards.

Faculty mentors for the Portfolio. Each student participant in Portfolio is assigned a mentor. A mentor is a member of the faculty who has agreed to act as a guide for the student through his/her Portfolio process.

Students meet with their mentors once a month to receive help in choosing artifacts and writing captions, introductions, and conclusions. It is up to the student to set up these meetings. The collaboration between student and mentor is designed to enable the student to have faculty support in the creation of various parts of the Portfolio.

Mentors are consultants who provide encouragement and the necessary scaffolding to keep students engaged with the task and moving along to the final product. Standards for the Portfolio that mentors must keep in mind as they work with students are:

- clarity of thought;
- connections to theory (mentors may suggest specific theorists for the student to consult);
- connection to Bank Street experiences;
- connections to children and classrooms; and
- connections to student’s personal educational philosophy.

Developing your Portfolio. You can work in a variety of ways to develop your Portfolio.

Some students begin by identifying artifacts. To do this, you consider and reflect upon past educational experiences at Bank Street or at other institutions. Meaningful events or objects from your personal life that have implications for your growth as an educator may also be considered. Another source of artifacts can be experiences in the classroom and in schools, including children's work. An artifact might also emerge from an idea of something that you have been thinking about doing, or struggling to understand. In this case, the artifact will be created to represent this idea. Further reflection on these artifacts will identify some as pivotal to your growth and development as an educator. Still further reflection will reveal connections between and among these artifacts that may be identified as the theme of the Portfolio.

Some students begin by identifying a theme that is broad enough to encompass many different aspects of their educational growth. Artifacts then are identified representing important ideas or experiences that exemplify and concretize the theme.

Students often combine these processes by moving back and forth between identification of theme and artifacts. Themes and artifacts may change during the process. As you become more deeply involved in the process and therefore more aware of what it entails, your concepts may shift and your understanding grows as you become more able to use reflection to inform your work. This generally means that you can expect to revise your captions, especially the earlier ones, many times.

Second reader. Revised Portfolios will be submitted to second readers two to three weeks following draft presentations. When the feedback from the second reader is received, you will meet once again with your faculty mentor to decide how to incorporate this feedback.

The Portfolio presentation. The evening before the commencement ceremony, you will be required to share your Portfolio at the public presentation to which you are encouraged to invite friends and family members as well as colleagues and faculty members. You will arrange a display of the contents of your Portfolio for viewing by the audience. Accompanying this display should be an abstract formatted specifically for the presentation as specified in the *Portfolio Abstract Presentation Format* form. The ten-to fifteen-minute presentation includes a summary of the overall Portfolio process, description of the theme, and a discussion of at least two artifacts. At the end of the presentations, the audience is invited to ask questions and to walk around to view the displayed work at close hand. Immediately following the presentation, students debrief for a short time with their mentors and group facilitators.

General timeline for the Portfolio. At the first peer group meeting, all Portfolio participants will receive a timeline for the year, including due dates for the submission of each caption, the introduction, and the conclusion, as well as dates for the draft presentation, submission to second reader, and the public Portfolio presentation.

It is essential that students adhere to this schedule in order to complete Portfolios satisfactorily. The specific due dates correspond to the dates of the peer group meetings, which will be established at the first meeting.

June – Submit online application (in the Portfolio section of the IMP website)

End of July – Students notified of acceptance and registration process

September – Initial planning; discussion of prospective artifacts

October – Artifact 1 with its caption

November – Artifact 2 with its caption

December – Artifact 3 with its caption & prospective theme

January – Artifacts 4 and 5 with their captions

February – Introduction

March – Conclusion and draft presentations

Early April – Completed Portfolio submitted to second reader

Early May – Final edition of Portfolio due

Late May (evening preceding graduation) – PORTFOLIO PRESENTATIONS

Criteria for Successful Completion for the Portfolio

General standards for a Portfolio. The following five questions address the overall content of the Portfolio:

1. Does the introduction contain a clearly stated Portfolio theme, statements about your educational values/philosophy, and important theoretical influences?
2. Does each caption clearly explain the relationship of each artifact to the theme?
3. Do the designated artifact and caption clearly represent the specified domain (human development, social context of learning, curriculum, philosophy/history)?
4. Does each of the captions respond in some way to these “four questions”?
 - What did I learn from the experience represented by this artifact?
 - What are the implications of this learning for my work with children?
 - How has this learning shaped or been shaped by my educational vision and/or values?
 - How is this learning framed by historical perspectives, current ideas, and research in the field?
5. Does the conclusion synthesize theme and captions, and identify where the next steps in the student’s journey may lead?

Specific criteria for assessment of a Portfolio

Content. This area includes evidence of theoretical knowledge, application of that knowledge to practice, reflection, and sensitivity to individual differences and issues of equity and diversity.

1. The Portfolio contains information using a variety of media.
2. The Portfolio documents your learning journey, including a clear description and analysis of milestones and turning points.
3. Each domain (curriculum, the social context of learning, human development, and

philosophy/history) is represented clearly in the artifacts, and each is supported by references to relevant theory.

4. Each caption is supported by references to personal experiences.
5. Each caption articulates a rationale for the choice of the artifact it accompanies.
6. The theme is identifiable in each artifact and caption and serves as the map of the personal learning journey.
7. The theme is elaborated through the artifacts and their captions.
8. The introduction, the conclusion, and the captions reflect the student's personal and professional growth.
9. The conclusion reflects a synthesis of all the parts of the Portfolio.
10. The introduction and the conclusion clearly identify the educational implications of the theme and the student's personal journey.
11. The writing reflects sensitivity to and awareness of issues of cultural diversity and relevance by:
 - respecting and appreciating differences in race and ethnic identity, gender and sexual orientation, age, religion, and abilities.
 - adhering to *General Guidelines for Reducing Bias* (APA Manual, p. 71).

