

The Arts and Spirituality Center's HeartSpeak Program: Analyzing Data from a Reflective Conversation

by
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ABSTRACT

The Arts and Spirituality Center's HeartSpeak Program: Analyzing Data from a Reflective
Conversation

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Through HeartSpeak, an arts and peace initiative of the Arts and Spirituality Center, artists provide multiple anti-violence art workshops in schools and several other venues throughout Philadelphia. This study focuses on quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the program in order to see what impact poetry in general and the specific HeartSpeak program have in helping children to thrive despite exposure to chronic community violence. This research was conducted through facilitating reflective conversations and implementing questionnaires among fourth, fifth and sixth graders at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies and fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy. The results indicate that the program is helping children to grow in confidence, express themselves, learn about their abilities and those of their classmates, and identify places of sanctuary in their lives. Having previous experience with writing poetry and feeling confident when sharing poetry with classmates were significantly related to students' belief that the program is important. My main recommendations are for more workshops to be provided for the children, more time to be devoted to writing, more freedom in children choosing writing topics, and closer partnership between poetry instructors and the classroom teachers.

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I. Introduction:

Founded in 2000, the Arts and Spirituality Center was founded in collaboration with artists and spiritual leaders. Their vision was to open a non-sectarian organization in Philadelphia that would build bridges between people of different races, ethnicities, religions, classes and cultures. (22) The primary focus is on personal and social healing through both artistic and spiritual forms of expression such as poetry, creative writing, visual arts, dance, music, and other artistic media. (22) Serving mainly at the neighborhood level, the center's mission is to nurture the inherent ability that individuals and communities have to overcome injustices, break through alienation, and impact neighborhood revival. (22) Through its work, the center desires to build the strength of the human spirit and the capacity for change within the community of Philadelphia, with a specific target toward underserved neighborhoods. (22)

HeartSpeak, one of the Arts and Spirituality Center's programs, is a citywide arts and peace initiative that engages thousands of youth throughout Philadelphia in a conversation about their visions of peace through art and poetry. (22) The objective of the program is to give youth a voice in articulating how they feel about the violence in the city, how it affects them, and what they believe can be done to reduce it. (22) The program also provides outlets for many of the children to be able to share their ideas through performance opportunities to wider audiences through the media or small venue presentations. (22) Through the HeartSpeak program, artists provide multiple anti-violence art workshops in schools, afterschool programs, community-based programs, faith-based communities, and immigrant communities. (22) After the conclusion of workshop series or after several sessions had taken place, my study focused on qualitative evaluation of the program. The main purpose of the evaluation was to determine what impact

poetry in general and the specific HeartSpeak program have in helping children to thrive despite exposure to chronic community violence. While acting as a place of sanctuary for its writers, poetry builds self-esteem and self-efficacy as it exposes individual talents; thus, these protective factors offered by poetry help give children the ability to be resilient.

II. Background and Significance:

Children living in low-income, urban environments are particularly vulnerable to experiencing “chronic community violence.” Chronic community violence can be defined as the frequent and continual exposure to violence in the neighborhood as in the use of guns, knives, drugs, and random acts of violence. (1) Studies have shown that children growing up in inner cities throughout the United States have commonalities with children growing up in war zones in that the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder often seen in children living in violent urban areas are similar to those seen in children in actual war zones. (2, 3) Depending on the age of the child, these symptoms can range from nightmares, fear of natural exploring beyond their immediate environment, clinginess to parents or other caregivers, a numbing of feelings and emotional expression, distractibility, and/or feelings of alienation. (2, 3) Children of all ages are deeply impacted by exposure to violence. Infants and toddlers exposed to violence often exhibit excessive irritability, immature behavior, sleep disturbances, fear of being alone, emotional distress, and regression in toileting and language proficiency. (4) A connection has been made between the exposure of school-age children to community violence and anxiety, depression, and aggressive behavior. (5) As children grow older and continue to be exposed to violence, particularly chronic community violence, the impact becomes even more significant. Adolescents in these situations tend to display high levels of aggression and acting out, along with anxiety, behavioral troubles, school problems, truancy, and revenge-seeking. (6) In addition to youth showing the same signs of posttraumatic stress as children living in war-torn areas, many adolescents exposed to persistent violence exhibit symptoms similar to soldiers returning from combat. (6)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has long been one of the most violent cities in the country with many of its residents living at or below the poverty line. (23) According to the crime statistics data provided by the Philadelphia Police Department, in 2006, there were almost 23,000 violent crimes committed: 406 murders, 960 rapes, 10,971 robberies, and 10,546 aggravated assaults. (8) According to Philadelphia Police Department records, 333 Philadelphians were murdered in 2008. (8) Of this number, 245 victims were twenty-five years of age or younger with seventeen being under the age of eighteen. (8) Almost all of the victims were male minorities. (8) Of these 245 young victims, almost 93% were killed with a firearm. (8) It is no wonder that many inner city youth exhibit behavior consistent with war trauma. (7)

In addition to horrific community violence, many youth witness domestic violence or experience it first-hand. In a 2005/2006 study conducted with teens 13 to 18 years of age, one in three teens claimed to know a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, slapped, choked or otherwise physically harmed by his/her partner. (9) Thirty percent of teens reported worrying about their personal physical safety in a relationship. (9) According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, in a separate study, one in five female high school students reported being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner. (10, 13) Extremely low-income families are particularly vulnerable to experiencing domestic violence with 35.5% of women and 20.7% of men in households with incomes under \$15,000 per year enduring violence from an intimate partner. (11) According to findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey of 2000, domestic violence goes largely underreported. (12) Most victims who did not report their victimization to police believed that the police would not or could not help them in any way. (12)

Many studies of resilient children of all ages have consistently pointed to three critical protective factors for development: a caring adult, a place of safety or sanctuary within the community, and a child's own internal resources. (1) HeartSpeak nurtures several of the important internal resources that are helpful to children's resiliency such as their sense of self-esteem, self-efficacy and existence of individual talents. (1) It also helps them to both identify and create places of safety and sanctuary in their lives.

The National Association for Poetry Therapy (NAPT) defines *poetry therapy* as "the intentional use of the written and spoken word to facilitate healing, growth and transformation." Poetry therapists can be mental health providers, medically trained health practitioners, educators, artists, writers, or individuals of any and all professions and backgrounds. Poetry therapist, Robert Carroll, said "Poetry gives us ways to talk about (subjects that we do not usually talk about). My job . . . is to use poetry and voice to help people get access to the wisdom they already have but cannot experience because they cannot find the words in ordinary language." (14) Poetry allows individuals to get to the bottom of their feelings, thoughts and actions and begin to grapple with them and understand them. The construction of original poetry, the sharing of one's own poems, and hearing the expression of others' work has been shown to be very therapeutic in working through traumatic experiences. Legendary artist, Pablo Picasso said, "*Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life*" and "*Every child is an artist. The challenge is to remain an artist after you grow up.*" (18)

Research by influential researcher in the field of the therapeutic uses of expressive writing, James Pennebaker, has shown that the use of expressive writing for as little as 15 minutes over 4 days has positive health effects as measured by visits to physicians and a

diminution of symptom complaints. (15) His original work deals with healing wounds from traumatic, stressful events through the use of expressive writing. (16) He also reviewed the evidence for the psychological benefits of expressive writing in its ability to foster positive short and long-term changes in mood and behavioral effects in the form of school performance. (17)

The book Broken Hearts Healing: Young Poets Speak out on Divorce, edited by Tom Worthen, Ph.D, is a volume of over two hundred poems that has been used by counselors, therapists and others throughout the country to help parents and children cope with the painful process of divorce. (26) By identifying with the poetry of other children in similar circumstances, children are better able to communicate deep feelings that they may be consciously or unconsciously suppressing. (26)

III. Specific Aims

Overarching goal: See what impact poetry in general and the specific HeartSpeak program have in helping children to thrive despite exposure to chronic community violence.

Primary Objectives:

- Give the Arts and Spirituality Center feedback concerning the impact of the HeartSpeak program on participants in order to help them enhance the program based on students' feedback from the reflective conversations and written responses.
- Teach children the life skill of reflection and help youth to reflect on the tools that they have obtained and the specific and overall enrichment they have received from the program, so that they can use what they have learned in other parts of their lives and in the future.

Secondary Objectives:

- Provide the Arts and Spirituality Center with a means of sharing HeartSpeak's impact on children with their board, present and potential funders, and the public.
- Encourage the teaching artists by showing them the impact that they are having on the children in order that they might see that they are truly making an incredible difference in their lives

IV. Reflection on the Process

In deciding what type of master's project to undertake and which organization I should approach for a possible community-based masters project (CBMP), I wanted to do research concerning a vulnerable population in the city of Philadelphia. I have a particular interest in the benefits of spirituality in addressing community and individual issues. When I shared my interest with my advisor, Dr. Nancy Epstein, she suggested working with the Arts and Spirituality Center because of their recognition of the part that spirituality, internal resources, and the arts play in bringing healing to individuals and communities. Dr. Epstein is also a member of the board and familiar with the wonderful people who work there.

In September 2009, I contacted Fatima James (the Program Director at that time) to schedule a meeting with her, founder Reverend Susan Teegen-Case and creative director, Cathleen Cohen, in order to discuss possible projects. After our meeting, we made the decision to work together on a project to evaluate the HeartSpeak program. In a few meetings that took place in the month of October 2009, with Dr. Epstein, Rev. Teegan-Case, Dr. Cohen, Ms. James, and Ms. Geri Buck (a Drexel doctoral student working with the Arts and Spirituality Center), we discussed the best ways to evaluate the program and other projects that would be useful in helping me to fulfill my CBMP goals. We decided that I would conduct the evaluation from the students' point of view.

We discussed several options for evaluation tactics. We initially thought of conducting focus groups with a sampling of students from various grades in several different participating schools. Dr. Michelle Teti, from Drexel School of Public Health's, Department of Community Health and Prevention, gave me suggestions on important factors to keep in mind when conducting focus groups with youth, as she has extensive experience in facilitating focus groups.

We also considered conducting a few interviews of children ranging in age, gender, and interest in poetry. We considered using different types of media to capture children's responses, such as tape recorders, video recorders, and questionnaires. We had some reservations about capturing children on video, however, because of the lack of confidentiality that video recording allows. There were feasibility and validity problems with hosting focus groups or interviews. The teaching artists were going to choose a small group from each class that they believed would most accurately reflect the range of views in each class, but how could they be sure that their chosen group would truly accurately reflect the views of the entire class? How could we pull just a few children from class? What would the other students be doing in the meantime? We sought to devise an evaluation tactic that would help us to evaluate the program and assess its impact on participating students while developing a built-in evaluation and reflection tool. As we continued to wrestle with different ideas, Reverend Teegen-Case voiced her desire to facilitate reflective conversations that would involve all of the children and would be able to be continually replicated toward the end of all workshop series in the future.

Reflective conversations are a period of time in which there is an open classroom dialogue when those present have the opportunity to collectively reflect on a common experience. For our purposes, reflective conversations were utilized in order to have each participating class have an open discussion during which time the students could collectively reflect on the overall impact of a HeartSpeak program in which they were all involved. Research has highlighted the importance of teaching through experience (such as done through poetry workshops) and the crucial place of reflection in turning experience into learning. (19) In Kenny, Brown, and Ralf's article The Importance of Reflection in Experiential Learning with Community and Youth Workers for the Learning Age, they discuss the necessity for educational

programs to allow participants to voice what they have learned and value and reflect upon what they have learned in order to establish a meaningful foundation for further self- and group-development. (19) Research has also indicated that reflective inquiry in a classroom setting helps individuals grow in their abilities to collaborate with one another and reflect real-world work while building group social skills. (20) It also promotes the exchange of ideas. (20) Robert Carroll (mentioned above) wrote about the importance of practicing accessing the healing power of poetry. (14) Through continual practice, poetry's therapeutic effects can be deepened and better experienced throughout life. Like any other habit, as one writes over and over again, it becomes easier to access the deeper parts of sub-consciousness and express the multi-dimensional self.

The idea for reflective conversations was solidified in November and the time for developing the specific process began. Through consulting with Cathy and Geri, it was decided that we would take the time of one session (typically forty minutes) to ask the students several questions in order to start a reflective conversation about HeartSpeak, however, we thought it important to collect written responses from the children as well. We settled on developing questions that we would ask the entire class as a group, while having them also answer questions on a questionnaire that would be given to all of them. Our thought was that we could have one person generally transcribe the conversation (without writing any specific information about individual children). The children would only write their current grade (in order to give an idea of their age and development) on their questionnaires, because we wanted to collect only as much personal information about the students as necessary in order to protect their privacy.

In order to develop the best questions for the evaluation, I reviewed the objectives of the HeartSpeak program. I also referred to my literature review which includes research of the

effects of trauma on children and the evidence of the tools necessary for children to be resilient in the midst of trauma and chronic community violence. I wrote a list of questions that I believed would get at the heart of whether or not the HeartSpeak program is helping the children they serve to build the tools they need in order to be resilient in the face of the chronic community violence in Philadelphia and any personal traumas that they may be facing. After generating my own list of questions, I met with Cathy and Geri in order for them to add their question ideas. As the Arts and Spirituality Center's teaching artists are the most familiar with what takes place during the poetry workshops, I wanted to hear what questions all of the teaching artists thought would be important to ask the children. I met with all of the teaching artists (along with several other Arts and Spirituality Center staff) to tell them about my project and get their input. They offered several questions for me to add to the list that I had already prepared. At this point, there were over thirty questions that needed to be narrowed down. I sifted through all the questions and made a final list, with the most critical, agreed-upon questions at the top of the list. Finally, after meeting with Cathy one last time to solidify the final list, I was able to assemble the complete list of closed and open-ended questions for the questionnaires and group questions for the reflective conversations. After Cathy designed the layout for the final questionnaire format, we were ready to launch the evaluation. There was just one step left before we could get the ball rolling.

After Cathy and I had decided upon the questions for the reflective conversations and questionnaires, we wanted to test the feasibility of our tactics within the classroom. We decided to launch a pilot study at Quba Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Cathy was able to obtain the proper authorization from the principal and other leadership at the school. On Wednesday December 16, 2009, we met with a class composed of 4th and 5th graders and another class

composed of 6th and 7th graders. During the sessions, we placed a small tape recorder in the center of the room in order to record the reflective conversations. I passed out pieces of paper, but had the children wait to write anything on the paper. Then I proceeded to ask various questions to the entire class. As I asked several questions that different children answered, I asked a specific question from our questionnaire list and had them all write down their individual answers on the paper. I waited several minutes for each child to finish writing. Then we picked back up with the conversation and other questions. During the midst of the conversation, the children answered all seven questions on the piece of paper. When the conversation was finished, I collected all of the papers from the children and thanked them for their participation.

After we left, I attempted to transcribe both recorded conversations. However, the recorder failed to record the conversation from the 6th and 7th grade class. As I tried to transcribe the conversation from the 4th and 5th grade class, I ran into trouble as well. Sometimes the recorder was unable to pick up their responses and, at other times, the rustling of papers or other noises in the classroom drowned out the sound of the students' responses. Also, if the children spoke at the same time, I could not decipher their words. All of these obstacles led Cathy and I to choose not to record the reflective conversations. We recognized, though, that it would be extremely valuable to collect data from them, so we decided to have someone take notes during the conversations. Also, we realized that we needed to amend some of our questions. There was only one open-ended question, but we needed more detailed answers in order to truly get at the heart of what we wanted to learn from the children. We also realized that we may want to rephrase some of the questions on the questionnaires to help the children understand what we were trying to ask. It was easier during the conversation because we had the advantage of phrasing each question several different ways, using synonyms, and being able to tell if the kids needed

further instruction. However, we needed to be clear on the questionnaires so that the children could fill them out accurately without having to ask for further explanation.

The pilot study allowed us to recognize some things that were working well, though, too. It seemed that the reflective conversations added to children's ability to expound in their written responses. It helped all of the children shift from the frame of mind that they were in before we arrived – whether they were engaged in thoughts surrounding mathematics, history, music or physical education class, etc. – and begin thinking about poetry, the HeartSpeak program, and the fullness of the experience that they had. By articulating their thoughts and hearing their classmates' reflections, they were in a better position to give more thoughtful, comprehensive feedback. In preparation for launching our evaluation, we made then necessary changes to the questionnaire and revised some of our methodological plans.

The next step involved choosing the schools that would participate in the evaluation. During the planning phase, we had decided to facilitate the reflective conversations toward the end of the workshop series. After speaking with the teaching artists, I discovered that workshops were currently taking place at The Bache-Martin School, Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, La Salle Academy, and Villanova Academy for Honor Studies. I was able to attend several HeartSpeak sessions with Cathy and Ms. Sawab Shah (a parent of two students at Al-Aqsa and an aide for the school and the Arts and Spirituality Center) at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy and with Lynn Blue at the Bache-Martin School in order to better understand the nature of the sessions. I also attended an assembly hosted by the Arts and Spirituality Center at the Bache-Martin School.

