

**ATTACHMENT H:
POL STUDENT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL**

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POL Student Focus Group Protocol

My name is _____, and I am with Social Policy Research Associates, the organization that is conducting a study about the Poetry Out Loud program. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. Our goal today is to learn about your experiences in Poetry Out Loud program.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. This agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection information unless that collection displays a valid OMB control number XXXX-XXXX, expiring [date]. Our discussion here should last about 60 minutes.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary, and there is no right or wrong answer – we just want to understand your experiences. There are no program consequences (i.e., loss of benefits) for deciding not to participate in the interview, or for deciding not to answer any particular question. Also please note that your name will not be associated with any information you provide. We will keep your responses private to the extent permitted by law.

[if you will be recording] We will be taking notes so we can later recall your perspectives more accurately. In addition, so we can stay focused on the conversation, we would like to record today's discussion. If at any point you would like me to pause or turn off the recorder, please let me know. I want to let you know that Social Policy Research Associates will not use your name in any reports.

Poetry Exposure/Appreciation

1. How many of you studied poetry before this year? [Count # of affirmative responses]
 - a. For those who respond in the affirmative, get some information about that— when did they study it? What did that kind of study entail?
2. How many of you *enjoy* poetry?
 - a. What is it that you like about it?
 - b. Do you have favorite poets? Who are they? Why do you like their poetry?
3. How many of you dislike poetry or find it (or parts of it) difficult?
 - a. What is it about poetry that you find challenging? Is there something that you think might help make it less challenging/more enjoyable?
4. Tell me a bit about how what poetry studies in your English class is like.
 - a. What kinds of poems do you study?
 - b. Do you get to choose? If so, how do you make your choice? What are you drawn to?
 - c. What does studying poetry involve? [Depending on where they are in the curriculum, it should include memorization, analysis, and recitation. Feel free to probe so you know what they are doing. You are asking this question so that you know how to tailor some of the other questions, depending on where they are in the program and what they have done to this point.]
 - d. Do you study by yourself? In pairs or on group work?

Poetry and Academic Outcomes

5. Do you think that studying poetry has helped you improve in your work in English class? In what way? [Probe to help them articulate specifics—has it improved their writing? Their reading comprehension? Their vocabulary?]
6. Tell me about the process of analyzing poetry. How would you describe it? What's challenging about it? Is there something rewarding about it?
7. What are you learning through your study of poetry that is most meaningful or interesting to you? [For probes, consider: creative expression, different modes of expression, different perspectives/world views, etc.]
8. Has studying poetry changed the way you feel about studying English language arts? If yes, in what way?
9. How about your other subjects or school in general? Has your experience with poetry studies changed the way you approach or think about other subjects? Or your interest in learning in general?

Poetry and Socio-emotional Development

10. Have your poetry studies introduced you to different ways of looking at the world and at other people? Can you talk about that a little bit? [This is a more targeted question around exposure to different cultures, perspectives, and world views.]
11. Has studying poetry had an effect on how you see yourself? If so, how?
12. How many of you have had experience speaking in front of audiences before? How many of you are *comfortable* speaking in front of an audience?
 - a. For those of you who are uncomfortable with it, tell me a little bit about that. What is it that makes you uncomfortable?
13. How many of you have had an opportunity to recite poetry in front of your classmates? [Count # of affirmative responses]
 - a. [For those who responded affirmatively], what was that like?
 - b. Did that change at all your level of comfort speaking in front of people? Can you describe how for me?
14. In studying poetry, you probably have seen lots of different ways that poets use language to express themselves. Has this influenced the way you express yourself, or encouraged you to think about different ways of expressing yourself? [If yes], tell me a bit about that.
 - a. For example, are you more comfortable using metaphor? Simile? A wider range of words than you used to use? Other changes?
 - b. Do you find that these changes affect your writing? Your speaking? Both?

Wrap Up

15. Have your feelings about poetry changed since you started studying it in class?
16. Do you ever share poetry with your friends? Your family? If yes, how do you share it? (e.g., social media?) What have been their responses?
17. Before studying poetry in this class, how many of you have tried writing your own poetry? [If largely non-affirmative response] Are any of you writing it now? What do you write about? How do you feel when you write your own poetry?

- a. For those who had been engaged in writing poetry before taking this class, has the class had any influence on your writing process?
18. I think you've answered all my questions. Do you have any questions for me? Is there anything else you would like to share about your participation in POL that we might not have covered yet?