Organization.

1. The Portfolio package contains a clear, attractive, and accessible presentation of component parts.
2. Each section of the Portfolio is coherent and sharply focused.
3. The introduction identifies what will follow and how the contents mesh with the student's educational vision.
4. The conclusion synthesizes preceding captions and artifacts.
5. The conclusion relates to both personal vision and theoretical underpinnings.
6. The conclusion contains implications for the individual's future work and inquiry.

Form

1. The text and bibliography reflect the use of current and classic materials.
2. The writer uses APA style consistently throughout the Portfolio.
3. Syntax, spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct throughout the text.
4. The materials are well packaged for viewing and retrieving throughout the Portfolio.

Permissions. A copy of the documents granting permission to use any of the following material is included in the study:

- copyrighted material (see pp. 36-38 and 49-50)
- names of individuals or institutions whose identities are not masked (see p. 37-38)
- recognizable photographic images of individuals (see p. 37-38).

Format requirements

Margin requirements: 1-1/2" left margin, 1" right margin, 1" top and bottom margins.

Spacing: double-spaced with indented paragraphs.

Page numbers: all pages beginning with the title page should be numbered

consecutively in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

Running head: should NOT be used.

APA style: should be used throughout the Portfolio.

Proofreading: The final copy must be proofread and corrections made prior to submission.

The components of the Portfolio, each on a new page, should be in the following order:

- **Title page** (see correct format on the following page).
- **Abstract** (see sample abstract on p. 26)
- **Dedication page** (optional).
- **Table of contents** (with page numbers for sections, captions, and pages representing artifacts).
- **Text** (introduction, artifacts and captions, conclusion).
- **References**
- **Permission letters** (unsigned sample[s] if utilized)
- **Copyright letters and responses** (if copyrighted material is included)

Preparing and Submitting Your Portfolio Electronically (see pp. 14)

A PDF of your Portfolio must be submitted to your mentor no later than the early May date listed on the Portfolio timeline for the specific academic year.

Sample Title Page for Portfolio

1

TITLE

A Portfolio

By

Jane Doe

Mentor: Josephine Smith

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
(*use the appropriate degree*)

Master of Science in Education or

Master of Education or

Master of Science

Bank Street College of Education

20—

Sample Abstract Format for the Portfolio (one page only)

2

Title of Portfolio

Author

Theme:

Brief (2-3 sentences) statement of the theme

Artifact 1: Title Domain:

Brief (1-2 sentences) description of the artifact

Artifact 2: Title Domain:

Brief (1-2 sentences) description of the artifact

Artifact 3: Title Domain:

Brief (1-2 sentences) description of the artifact

Artifact 4: Title Domain:

Brief (1-2 sentences) description of the artifact

Artifact 5: Title Domain:

Brief (1-2 sentences) description of the artifact

Theoretical Influences:

List names of most important theorists used.

One-Semester IMP Options

In 2008-2009, the Graduate School introduced three new one-semester IMP options: Site-Based Inquiry (SBI), Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry (CSFI), and Mentored Directed Essay (MDE). These options are designed to give students a meaningful way to complete the IMP requirement that is supported by faculty, provides a structure with flexibility and choice as well as openness for student creativity, and is completed within the time limit of a single semester. Before selecting one of these options, you should be certain that you will have sufficient time to complete the work within the semester. If all work is not completed by the beginning of the following semester, you will need to reregister and pay another fee.

Although no formal academic credit is granted for IMPs, in recognition of the significant time involved, you are granted—for financial aid purposes only—a six-credit equivalent for the term in which you are registered to do your IMP. The six-credit equivalent is used to determine your financial aid half-time status.

Site-Based Inquiry (SBI) and Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry (CSFI), offered in fall and spring semesters, provide a small peer-group experience. Groups of students meet with a faculty facilitator four times during the semester to share and support one another with their individual projects in process.

Students are expected to present their work across groups at an early evening share event at the conclusion of the semester. The fall share is generally scheduled for the second or third Thursday in January. The spring share is scheduled for the Monday before graduation. Faculty may invite students who create work of exceptional quality to prepare their inquiries for submission to the Library.

The **Mentored Directed Essay (MDE)**, offered in fall, spring, and combined summer 1 and 2, provides program-specific questions that students, working one-to-one with their assigned faculty mentor, can adapt to fit their professional goals and setting. Before deciding on this option, it is strongly recommended that you read these questions, available online in the Registrar's Office section of the Graduate School website. Final projects are submitted to the mentor.

Registration

All three options are listed each semester in the Integrative Master's Project section of the online course schedule. Registration procedures and policies for the one-semester options are the same as those governing regular classes.

Registration should be done online at the student's appointed registration time slot

that is scheduled during the web registration period each term. Students who miss web registration for the CSFI or SBI may register in person during the in-person registration day or during the add/drop period. Students who do not register online for the MDE may register in person at the Registrar's Office any time up until the last day of the add/drop period. Please bear in mind that some one-semester IMPs have their first session scheduled prior to the official first day of the term; therefore, students must read the dates in the schedule carefully and be sure to register on time and attend all sessions. The one-semester IMPs are treated as regular courses and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Payment. A \$750 fee is charged for each one-semester IMP. Follow all instructions pertinent to payment options and due dates that link to the registration calendar for each term (including the add/drop period). Financial aid may cover the cost of the IMP.