We ran into obstacles in working with the Bache-Martin School. In order to conduct the reflective conversations there, we would have needed to go through the Philadelphia School District's institutional review board (IRB), however, they were experiencing some major delays

at the time and we were not able to wait for clearance from them. However, because Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, La Salle Academy and Villanova Academy for Honor Studies are all private institutions, we only needed permission from the principals in order to conduct our research there. I drafted a letter informing the schools of our research plans and the ways in which we planned to collect data (through reflective conversation notes and questionnaires) and asked for their authorization. Unfortunately, we were not able to conduct the reflective conversations at La Salle Academy because we did not hear back from the school principal, giving us permission to do the research. The principals of both Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy and Villanova Academy for Honor Studies gave us permission for our research, so I submitted their signed letters with my proposal submission to Drexel University's Institutional Review Board.

Though I attended very informative IRB sessions during the fall of 2009, I still experienced some confusion during the process that caused me some delays. I initially thought that my project was on an expedited level because it involves a vulnerable population. Then I thought that I could apply at Exempt Category 1 (because the research was taking place during the course of normal educational practices) if I had authorization letters from the principals at each participating private school. After I completed that paperwork, I was informed that I would need letters of consent from each participating child's parent or guardian and a letter of assent from each participating child. Only the children that returned both consent and assent forms would be able to participate. Cathy and Sawab let me know that that would not be possible. From their experience and knowledge, there would be no way to get all of the parents to sign and return the forms. Because I wanted to be able to get at the heart of the research that the Arts and Spirituality Center hoped to achieve through my project – and that would mean including all of the children – I spoke with Cathy about having the teaching artists facilitate the reflective

conversations and disseminate and collect the questionnaires. All the students would be able to be included without parental consent or personal assent if my role was limited to analysis of the data. Cathy and the other teaching artists gladly agreed to collect the data and return it to me when they were done. I submitted the final IRB submission with the new plan going forward with the same conversation questions and questionnaires – but just, instead, having each of the teaching artists gather the data as I took a back seat. On March 5, 2010, the IRB accepted this new plan and we were ready to go with the evaluation. I was disappointed at the prospect of not actively participating in the data collection, yet very grateful for each person who would be working in my stead and very excited to await the final results.

Cathy and Sawab facilitated all of the reflective conversations at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy and Myra Diaz conducted both of the reflective conversations at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies. In the middle and end of March, I was able to collect all of the completed questionnaires and notes from the reflective conversations from Cathy, Sawab, and Myra. Then I was able to begin the process of analyzing the data.

My first step involved transcribing all seventy of the questionnaire responses. Then I calculated the students' responses to the first seven (quantitative) questions on the survey. I calculated both the raw number and the percentage associated with each type of response for each question. The next step was to find the best quantitative methods to analyze these questions. I consulted one of my colleagues, Phillip Eckels, (because of his double concentration in Epidemiology and Biostatistics) and Drexel University School of Public Health faculty member, Dr. Longjian Lui, for the quantitative piece of the analysis. Phil suggested using a summary table for the results that would clearly show the raw numbers and percentages of responses for each of the seven questions. He also helped me to run an analysis using SAS

Version 9.1 in order to test different relationships for significance. After meeting with Phil, I met with Dr. Lui in order to get his thoughts as well. We discussed my thoughts on what types of information I wanted to be able to extract from the data. He agreed with Phil's ideas and then gave me some additional thoughts as well. I created the summary table and, with Phil's help, gleaned the necessary information from running the data through the SAS program.

In order to decide upon the best methods for evaluating the six qualitative questions on the survey, I consulted my professor, Dr. Allison Karpyn prior to the implementation of the evaluation. She works as an evaluator with The Food Trust in Philadelphia, so she is very familiar with best practices for evaluating qualitative results from surveys. I showed her the questions that I was asking on the questionnaires in order to get her input. She suggested finding common themes among the answers and making logical deductions from those results. After I received all of the completed questionnaires, I began the process of reading through all of the responses. For each question, I generated a list of elements that represented the content of each response given. Then I matched the different elements to each response, so that each element of each response would be counted. Then I added up the raw numbers and calculated the percentage of responses for each element.

As I set out to understand the implications of the results, I looked to my literature review to see how the results may or may not be linked to what research has found to be critical elements in children's resilience in the midst of chronic exposure to community violence. I found that many of the students' responses aligned with my research. Many of their responses concerning what they are gaining from the program, how they feel during certain activities during the program, and their ideas for improvement were rooted in the research concerning chronic community violence. Many of the responses indicated that resiliency tools were being

added to them. Their suggestions showed that they wanted to add or increase activities that would continue to add to their tools. I found it fascinating that these young students were able to articulate their needs and that, though they were probably unaware of the research I had found, their ideas were empirically rooted.

As I finished analyzing the qualitative data, I started deciding how to best lay out the information in order for it to be most understandable. I made a chart with the results and then wrote them out in paragraph form. After running this approach by my advisor, she suggested that I put the data into an easier-to-follow chart format.

As I was finishing with the analysis section, I started to write my discussion section concerning how the research linked to the evaluation strategy and results. I also began to make recommendations based on the literature review and the students' responses. My thesis was starting to take shape as I prepared for my oral defense scheduled for May 17, 2010.

My oral defense would be a time of giving an overview of the project and particularly emphasizing the results, discussion, and recommendations generated from the project. My advisor and preceptor were required to attend my defense, so we scheduled a time that would work for the three of us. However, I felt it important to invite others who have a vested interest in the results as well. I invited Susan (founder and director) and Janelle (program director) from the Arts and Spirituality Center, along with Geri (doctoral student from Drexel University) who has been working extensively on a research project with the Arts and Spirituality Center. It turned out that Geri was the only additional person that was able to attend, but we had already planned to have another meeting at the Arts and Spirituality Center at a later date, so that I could share the finished product with the staff there and have more time for a fuller discussion about the results and recommendations.

When the day of my defense arrived, I met with Cathy, Nancy, and Geri in a conference room at Drexel University for the presentation. After I presented the information, there was a time of discussion and each of the women asked some questions and gave me some suggestions in how to change the power point presentation and some items to add to the thesis. The amended power point presentation is included in Appendix A. Some of their ideas for the thesis were to pull out my impressions by age range and site and discuss how my work fits under a bigger umbrella of research that is being conducted by Geri. Cathy brought up the reality that there was an additional aim in my project that was not mentioned. The evaluation was also meant to encourage the teaching artists by showing them the impact that they are having on the children in order that they might see that they are truly making an incredible difference in their lives. Nancy suggested creating more charts and bulleting my specific aims and some other types of information to improve readability. She also proposed that I expound a bit more on my reflections of the process. She also suggested adding the empirical evidence that would support the use of reflective conversations as an evaluative tool.

After we finished discussing the project and presentation, I was asked to leave the room so that they could discuss my performance, assign a grade for the oral defense, and write comments regarding my presentation and overall work on the project. When I was called back into the room, Nancy let me know their grading decision and read their comments. My grade was favorable and their comments were extremely encouraging.

After completing the oral defense, I was ready to complete my thesis. As I sought to make the thesis as comprehensive as possible and implement all of Cathy, Nancy and Geri's suggestions, I went back and forth with several drafts for Nancy and Cathy to review. I am now

just working on the finishing touches (formatting, proofreading, etc.) and will submit the finished product by the due date of Friday May 28, 2010.

V. Research Designs and Procedures:

Overview: A cross-sectional study was conducted in which seventy HeartSpeak participants participated in reflective conversations and completed questionnaires to help the students reflect on the program and determine the impact of the program and potential areas for improvement.

Subjects: Each student in the chosen grades in each school participates in the poetry workshops. There was no need for children to specifically enroll in this reflective conversation session. Each child in 4th grade or above in Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy and Villanova Academy for Honor Studies was included in the conversations and questionnaire process. These two schools were chosen because we wanted to choose schools that had already participated in several HeartSpeak workshop sessions and were still currently participating in sessions. Out of the few schools that were in this exact position in the HeartSpeak program, we were only able to garner the proper authorization from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy and Villanova Academy for Honor Studies. Both of these schools are private, religious (Islamic) schools. Villanova Academy for Honor Studies is a primary school located in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy is a primary/secondary school located within the city limits in North Philadelphia. The majority of students in both schools are either Asian (Middle Eastern) or African American. The two other schools that were approached for participation were Bache-Martin School and La Salle Academy. Bache-Martin is a magnet public school located in North Philadelphia with over 80% of students being African American and roughly 16% of students being an even mix of Latino and Caucasian. (24) La Salle Academy is a private, Catholic primary school located in North Philadelphia. Approximately half of the students are Latino, 34% are African American, and 18% are Caucasian. (25)

There were no specific exclusion criteria. However, children who were absent on the day of the session did not participate, as it would not have been possible to re-create an interactive class conversation with only one or a couple of students at a later date. There were a total of seventy male and female students that participated. I was not in immediate contact with the students, however, the teaching artists (who had already been teaching these particular groups of students for several sessions) facilitated the reflective conversations and distributed and collected the questionnaires during one of their scheduled sessions. The children were asked to write only their current grade on the top of the questionnaire. If the children chose to add any additional information on the paper, it was not regarded in the analysis. The questionnaire did not ask for any individually identifiable information.

Study Variables and Methods of Data Collection: During the session, the regularly scheduled poetry artist instructor asked a few questions designed to help children reflect personally and collectively on their experience with the HeartSpeak program. After each question, the instructor opened up the conversation and encouraged children to give their responses. Through the raising of hands, children shared their ideas and thoughts with the rest of the class. Though participation was voluntary, the instructor encouraged children who do not speak up as freely as others to add their input if they felt comfortable doing so. After group discussion was closed out, each child was asked to complete the questionnaire. Poets and teachers have noticed that children are sometimes reluctant to write responses to questions when they do not know how to spell the words that they want to use in order to fully express what they are trying to communicate. Therefore, before and during their writing, the children were reminded that, just as with when they write poetry, they did not have to worry about correct spelling. However, the instructor let the children know that they could feel free to ask if they

needed help spelling any words if they would like. After the children finished responding to the last question, they wrote poems on the back of the questionnaires if they had time. Then the teaching artists collected each of their writings. During and after the reflective conversations, the teaching artists jotted down a summary of the comments that children made during the conversations. All of the questionnaires, poems, and conversation notes were then given to me for analysis. I have attached the full list of responses from the completed questionnaires, all of the poems, and all of the notes from the reflective conversations in Appendices B, C, and D, respectively. The end of Appendix B also includes all of the data from the reflective conversations and questionnaires that were gathered during the pilot study at Quba Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies in December 2009.

Risks: The risks of this research were minimal. Children's participation in this project was completely voluntary. There is a possibility, however, that children felt the pressure to participate because they believe that the poetry instructors, their teachers, or I wanted them to participate. We tried to control for this by making sure that the classroom and poetry teachers let the chosen participants know that it is completely acceptable for them not to participate and that there would not be any negative consequences for choosing not to participate. For those who chose to participate, at the beginning of the session, the poetry teaching artist let the children know that they could choose to stop participating at any time and they could skip any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. Only their current grade level was included at the time of data collection and in the final paper or any other formal documents or presentations. Though overall feedback compiled from all students across schools will be shared with the participating schools, no identifying information will be divulged except the grade levels of the participants.

Limitations: All the children taking part in the evaluation are attending private, religious (Islamic) schools and, therefore, their views may not accurately represent the spectrum of views of children across different religious backgrounds. They may also differ in certain characteristics from children attending public school.

As the children vary in age and stages of mental and emotional development, the comprehensive evaluation may not accurately depict the beliefs and thoughts specific to each age group. Also, some of the children may find it difficult to fully convey their thoughts and feelings in a way that the analysts can understand.

Institutional Review Board Considerations: This research protocol was approved by Drexel University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Out of the four schools that were originally approached, one school (Bache Martin School) is part of the public school district. In order to get approval to conduct the study with students at Bache Martin School, I would have had to get approval through the Philadelphia School District's IRB. Bache Martin let me know that the school district's IRB was experiencing some setbacks, so we realized that it would not be feasible to conduct the study there at this time. Because the other schools that we approached are private institutions, there was not a need to get preliminary approval from other review boards. However, Drexel IRB required authorization from the participating schools' principals. The signed letters are attached in Appendix E. The first letter is signed by the principal at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, Mr. Harris Tahir. The second letter is signed by the principal at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, Mr. Abdur Rahman. I had originally planned to facilitate the reflective conversations and distribute the questionnaires myself, however, the IRB would have required that I obtain signed student assent and parental consent forms from each participating child. Dr. Cathleen Cohen (my preceptor) and Ms. Sawab Shaw (an assistant for the Arts and Spirituality

Center) informed me that it would not be feasible to collect consent forms from all of the parents. Because it is more integral to the project to have each eligible child in each class be able to participate than for me to be the person administering the study, we decided to have the Arts and Spirituality Center teaching artists collect the data (because they already have authorization to do their work in the school) and give it to me for analysis. This project went through Drexel University's IRB at an Exempt Category 1 level. I completed the application and my faculty chair and advisor, acting department chair, preceptor, and I signed off on the application and submitted it for review. After responding to a few follow-up questions from the IRB, the project was approved. I have attached a copy of the approval letter in Appendix F.

Data Analysis Section:

The data from the study are composed of the completed questionnaires, poems written by the students on the back of their questionnaires, and teaching artists' notes generated from the content of the reflective conversations. I referred to the supplemental notes that were taken by the teaching artists during the reflective conversations as a means to gain a fuller understanding of the environment in the classroom and the general nature of the conversations. There were two main parts of the data analysis: quantitative analysis on the first seven closed questions on the questionnaire and qualitative analysis on the last six open-ended questions on the questionnaire.

For the quantitative analysis, I created a summary table to indicate the total number and percentages of students that answered "Yes," "No," were "Undecided," or did not respond for each of the seven closed questions. I also used the data analysis tool, SAS Version 9.1, to identify significant links between the closed questions. The p value measures the probability that random sampling would have led to such an extreme difference between sample means as I observed, if the populations do, in fact, have the same mean overall. P values that were less than

0.05 were considered to be significant. Each question was compared to each of the other questions in order to see if the p values indicated a significant correlation.

To analyze the qualitative data, responses were organized in order to find common themes in answers. For each question, all elements of the responses were assigned a descriptive category based on the nature of the response. If any of the seventy responses touched on a particular element, the number assigned to that element was placed next to that response. Then numbers were tallied to see what percentage of the seventy responders mentioned that particular element in their answer. The percentage of each element was also calculated.

Presentation of Timeline for Project Activities

- 1) Project development: October 2009 through January 2010
- 2) Pilot study at Quba Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies: December 2009
- 3) Drexel Institutional Review Board (IRB) submission: March 2010
- 4) Facilitation of reflective conversations and data collection: February and March 2010
- 5) Draft outline of thesis: February 2010 (and turn in by March 1, 2010)
- 6) Compilation and analysis of data: March through May 2010
- 7) Report Writing: April and May 2010
- 8) Oral Defense: May 17, 2010
- 9) Dissemination of Information: May and June 2010

VI. Results:

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Quantitative questions:

1. Before starting this poetry program, did you write on your own?
2. Do you write more poetry now?
3. Does this program help you show how you are feeling?
4. Do you think this program is important?
5. Do you feel confident when you write poetry?
6. Do you feel confident when you share your poetry with others?
7. Did writing poetry help you see talents in yourself that you did not know you had?

SUMMARY TABLE				
Questions	Yes	No	Undecided	Missing data
1	28(40%)	33(47.14%)	9(12.86%)	None
2	27(38.57%)	28(40%)	15(21.43%)	None
3	36(51.43%)	21(30%)	12(17.14%)	1(1.43%)
4	43(61.43%)	11(15.71%)	16(22.86%)	None
5	33(47.14%)	18(25.71%)	17(24.29%)	2(2.86%)
6	19(27.14%)	30(42.86%)	20(28.57%)	1(1.43%)
7	33(47.14%)	20(28.57%)	16(22.86%)	1(1.43%)

Table 1: Summary Table

*All the following information was generated by using SAS Version 9.1. through univariate predictions:

$p < 0.05$ is significant.

Previous poetry writing (Q1) was a significant predictor in children writing more after participating in the program (Q2).

