

American Institutions Focus Group Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for coming to our focus group today. We value your contributions and your participation will greatly aid in our research into creating effective and engaging history courses. This will be a semi-structured interview, so while I have questions, there are no right or wrong answers and you are free to share your different experiences and opinions. So, if you think 'that's not how I feel,' then you should let us know.

Topics:

1. General attitudes:

- a. What was your experience like in this course?
 - i. Who has an experience that we haven't heard yet?
- b. What helped you learn in the course?
 - i. Can you give an example of how you used this strategy/tool?
- c. Do any of the sessions stand out in your memory?
 - i. Can you describe them?
- d. Since taking the class, have you ever talked about this class to family, friends, or anyone else not in the class?
- e. Since taking the course, have you been in contact with any students from the course?
- f. If you were talking to a high school student, how would you explain the purpose of this course?
 - i. Could you say some more about that?

2. Attitudes towards the discipline

- a. Do you find the study of history interesting?
 - i. If not, what has your past experience been?
- b. Can you think of any ways that the class made you think differently about history?
 - i. Can you give me an example?

3. Historical Skills

- a. Have you thought about history since taking this class?
 - i. Can you say more about that?
- b. Have you used any academic skills from this class in other classes?

- i. Can you give me an example?
- c. Do you think you learned skills in this class that will be useful in your professional careers?
 - i. Can you give me an example?

4. Civic Engagement

- a. Do any issues you covered in the class seem relevant today?
 - i. Can you say more about that?
- b. Do you see connections between the course and your lives/identity?
 - i. What do you mean by that?
- c. After having taken this course, do you feel more confident taking part in current political debates?
 - i. Can you give me an example of that?