Attendance. Attendance is required at all scheduled group meetings for CSFIs and SBIs. Initiating and maintaining contact with the mentor of the MDE is a required part of the process.

Dropping. If a student wishes to drop a one-semester IMP, s/he may do so by the end of the add/drop period by visiting the Registrar's Office and filling out the required paperwork. The student will be given a refund for the \$750. If the IMP is not dropped by the end of the add/drop period, the fee is not refundable and not transferable to another future IMP option.

Grading Policies

There are three grades that may be awarded for one-semester IMPs:

1. PASS (P). This grade is awarded when the final work has been submitted and accepted as completing the IMP requirement. This grade satisfies the IMP requirement for graduation.
2. IMP ATTEMPTED BUT NOT COMPLETED (IA). This grade is awarded when the work has not been sufficiently completed to receive a grade of Pass at the time when grades are due. This grade does not satisfy the IMP requirement for graduation. Students receiving this grade have two options:
 - A) Notify the faculty mentor that they wish to continue work on this IMP and submit all work to the faculty mentor no later than the beginning of the following term (i.e., first day of the spring term for fall IMPs; first day of the Summer 1 term for Spring IMPs; First day of Fall term for Summer IMPs).
 - B) Register (and pay) for a new IMP during a subsequent term.

If the work is successfully completed by the due date, the faculty mentor will change the grade to a Pass (P). If not, the grade of IA will remain on the transcript.

3. NOT ATTENDED (NT). This grade is awarded when the student registered for a semester based IMP but did not participate during the term and did not withdraw officially through the Registrar's Office by the appropriate add/drop deadline.

Timing of grade submission. Grades for IMPs are due at the same time all other grades are due in the Registrar's Office each term. Students intending to graduate in the spring term will be highlighted on the roster and those grades will have an early due date in order to facilitate graduation processing. In the spring term, students must be awarded a grade of Pass by the early grading date in order to be eligible to graduate and participate in the Commencement ceremony.

The Site-Based Inquiry

This IMP option is offered in the fall and spring semesters.

The Site-Based Inquiry is appropriate for students who are currently employed in, or have access to, a school setting and wish to focus their Master's project on a topic/problem related to their setting. Students may complete this option whether they reside/work in the immediate New York City area or at a distance, provided they can participate in the group meetings.

Description: Each student will work with a small peer group and the faculty facilitator to identify an educational problem or concern within their own work situation, to investigate that problem and to generate possible courses of action to move toward resolution. In some cases, it may be possible to implement an intervention. In other circumstances, a detailed action plan will be the outcome, based on discussion and approval of the faculty facilitator.

A group of up to six students will meet together a minimum of four scheduled times during the semester-long inquiry project. While the Site-Based Inquiry may be highly individual, it is also possible that two or more students in the group may wish to work together on a similar problem or inquiry. Additional online or peer group discussions are encouraged for group members wishing to access the ideas and experiences of the group. Candidates will describe their inquiry and outcomes in hard copy or multimedia format.

Time requirements: The Site-Based Inquiry must be completed within one semester. It will be important for candidates selecting this option to come to the first session with ideas for the problem they wish to investigate, preferably including a written description. Candidates may have an extension only until the beginning of the following semester, and will need to reregister and pay another fee if the work is not completed by that date.

Sessions typically include:

- 1. Problem Identification.** Students will be expected to come to the first session prepared to describe the problem they wish to investigate. The description should include (1) a statement of the problem, (2) reason why the problem has been selected, (3) list of questions to help to clarify the problem within the setting, and, (4) the desired outcome of the inquiry.
- 2. Data gathering.** Students will come to the second session with specific data gathered in the course of their inquiry (e.g. interviews, surveys, observational documentation, video, research articles, etc.). The session will focus on understanding and analyzing the data and identifying additional data and resources to support further inquiry.
- 3. Action planning.** Students will analyze, prepare, and present data gathered in the course of the inquiry in print or multimedia format. If possible, some or all steps in the action plan will be implemented before the final session.
- 4. Outcomes.** The final group session will require students to present a cohesive story of their site-based inquiry, beginning with rationale for project selection, including a description of methodology used to gather information, explanation of the action plan and/or intervention, and a brief reflection on the process.

Presentation. Students will participate in an evening presentation session open to faculty, students, friends, and family and scheduled for the second or third week in January for the fall semester and the Monday preceding graduation for the spring semester.

Examples of Site-Based Inquiry ideas:

- What types of disciplinary office referrals occur over a two-week period and what are possible ways of decreasing numbers?
- How do different types of writing prompts influence students' writing output in a given grade/class?
- Do students perform better on math word problems when visual cues are added?
- In what ways do children in an inclusive early childhood program interact socially within the first four weeks of school?
- How do perceptions of parents from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds compare in relation to a parent-teacher event at school?
- What structures seem to enable children to attend most easily during meeting times?

Criteria for successful completion. All students are expected to meet the *Criteria for Successful Completion for Site-Based Inquiry and Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry* on page 33.

The Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry

This IMP option is offered in the fall and spring semesters.