Children who reported that they already wrote poetry were significantly more likely to think that the program is important. (Question 1 univariately predicts question 4.) $p = 0.0147$

Kids who reported that the program helped them to show how they were feeling were strongly associated with believing that the program is important. ($p = 0.0598$)

Of kids who thought that the program was important, a significant portion of them reported feeling confident when they share their poetry with others. ($p = 0.0027$)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

*All of the following information is available in a number of charts found in Appendix G. The following information details the total responses for the six qualitative, open-ended questions on the questionnaire for all seventy (70) participants. Appendix G contains three charts with all of the responses, the most common responses (those responses reported by ten percent or more of the students), and the most common positive and negative responses.

When asked the question, “What did you learn about yourself through poetry?,” the students offered several responses. Out of the seventy total respondents:

- 47.17% wrote remarks that indicated growth in confidence.
- 51.43% said that they learned something positive about themselves and their personal characteristics.
- 25.71% said that poetry helped them to see or let out their emotions.
- 38.57% recognized their abilities through poetry.
- 18.57% said that poetry helped them develop skills. 17.14% reported learning new things about poetry.
- Two students (2.86%) expressed gaining hope through poetry.
- Two students expressed gaining a new perspective or learning a life truth.
- One student (1.43%) reported feeling heard through poetry.
- One student reported feeling similar to others through poetry.
- One student learned that anyone can be a good poet.
- Two students reported learning that they are not talented at writing poetry.

- Two students were undecided about what they learned about themselves.
- I was unable to decipher two students' responses and two students did not respond.

When asked the question, "How do you feel when you share your poetry with others?," the students responded as follows:

- 25.71% reported feeling confident, proud, and that they did a good job.
- 15.71% expressed feeling nervous.
- 14.29% expressed feeling good/enjoying it.
- 11.43% felt that they were expressing themselves.
- 10% felt shy/timid.
- 8.57% preferred to keep their poetry private.
- 8.57% felt unsure of themselves and/or others' reactions.
- 7.14% felt happy.
- 5.71% felt scared.
- 5.71% felt embarrassed.
- 4.29% felt weird or funny.
- Three students (4.29%) reported that they do not feel anything when they share their poetry with others.
- Two students felt that they were able to be an influence on other students through their poetry.
- Two students felt okay sharing their poetry if it was not personal.
- Two students felt that their views were the same or similar to others.
- One student expressed feeling different or having different views than others.

- One student said that s/he feels honest when sharing his/her poetry.
- One student felt courageous, one felt that s/he is learning
- One felt angry
- One expressed feeling that s/he is with his/her family when sharing poetry.
- One student expressed feeling bad about herself/himself.
- One student was unsure of how s/he felt when sharing his/her poetry and one did not respond.
- I was not able to decipher one response.

When asked the question, “How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry?,” the students responded as follows:

- 34.29% of the students expressed that they feel good and they enjoy it.
- 25.71% feel that they learned about their classmates and began to understand them more.
- 22.86% see their classmates’ abilities and 20% felt that they did a good job and/or were proud of them.
- 4.29% said that listening to their classmates’ poetry helps give them ideas for their writing.
- 5.71% said that it encourages them to do better.
- 4.29% said that they feel more connected to their classmates and similar to them.
- One student feels out-going and one student feels that s/he is helping them.
- 8.57% expressed that they felt bored, disinterested, or do not listen when their classmates read their poetry.

- 5.71% reported feeling negative feelings about themselves or feeling jealous when their classmates read their poetry.
- 5.71% said that they feel nothing.
- 4.29% felt negative feelings toward those presenting while 4.29% had mixed (good and bad) feelings.
- One student voiced that s/he disagrees or feels differently from his/her classmates.
- One student said that the students' work does not make sense and one said that the students' do not care about their own work.
- One student is unsure of how s/he feels when s/he hears his/her classmates read their poetry.

When asked to "Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary,":

- 88.57% of the students were able to name at least one place of sanctuary in their lives.
- 55.71% of students named their bedroom.
- 42.86% named their home as places of sanctuary.
- 35.71% of students named a place of worship or spiritual activities as a place of sanctuary.
- 18.57% of students named nature or being outdoors as being a sanctuary.
- 7.14% named recreational activities/places.
- 15.71% of students named internal places of sanctuary such as their mind, heart, abilities, and their imagination.
- 15.71% of students named school.
- 10% named the library.

- 8.57% named writing/diary/journal.
- 8.57% named a secret place or being alone.
- 7.14% named their parents and/or their parents' room.
- Three students (4.29%) named their friends.
- Three named reading/books.
- Three named a particular city, country, or other political place/symbol as a sanctuary.
- Two students named a car and two named peaceful places.
- One student named familiar places.
- One named enjoyable experiences.
- One named poetry class.
- One named any place where s/he is welcome as places of sanctuary.
- Four students voiced that there is no place that they consider to be a sanctuary.
- Three students who were able to name a few places of sanctuary in their lives, also expressed the desire for other places of sanctuary (such as an imaginary, secret place where they could be alone).

The respondents were asked to share their favorite thing about the poetry program. Their responses were as follows:

- 28.57% of students said that their favorite thing is the opportunity for them and others to be able to express themselves and share their emotions.
- Writing/rhyming was named by 21.43% of students.
- 12.86% said that sharing poetry and/or listening to others' poetry is their favorite part of the program.

- Four students said that the program is encouraging/inspiring.
- Three students said that it is fun (enjoyable) and/or funny.
- Three students most enjoy choosing topics.
- Two students most enjoy their poetry instructor and two students named drawing.
- Two students most enjoy seeing the talents of others.
- One student finds the program to be peaceful/calming.
- One student most enjoys missing class.
- One named the program's ability to help him/her successfully deal with emotions.
- One expressed enjoying the mental challenges.
- One student most enjoyed missing class.
- One most enjoyed that the program helps him/her improve his/her poetry skills.
- One student's favorite part is "everything."
- 14.29% of students expressed that nothing is their favorite and/or that they do not like poetry.
- Two students were unsure of their favorite thing.
- One student did not respond.

The students were asked to offer their ideas about some ways to improve the program. They responded with the following thoughts:

- 10% said that the program is fine as it is and nothing needs to be improved.
- 12.86% suggested allowing more time for writing and/or sharing poetry.
- 11.43% suggested that students being able to choose their own writing topics would make the program better.

- 7.14% suggested opening the program up to include more people.
- 7.14% asked that the sessions be provided more often and that more time be allotted.
- Four students suggested implementing more projects, hands-on activities, and/or exercises involving other supplies and computers.
- Three students suggested doing activities that lead to growth in confidence.
- Three suggested giving children the opportunity to share their work publicly.
- Three suggested going on field trips (possibly to places of sanctuary).
- Three suggested providing food/snacks in the program.
- Two students proposed hanging up the programs.
- Two recommended more time for discussion/talking.
- One student suggested that the program be more artistic and creative.
- One student recommended more drawing.
- One suggested giving everyone a chance to read.
- One suggested that only the students and poetry teacher be in the room during the sessions.
- Two voiced that they would like the environment to be more caring.
- Two expressed a desire for students to pay more attention and be quiet.
- One student suggested getting rid of the program.
- 15.71% of students were not sure how to improve the program.
- Three students did not respond.
- There were two responses that I was unable to decipher.

COMPARISON OF DATA BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND CLASSES

The following tables give a detailed breakdown of the questionnaire responses broken up by class and school.

COMPARISON OF QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BETWEEN EACH CLASS

“V4/5” and “V6” represent both the 4th/5th grade class (18 total students) and 6th grade class (10 total students) at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, respectively.

“AA5,” “AA8,” and “AA11” represent the 5th (16 total students), 8th (16 total students), and 11th grade (10 total students) classes at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, respectively.

	V4/5	V6	AA5	AA8	AA11
1)Before starting this poetry program, did you write on your own?	Yes: 7 (39%)	Yes: 7 (40%)	Yes: 4 (25%)	Yes: 8 (50%)	Yes: 4 (40%)
2)Do you write more poetry now?	Yes: 8 (44%)	Yes: 3 (30%)	Yes: 4 (25%)	Yes: 7 (44%)	Yes: 5 (50%)
3)Does this program help you show how you are feeling?	Yes: 8 (44%)	Yes: 5 (50%)	Yes: 8 (50%)	Yes: 9 (56%)	Yes: 6 (60%)
4)Do you think this program is important?	Yes: 12 (67%)	Yes: 6 (60%)	Yes: 11 (69%)	Yes: 8 (50%)	Yes: 6 (60%)
5)Do you feel confident when you write poetry?	Yes: 7 (39%)	Yes: 8 (80%)	Yes: 7 (44%)	Yes: 6 (38%)	Yes: 5 (50%)
6)Do you feel confident when you share your poetry with others?	Yes: 6 (33%)	Yes: 3 (30%)	Yes: 4 (25%)	Yes: 5 (31%)	Yes: 1 (10%)
7)Did writing poetry help you see talents in yourself that you did not know you had?	Yes: 8 (44%)	Yes: 3 (30%)	Yes: 7 (44%)	Yes: 8 (50%)	Yes: 7 (70%)

Table 2: Comparison of Quantitative Questionnaire Responses between Each Class

COMPARISON OF QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BETWEEN EACH CLASS

“V4/5” and “V6” represent both the 4th/5th grade class (18 total students) and 6th grade class (10 total students) at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, respectively.

“AA5,” “AA8,” and “AA11” represent the 5th (16 total students), 8th (16 total students), and 11th grade (10 total students) classes at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, respectively.

Question 1: What did you learn about yourself through poetry?	V4/5	V6	AA5	AA8	AA11
1)Growth in Confidence	10 (56%)	3 (30%)	4 (25%)	7 (44%)	4 (40%)
2)Letting out/seeing own emotions	5 (28%)	3 (30%)	3 (19%)	3 (19%)	4 (40%)
3)Feeling heard	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4)Learning about themselves/positive personal characteristics	10 (56%)	6 (60%)	7 (44%)	7 (44%)	6 (60%)
5) Recognizing similarities with others	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6)Learning positive things about others	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7)Recognizing abilities	11 (61%)	3 (30%)	4 (25%)	6 (38%)	3 (30%)
8) Growing in skills	7 (39%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	3 (30%)
9)Learning new things about poetry	5 (28%)	2 (20%)	2 (13%)	1 (6%)	2 (20%)
10)Expressing hope	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
11) Gaining new general perspective/learning life truths	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
12)Nothing/not much	2 (11%)	1 (10%)	4 (25%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)
13)Negative things about themselves	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Undecided/Not sure	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Unable to decipher response	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Did not respond	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

Table 3: Comparison of Qualitative Questionnaire Responses between Each Class – Question 1

COMPARISON OF QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BETWEEN EACH CLASS

“V4/5” and “V6” represent both the 4th/5th grade class (18 total students) and 6th grade class (10 total students) at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, respectively.

“AA5,” “AA8,” and “AA11” represent the 5th (16 total students), 8th (16 total students), and 11th grade (10 total students) classes at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, respectively.

Question 2: How do you feel when you share your poetry with others?	V4/5	V6	AA5	AA8	AA11
1)Influential	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (10%)
2)Confident/That I did a good job/Proud	6 (33%)	2 (20%)	4 (25%)	4 (25%)	2 (20%)
3)Private	3 (17%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
4)That I am expressing myself	3 (17%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	3 (19%)	1 (10%)
5)Nervous	2 (11%)	1 (10%)	3 (19%)	2 (13%)	3 (30%)
6)Shy/Timid	2 (11%)	3 (30%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
7)Scared	2 (11%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
8)Getting over negative emotions related to sharing poetry	2(11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9)Like it/Good	1(6%)	1(10%)	4(25%)	2(13%)	2(20%)
10)Don't like it	2(11%)	1(10%)	0(0%)	1(6%)	1(10%)
11)Unsure (of self and/or others' reactions)	3(17%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(6%)	2(20%)
12)Honest	1(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
13)Happy	1(6%)	1(10%)	1(6%)	1 (6%)	1 (10%)
14)Ok, if not personal	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
15)Embarrassed	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
16)Different/Different views than others'	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
17)The same/Similar views as others'	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
18)Weird/Funny	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
19)Comfortable (w/ family)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
20)Courageous	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
21)Bad about myself	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
22) Nothing	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
23)That I'm learning	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
24)Angry	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Undecided/Not sure	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Unable to decipher response	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Did not respond	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

Table 4: Comparison of Qualitative Questionnaire Responses between Each Class – Question 2

COMPARISON OF QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BETWEEN EACH CLASS

“V4/5” and “V6” represent both the 4th/5th grade class (18 total students) and 6th grade class (10 total students) at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, respectively.

“AA5,” “AA8,” and “AA11” represent the 5th (16 total students), 8th (16 total students), and 11th grade (10 total students) classes at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, respectively.

Question 3: How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry?	V4/5	V6	AA5	AA8	AA11
1)They did a good job/Proud	3 (17%)	4 (40%)	5 (31%)	1 (6%)	1 (10%)
2)Helps me get ideas for my writing	3 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3)Encourage me to do better	3 (17%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4)I see their abilities	1 (6%)	4 (40%)	4(25%)	4 (25%)	3 (30%)
5)Good/I enjoy it	6 (33%)	3 (30%)	8 (50%)	2 (13%)	5 (50%)
6)I learned about them/Began to understand them more	3 (17%)	1 (10%)	2 (13%)	8 (50%)	4 (40%)
7)Feeling more connected to them/Similar to them	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
8)Disagree/Feel differently than they do	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9)Mixed good and bad feelings	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (10%)
10)That they do not care about their work	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
11)That it does not make sense	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
12)Negative feelings about themselves/Jealous	2 (11%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
13) I don't listen/Bored/Disinterested	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	1 (6%)	2 (20%)
14)Negative feelings toward them (irritated, resentful, laughing at them)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
15) That I am helping them	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
16)Out-going	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
17)Nothing	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Undecided/Not sure	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Did not respond	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (10%)

Table 5: Comparison of Qualitative Questionnaire Responses between Each Class – Question 3

COMPARISON OF QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BETWEEN EACH CLASS

“V4/5” and “V6” represent both the 4th/5th grade class (18 total students) and 6th grade class (10 total students) at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, respectively.

“AA5,” “AA8,” and “AA11” represent the 5th (16 total students), 8th (16 total students), and 11th grade (10 total students) classes at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, respectively.

Question 4: Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary.	V4/5	V6	AA5	AA8	AA11
1)Internal places (mind/heart abilities/imagination)	3 (17%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	3 (19%)	2 (20%)
2)Home	9 (50%)	4 (40%)	2 (13%)	9 (56%)	6 (60%)
3)School	3 (17%)	3 (30%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	2 (20%)
4)Friends	1 (6%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
5)Place of worship/Spiritual activities	14 (78%)	1 (10%)	4 (25%)	3 (19%)	3 (30%)
6)Writing/Diary or journal	3 (17%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
7)Library	3 (17%)	1 (10%)	3 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
8)Bedroom	10 (56%)	7 (70%)	8 (50%)	6 (38%)	8 (80%)
9)Parents’ room/Parents	2 (11%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
10)Familiar places	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
11)Secret place/Being alone	2 (11%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
12)White House	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
13)Car	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
14)Place where they are alone	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
15) Peaceful places	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
16)Enjoyable experiences	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
17)Reading/Books	1 (6%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
18)Recreational activities/Places	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
19)Nature/Outside	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	6 (38%)	2 (13%)	3 (30%)
20)A city or country or other political symbol	1 (6%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
21)Named places they <i>wish</i> were a sanctuary	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
22) Poetry class	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
23) Nowhere	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	1 (10%)
Did not respond	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 6: Comparison of Qualitative Questionnaire Responses between Each Class – Question 4

COMPARISON OF QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BETWEEN EACH CLASS

“V4/5” and “V6” represent both the 4th/5th grade class (18 total students) and 6th grade class (10 total students) at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, respectively.

“AA5,” “AA8,” and “AA11” represent the 5th (16 total students), 8th (16 total students), and 11th grade (10 total students) classes at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, respectively.

Question 5: What is your favorite thing about the poetry program?	V4/5	V6	AA5	AA8	AA11
1) They and others being able to express themselves/Share emotions	8 (44%)	4 (40%)	2 (13%)	3 (19%)	3 (30%)
2) Able to successfully deal with feelings	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3) Writing/Rhyming	2 (11%)	5 (50%)	4 (25%)	2 (13%)	2 (20%)
4) Mental challenges	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
5) Drawing	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6) My art teacher	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7) Choosing topics	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
8) Sharing poetry/Listening to the poetry of others	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	4 (25%)	3 (19%)	1 (10%)
9) Seeing others' talents	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
10) Missing class	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
11) Fun (enjoyable)/Funny	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
12) Helps improve poetry skills	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
13) Program is encouraging/Inspiring	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (19%)	1 (10%)
14) It is peaceful/Calming	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
15) Everything	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
16) Nothing/ I do not like poetry	3 (17%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	3 (19%)	2 (20%)
Undecided/Not sure	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Did not respond	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

Table 7: Comparison of Qualitative Questionnaire Responses between Each Class – Question 5

COMPARISON OF QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BETWEEN EACH CLASS

“V4/5” and “V6” represent both the 4th/5th grade class (18 total students) and 6th grade class (10 total students) at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, respectively.