Students looking to explore a particular issue or problem in collaboration with both a faculty member and their peers may elect this option. The specific topics, faculty facilitators, and meeting dates and times will be listed in the Integrative Master's Project section of the online course schedule each semester. These topics represent a particular interest or research or policy concern of a faculty member. The faculty facilitator and the student group will help each student identify a particular aspect of the issue to investigate and, together, determine a collective format in which to coordinate and present the findings. Students may complete this option whether they reside/work in the immediate New York City area or at a distance, provided they can participate in the group meetings.

Time requirements. It is critical that the inquiry plan for each student be carefully delineated, be feasible within the semester time frame, and be identified quickly at the beginning of the term so there is time for the research, documentation, and presentation of the findings. Clear timelines—with completion comfortably before semester end or graduation—will be specified.

Structure. The faculty facilitator will provide, in writing and before the first meeting, orientation to the topic and possibilities for research. The group will meet together a minimum of four scheduled times during the semester. The faculty facilitator and group members, individually and collectively, will communicate (via email and/or phone) in the intervening times.

The four sessions will generally follow this sequence.

1. At the first meeting, the topic will be discussed in greater depth, as will options for students to individualize the research to their own sites or available resources. Students should leave the meeting with agreement on directions and strategies for their personal inquiries.
2. Students will bring to the second session their initial research data that will have been shared with members of the group prior to the meeting so that all of them will be ready to begin the process of analysis and prepare for further avenues of exploration.
- 3 and 4. In subsequent sessions, students will report, critique, analyze, and articulate the research on the various components of the larger topic, and collectively assess implications of the findings. The group will assemble and compile its findings.

Findings/presentation. Students will present their inquiry process and findings in hard copy and/or multimedia formats. The work of the individual group members will be brought together into a format for presentation, decided upon by the group

in consultation with the faculty facilitator. Requirements for citation of resources, permissions for use of materials and information from human participants, and other components of a professional presentation will be outlined in advance for the students.

All students will participate in an evening presentation session open to faculty, students, friends, and family and scheduled for the second or third Thursday in January for the fall semester and the Monday preceding graduation for the spring semester.

Faculty responsibilities. The faculty facilitator conceptualizes and develops the focus of the inquiry and a short, relevant list of readings for students. The faculty facilitator will be responsible for facilitating the group meetings; orienting the candidates to the topic and process; seeing that all students are expeditiously embarked on relevant, practical, feasible research; monitoring the research and documentation of individual students and providing focused assistance where needed; and helping students to prepare their presentations. The faculty facilitator will assess the individual projects to assure successful completion of the IMP requirement.

Student responsibilities. Students commit to full, regular participation in the group sessions; active research on their selected component of the group topic, in consultation with peers and as approved by the facilitator; meeting benchmarks in documenting their project in a timely way; meeting all ethical requirements of permissions and confidentiality; regular communication with the faculty facilitator; and participating in the presentation.

Examples of Collaborative Student-Faculty Inquiry topics offered by faculty:

1. International issues and practices in education
2. Ownership of the classroom: routines and transitions
3. Teacher and parent/family collaboration
4. Teacher leadership
5. Drama and literacy
6. Supporting kids on the autism spectrum
7. Integrating aesthetic education into curriculum
8. Children's literature
9. Diversity: different for a purpose
10. How toddlers make friends
11. Developing a curriculum of experience: place-based learning and curriculum design

Criteria for Successful Completion for Site-Based Inquiry and Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry

All students are expected to meet the following criteria:

Content and scholarship

- The writer has clearly stated the purpose, methodology, and outcomes of the inquiry.
- Data gathered during the inquiry is presented in a clear, concise format that is readily understandable.
- Outcomes or action plans are based on a thoughtful analysis and synthesis of ideas and knowledge of the field, including citations of relevant research.
- The writer uses clear and accurate terminology in describing the project and its action plan/outcomes.
- The writing reflects sensitivity to and awareness of issues of cultural diversity and relevance by respecting and appreciating differences in race and ethnic identity, gender and sexual orientation, age, religion, and abilities and by adhering to *General Guidelines for Reducing Bias* (APA Manual, p. 71).
- The writer has taken appropriate steps to ensure that all ethical requirements are met, such as informed consent, photo or video permissions, and preservation of confidentiality.

Organization

- The presentation is presented in a way that reflects the needs of the reader/audience and is easily understood and followed.
- The writer uses headings, subheadings, and graphic elements to reinforce essential points.

Form

- Written presentations should be approximately 25 pages, double-spaced.
- Media presentations should be visually appealing, have clear, concise text and sufficient white space to allow for ease of viewing, and be accompanied by a written rationale and reflection.
- The writer has appropriately credited all sources in correct APA format, including use of digital photos or graphics not produced by the writer.
- Syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct throughout.
- Vocabulary is rich and varied, indicative of a broad understanding of the field.

The Mentored Directed Essay

This option is offered in fall, spring, and combined summer 1 and summer 2 semesters. Students may complete this option whether residing/working in the immediate New York City area or at a distance. The directed essay questions for all programs offering the Mentored Directed Essay are located in the Registrar's Office section of the Graduate School website. Students are strongly urged to read these questions carefully and assess their ability to meet the requirements for this option during one semester before they register for it.

Description. Each student works with an assigned faculty mentor to design an essay that is based on existing program-specific, prepared questions. These questions are designed to help students think and write about the salient and significant issues pertaining to their chosen area of study, while drawing on and integrating knowledge gained in courses and field experiences. This option is designed to provide structure and focus with maximum flexibility. Together, mentor and student may adapt questions to support the professional growth, interests, and current work situation of the student. With the mentor's approval, the student may create his/her own question(s). Questions have clearly demarcated sections to make them manageable for students. The number of questions and specific criteria for the essays and student-generated questions are decided within programs/pathways. Mentors are assigned within programs and pathways, and the students are notified to contact their mentor.