“AA5,” “AA8,” and “AA11” represent the 5th (16 total students), 8th (16 total students), and 11th grade (10 total students) classes at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy, respectively.

Question 6: What are some ways to improve the program?	V4/5	V6	AA5	AA8	AA11
1)Nothing/It is fine as it is	6 (33%)	4 (40%)	2 (13%)	4 (25%)	1 (10%)
2)Hanging up the poems	1 (6%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3)More artistic/creative	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4)More discussion (talking)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
5)More time for poetry (writing and/or sharing	3 (17%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	2 (20%)
6)Drawing	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7)More projects/hands-on activities/supplies/computer	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
8)People choosing their own topics	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	3 (30%)
9)More often/more time	1 (6%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
10)Food	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
11)Give everyone a chance to read	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
12) Field trips (to go to places of sanctuary	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
13)Open it up to involve more people	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	2 (20%)
14)Give opportunity for kids to share publicly	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
15)People to pay attention more; Being quiet	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
16)To become confident (do activities that lead to growth in confidence)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	1 (10%)
17)Only students and poetry teacher in the room	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
18)For the environment to be more caring	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
19)Get rid of it	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Undecided/Not Sure	2 (11%)	1 (10%)	3 (19%)	3 (19%)	2 (20%)
Unable to decipher response	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Did not respond	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	1 (10%)

Table 8: Comparison of Qualitative Questionnaire Responses between Each Class – Question 6

In comparing the differences in responses between the two participating schools and between grade levels, there were a few findings that are worth noting. Both quantitative and qualitative results show that a large number of participants believe that the program is important and that it helps them show how they are feeling. This finding was consistent across all grades and both schools. When asked the question, "Do you feel confident when you write poetry?," for each class, 50% or less of the class responded "Yes." However, 80% of the 6th grade class at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies reported feeling confident when writing poetry. The 11th grade class at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy reported noticeably low confidence when sharing their poetry with others. Only 10% of 11th grade students reported confidence in this area, while 25% to 33% of the other classes did so.

Interestingly, the quantitative data showed that the 11th grade class believe that the program helped them see talents in themselves that they did not know they had, however, it was the youngest class, the 4th and 5th graders at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies, that most reported recognizing their own abilities and feeling they were growing in their skills through poetry. A few older children reported feeling that they are influential when sharing their poetry with others, while the younger children did not report feeling influential. Younger kids reported feeling far more shy, timid, and scared when sharing their poetry than the older kids. The younger children, but not the older children, also reported feeling proud of their classmates and that they did a good job when they heard their classmates read their poetry, but the older children reported far more that as their classmates read their poetry, they learned about them and began to understand them more. Only the younger children reported feeling that they felt encouraged to do better and that they were gaining ideas for their own writing as they listened to their

classmates read their poetry. When asked to name their favorite thing about the poetry program only the older children said that the program encouraged them or inspired them.

For a few responses, there were notable differences between the responses of the children attending Villanova Academy for Honor Studies and Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy. Only 7% of participants at Villanova reported that nature/outdoors are a sanctuary, while 26% of students at Al-Aqsa named nature or somewhere outdoors as being a sanctuary. It is interesting to note that Al-Aqsa is located in an urban area and Villanova is located in a suburban area, so children at either school may have exposure to different types of outdoor environments. Also, all of the respondents at Villanova were able to name a place of sanctuary in their lives, while four students at Al-Aqsa reported that they do not have any place of sanctuary in their lives. Also, five students at Al-Aqsa suggested involving more people in the program, while no students at Villanova voiced this idea.

Some of these differences could be attributed to the nature of the reflective conversations. Perhaps, certain topics were brought up in some classes and not in others and, therefore, several students in certain classes were more likely to have different ideas and thoughts at the forefront of their minds in answering the questions on the questionnaires. Also, some of the differences in responses between the older and younger students may have to do with their vocabularies and overall development levels. However, there may be some explanations for the differences that are not readily apparent.

VII. Discussion:

OVERALL DISCUSSION

In conducting the research and looking at the key elements in helping children thrive despite exposure to chronic community violence and the research surrounding trauma recovery, there were common threads that linked the research to the chosen questions and the final results. The following common elements for resilience were woven throughout the findings in the research, the intention of the questions, and the evaluative responses:

- having a sense of confidence/self-efficacy,
- being able to identify internal and external sanctuaries,
- being able to express one's feelings,
- identifying personal talents and internal resources,
- both identifying and being able to articulate the healing benefits of poetry, and
- experiencing a sense of connectivity to others.

The evaluation questions were designed to get at whether or not the HeartSpeak program is providing these elements. I believe that the results truly show that the HeartSpeak program is being successful in giving students the tools to be resilient in the midst of chronic community violence. In her book entitled Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror, Dr. Judith Herman discusses how many survivors feel that people do not want to hear their stories. (21) Interestingly, the evaluation participants voiced that the thing that they most appreciate about the program is that it gives them the opportunity to express themselves. She also talks about the reality that "isolation" and "helplessness" are central experiences in psychological trauma - and, therefore, "empowerment" and "reconnection"

are central experiences of recovery. **(21)** Through the children's own responses, it is clear that the HeartSpeak program is empowering them and helping them to better understand their classmates, feel better understood by them, and build a stronger sense of community. Not only is the HeartSpeak program building participants' capacity for resilience, but it is also well-aligned with the Arts and Spirituality Center's overall mission to empower and transform communities, nurture resources and values that strengthen the human spirit and build the capacity for change.

(21)

In looking back to the specific symptoms that children often experience when they are exposed to chronic community violence (mentioned in the Background and Significance section of this paper), several ways in which the children are impacted by poetry and the HeartSpeak program directly address those symptoms. The results show that poetry fights against feelings of anxiety and depression. This is evident through the children indicating that when participating in the HeartSpeak program, they feel happy, good, at peace, hopeful, confident, and other emotions that oppose feelings of anxiety and depression. However, an extremely small number of students reported feeling bad about themselves when sharing or hearing others' poetry, which could exacerbate feelings of depression. Several students mentioned poetry and HeartSpeak's ability to help them deal with anger and other potentially harmful emotions in a constructive manner. This denotes poetry's ability to abate aggressive behaviors in HeartSpeak's participants. Identification of places of sanctuary would naturally reduce children's feeling of being in a violent, virtually war-torn environment and would, instead, lead them to see their internal and external environment as having places of safety and peace. By several students even recognizing school, their friends, and the HeartSpeak program as being sanctuaries for them, they may feel

more encouraged to go to school regularly and not succumb to the pressures to skip classes or drop out of school altogether.

I believe that all of the results must be understood within a certain context in order for them to be most accurately understood and interpreted. Though the exact number and percentages of response types were calculated, there are limitations to the qualitative figures. Because of the nature of the chosen data collection method, I believe that many of the responses were underreported. By asking open-ended questions, there were a limitless number of responses that the children could have given, yet, of course, there was limited time given to allow them to respond. Therefore, their answers had to be limited to whichever answers were at the forefront of their minds. The answers which were given can be trusted to be the students' true responses, yet there are likely additional responses that would ring true for them as well. For example, in answer to the first qualitative question, "What did you learn about yourself through poetry?", though approximately 39% of students mentioned they recognized their abilities through poetry and about 26% of students said that poetry helped them to see or let out their emotions, it is very likely that many of the students in either group felt *both* of those elements, yet one was predominantly in their thoughts. This effect most likely took place with many of the responses. To offer just one more example for the first question, only one student mentioned feeling similar to others, so it appears that only one student (1.43%) out of seventy total students learned that s/he feels similar to others through poetry, yet if the question had been asked to all students, "*Does poetry help you to feel similar to others?*" *Yes/No/I don't know*, it is very likely that far more children would have reported a positive response to this question simply because they would be confronted with the question rather than having to pull it from their own thoughts in order to report it.

Recognizing that any reported responses are more than likely shared by more children than reported, I believe that more weight should be placed on each response. Each response should be thoughtfully considered, whether reported by a small or large number of children - though the most commonly reported responses should be understood to indicate the largest consensus. That being said, as one of my primary objectives for this project was to give the Arts and Spirituality Center feedback concerning the impact of the HeartSpeak program on participants in order to help them enhance the program based on students' feedback, the recommendations offered in the next section attempt to address students' most common suggestions for making the program better, as well as the ideas proposed by only a few of the children. As most of the recommendations are in line with both the students' desires and supportive literature, I believe that considering the list of recommendations will be very helpful for the Arts and Spirituality Center to consider as they seek to make the HeartSpeak program even more enjoyable and effective.

As mentioned earlier, founder Reverend Susan Teegan-Case's desire is to have reflection become a standard part of the Arts and Spirituality Center's HeartSpeak Program. This project is acting as the first formal time of reflection among HeartSpeak participants and can, therefore, begin to indicate the level of impact that this time of reflection has on the students and how it may or may not be successful in helping them to effectively recall what they have learned and in what ways they have become enriched through the program. It would appear, through these preliminary results, that the time of group discussion helped the students remember not only what they had learned during the program, but also things that they had discovered on their own during the process. Just as the research concerning the effectiveness of reflective inquiry indicated, the teaching artists' notes (taken during the reflective conversations) show that the

students were able to feed off of one another's ideas and build upon them – thus, building upon their knowledge, understanding, and tools that they can take with them into various parts of their lives. Through the use of reflection, what they have learned – tangible and intangible places that they have at their disposal to use as sanctuaries, abilities that they now know that they have, uses for poetry that can practically help them in their scholarly and personal lives, similarities to others and admiration for others' abilities, confidence in not only what they can do, but who they are – will go from being merely head knowledge to being a part of them. This project, along with the supportive research, has shown evidence for the successful use of reflection within the HeartSpeak program and I strongly recommend its continued use.

My first secondary objective was to provide the Arts and Spirituality Center with a means of sharing HeartSpeak's impact on children with their board members, present and potential funders, and the public. I believe that this research will greatly increase the Board's ability to make directional decisions regarding the HeartSpeak program as well as other programs within the Arts and Spirituality Center. It will also serve as another evidence-based, tangible way (in addition to research that has already been done, feedback that has already been gathered, and various media that have already been shared and distributed by the Center) for funders to be able to see the direct benefit that the HeartSpeak program is having on participants. Other stakeholders, such as parents, local school and government officials, and many others have a vested interest in being aware of these results, so that they can support the Arts and Spirituality's efforts and think outside of the box when trying to determine ways to reduce violence and help children to overcome the damaging effects of exposure to ongoing community violence and poverty. Lastly, in addressing my second secondary objective to show teaching artists how they are making a difference in the lives of the children that they teach, making these results readily

available to those who are directly involved in overseeing and implementing the HeartSpeak program will likely increase moral, sense of purpose, and creativity for future steps. The continued, more comprehensive evaluation that Geri Buck is conducting with the HeartSpeak program will undoubtedly greatly contribute to the work at the Arts and Spirituality Center as well.

CONTRIBUTION THAT THE PROJECT WILL MAKE TO THE COMMUNITY SITE AND TARGET POPULATION

In addition to fulfilling the specific aims mentioned earlier in this paper, this research has and will continue to provide several other benefits to the community site and target population. This project has contributed to the Arts and Spirituality Center by providing quantitative and qualitative feedback on the extent to which they are meeting their goals to positively impact Philadelphia's children through the HeartSpeak program. It has also provided a replicable mechanism for teaching artists to use in future workshop series to aide them in leading children in reflecting on the program, its benefits to them, and their ability to utilize poetry in the future. It also serves to provide a means of feedback for teaching artists to better understand the impact that they are having on the children whom they serve and gives them further motivation to continue in their service. This research has served the targeted population of school children by helping them reflect on their experience in the HeartSpeak program and aiding them in drawing connections between their self-discovery within the program and the ability for these skills to be applied in future situations. It also gave participants the opportunity to voice their opinions for program improvement.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

My reflection on the process:

What was I surprised by?

I was surprised by the depth of some of the children's responses on their questionnaires. I was surprised by how in touch they could be with their emotions, reasons behind their emotions, and thoughts. I was also surprised by their ability to compose such imaginative, expressive poetry. I expected that some of the children would be impacted by the program and some would not, but I was surprised at how, even among those kids who did not seem to get much from the program, many of them were still able to articulate their negative feelings toward poetry, themselves or others. I was also surprised by how many of the children (even those in fourth through sixth grade) were able to understand the therapeutic and health-building capacity of poetry. At that age, I think that I viewed poetry as more of a fun, recreational activity – not necessarily as a place of sanctuary, a way to grow more confident, or a way to learn about myself or others.

What challenged me?

It was a challenge to try to keep everyone abreast of what was going on in the project and to adequately include each relevant person in the process. I found that I wanted far more input than I was able to reach out for and I saw far more wealth in people's abilities, knowledge and experience than I knew how to draw upon. I knew that many individuals involved in the process may be able to make significant contributions to the research and in my personal understanding of this subject, however, I found myself sometimes at a loss as to how to best open up the possibility of their involvement and make it be a smooth, natural outflow while not wasting their time and not meandering into areas that were outside the scope of this project.

Choosing and designing the questions to most accurately and effectively obtain the information necessary for program evaluation was also challenging. I asked myself several questions in the midst of the process: Given the limited amount of time to obtain responses for each question, what questions are most important? Will the students understand all of the questions? Should I ask different questions to different age groups?

What did I love?

I loved having the opportunity to work with such an amazingly kind, motivated, and dedicated group of people at the Arts and Spirituality Center. I learned so much by having the chance to get such a close look at the logic behind a nonprofit organization's strategy for engaging the community to address a relevant need. Working so closely with Cathy helped me to see I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to meet several children and witness their response to the program and hearing their unique position on the importance of the program and the part that poetry has played in their lives. It was my pleasure to hear several children share their poetry during various workshop sessions and during the Arts and Spirituality Center's "Spark Light" dinner. It was so refreshing and awe-inspiring to hear such young children relay such profound, thought-provoking, convicting, and honest words. Confidence, power, and hope are the three words that come to mind in reflecting upon the children's performances during the dinner. Whether it had been with them awhile or it was newly found, I could see a strong and growing confidence in the children, as they knew that what they were sharing was important and powerful. I could also see hope in their eyes and hear it in their words. Even if they had experienced significant hardships, in those moments, the audience could truly hear the hope that they felt for the future. Picking up with the challenges I mentioned earlier, this complexity led to another challenge that I faced in the research. It was very difficult to try to capture the depth of

the impact that the program was having while asking relatively one-dimensional questions.

Though I knew that the program was having a deeper, more complex, multi-dimensional impact on several of the children, I was not sure how to go about asking questions in such a way as to allow them to fully share their experiences.

What was the project's impact on me?

Completing this project had a strong impact on me in many ways. One of the most profound is that, in the midst of this process, I started writing poetry more often. I used to write poems every once in awhile, as the mood struck me. However, learning about the therapeutic uses of poetry through the literature and witnessing the healing benefits of poetry in the lives of the children whom the Arts and Spirituality Center serves, led me to purposefully write poetry when I have been feeling overwhelmed and feeling the need to express my emotions and get them out on paper. I, myself, began to experience the reality that poetry can bring me peace and pull out my emotions in a way that ordinary writing or talking cannot do. I can relate to one 4th grade student's response on the questionnaire: “. . . I never knew there was a way to take all of your anger out.” I also began to more clearly see the connection between spirituality and the arts. As I let what was in my heart flow out onto the paper, the strength of my spiritual convictions was able to shine through all of the clutter in my life.

VIII. Recommendations:

Recommendations based on student responses:

- 1) As previous poetry writing and confidence in sharing poetry (which grows over time) are both significantly linked to students believing that the program is important, I would recommend that the Arts and Spirituality Center expand the program to last longer. Rather than running a course of approximately eight weeks, having the program run throughout the year would be in line with students' desire for more time to be given to the poetry program, it would serve to allow more time for children to grow in their skills and confidence level in writing, and would give children wider exposure to poetry which may, in turn, help more of the children to value poetry and gain more from the HeartSpeak program.
- 2) Having more time to write and share the poetry would be helpful. Of course, time is limited and their regular classroom teachers need to have time to teach their lessons, however, as approximately 13% of students expressed wanting more time to write and share poetry and about 12% of students reported that choosing their own writing topics would make the program better, I suggest giving children more time to freely write about whatever topics are important to them. It may be that there are things on their minds that they need to get out on paper. Nearly 30% of students said that their favorite thing about poetry was getting the opportunity to express themselves. The children being able to express themselves in their own unique, chosen way will help them to feel heard and that they are more fully getting to express themselves and getting to hear know their classmates more clearly.