During an initial meeting, the faculty mentor helps the student understand and adapt the appropriate questions, sets a timeframe for when each section of the work will be due, and suggests appropriate resources. In two or more subsequent meetings, which can be face-to-face or via phone and/or email, the mentor gives feedback on completed work and provides assistance as needed. *It is the student's responsibility to initiate and maintain contact with the mentor, to manage his/her time well, to ask for clarification and assistance when needed, to meet the criteria for successful completion articulated below, and to complete the work within the established time requirements.* In a final meeting, the mentor gives overall feedback and reflects with the student on the process of developing the essays.

Guidelines for adapting directed essay questions. Through discussion, faculty mentor and student may adapt the existing directed essay question(s) so that they are personally meaningful, professionally relevant, and intellectually accessible to and appropriate for the learning style of the student. The process of writing the directed essay is intended to further the student's professional growth through:

- inquiry into an issue of personal/professional relevance
- integration of many facets of experiences at Bank Street and in the field
- reflection on previous work to critically assess and deepen understandings
- application of theoretical knowledge to current and future work as an educator.

Criteria for Successful Completion of the Mentored Directed Essay

Content and scholarship.

- Each essay draws upon relevant examples of the writer's personal experiences in the field and integrates them with multiple theorists, making clear and understandable connections.
- Each essay contains thoughtful analysis and synthesis of ideas and knowledge of the field and implications for future practice.
- The writing reflects sensitivity to and awareness of issues of cultural diversity and relevance by respecting and appreciating differences in race and ethnic identity, gender and sexual orientation, age, religion, and abilities and by adhering to *General Guidelines for Reducing Bias* (APA Manual, p. 71).

Organization.

- The paper is organized and presented in a way that reflects the needs of the reader/audience and is easily understood and followed.
- The writer uses headings, subheadings, and graphic elements to reinforce essential points.

Form.

- The paper should be the length specified in the specific questions, double spaced.
- The writer has appropriately credited all sources in correct APA format.
- Syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct throughout.
- Vocabulary is rich and varied, indicative of a broad understanding of the field.

IMP Procedures and Resources

Assistance With Writing

Bank Street College offers a range of resources for students interested in writing assistance or those who need help with technical writing questions.

The Graduate School Writing Assistance Program. Mentors can refer students with significant writing difficulties to Rena Rice, director of the Writing Assistance Program. Please email Rena at renarice@bankstreet.edu for information about the program and procedures for referrals.

A *Writer's Handbook*. Bank Street publishes *A Writer's Handbook*, which provides information on style, organization, and APA citation. *A Writer's Handbook* is available as a PDF on the Library page of the Bank Street website.

The Bank Street College Library. If you would like to have a personal bound copy of your IMP, bring a print copy and two blank pages, along with \$20.00 (in cash, or a check made out to the Bank Street College Library) to arrange for a journal-quality binding. Details, including colors available for binding, are on the Bank Street College Library website in the *How Can I... Have an IMP Bound* section.

Copyright Compliance

Compliance with copyright law is crucial for works that are intended to be submitted to the Library, particularly if they exceed the “brevity” parameters summarized on page 37. Copyrighted materials include:

- selections from books and dramatic works, and poems
- recorded music, websites (and the images found on them)
- artwork
- photographs.

If you have included your own original artwork, etc. please indicate that clearly in the text and in captions so it is clear that this is not the copyrighted work of others.

Failure to show proof of permission may result in the work being withheld from public use. Please make sure to include in your appendix a copy of each of the permissions you have obtained. Permissions received via email are acceptable. Additionally, a full citation for the copyrighted material must appear on the same page as the material. See the samples of copyright permission letters on pages 49-50. These letters can also be found on the Library website under *How Can I...*

The brevity parameters of fair use are:

- print material consisting of up to 10 percent or 1,000 words, whichever is less, of a copyrighted work;
- a single picture;
- a single page of a children's book;
- a short (thirty-second) excerpt from an audio or video recording
- a single page from a website.

If the amount of material used falls within the brevity parameters, permission is not required; however, a full citation is required for all copyrighted material used.

The Library has copies of the following books to help with copyright questions:

Hobbs, R., & National Council of Teachers of English. (2010). *Copyright clarity: How fair use supports digital learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Crews, K. D. (2012). *Copyright law for librarians and educators: Creative strategies and practical solutions*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

If you have specific questions about copyright, please call the Library at 212-875-4456.

Permission to use Names and Images

If your IMP will be submitted to the IMP database or to the Library, you will not only have to get permission to quote copyrighted material, you will also need to obtain written permission for any of the items listed below. All permissions or letters and forms of consent should be placed in a permissions section of the appendix for your IMP.

Note: If you are conducting a research study, you may need to apply to the IMP Committee for approval before you are allowed to begin work with human participants. Please read the section below on Research Involving Human Participants and talk with your mentor or a member of the IMP Committee to determine whether or not an application is necessary. See sample consent letters and forms in the Research Involving Human Participants section, pages 41-45.

1. **Images of individuals.** If you plan to include either photographic or digital media with images of individuals, you will need to obtain signed permission from individuals 19 years of age and over, and from the parents or guardians of those age 18 and under. A blank sample letter must be included in the appendix, and the signed letters should be kept in a safe place for five years.
2. **Names of individuals.** Names of adult individuals may be included only with written permission of the individuals involved. A signed copy of the written permission for each named individual must be placed in the permissions section of the appendix of your IMP.

3. **Names of institutions.** Names of institutions may be used only with the written approval of the director or principal. The written permission, on institutional letterhead, should be placed in the appendix.
4. **Observational material.** If you use any observational material of identifiable individuals or groups, you must disguise the names of actual persons and advise the director or principal of the institution concerned that such material is being incorporated into the study. If this is part of a research study, before you begin this research, you will need the written permission from a member of the IMP Committee. Details on applying for permission are in the following section on *Research Involving Human Participants*.

Research Involving Human Participants

Doing research that involves human participants holds great promise for students. Through systematic and deliberate inquiry, it is anticipated that students will both broaden and deepen their understanding of some aspect of education in which they are keenly interested, and discover ways of strengthening their practice. Researchers, and by extension students in the Graduate School, are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner and to provide assurance that they will not exploit their participants.

In compliance with federal regulations, the College has an Institutional Research Review Board (IRRB) to ensure that human participants involved in research projects at the College are protected from harm, that research is of service to participants, and that the participants and community are protected from foreseeable risks in those settings in which data are collected. We believe that respect for individuals is a core value of education professionals; to this end we strongly encourage students and mentors to discuss ethical matters concerning their research projects both with each other and the prospective participants. Definitions of commonly used terms are on pages 46-47.

Student-initiated research projects involving human participants at Bank Street are reviewed by the IMP Committee, which provides assistance to students to ensure that human participants will be respected and their identities protected. In rare instances, if the IMP Committee is not fully satisfied that human rights are sufficiently protected, a full review before the Institutional Research Review Board may be necessary. In such cases, the mentor will work with the student, in collaboration with the chair of the IMP Committee, to prepare for the full review.

Determining whether you need approval to work with human participants. No approval is required for the following circumstances:

- Information from a public database where aggregated data cannot be associated with any particular individual or group of individuals;
- Observations of behavior within a public gathering that cannot be associated

- with any particular individual or group of individuals;
- Information that is already in the public domain (e.g., autobiographies, diaries, other published materials);
- Human participants are being asked solely to give feedback on or participate in trial uses of original work created by the student. For example, teacher feedback on a curriculum project, reading to children a book written by the student to get the children's responses, trying out curriculum activities in a classroom, etc.

Prior approval for working with human participants *is required* for cases in which research data will involve one or more of the following:

- Identifiable private information about an individual or a group of individuals;
- Graphic, written, or recorded information derived from individually identifiable human participants;
- A risk of harm to the participant(s), whether physical, mental, emotional, social, or political.

Approval Process for Work with Human Participants. If your project includes the use of human participants then, with your mentor's assistance, you will need to prepare a brief proposal and submit it for approval to a member of the IMP Committee. You may not begin your research with human participants until this approval is granted.

Your proposal should include the following:

1. A brief description of the research to be undertaken, including the kinds of data to be collected;
2. A statement about the steps being taken to ensure that participants will be informed about the research and how the data collected will be used, with specific answers to the following questions:
 - How will the participants (or their parents/guardians) be informed about the study?
 - How will you secure their agreement to participate?
 - If the study involves children, how will you secure parents' or guardians' permission for the children to participate?
3. Procedures to ensure that the identity of the participants and institutions will be protected (this may also involve disguising the identity of the site of the project) and, if you are referring to individuals directly, how you plan to mask their identities (e.g., using different names).
4. A sample of the form that secures the participants' written consent to participate. (See *Consent Forms for Research Involving Human Participants* (below), and *Sample Consent Letters* on pp. 42-46.)
5. A statement that you will keep letters of informed consent available and accessible for five years after the research is completed.

Getting Your Proposal and Consent Forms Approved:

1. Email the above materials to a member of the IMP Committee.
2. The IMP Committee member will respond via email to both you and your mentor.
3. If the plan satisfies the requirements, you will receive a letter stating that you have approval to begin your research. *You must include this letter of approval in the permissions section of the appendix of your study, along with a blank (or, if appropriate, signed) copy of any consent forms.*
4. If the plan does not satisfy the requirements, resubmit it to the IMP committee member with the requested modifications (repeat steps 1–3).
5. You may formally begin the research process once these steps have been completed.

Consent Forms for Research Involving Human Participants.

Participants need an opportunity to make an informed decision and to give their consent to take part in a research study. They should be given sufficient knowledge about the nature and purpose of the research project as well as any possible consequences of their engagement in it. This is generally done with a consent form. Parents/guardians of children 18 years and under should sign a consent form giving permission for their children to participate in a research study. Children 18 years old and under also may be asked to sign an assent form in which they agree to participate voluntarily. Special care should be taken to protect the rights of children and other individuals who may lack self-determination due to illness, disability, or other circumstances.

Students should plan to keep the signed forms in a secure place for five years after the completion of the research. They should include an unsigned sample form in the appendix of their study.

Consent forms should provide the following information to prospective participants:

1. A general description of the research, including its purpose, time involvement for the participant, why the participant was selected, and a description of the research process.
2. An account of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participant.
3. A description of any benefits to the participant or to others that may reasonably be expected.
4. A statement that indicates that their participation or the participation of minors in the project is voluntary and they are aware of their right to refuse or withdraw consent at any time without penalty.
5. A statement that the Independent Study will be submitted as a PDF to the

Bank Street Library where it will be catalogued as part of the collection and downloadable via a live link on the catalog entry. It will also be entered into an international database, available to those beyond the Bank Street community.