- 3) Also, partnering more closely with the classroom teachers in order to possibly reinforce what the students are learning both in the regular classroom and during the poetry sessions could also help to justify the amount of time used during the school day for the HeartSpeak program.
- 4) As five (7%) students suggested opening the program up to more people, three students (4%) suggested giving children the opportunity to share their work publicly, and two students (3%) suggested hanging up the poems, I would suggest having a regular public outlet for sharing poetry such as hosting poetry expositions that are open to the public where students can display their work (if they so choose). Also, the children may enjoy having guest speakers (some of which may be students from other schools presenting their work) and collaborating with other schools in various projects.
- 5) In order to employ more projects and hands-on activities, as the children come up with ideas on how to bring peace to the city, they can think of (and research) ways to do that - and possibly collaborate with others in order to do so.
- 6) Implementing food at times may make the program more enjoyable as well. It may also be a good way for introducing creative, hands-on activities by having children serve each other and creating something with food items that can allow them to tell a story. Creating some of the activities to be confidence-building would be in line with the children's requests and would strengthen their self-efficacy.
- 7) As three students mentioned having more time for discussion/talking, when topics are raised during sessions, perhaps it may be helpful to take time to discuss their thoughts on those things. This may also help them to see how learn more about each other and feel more connected to each other.

- 8) Two students mentioned desiring a more caring environment and two students mentioned having children be quiet and pay more attention during the sessions. Perhaps there is a way to demand a respectful environment by having the children set up ground rules in the beginning of the program and having pre-determined consequences for going against those rules (such as leaving the room or sitting in the back of the classroom).

Suggestions for further research:

This research has generated several ideas for further research and exploration. One factor that would be worth investigating is the physical benefits of poetry. Just as researcher, James Pennebaker (whom I mentioned earlier) has cited the ways in which expressive writing has been shown to aid in physical healing, it would be worth investigating the extent to which HeartSpeak participants experience any curative effects from writing poetry. Also, in the event that further evaluation is done, it may be wise to ask questions that get at whether or not the children exhibit the specific symptoms consistent with exposure to chronic community violence (as mentioned in the Background and Significance section). If this were more precisely determined, the extent to which these symptoms are alleviated through the HeartSpeak program could be more explicitly measured. Also, as chronic community violence has different effects based on age, asking different questions for each age group may be necessary. Lastly, in line with HeartSpeak's mission, asking children more direct questions about how they feel about the violence in the city, how it affects them, and what they believe can be done to reduce it may open up more ideas about how to hone the program based on their ideas.

IX. Conclusion:

In conclusion, this evaluation, measured from the participants' points of view, has demonstrated the impact of poetry and the specific HeartSpeak on the participants of Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy and Villanova Academy for Honor Studies. It has shown that, while acting as a place of sanctuary for its writers, poetry builds self-esteem and self-efficacy as it exposes individual talents; thus, these protective factors offered by poetry help give children the ability to be resilient. The literature review has substantiated HeartSpeak's focus on empowering and strengthening children through the introduction of poetry, identification of places of sanctuary, and the utilization of reflective inquiry. This research indicates that the HeartSpeak program is having a tremendous impact on participants, yet there are several measures that can be taken to make the program even more fruitful. Through tying together empirical research, the evaluation method, and congruent results, the HeartSpeak program can thoughtfully look toward the future of the program. It has been my honor to conduct this research. It is my most sincere hope that this body of work is deeply beneficial to all of the current and future unique, bright HeartSpeak participants and to the amazing efforts of the Arts and Spirituality Center.

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APPENDIX A

The Arts and Spirituality Center's HeartSpeak Program: Analyzing Data from a Reflective Conversation

Deirdre S. J. Church
May 17, 2010
Drexel University School of Public Health

OUTLINE

- ❖ Acknowledgements
- ❖ Abstract
- ❖ Statement of the Problem
- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Background & Significance
- ❖ Specific Aims
- ❖ Research Design & Methods
- ❖ Results
- ❖ Discussion
- ❖ Recommendations

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ABSTRACT:

(page 1 of 2)

Through HeartSpeak, an arts and peace initiative of the Arts and Spirituality Center, artists provide multiple anti-violence art workshops in schools and several other venues throughout Philadelphia.

Objectives: This study focuses on quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the program in order to see what impact poetry in general and the specific HeartSpeak program have in helping children to thrive despite exposure to chronic community violence.

Methods: This research was conducted through facilitating reflective conversations and implementing questionnaires among fourth, fifth and sixth graders at Villanova Academy for Honor and fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy.



ABSTRACT:

(page 2 of 2)

Results: The results indicate that the program is helping children to grow in confidence, express themselves, learn about their abilities and those of their classmates, and identify places of sanctuary in their lives. Having previous experience with writing poetry and feeling confident when sharing poetry with classmates were significantly related to students' belief that the program is important.

Conclusions: My recommendations are for more workshops to be provided for the children, more time to be devoted to writing, more freedom in children choosing writing topics, and closer partnership between poetry instructors and the classroom teachers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

*Children living in low-income, urban environments are particularly vulnerable to experiencing “chronic community violence.” (1) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is one of the most violent cities in the country and has many residents living at or below the poverty line. (2, 3)

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ARTS & SPIRITUALITY CENTER

- Founded in 2000 by artists and spiritual leaders
- Mission
 - Empower & transform communities
 - Nurture resources & values that strengthen the human spirit
 - Build the capacity for change

<http://www.artsandspirituality.org>

HEARTSPEAK

- ❖ Uses art & poetry to engage youth in a conversation about their visions of peace in Philadelphia.
- ❖ Anti-violence workshops

<http://www.artsandspirituality.org>

BACKGROUND:

*Children living in low-income, urban environments are particularly vulnerable to experiencing “chronic community violence” (1)

-CCV can cause PTSD symptoms in children (2, 3)

*Studies of resilient children of all ages have pointed to 3 protective factors for development:

- 1) a caring adult
- 2) a place of safety or sanctuary within the community
- 3) a child’s own internal resources (1).

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SPECIFIC AIMS:

GOAL: What impact does poetry in general and the specific HeartSpeak program have in helping children to thrive despite exposure to chronic community violence?

- Primary Objectives: 1) Give the Arts and Spirituality Center feedback concerning the impact of the HeartSpeak program on participants, and 2) Help youth to reflect on the tools that they have obtained and the specific and overall enrichment they have received from the program.
- Secondary objective: Provide the Arts and Spirituality Center with a means of sharing HeartSpeak's impact on children with their board, present and potential funders, and the public.

METHODS:

- 1) Reflective conversations
- 2) Questionnaires

Reflective Conversation Questions

- What is poetry (in your own words)?
- What, if anything, surprised you about poetry?
- What does the word “sanctuary” mean to you?
- When might it be helpful to write poetry?



The Arts & Spirituality
C E N T E R

		yes	no	I don't know	
1.	Before starting this poetry program, did you write on your own?				
2.	Do you write more poetry now?				
3.	Does this program help you show how you are feeling?				
4.	Do you think this program is important?				
5.	Do you feel confident when you write poetry?				
6.	Do you feel confident when you share your poetry with others?				
7.	Did writing poetry help you see talents in yourself that you did not know you had?				

- What did you learn about yourself through poetry?
- How do you feel when you share your poetry with others?
- How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry?
- Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary.
- What is your favorite thing about the poetry program?
- What are some ways to improve the program?

RESULTS:

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:

- Univariate analysis
- Summary table

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS:

- Common themes

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: SUMMARY TABLE

SUMMARY TABLE				
Questions	Yes	No	Undecided	Missing data
1	28(40%)	33(47.14%)	9(12.86%)	None
2	27(38.57%)	28(40%)	15(21.43%)	None
3	36(51.43%)	21(30%)	12(17.14%)	1(1.43%)
4	43(61.43%)	11(15.71%)	16(22.86%)	None
5	33(47.14%)	18(25.71%)	17(24.29%)	2(2.86%)
6	19(27.14%)	30(42.86%)	20(28.57%)	1(1.43%)
7	33(47.14%)	20(28.57%)	16(22.86%)	1(1.43%)

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: SAS VERSION 9.1

p < 0.05 is significant

- ❑ Previous poetry writing (Q1) was a significant predictor in children writing more after participating in the program (Q2)
- ❑ Children who reported that they already wrote poetry were significantly more likely to think that the program is important. (Question 1 univariately predicts question 4.) $p = 0.0147$
- ❑ Kids who reported that the program helped them to show how they were feeling were strongly associated with believing that the program is important. ($p = 0.0598$)
- ❑ Of kids who thought that the program was important, a significant portion of them reported feeling confident when they share their poetry with others. ($p = 0.0027$)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: COMMON THEMES

MOST COMMON THEMES FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 1: What did you learn about yourself through poetry?	
1) Learned something positive about themselves/their personal characteristics	36 (51%)
2) Growth in confidence	33 (47%)
3) Recognized their abilities through poetry	27 (39%)
4) Poetry helped them to see or let out their emotions	18 (26%)
5) Poetry helped them develop skills	13 (19%)
6) Learned new things about poetry	12 (17%)
7) Learned that they are not talented at writing poetry	2 (3%)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: COMMON THEMES

MOST COMMON THEMES FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 2: How do you feel when you share your poetry with others? 1) Confident, proud, and that they did a good job 2) Nervous 3) Feel good/enjoy it 4) That they are expressing themselves 5) Shy/Timid 6) Unsure of themselves and/or others' reactions 7) Scared 8) Embarrassed 9) Nothing	18 (26%) 11 (16%) 10 (14%) 8 (11%) 7 (10%) 6 (9%) 4 (6%) 4 (6%) 3 (4%)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: COMMON THEMES

MOST COMMON THEMES FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 3: How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry? 1) Feel good/enjoy it 2) They learn about their classmates and begin to understand them more 3) See their classmates' abilities 4) Feel that they did a good job and/or are proud of them 5) Bored, disinterested, or do not listen 6) Negative feelings about themselves or jealousy 7) Nothing 8) Negative feelings toward those presenting 9) Mixed good and bad feelings	24 (34%) 18 (26%) 16 (23%) 14 (20%) 6 (9%) 4 (6%) 4 (6%) 3 (4%) 3 (4%)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: COMMON THEMES

MOST COMMON THEMES FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 4: Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary.	
1) <i>Could name at least one place of sanctuary in their lives</i>	62 (89%)
2) Bedroom	39 (56%)
3) Home	30 (43%)
4) A place of worship or spiritual activities	25 (36%)
5) Nature or being outdoors	13 (19%)
6) Internal places (mind, heart, abilities, their imagination, etc.)	11 (16%)
7) School	11 (16%)
8) Library	7 (10%)
9) Nowhere	4 (6%)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: COMMON THEMES

MOST COMMON THEMES FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 5: What is your favorite thing about the poetry program?	
1) The opportunity for them and others to be able to express themselves	20 (29%)
2) Writing/rhyming	15 (21%)
3) Sharing poetry and/or listening to others' poetry	9 (13%)
4) Nothing and/or they do not like poetry	1 (1%)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: COMMON THEMES

MOST COMMON THEMES FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 6: What are some ways to improve the program?	
1) Undecided	11 (16%)
2) Nothing/ It's fine as it is	7 (10%)
3) Allowing more time for writing and/or sharing poetry	9 (13%)
4) Students being able to choose their own writing topics	8 (11%)
5) A more caring environment	2 (3%)
6) Students paying more attention and being quiet	2 (3%)

QUOTES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

What did you learn about yourself through poetry?

“That I’m more powerful than I thought I was (and) that they (my classmates) are powerful, too.” – 8th grader @ Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

“I learned that I had a talent that I never knew about. I never knew there was a way to take all your anger out.” – 4th grader at Villanova Academy for Honor

QUOTES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

How do you feel when you share your poetry with others?

“I feel good because they can tell me what I have to fix so I won’t hurt other people’s feelings.” – 5th grader at AAIA

“I feel awesome because maybe my words can influence another person. Also, I feel very happy. Sometimes I hesitate to share my poems, but when I do share them I feel like I accomplished something, which makes me brave.” – 11th grader at AAIA

QUOTES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry?

“I feel more connected with them, and that we are very similar even if we are complete different on the outside and come from different places.” – 8th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

The bird of Poetry



Birds of poetry visit my heart
and ask the heart for my feelings of happy things
my heart smiles and gives them what they want
the bird of poetry carries my feelings inside it
and express it
and spreads it
like it spreads its beautiful wings
and the poetry birds perch on my soul
and whispers
Poetry is Rachel's* sanctuary . . .
- 6th grader at Villanova

Poetry

There is a flower
growing in my heart
That flower is poetry
The poetry is my chart
Poetry is nice
Something to feed my soul
It is like rice
feeding me from my bowl
Poetry is as sweet as candy
Poetry, I use in good or bad times
Poetry is always handy
especially when it rhymes
- 4th grader from Villanova



Poetry is so kind
She gives and does things
But never wants anything in return!
- 5th grader from Villanova

One word can mean so much,
It can even describe a person's entire life,
One sentence can mean so much,
It can even describe a person's future,
What is poetry?
Poetry is Peace.
- 8th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy



Poetry
is like freedom
freedom
is like wings
What are wings?
[Wings are a sign of freedom
to those who have
None]
- 11th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy



Discussion:

- The thread that links the research with the chosen questions and the results
- What do I make of the results
- How the results & this project help fulfill the mission of the A & S Center (and the HeartSpeak program)



Recommendations:

- Amendments to questions:
 - Ask about the physical benefits of poetry
 - Ask questions that get at whether or not the children exhibit the symptoms consistent with exposure to chronic community violence
 - Have different questions for different age groups
 - In line with HeartSpeak's mission, ask children more direct questions about how they feel about the violence in the city, how it affects them, and what can be done to reduce it.

Recommendations:

- Based on research & student recommendations:
 - Have program run year-round
 - Have more time for discussion and sharing
 - Partner with students in choosing topics
 - Partner with classroom teachers
 - Have regular public outlet for sharing poetry
 - Have children work more collaboratively and involve more people
 - More activities such as: field trips, food, and confidence-building activities
 - Set up enforceable ground rules

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Please feel free to ask questions.

?????

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APPENDIX B

TOTAL RESPONSES TAKEN FROM THE 70 PARTICIPANTS' COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES:

Closed Questions:

- 1) Before starting this poetry program, did you write on your own?
- 2) Do you write more poetry now?
- 3) Does this program help you show how you are feeling?
- 4) Do you think this program is important?
- 5) Do you feel confident when you write poetry?
- 6) Do you feel confident when you share your poetry with others?
- 7) Did writing poetry help you see talents in yourself that you did not know you had?

Open-ended Questions:

- 1) What did you learn about yourself through poetry?
- 2) How do you feel when you share your poetry with others?
- 3) How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry?
- 4) Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary.
- 5) What is your favorite thing about the poetry program?
- 6) What are some ways to improve the program?

Villanova Academy (4th and 5th graders)

1.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1) Yes | 1) I learned about myself that I can express many cool things with poetry. |
| 2) Yes | 2) I feel confident and I feel that I did a good job with writing the poem. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel that they did a good job with their poetry. |
| 4) Yes | 4) I think the place that are sanctuaries to me are my heart, my home, a masjid, my school, and my friends!!!! |
| 5) Yes | 5) The most favorite thing about the poetry program is that many kids around the world get to have a chance to express their selves in poetry. |
| 6) Yes | |
| 7) Yes | 6) Nothing!!! |
-

2.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1) I don't know | 1) I learned that I had a talent that I never knew about. I never knew there was a way to take all your anger out. |
| 2) Yes | |
| 3) Yes | 2) I like keeping my poem private. Poetry is not about being famous. Poetry is about expressing yourself not being a showoff. |
| 4) Sometimes | |
| 5) Yes | 3) I like to hear my classmates' poetry. It makes me think of words I could use when I do poetry next time. |
| 6) Sometimes | |
| 7) Yes | 4) library, room, diary, mosque |
| | 5) It taught me to express myself. |
| | 6) The program doesn't have to improve. |
-

3.

- 1) Yes 1) I learned that I have more talent than I thought.
 - 2) Yes 2) When I share poetry with others I feel confident and express myself more than I do when I write.
 - 3) Yes
 - 4) Yes 3) I feel that sometimes the poetry does not make sense and they just write down without reading over it.
 - 5) Sometimes
 - 6) Yes 4) The masjid, my house, my own room, and my parents' room.
 - 7) Yes 5) My favorite thing about the poetry program is that you can share your feelings with others.
 - 6) I can improve the program by letting the students hang up their (poems?) in the schools.
-

4.

- 1) Yes 1) I learned that getting angry won't help with your problems, but writing it down in poetry will help a lot.
 - 2) Yes
 - 3) Yes 2) I feel confident and I say to myself, "This is how I feel, there is no reason to be afraid or ashamed of whatever you wrote."
 - 4) Yes
 - 5) Sometimes 3) I feel that sometimes they don't care and they just write down whatever they want and they don't take pride in their work.
 - 6) Yes
 - 7) Yes 4) To me the Masjid is my sanctuary because it is where I pray and worship my god (Allah).
 - 5) My favorite thing is that you can share and everyone can see your feelings.
 - 6) I think that the poetry program is fine and easy-going as it is.
-

5.

- 1) No 1) I learned that I could write good poems without embarrassing myself.
 - 2) No 2) very nervous but still very confident
 - 3) No 3) I feel that they do way better and I need to improve!
 - 4) Yes 4) mosque, room, library, school, mind, home
 - 5) No 5) That I can get over my feelings.
 - 6) No 6) You could make more artistic and creative.
 - 7) No
-

6.

- 1) No 1) Nothing
- 2) No 2) I don't.
- 3) No 3) I don't listen.
- 4) No 4) The masjid
- 5) No 5) Nothing
- 6) No 6) Get rid of it.

7) No

7.

- 1) Yes 1) That I can write poetry and know I am good at it. Before I didn't know how.
 - 2) a little 2) I feel shy and scared and I just hold the paper in front of my face.
 - 3) I don't know 3) I feel like I should add a little bit more and think more about what I'm writing.
 - 4) Yes 4) Masjid, my room, and places I been there a lot like my grandmom's house.
 - 5) Yes 5) Is that we get to write and I love writing.
 - 6) Yes 6) I don't know.
 - 7) I don't know
-

8.

- 1) Yes 1) I learned that I am really special and talented through poetry.
 - 2) Yes 2) I feel confident and now I am not scared of speaking out loud to people.
 - 3) Yes 3) I feel relaxed and when I hear their poems they inspire me to write better and to write more.
 - 4) Yes 4) The masjid, my room, my secret hiding space, and the back of the basement is my sanctuary.
 - 5) Yes 5) My favorite thing about this program is writing my own poems.
 - 6) Yes 6) Nothing, this program is good.
 - 7) Yes
-

9.

- 1) No 1) I learned that I suck at poetry.
 - 2) No 2) I feel timid and small.
 - 3) No 3) I feel like I am a loser.
 - 4) No 4) My room, couch, diary, parents room.
 - 5) No 5) I do not have anything I like in poetry.
 - 6) No 6) I think we should have more talking and less writing.
 - 7) No
-

10.

- 1) No 1) That poetry can expand your emotion.
 - 2) No 2) I feel that I should share my poetry to myself.
 - 3) Yes 3) I think it's good.
 - 4) Yes 4) The masjid.
 - 5) Yes 5) That we share our emotions.
 - 6) No 6) No I think it is ok the way it is.
 - 7) I don't know
-

11.

- 1) Yes 1) That I am similar to a lot of people. I express my feelings very good.
- 2) Yes 2) I sometimes like it and sometimes don't. I feel that sometimes other people might

- 3) Sometimes laugh at my poems.
 - 4) Yes 3) It's fun, you hear how others feel about the specific topic. You hear what's on other
 - 5) Sometimes people's mind.
 - 6) No 4) my heart, brain, room, journal, masjid
 - 7) Yes 5) It's a time where I can express my feelings.
 - 6) more time for poetry
-

12.

- 1) No 1) That I could write poetry when I thought I couldn't.
 - 2) Yes 2) I feel like I'm giving my ideas images to them.
 - 3) Yes 3) I feel like I learned their feelings.
 - 4) Yes 4) The masjid and the kabah.
 - 5) Yes 5) That I can express all my feeling.
 - 6) Yes 6) I'm happy the way it is.
 - 7) Yes
-

13.

- 1) No 1) That I can express myself
 - 2) Sometimes 2) I do not know how I feel but I do not like people to look at my poetry.
 - 3) Yes 3) Good since their letting their emotion out or how they feel
 - 4) Yes 4) my room, a book, or somewhere secret
 - 5) No 5) that I can express myself
 - 6) No 6) To make it more better
 - 7) Yes
-

14.

- 1) Yes 1) I learned that poetry can make good stories.
 - 2) No 2) I don't feel confident because they laugh at me!!! *@?
 - 3) No 3) I don't feel anything I just like playing video games!!!
 - 4) No 4) White house, my houses, kabah, taj mahal
 - 5) No 5) You get to draw while people read!!! *@?
 - 6) No 6) It should be a drawing class.
 - 7) No
-

15.

- 1) Sometimes 1) I learned that I can be a better writer.
 - 2) I don't know 2) I feel confident and more honested of myself.
 - 3) Sometimes 3) I feel that more ideas are coming faster and faster.
 - 4) Yes 4) home, room, library, classroom, masjid
 - 5) Yes 5) My favorite thing about poetry is thinking(?) and figuring out things.
 - 6) Sometimes 6) You should bring more supplies and make a kind of computer or thing space and use it
 - 7) No instead of the folder.
-

16.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) No | 1) I can write poems. |
| 2) No | 2) I feel scared. |
| 3) No | 3) I don't feel nothing. |
| 4) Yes | 4) Did not respond. |
| 5) No | 5) Nothing |
| 6) No | 6) Writing good |
| 7) Did not respond. | |
-

17.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) Sometimes | 1) I don't really learn many things about myself in poetry. |
| 2) Yes | 2) I feel a little nervous about sharing my poetry with others because I don't know what they are going to think about it. |
| 3) No | |
| 4) I don't know. | 3) I feel a little happy about what they wrote. |
| 5) Sometimes | 4) The masjid and my house. |
| 6) Sometimes | 5) My favorite thing is the things Ms. Mira hands out. |
| 7) No | 6) Some ways to improve the program is to have projects and more hands on activities. |
-

18.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) Sometimes | 1) I don't know really. |
| 2) No | 2) A little happy. |
| 3) No | 3) I feel happy sometimes. |
| 4) I don't know | 4) Masjid, room, car, bathroom |
| 5) Did not respond. | 5) that you can draw while you do it |
| 6) No | 6) by doing poetry more |
| 7) No | |

Villanova Academy (6th graders)

1.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) Yes | 1) I learned that I have the potential to do anything I want if I put my mind to it. |
| 2) No | 2) I feel pretty happy that I get to show my feeling to my friends. |
| 3) Sometimes | 3) excited |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) my house |
| 5) Yes | 5) writing poetry |
| 6) Yes | 6) more outdoor activities |
| 7) I don't know. | |
-

2.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) I learned that there was a whole side of me I didn't know of. |
| 2) No | 2) I feel ok sometimes if it's not personal. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel inspired because there are many poets that are better than me in this classroom. |
| 4) Yes | 4) My sanctuary is my room. But I wish that there would be a place where nobody knew except me. Like a golden bridge and once you enter it and you would beautiful pixies and flowers and singing everywhere. |
| 5) Yes | |
| 6) Not really | |
| 7) Yes | 5) When I get to sit and write how I feel. But I just don't feel open when she chooses a topic for us. |
| | 6) I love it. I don't think improve it anymore than it already is. |
-

3.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1) No | 1) I learned that it can be fun to write. |
| 2) No | 2) I feel shy sometimes. I'm not usually a shy person. |
| 3) Did not respond. | 3) I feel like some of them really write good poetry. |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) bedroom, house, mall, Puerto Rico, acting, singing, writing, songs, being with my family, and being with my friends. Having fun. |
| 5) Yes/I don't know. | |
| 6) Did not respond. | 5) My favorite thing about poetry is writing about anything. |
| 7) I don't know. | 6) ? |
-

4.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) No | 1) I learned that I had a lot of feelings I was hiding. |
| 2) No | 2) I feel scared and embarrassed sometimes. |
| 3) I don't know. | 3) I feel that they are really good writers. |
| 4) Yes | 4) my room, and the library, and in my dreams, and praying |
| 5) Yes | 5) My favorite thing is that we can write and express ourselves. |
| 6) No | 6) I think the program is doing the best as it is. |
| 7) I don't know. | |
-

5.

- 1) Sometimes 1) Well, when the teacher read my poems to the class, everyone said my poems were very
2) Yes nice. And I had no idea that people would like my poems so much. So I learned I could
3) Yes write very good poems.
4) Yes 2) Well, I really don't like sharing my poems with my class.
5) Sometimes 3) I feel like they're doing a great job. And I love their poetry. Unless it's violent (the
6) Sometimes poems).
7) I don't know. 4) My room, my school, & any new place I discover, that no one knows about.
5) My favorite is writing the poems!
6) Well, I like the, "program" very much – so – No changes!
-

6.

- 1) Yes 1) Did not respond.
2) Yes 2) I feel that I have done something big.
3) No 3) Did not respond.
4) Yes 4) 1. When it's Sunday and I'm just sitting with my teammates on the football field singing the
5) Yes pledge of America, 2. In my room waiting for the present and thinking about the past.
6) Yes 5) My favorite thing is when class is almost over and we share our poems.
7) Yes 6) We can improve the program by making it more than once a week and have a class where it's
free writing.
-

7.

- 1) Sometimes 1) I learned that you could express your feeling just by jotting down a few words.
2) Sometimes 2) I feel nervous, shy, & sometimes confident.
3) Yes 3) I feel that the poem relates to them.
4) Yes 4) My imaginary world (Hafatim), my room, my Diary, & Dear Dumb Diary books, &
5) Yes School (sort of), & Poetry class
6) Sometimes 5) My teacher (Ms. Myra) & expressing my feelings through poetry.
7) Yes 6) We could take turns every week every student gets a turn to pick a subject to write on.
-

8.

- 1) Yes 1) I learned that I just love using nature as a comparison. I learned that I love peace and I
2) Yes always want to be quiet and alone. I learned my most longfull wish is to live in my
3) Yes poetry.
4) Yes 2) Sometimes I think they agree. Most of the time I feel they have a whole different way
5) Yes of looking at things and that's why I'm mostly shy about it.
6) Mostly no 3) I think a lot of times that what they're writing is true. I sometimes honestly don't
7) I don't know agree about their perspective of certain things.
4) A lot of times books are my refuge, my life. I want to be in a place that has crystal
water, heaven's grass, a small home in the beautiful setting of a waterfall, cliff, grass,
sand, ocean breeze. To hear my echo of me being alone and doing things I love best.
5) I love how they make expressing yourself so easy.
6) I'm very happy as it is.
-

9.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) No | 1) Nothing |
| 2) No | 2) Weird |
| 3) I don't know. | 3) good and jealous |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) garden, bedroom, attic |
| 5) Yes | 5) It's calm |
| 6) I don't know. | 6) ? |
| 7) No | |
-

10.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) humor and confident |
| 2) Not really | 2) Alive |
| 3) Yes | 3) Happy |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) parks, home, and school |
| 5) Yes | 5) laughter |
| 6) Yes | 6) Have some exhibits of poetry and some food after poetry. |
| 7) No | |
-

Al Aqsa Islamic Academy (5th graders)

1.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) No | 1) I learn that I am creative. |
| 2) Yes | 2) Nervous |
| 3) Yes | 3) Good |
| 4) Yes | 4) Did not respond. |
| 5) Yes | 5) It is fun. |
| 6) I don't know. | 6) Did not respond. |
| 7) I don't know. | |
-

2.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) I'm not mad all the time. |
| 2) I don't know. | 2) I feel funny. |
| 3) No | 3) I feel like it is funny because what they say. |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) Did not respond. |
| 5) I don't know. | 5) You get to hear what other people is saying. |
| 6) Yes | 6) Write more poetry. |
| 7) Yes | |
-

3.

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) No | 1) That anyone can be a good poet. |
| 2) No | 2) I feel embarrassed. |
| 3) No | 3) I feel impressed. |
| 4) Yes | 4) My room. |
| 5) No | 5) We could hear each others' poems. |
| 6) No | 6) No way. |
| 7) No | |
-

4.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) No | 1) I learned that I can be creative and that I can let my imagination run wild. |
| 2) I don't know. | 2) I feel good because they can tell me what I have to fix so I won't hurt other people's feelings. |
| 3) I don't know. | 3) I feel great since I'm helping them with their work. |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) My sanctuaries are my room, the masjid, or any place that's quiet. |
| 5) No | 5) My favorite thing is that I have 2 great teachers. |
| 6) Yes | 6) One way is to let the people write about whatever they want to. |
| 7) I don't know. | |
-

5.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1) No | 1) I learned that I know how to write poetry. |
| 2) Yes | 2) With my family. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel like they are so talented. |
| 4) Yes | 4) my room, outside, next to the waterfall, in the winter where there is snow. |
| 5) Yes | 5) that I tell people my adventure in life |
| 6) No | 6) to go places which are sanctuary |
| 7) Yes | |
-

6.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) No | 1) I learned how to write poetry. |
| 2) I don't know. | 2) I feel happy when it is funny. |
| 3) No | 3) I feel like they are so good at writing poetry. |
| 4) Yes | 4) my room and outside |
| 5) I don't know. | 5) I like hearing other people's poetry. |
| 6) No | 6) By paying attention. |
| 7) Yes | |
-

7.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) No | 1) I could let my imagination run wild. |
| 2) Yes | 2) I feel nervous and afraid everyone will laugh at me. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel happy that they tried to read without getting nervous. |
| 4) Yes | 4) my room |
| 5) Yes | 5) You can show how you feel. |
| 6) I don't know. | 6) You can gain confidence. |
| 7) Yes | |
-

8.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1) No | 1) Nothing |
| 2) No | 2) Good |
| 3) No | 3) I feel bored. |
| 4) No | 4) my room |
| 5) No | 5) don't know |
| 6) No | 6) don't know |
| 7) I don't know. | |
-

9.

- | | |
|--------|------------------|
| 1) No | 1) nothing |
| 2) No | 2) I feel good. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel great. |
| 4) Yes | 4) my room |

- 5) Yes 5) nothing
 - 6) Yes 6) Don't know.
 - 7) Yes
-

10.

- 1) No 1) That I have a wild imagination.
 - 2) Yes 2) I feel that I am a star.
 - 3) Yes 3) I feel happy that someone is expressing their feeling to me
 - 4) Yes 4) My room, my bed, outside under a tree
 - 5) Yes 5) when we read a famous poem
 - 6) Yes 6) 1. give more time to it, 2. give everybody a chance to read
 - 7) No
-

11.

-) No 1) nothing
 - 2) No 2) I do not feel anything.
 - 3) No 3) I laugh at them.
 - 4) No 4) no
 - 5) No 5) nothing
 - 6) No 6) nothing
 - 7) No
-

12.

- 1) No 1) How I feel
 - 2) No 2) I feel good.
 - 3) Yes 3) not shy
 - 4) Yes 4) library, home, masjid
 - 5) I don't know. 5) Everything is my favorite.
 - 6) I don't know. 6) more people
 - 7) I don't know.
-

13.

- 1) Yes 1) I feel about myself as in noting.
 - 2) No 2) I feel like everybody complet off of me.
 - 3) I don't know. 3) I feel like they are a lil good.
 - 4) Yes 4) library, a tree, my room, my classroom when no one is in it.
 - 5) No 5) to write and write a poem's about cats, dogs etc.
 - 6) No 6) They are ways to like write read
 - 7) No
-

14.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) nothing. It does not help me. |
| 2) I don't know. | 2) I feel like nobody likes my poetry but I have to like theirs but I am (Jenna) and I am not going to do that. |
| 3) No | 3) well I feel like everybody loves their poetry and (HATE'S) mine |
| 4) No | 4) porch, Jacuzzi, edge of my pool |
| 5) No | 5) To make rhymes, but to tell you the truth I really do not have a favorite I just put anything. |
| 6) No | 6) people to care about my poetry |
| 7) No | |
-

15.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1) Yes | 1) I learned that I am a very smart person and my imagination gone wild. |
| 2) No | 2) very nervous |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel energized to read minds. |
| 4) Yes | 4) the library, home, masjid, backyard |
| 5) Yes | 5) writing the poetry |
| 6) No | 6) start doing more activities and writing on the board; and projects |
| 7) Yes | |
-

16.