6. A commitment on the part of the researcher to maintain confidentiality and a description of how that will be achieved.
7. Contact information in case the participant has any questions.

For more information, download the resource *Consent Letters to Parents* on the IMP website under Graduate School > Academics > Integrative Master's Project (bankstreet.edu/imp).

The sample consent letters and forms on the following pages can be adapted to fit the particular circumstances of each research study.

Sample Consent Letter 1 *(To be printed on museum stationery)*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is _____ and I am a graduate student in Museum Education at Bank Street College of Education in New York. I am also a full-time museum educator at [name of museum]. I am currently conducting research for my master's thesis and will be acting as the principal investigator for this study. The goal of my master's thesis is to create an arts-based museum program for children with autism and their families. This program will most likely be implemented at [name of museum]. I am interested in learning about your experiences in cultural settings and with cultural programming as a parent or guardian of a child or children on the autism spectrum. The information that you provide will provide me with insights that will be used in the planning of this program.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to [indicate survey or interview/ place and time]. Your participation is voluntary and you can refuse to answer any questions or terminate your participation at any time without penalty. Please note that if the feedback that you share during this time is included in the thesis, your name will be changed to protect your privacy. Please also note that the master's thesis will be submitted as a PDF to the Bank Street Library where it will be catalogued as part of the Library collection and downloadable via a live link on the catalog entry. It will also be entered into an international database for wider circulation. The thesis will also be utilized at [name of museum] and may serve as a model program for other museums interested in establishing programs for children with autism.

Please sign on the lines below to indicate that you grant permission for the information that you provide to be used for the purpose of this study. Please also indicate whether you agree to allow your child to be interviewed for the purpose of this study.

Thank you for taking the time to share you insights with me. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at [student's email address].

Sincerely,

(signature of student)

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Participant (please print) _____

Signature _____

I grant permission for my child to participate in this study.

Name of Child (please print) _____

Signature (parent/guardian) _____

Date _____

Sample Consent Letter 2 *(To be printed on school stationery)*

Dear Parents,

As you know, I am studying literacy development in elementary education at Bank Street College. I am in the process of completing my master's degree, and am planning to compile a study of the development of Hebrew reading and writing skills as my thesis project. In this study, I will explore students' responses to the questions and assignments I have given them to develop their decoding and deepen their comprehension, much of which I have demonstrated to you during Back to School Night and our parent-teacher conferences. I am very pleased and proud of the progress of this year's first grade class, and would like to document what I have learned from our classes this year. I would like to obtain your permission to use some of your child's written work, and possibly photos of [him or her] engaged in the learning process, in my final thesis presentation. Names will be removed from any and all student work and pictures and the name of the school will be disguised. The study will be submitted as a PDF to the Bank Street Library where it will be catalogued as part of the Library collection and downloadable via a live link on the catalog entry. It will also be entered into an international database for wider circulation.

Please sign and return this form to confirm your consent.

Thanks sincerely,

(signature of student)

I understand that (name of student), Master's Degree candidate at Bank Street College of Education, is studying the development of Hebrew as a second language for (her/his) Master's thesis.

I give permission for my child's written work to be used in this study.

Signed _____ Dated _____

I consent to the use of my child's photograph to be included in this study.

Signed _____ Dated _____

Sample Consent Letter 3 *(To be printed on school stationery)*

Dear Parents,

As you know, I am currently a student at Bank Street College, completing my Master's degree in early childhood education. As part of my graduate work, I am writing an Independent Study, a requirement for my degree and a culmination of my studies. For my project, I have chosen to examine the development of empathetic behavior among three- year-olds in the early childhood classroom. In order to examine this process, I will be engaging the children in discussions of the needs of others and of different ways of helping. I will be asking the children to take part in documenting their own empathetic actions in books that will be available in the classroom. I will also be making running records documenting behavior and language related to empathy in the classroom. I may also record classroom discussions through video or audio recordings. Together, these will serve as the primary data for my study. Every individual will be given a pseudonym and any identifying features will be disguised. The school and the classroom will also be given pseudonyms. Video and audio recordings will be transcribed and pseudonyms will be used here as well.

In order to use the written and video or audio documentation, I need your permission. Please fill out the attached Consent Form and return it to me by _____ .

The study that results from this project will be shared as a PDF with the Bank Street community in a password-protected searchable database and may also be submitted as a PDF to the Bank Street Library where it would be catalogued as part of the Library collection and entered into an international database for wider circulation. The material may also be included in professional presentations and publications.

If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(signature of student)

Sample Consent and Release Form

Consent and Release Form for Parent or Guardian

I am the parent/guardian of _____

I have carefully read the information provided above and give my permission to (name of Bank Street graduate student) to use (check all that you are consenting to):

_____ Written documentation of my child

_____ Video documentation of my child

_____ Audio documentation of my child

I understand that my child's name and the name of the school and community will be protected by pseudonyms in the actual thesis as well as in any professional talks and publications based on this research. I grant permission to (name of Bank Street graduate student) to use the above noted documentation of my child in the thesis document and in professional presentations and publications.

I have read this release form and agree to its terms knowingly and voluntarily.