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| 1) No | 1) by expressing my thoughts |
| 2) No | 2) I feel nerves. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel happy. |
| 4) Yes | 4) the masjid |
| 5) Yes | 5) You get to write. |
| 6) No | 6) I don't know. |
| 7) Yes | |
-

Al Aqsa Islamic Academy (8th graders)

1.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) I don't know. | 1) Nothing |
| 2) I don't know. | 2) Funny |
| 3) I don't know. | 3) Funny |
| 4) Yes | 4) Nowhere |
| 5) I don't know. | 5) Funniness |
| 6) I don't know. | 6) Sharing more funny poetry |
| 7) I don't know | |
-

2.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) No | 1) Did not respond. |
| 2) sort of | 2) Did not respond. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel happy. |
| 4) Yes | 4) My bedroom and I guess that's all. |
| 5) Yes | 5) You can write in whatever way you want. |
| 6) I don't know. | 6) I love it the way it is. |
| 7) a bit | |
-

3.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Sometimes | 1) That I have the ability to express myself in ways unlike any other. |
| 2) Yes | 2) Sometimes I'm nervous when sharing my poetry but I'm relieved when I get |
| 3) Sometimes | an applause. |
| 4) Yes | 3) I understand how they feel and notice the talent they actually have with |
| 5) I don't know. | poetry. |
| 6) Sometimes | 4) My house and anywhere else I am welcomed. |
| 7) Yes | 5) It encourages people to write poetry to inspire yourself and others. |
| | 6) Some ways to improve the program is to get more people involved and more |
| | themselves better known in the society. |

4.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) No | 1) not so much |
| 2) Sometimes | 2) very happy that I let it out on to the world |
| 3) Yes | 3) like they are very confident |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) house, work, around Dad and Mom, and in the mosque |
| 5) Sometimes | 5) that no one laugh at you when you say your poem |
| 6) I don't know. | 6) show people that you care |
-

7) No

5.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Yes | 1) nothing |
| 2) No | 2) idle |
| 3) Yes | 3) idle |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) my home, the masjid, my school |
| 5) Yes | 5) I tell my feelings |
| 6) Yes | 6) for the class to be quiet |
| 7) Yes | |
-

6.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) I feel good and very confident. |
| 2) Yes | 2) When I share any poetry with others I feel very confident of myself. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel like they have hope in them and they have good in them. |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) First thing is home, then school, then your mom's hands. |
| 5) Yes | 5) My favorite thing is the rhymes I love rhymes; they make me feel good. |
| 6) Yes | 6) Don't know. |
| 7) Yes | |
-

7.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) That I am kind of good in it. |
| 2) Yes | 2) I feel that I am a good poet. |
| 3) Yes | 3) That they are trying to communicate with us in their own way. |
| 4) Yes | 4) my home, my room |
| 5) Yes | 5) That they are trying to make more poets in the world. |
| 6) Yes | 6) To allow some young children to go there, and try to make more poets share with the world. |
| 7) Yes | |

8.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1) Yes | 1) I learned that I have a lot of feeling other than sad and happy. |
| 2) Yes | 2) I feel that maybe I can affect them and change the way they feel. |
| 3) No | 3) Did not respond. |
| 4) Yes | 4) my room, the masjid, and the beach |
| 5) Yes | 5) when we share our poetry |
| 6) Yes | 6) Did not respond. |
| 7) Yes | |
-

9.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) No | 1) No something's I did |
| 2) No | 2) I feel like people are joking about me |
| 3) I don't know. | 3) I feel like they have confident in them |
| 4) No | 4) Don't know. |
| 5) I don't know. | 5) Nothing is |
| 6) No | 6) No way |
| 7) No | |
-

10.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) I learned that I can express myself through words. |
| 2) Yes | 2) I feel strong, confident, etc. I feel powerful. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel good, because I can also hear their feelings. |
| 4) Yes | 4) My home, there's nothing like a warm home :) |
| 5) Yes | 5) I love how I can express myself. |
| 6) Yes | 6) I think it's great :) |
| 7) Yes | |
-

11.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) No | 1) No |
| 2) No | 2) I feel excited. |
| 3) No | 3) I don't feel anything. |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) I don't (feel?) safe anywhere. |
| 5) Did not respond. | 5) I don't like poetry. |
| 6) No | 6) I don't know. |
| 7) No | |
-

12.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) That I'm creative, and that I can change the world if I keep moving forward. |
| 2) Yes | 2) I feel confident, and I feel as if I am helping the other person see what type of person I am. |
| 3) Sometimes | 3) I feel more connected with them, and that we are very similar even if we are complete different on the outside and come from different places. |
| 4) Yes | 4) Home. In my dreams when I'm asleep. |
| 5) Sometimes | 5) When we share our poems. |
| 6) Sometimes | 6) Well, the program is fine but I wish we could have a field trip to a place where we can share our poems. |
| 7) Yes | |
-

13.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) No | 1) I learned that I'm very talented. And that I just didn't know it. |
| 2) I don't know. | 2) I feel nervous. |
| 3) Yes | 3) I feel good to hear poetry to see how they can combine many ideas and make it into a poem. |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) my home, my bedroom |
| 5) I don't know. | 5) We get to share our poems with each other. |
| 6) No | 6) To be confident and share our poetry with each other. |
| 7) I don't know. | |

14.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) That I'm more powerful than I thought I was. |
| 2) Yes | 2) Ok |
| 3) Yes | 3) That they are powerful, too. |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) my room, the beach, when I close my eyes. |
| 5) I don't know. | 5) Did not respond. |
| 6) I don't know. | 6) I don't know. |
| 7) Yes | |

15.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1) No | 1) nothing |
| 2) No | 2) nothing |
| 3) No | 3) I don't feel nothing. |
| 4) No | 4) home |
| 5) No | 5) nothing |
| 6) No | 6) illegible (but possible "IDK" – I don't know.) |
| 7) No | |

16.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Yes | 1) Yes. I learn that life is beautiful and all the things going on with my life |
| 2) I don't know. | will be ok. I'm safe. |
| 3) Yes | 2) I feel like now people more know me and I feel like I'm not the only one. |
| 4) Yes | 3) I feel like I understand them, there's more in common with us. |
| 5) I don't know. | 4) My thoughts, my room, my dreams |
| 6) I don't know. | 5) That I express myself |
| 7) I don't know. | 6) To get more people involved |
-

Al Aqsa Islamic Academy (11th graders)

1.

- 1) Yes 1) I learned of a better way to express myself. I never really did. However, with poetry I
 - 2) Yes can be myself and express myself without anyone knowing what I'm really saying.
 - 3) No 2) I don't like to share my poems. I like them to be just for myself.
 - 4) Yes 3) I feel happy that the students discovered a different way to say what's on their mind in
 - 5) No a beautiful way.
 - 6) No 4) my home, my room, my mind, my heart
 - 7) Yes 5) It helps improve my writing as well as it in poetry.
6) I believe we should have time to write poetry on our own desired topic.
-

2.

- 1) Yes 1) I learned that I can rhyme good, and I can put different metaphors together.
- 2) Yes 2) I feel confident that they will like it, and when I read it, they can imagine the picture.
- 3) Yes 3) Did not respond.
- 4) Yes 4) my room, house, masjid
- 5) Yes 5) We get to express our feelings.
- 6) Yes 6) To do more poetry, snacks, better topics.
- 7) Yes

3.

- 1) Yes
- 2) ½ +- write stories
- 3) Yes
- 4) Yes
- 5) Yes
- 6) Yes/I don't know.
- 7) Yes

- 1) Well, I learned that I'm more than just who I am. Also that words can really express who you are.
 - 2) It makes me feel shy because I don't like talking outloud and I don't want people to think that my poems are pertaining to me.
 - 3) I feel excited to know what they were thinking about.
 - 4) my room, the masjid, in the car, at night, in the bathroom
 - 5) I miss 1 class and I like writing.
 - 6) snacks, longer time, better topics, only but the poetry teacher in the room
-
-

4.

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) Yes
- 4) Yes
- 5) Yes
- 6) No
- 7) Yes

- 1) I learned about myself that I have a lot to say. I learned through poetry that I have a trust issue (but tend to let it out through poetry).
 - 2) I am never confident sharing my poems with others. Poems are personal to me and no one ever seems to really understand it.
 - 3) It's a little interesting and mildly entertaining when my classmates read their poetry. It's interesting when I realize they have deeper thoughts than I imagined and entertaining because they have an element of humor.
 - 4) my room, my rooftop, English and poetry class, my notebook
 - 5) That I have 45 minutes of every Tuesday to express myself in ways I never thought possible. It's a time where nothing else matters.
 - 6) ways to improve the program: more than once a week
-

5.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Maybe | 1) I don't know. |
| 2) No | 2) slightly humiliated and nervous |
| 3) No | 3) Irritated |
| 4) I don't know. | 4) my room, while I play video games, while I play card games, <u>my mind</u> |
| 5) No | 5) Nothing |
| 6) No | 6) I don't know. |
| 7) I don't know. | |

6.

- 1) No 1) I can rhyme.
 - 2) No 2) nervous
 - 3) No 3) happy
 - 4) No 4) my room
 - 5) Yes 5) rhyming
 - 6) No 6) Did not respond.
 - 7) No
-
-

7.

- 1) No 1) That I can't write
 - 2) No 2) embarrassed
 - 3) No 3) bored
 - 4) No 4) nowhere
 - 5) No 5) nothing
 - 6) No 6) I don't know. ☺
 - 7) No
-

8.

- 1) No 1) Well considering the fact I always write about sports it shows I'm an avid sports fan.
 - 2) Yes 2) I don't like it much because not that many people are interested in writing poetry and
 - 3) Yes they don't like sports so they just drift off.
 - 4) No 3) Bored, unless it's someone who I like – then I'm interested.
 - 5) No 4) My house. I mean that's where my life is unless I'm out somewhere.
 - 6) No 5) The creativity of the words people use
 - 7) Yes 6) Honestly, nothing. It's okay the way it is now.
-

9.

- 1) No
- 2) Yes
- 3) Yes
- 4) Yes
- 5) No
- 6) I don't know.
- 7) Yes

- 1) It helps express all my thoughts in my own words whereas no one must know its exact meaning but myself.
 - 2) I usually feel nervous. Although writing poetry is not about pleasing others, I don't often feel confident about it, but I do enjoy it.
 - 3) I like the fact that I am able to experience various types of writings coming from different students. I love the distinction and expression of feelings.
 - 4) my bedroom, walking alone in parks, malls & the outside in general
 - 5) The fact that everyone has a unique style of writing; expressing their feelings in different ways; the various types of styles we use, and the fact that your poem can be your own with only your understanding.
 - 6) One way can be that we should write poems and put them into perspective. Another way is that we can experience poetry in a more fun way such as building confidence and perhaps include more speakers and certain instruments.
-

10.

- 1) No
- 2) Yes
- 3) Yes
- 4) Yes
- 5) Yes
- 6) No (because I don't know if it'll please them)
- 7) Yes

- 1) I learned about the feelings I had that couldn't be expressed by telling others. When I wrote poetry I felt free and no one could tell me I'm wrong or that I am not able to feel worthy.
 - 2) I feel awesome because maybe my words can influence another person. Also, I feel very happy. Sometimes I hesitate to share my poems, but when I do share them I feel like I accomplished something, which makes me brave.
 - 3) Usually when I hear my classmates, I feel that I understand what is going on in their mind. Also how my classmates really feel about love, happiness, lost, and success.
 - 4) paradise, my home, school, masjid, beac, my roof, city, pools, and my room
 - 5) My favorite thing about the poetry program is the encouragement. It has influenced me to write, and that I have my freewill. This is done by reading the poems from poets.
 - 6) The program could improve by maybe having different schools actually join together and share how poetry helped them and the actual poems they have written during the program.
-

QUBA: PILOT STUDY FOR HEARTSPEAK EVALUATION

Questions for 4th and 5th graders:

- 1) Before starting this poetry program, did you write on your own?
- 2) After starting this program, do you feel inspired to write on your own?
- 3) Did participating in the program help you show how you were feeling?
- 4) Was there anything about writing poetry that surprised you?
- 5) Did you learn anything in the poetry program?
- 6) How does it feel to share your work with others? (parents? Teachers? Classmates? Other family members?)
- 7) What is your favorite thing about poetry?

Student in Grade 4

- 1) Yes I started writing poetry when I was 7.
- 2) Yes because I like to express my feelings.
- 3) Yes. My feeling from the heart.
- 4) Yes because when drew our picture I never knew we had to write about them.
- 5) Yes to express my feelings to my friends.
- 6) Good because I share my poetry with my family members then they give me a hug.
- 7) Writing about my feelings.

Student in Grade 4

- 1) Yes because I was writing when I was 5 and I love to write about my filings (feelings).
- 2) Yes because I show my feelings to my friends.
- 3) Yes because I made a good desend (not sure what this word means).
- 4) Yes
- 5) Yes because I learned how to write my feelings.
- 6) Good and happy to show my poem to other people because I write some good poems.
- 7) When we share.

Student in Grade 4

- 1) Yes but I had problems thinking.
- 2) Yes because I don't know.
- 3) Yes. It made me be more creative.
- 4) No because I don't know.
- 5) No.
- 6) Good because it does.
- 7) Ding Ding Ding!

Student in Grade 4

- 1) Yes not really.
- 2) Yes I did.
- 3) Yes in a good feeling.
- 4) No nothing did.
- 5) No not really.
- 6) Nervous kindy (kinda) not really.
- 7) That you can say things in your own words. Not in others' words.

Student in Grade 5

- 1) Yes. I wrote poems sometimes when I was bored

- 2) Yes. It inspired me to write about my favorite things.
- 3) Yes it helped me get my imagination and creativity out.
- 4) No
- 5) I learned that you should share your thoughts and feelings
- 6) I don't really like to share my poems.
- 7) That you can write anything on the paper you want.

Student in Grade 5

- 1) Yes, I have. My teacher sometimes helps me.
- 2) It inspired me to work harder and better.
- 3) No, I don't think it has.
- 4) Yes. It's the way the people who read the poems say it.
- 5) No.
- 6) It makes me feel proud that someone wants to listen to me.
- 7) How we can express our thoughts to everyone.

Student in Grade 5

- 1) Yes, I wrote poetry since I was 6 years old.
- 2) Yes, I was really inspired to write because I had a lot of imagination.
- 3) Yes, my feeling helped express myself of making happy or sad poems.
- 4) No
- 5) No
- 6) It's fun to say it to the class, but it's exciting to say it to my family.
- 7) I feel that my favorite thing about poetry is brainstorming.

*** To add onto the written responses recorded above, here is a brief summary of the recording that was captured while the above questions were asked during the reflective conversation: Most of the kids voiced that each person in the class wrote poetry on their own before the poetry program. Some of the children expressed that poetry gives them excited feelings, and many also expressed that poetry helped them with their imaginations, creativity and expressing adventures. One child said that the way in which the teaching poets read the poems was surprising. One child said that poetry helps with brainstorming ideas for what to write in poems. One child learned that you can write anything on the paper while another learned that you can write about feelings. A few children voiced their favorite thing about the poetry program: One named the favorite as the project where they were able to choose what picture they wanted to draw and then write about it (and a few other students agreed). One most enjoyed how they were able to write about their feelings, what kind of sports they play, and about themselves and what they do. While most students expressed that they sometimes feel nervous when sharing their poetry, they also expressed that they enjoyed sharing. It made them feel good, happy and proud. Their families, teachers, and classmates react well to their poetry.

Questions for 6th and 7th graders:

- 1) Before starting this poetry program, did you write on your own?
- 2) After starting this program, do you feel inspired to write on your own?
- 3) Did participating in the program help you show or express how you were feeling?
- 4) Was there anything about writing poetry that surprised you? What did you learn?
- 5) What is your favorite thing about poetry?

Student in Grade 6

- 1) Yes one poem

- 2) Sometimes I'll think of poems but not write them down
- 3) Yes because now I can say it like how I write it
- 4) I learned how to make a collage but nothing really surprised me
- 5) Collages are fun they are my favorite

Student in Grade 6

- 1) Yes. I wrote about one or two poems.
- 2) Yes, I do.
- 3) Yes. It did a great deal
- 4) No. I learned that poetry didn't have to rhyme
- 5) Collages and drawing

Student in Grade 6

- 1) No, not really.
- 2) A little bit, when I have nothing better to do.
- 3) Yeah, it did. it helps me put my feelings into words
- 4) Yes. I learned that it's not just writing words on a piece of paper.
- 5) the art/drawing/collages

Student in Grade 6

- 1) I did not write about on my own before this program
- 2) Yes
- 3) Yes. It did
- 4) The collages. I learned you can express yourself through pictures
- 5) My favorite thing about poetry is the heart poems. I feel that poetry is weird way of expressing yourself

Student in Grade 6

- 1) Yes
- 2) Yes
- 3) sad angry
- 4) Yes
- 5) The collage

Student in Grade 7

- 1) Yes I did, when I was in second grade I started to write poetry.
- 2) Yes I do, I write poetry every time I have a break I do.
- 3) Yes, because, whatever mood I'm in I write about it in my poems.
- 4) Yes, I was surprised when I found out poems don't have to rhyme.
- 5) I love to rhyme in poems almost all my poems rhyme.