Parent/guardian's name _____ Date _____
please print

Parent/guardian's signature _____ Date _____
signature

Sample Consent Letter 4 *(for a Collaborative Student/Faculty Inquiry)*

Dear Parent or Guardian, or Teacher,

My name is _____ and I am a graduate student at Bank Street College of Education in New York. I am currently conducting research for my final master's project on *Parents' and Teachers' Perspectives on Parent-Teacher Conferences*. I am interested in learning your thoughts about your recent parent-teacher conference. This interview will take about an hour.

Please note that your name, your child's or children's names, or your student's name, and the name of their school, will be changed to protect your privacy. The study may be submitted as a PDF to the Bank Street library where it would be catalogued as part of the Library collection and downloadable via a live link on the catalog entry.

Please note that you may refuse to answer any questions, if you so choose. You are also free to terminate your participation at any time without penalty.

Please sign the lines below to indicate that you grant permission for the information you provide to be used for the purpose of this study, and for me to tape this interview.

Thank you for taking the time to share your insights with me. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [student's email address] or my faculty mentor, Jane Doe, at [faculty email address]

Sincerely,

[Student's signature]

I agree to participate in the study, *Parents' and Teachers' Perspectives on Parent-Teacher Conferences*, and I give my permission to tape this interview.

Name of participant _____ Date _____
please print

Signature _____ Date _____

Definitions of Commonly Used Terms for Research Involving Human Participants

Adult

For the purpose of implementing these guidelines, an individual 19 years of age or older.

Assent

“Assent” means a child’s affirmative agreement to participate. In addition to parental permission, federal regulations require in most instances that a child who is sufficiently mature to comprehend his/her participation in the research project be offered the opportunity to give consent. Mere failure to object should not, in absence of agreement, be construed as assent. When a written form is in use, it should contain a simple explanation of the research project, including benefits, risks, and safeguards. (Please note that “assent” is equivalent to “agreement,” and can be given by any participant who is sufficiently mature to do so. Compare with definition of “informed consent.”)

Benefits

Gains incurred by any stakeholder as the result of a research project.

Child

For the purpose of implementing these guidelines, an individual 18 years old or younger.

Confidentiality

The extent to which private, personal data can be accessed by anyone other than the researchers.

Debriefing

Post–research explanations of the projects that ensure that the participants fully understand what has occurred in the course of the project, including ensuring that any negative outcomes are identified and worked through.

Informed Consent

A statement by each participant that indicates that his/her participation or the participation of minors in the project is voluntary (not coerced), and that participants are aware of their right to refuse or withdraw consent without penalty. Informed consent is required from each participant who is legally, mentally, and physically able to provide it. The researcher must provide information regarding the research study in a form that can be easily understood by persons with no professional background.

Consent forms must include: a statement of the purpose of the research, acknowledgment that participants may terminate their participation in the project at any point with no penalty, and a statement guaranteeing confidentiality. (Please note that “informed consent” is equivalent to “permission,” and must be given by someone

legally able to grant such consent. In the case of an adult participant, the participant can give consent on behalf of himself or herself. In the case of a child participant, informed consent must be provided in writing by the child's parent or guardian. (Compare with definition of "Assent.")

Participant

Anyone who is a subject in a research study.

Principal Investigator

The person who leads the research project, and who has overall responsibility for its conduct and outcomes.

Privacy

Ensuring that confidential information is not accessible to anyone other than the researchers.

Risks

Circumstances that put participants in a research study in danger of some kind of harm.

Secondary Data Sources

Data previously compiled by others that is used by the researchers.

Sample Permission Letter requesting the Use of Copyrighted Images in an Independent Study

Permissions Department
Museum, or Publishing Company Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a graduate student at the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. As part of my graduation requirement, I am preparing an independent study on _____ . Independent studies are catalogued as part of the library collection and are downloadable via a live link on the catalog entry, making them accessible to Bank Street faculty and students as well as beyond the college. They will also be entered into an international database for wider circulation.

I would like to request permission to include a reproduction of the following image(s) to supplement my thesis text:

[complete the following information for each image from this source]

Artist's Name:
Title of Painting/Photograph/Sculpture/etc.:
Title of Publication from which the image will be reproduced:
Author of above publication:
Page Number(s):
Year of Publication:
Copyright Holder:
Type of Reprint: Color or Black & White Photocopy
Use: To be used as illustrative material

Additional sample text:

The image(s), in the form of color copies from the online collection, would be included only in the appendix, and serve as a point of reference for the reader.

I have enclosed a self-address envelope for your convenience. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Sample Permission Letter Requesting Use of Copyrighted Text in an Independent Study

Materials Permission Department
Publishing Company Name
Company Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a graduate student at the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. As part of my graduation requirement, I am preparing an Integrative Master's Project on _____ and would like to request permission to include a copy of the following material:

Title (Book or Article):
Book Publisher and Year of Publication
or
Journal Title, Issue, Year, Pages:
Author:
Copyright Holder:
Material to be duplicated (photocopy enclosed):
Type of reprint: Photocopy
Use: To be used as illustrative material

The Integrative Master's Project will be shared as a PDF with the Bank Street community in a password-protected searchable database and may also be submitted as a PDF to the Bank Street Library where it would be catalogued as part of the Library collection and entered into an international database for wider circulation.

I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope for your convenience in replying to this request.

Sincerely,

The Integrative Master's Project Committee

Rena Rice, *Graduate Faculty, Co-chair*
Gil Schmerler, *Graduate Faculty, Co-chair*
Peter Hare, *Reference Librarian*
Mollie Welsh Kruger, *Graduate Faculty*
Nesta Marshall, *Graduate Faculty*
Sean O'Shea, *Graduate Faculty*

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Graduate School of Education

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