Student in Grade 7

- 1) Yes I did since the 1st grade!
- 2) Yes!
- 3) Yes it help get my feelings out in a positive way!
- 4) I was surprised by the deep details and I learned how to be descriptive!
- 5) The rhythm.

***Unfortunately, the recorder failed to record the reflective conversation with the above class of 6th and 7th grade students.

***** For the responses above, I corrected some spelling, but not grammar.

APPENDIX C

STUDENTS' ORIGINAL POEMS AS WRITTEN ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL
QUESTIONNAIRES

*Any names that were included in the poems were changed in order to protect the privacy of the authors.

Poetry

There is a flower
growing in my heart
That flower is poetry
The poetry is my chart

Poetry is nice
Something to feed my soul
It is like rice
feeding me from my bowl

Poetry is as sweet as candy
Poetry, I use in good or bad times
Poetry is always handy
especially when it rhymes

- 4th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

A Poem for Poetry

F
rom a tiny letter
what could be made
a word builds up
like the steps of lemonade
<----- from a tiny word
a sentence appears what could be said
from end
to head
from a long sentence
what could you make
forget about it
just bake a cake
what your missing
is bigger than history
for a sentence
can't end with a mystery
after that it turns into beauty
then u see
its poetry

-5th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

Poetry is like me
cool, nice, loving
but sometimes it's not like me it becomes
mean, and boring.
and that's why I like poetry because it has
so many feelings.

- 4th or 5th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

Poetry to me is experiencing your self and feelings

- 4th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

Poetry is very fun.
It is like the beautiful glowing sun.
Poetry helps express your feelings.
Poetry is my favorite subject.
I hope everyone will start liking poetry.
Poetry is a beautiful butterfly.
I hope poetry will never die.
I love poetry.

- 4th or 5th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is ok
it expands
my emotions
it is
fun.

- 5th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

From a letter
to a word
they form a sentence
then a poem
the poem expresses its
feelings
like no other

- 4th grader at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

Poetry is the thing
that lets me express
my feelings
Its fun
Its a time I can
show everyone
my thoughts.
I hope everyone
likes poetry
everyone can do it
if you think you
can't
at least try once.
because if you try you are sure
to like it. So have fun!!!

- 4th grader at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is Poetry It is like your secret memory
It will be the same and never change
Poetry
is
cool
poetry is nice I never that poetry will make me so brite
I never felt this way but I think its alright
But sometimes poetry is never just right

- 4th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is fun because you get
to talk about anything you want
cool!!! @ hotmail.com!!!

- 4th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is cool to me

Poetry is sometimes good
and sometimes boring.
I think it's cool and
sometimes awesome, funny, and cool
Poetry needs to be improve.

- 5th grader at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

Poetry is very fun
It is like the beautiful glowing sun.
Poetry helps express your feelings.
Poetry is my favorite subject.
I hope everyone will start liking poetry.
Poetry is a beautiful butterfly.
I hope poetry will never die.
I love poetry.

- 4th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is so kind
She gives and does things
But never wants anything in return!

- 5th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

From a letter
to a word
they form a sentence
then a poem
the poem expresses its
feelings
like no other

- 5th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry makes me mad sometimes
because it is very hard to rythme
I started when i was nine
if i do not succeed its like
starting a crime

- 5th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

Poetry
fills my heart with light
It gives me hope
for
everything
My heart soothes
When I do poetry
I feel like
I'm in a meadow
Where I'm alone
and I can sing
and dance
In my blue Sundress
Poetry
is a way
of life
for me.

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is Fun
you can express yourself
Take things of your mind
Reflect

For some people it can be there sanctuary.
A place where they can be by there self
And just write

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is cool
we do many things
I never felt so
free to write whatever I want
I love poetry
like the sun on my face
and the blood through my dreams.

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry

Poetry,
Poetry is very calm and kind like Sandra*,
Poetry is very funny and humorous like Cristine* and Rebekah*,
Poetry is very beautiful and glammy like Marjorie* & Allison*,
Poetry is funny, but in a different way, - in a Good way,
like Leanne*.
Poetry is very quite and doesn't say much, but says a lot, lke
Me! - I think

And poetry could also be a bit gross, like the 3 boys.

Sorry! I don't mean it!

It's just a poem!

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
or fester like

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies (taken from Langston Hughes' poem,
A Dream Deferred)

Poetry

Poetry is a place
where you can relax
you can express
your feelings
You can have fun
and let
your heart
SOAR
To make your
feelings
SOAR
To love
your life
and your
inside

- 6th grader at Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

The bird of Poetry

Birds of poetry visit my heart
and ask the heart for my feelings of happy things
my heart smiles and gives them what they want
the bird of poetry carries my feelings inside it
and express it
and spreads it
like it spreads its beautiful wings
and the poetry birds perch on my soul
and whispers
Poetry is Sandra's sanctuary

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

A poem can be As long
as a comet or
as short as a star
like mine
it's over

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry makes me alive of
what I do, so that means so
can you.
It makes laugh because of me.

- 6th grader from Villanova Academy for Honor Studies

Poetry is poetry
I like to express myself
no to be
depressed with myself
poetry is funny
Just like a bunny
That is sweet like
honey it sometimes
loony Just like
george cloony

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry

It's the calm energy
around you
It's the pindrop silence
around you
It's the sound of
the morning birds chirping
It's the words
you think or speak
Whatever it is, it's something
you can describe your life
as.

- 8th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry

Poetry, poetry, poetry.
I like poetry the things
about poetry I like the rymes
and the short lines the confident
in your heart about poetry the
poetry that makes you feel
spourtatuauaty. in yourself
I like the rymes that
Make you stay away from crimes
anyway I like poetry.
 haha
 poetry

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

To express yourself,
your own way,
to be curious,
to imagine your own world,
to share your thoughts,
what is this?
Poetry!

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

*The fifth grade class at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy did not write any poems.

A sanctuary for words
A safe haven
A secret book of dream
each word is a key for the next
unlocking the story of my life
the wonders of the world
The beginning and the end
So what is poetry?
Poetry is freedom

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

One word can mean so much,
It can even describe a person's entire life,
One sentence can mean so much,
It can even describe a person's future,
What is poetry?
Poetry is Peace.

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

I don't like poetry
It is dumb
It does not make me express my feelings
It is not fun.
I don't like writing stuff
because it is all a bluff
that is why it's dumb.

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Music to my ears

Poetry is like a beautiful song to my ears
it's a flow to my spirits
When I'm down it brings me up
All the hard times, become so soft
It's peaceful, graceful, hopeful
And makes me understand life,
life is like an ice cream cone,
enjoy it before it melts, And that
sweet taste is poetry to my veins.

- 8th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Hey my name is
Katherine Watts* I
attend al-aqsa

- 8th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

did you ever ask yourself
"who are we?"
what's are point in life
what we are suppose to do, what were suppose to see.
have you ever thought
what you want to be
when you grow up
or when your done with everything.
These are the things I think
when I write poetry.
Not how things are
different, colorful, ugly, or pretty
I think "who are we?"
Or "what are we suppose to be?"
I wonder what life is.
this to me, is pure poetry.

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry

Poetry is made of words
and ideas.
It can continue forever
and there's no limits
It is a way of expressing
your feelings in paper
It could be sad,
happy, angry, or romantic
But it's always poetry
Poetry, poetry

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

The pedals on the rose
The streath of the redness
The hardship of the growth
The wildness as it bloom
I'm a rose and it's my time
to shine

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

When I walk down the street
I hear the birds fly and flapping their wing
I see the flowers blossoming when I walk down street
I see everybody with a frown upside down

- 8th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry

You are my heart
The thing that sets me apart
From everything that I am
It helps me believe that I can
You are what lets me express myself
A means of escaping oneself.
You listen to what I want to say
No matter the hour or the day
My mind is represented by words with you
You notice my change of attitude.
You are always there to lend a hand
You are my own personal choice of land.

- 11th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry is delight to the
ears.
Some people like poetry, and
some just don't care.
It helps you express
your feelings without
saying it out loud.
Some people can write,
but some don't know how.
Poetry comes with
different kinds such as
metaphor, and personification,
You can even write a poem
with 2 people having a conversation.
Poetry can also be work of art,
You can write whats in
your mind, past, or hearts.

- 11th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

When I think of poetry I think of me.
If I wasn't here how would the world Be.
Poetry helps me express my own feelings
It helps me think of All these killings.
The best time to write is when your alone.
Your by yourself, secluded, and speak in any tone.
Poetry is another way to have fun
read it to your grandma, daughter, maybe ya son.
Poetry be popping at night time
Although I be reading mine nice and calm

-11th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Expressionism

A place,
to escape
not run and hide,
but escape.
A sanctuary,
where grammar,
structure,
opinion,
facts & figures,
all become superfluous.
A corner
where everything
can mean anything.
A mirror
reflecting images
held deep within
An ocean
where ideas,
thoughts, emotions
drifts and float peacefully.
A paper,
A white canvas.
Where thoughts
become words
and word,
become surreal images.

- 11th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

This poem is about my poetry class
we take it in a classroom not out in the grass
Sometimes it gets fun
I will be disappointed when its done
I can write about anything I like
Even my trip to Canada to finish Northern Pike
when we finish writing we read them aloud
If the readers sits down with a big applause they are very proud.
When everyone is writing you can't hear a sound.
If we all play Gears I would have everyone downed.

- 11th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

I don't know what
the point of
poetry is . . .
It doesn't mean anything
to me . . .
I just do it to get
it over with . . .
I'm not trying to be
negative about it
It's just who I am.
And that is . . .
Not a poet!

-11th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry is everywhere
in my life
even in My dream
It's the music I listen to
It's how I feel when I'm down
Whether it's good or bad
it still effects me
Though I'm still stubborn and still
don't understand the beauty I wish
I do . . .
I have a horse named Jim

-11th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry . . .
Freedom of expression
let your thoughts soar
go ahead . . . become an anti-depression
become unique with so much more
become a poet . . .

-11th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Hidden and isolated from the world,
No wrong or right, without a flaw,
Happy, sad, or even in love,
To be written or spoken by a dove,
Untouchable,
So precious and clean,
So thick, but thin,
Very lean.

- 11th grader from Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

Poetry
is like freedom
freedom
is like wings
What are wings?
[Wings are a sign of freedom
to those who have
None]

- 11th grader at Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy

APPENDIX D

NOTES FROM REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Villanova Academy for Honor Studies: 4th and 5th grade class

1) What is poetry (in your own words)?

- When you write something down about how you feel - you express your feelings
- You can make up stuff and have fun - can rhyme or not rhyme
- It wouldn't hurt people's feelings and you can express yourself and do whatever your heart tells you to do and do your best
- You can tell a little about your emotions, if sad, can write about rain or blue. If happy, can write about sun or yellow. A way to express yourself through words could put a smile on somebody's face.
- Something that helps you make your own world
- Through poetry, people can see what you think, can feel your emotions

2) What, if anything, surprised you about poetry?

- How well people express their feelings
- How soothing poetry is sometimes.
- Poetry is something to get your anger out of you. Don't have to shout.
- The imagination gives you ideas you never thought about.
- It sometimes makes you feel happy or sad.
- I realized that it's really important to do it because (it) can let your feelings out.
- That poetry helps you relax

3) What does the word "sanctuary" mean to you?

- Somewhere you'd go to gain comfort and feel better
- Doesn't have to be a place, can be a paper
- Where you relax and imagine more
- A comfort zone
- Somewhere you can feel safe
- A private spot where you like to relax and calm down from the bad things that happen to you
- You can forget about everything and know how to deal with it
- A place where you can worship
- Peace and quiet
- A holy place
- Your thoughts, your brain, your heart, your mind, your diary, a reading nook, a secret place

4) When might it be helpful to write poetry?

- When you get angry or sad
- Always! in bad or good times
- When you want to express your feelings

- (When you need) to let your feelings out
- When you are alone
- When you want to calm down or comfort yourself
- When somebody has died and you're trying to forget about it
- In class

Villanova Academy for Honor Studies: 6th grade class

1) What is poetry (in your own words)?

- A way of expressing yourself
- The way you feel about things
- Express all your feelings
- Sometimes it's about something completely different from what you're feeling
- Trying to show your audience your perspective of things
- A part of life
- It can calm you down if you're really stressed, because it's just peaceful
- Can be like a song
- You can write about anything you want to, and you hide or not hide it from anybody
- You can compare things a lot, describe things, and the descriptions don't have to be real
- Sometimes poetry can be about fantasy.

2) What, if anything, surprised you about poetry?

- You don't have to use grammar
- You don't have to rhyme
- You can be humorous, adventurous
- Taking a stand on what you write

3) What does the word "sanctuary" mean to you?

- Your own, you can relax and do whatever you want to
- You can be by yourself
- A spa
- My room
- A place that is really beautiful, that only you know about
- A clubhouse
- A prison
- A garden/trees
- A forest - you go and reflect on the creations of Allah

4) When might it be helpful to write poetry?

- When someone doesn't get your feelings and you're trying to get someone to see things from your perspective

- If you get into some trouble and feel very guilty
- To calm yourself down
- When you're sad or happy or angry

Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy: 5th grade class

1) What is poetry (in your own words)?

- It is something you write about your feelings
- A time you can write your feelings and express yourself in writing
- One of the ways to let your imagination run wild.

2) What, if anything, surprised you about poetry?

- No answer

3) What does the word "sanctuary" mean to you?

- A place you can relax
- A place where there is quiet and you can rest

4) When might it be helpful to write poetry?

- When you are stressed out, mad, bored, sad, angry.

Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy: 8th grade class

1) What is poetry (in your own words)?

- A way that you can speak your mind
- Words, symbols to express
- Express my inner feeling and make you feel at peace.
- You get out of your world for a second.
- I like to write when I am around a scenery.
- It helps me to express more.

2) What, if anything, surprised you about poetry?

- There are no rules.
- You read and write according to what others express, and find you feel the same.
- When you write and say it, you actually really feel it.
- Everybody reads and interprets in a different way.

3) What does the word "sanctuary" mean to you?

- A safe place where you stay and be alone.
- Your own environment, it's a place meant for you, where you can dream.
- A place where you go to learn more about yourself and nothing matters.
- Express any way you want to.
- You can go and become something else.

4) When might it be helpful to write poetry?

- When you are angry, depressed, sad.
- When you are angry - so you can get your feelings out.
- Writing makes you feel good.
- When you are feeling sad and when there is no one who can listen, so you write and the pencil is a bridge between you and the paper.
- You can write about anything.
- When something bad happens.

Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy: 11th grade class

1) What is poetry (in your own words)?

- A way a person can truly express themselves.
- When you write grammar does not matter.
- Poetry cannot be wrong.
- When you write, you don't have to rhyme; that's a freedom in writing.
- Poetry has a hidden meaning. No one has to know what you are trying to say.
- You feel what the person is trying to say.
- You can get more than one view, different aspect (unique to the reader).
- Poetry is always influence by what a poet has been through.

2) What, if anything, surprised you about poetry?

- It does not have to rhyme.
- Things that some people have to say (the depth of the human mind - Myra's (the teacher artist) thought.)
- People who write, write honest.
- Things are written the way they appear.

3) What does the word "sanctuary" mean to you?

- Place where you are safe.
- Where you feel protected.
- Where you can be alone.
- Makes you think of peace.
- Free will.
- A place where you feel at ease and your home.

4) When might it be helpful to write poetry?

-Poetry can be written any time to express yourself - not only when you are sad, hurt, or under stress.

-Some people write out of the blue.

-You write at night, when your mind is clear.

APPENDIX E

January 22, 2010

Dear Mr. Tahir: :

My name is Deirdre Church. I wanted to contact you regarding an addendum to the HeartSpeak poetry program that has been taking place in your school through the Arts and Spirituality Center. I am working toward a master's degree in public health at Drexel University and I have been working alongside the Arts and Spirituality Center to develop a way for the participants of HeartSpeak to be able to reflect on what they have learned and allow the Center to get feedback regarding the impact of the program. In order to do this, the classes that are already participating in the poetry program will take part in one session of reflection after they have already participated in several workshops. This session will be no more than 40 minutes and will involve the facilitation of a "reflective conversation" and students writing responses to several questions. The children's current poetry instructor and I will facilitate the session and a transcriptionist will take notes during the conversation. I have attached a list of the questions that will be asked.

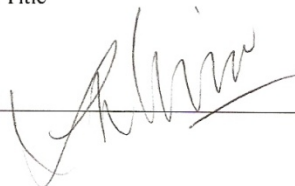
The findings from the conversations and questions will not be published. Rather, copies of the findings will be given to the Arts and Spirituality Center and each school that participates. The primary purpose for this session is to help the children understand what they have learned in the workshops so that they can utilize these strategies of self-expression and healing throughout their lives.

In order to begin these sessions, Drexel's Institutional Review Board (IRB) will need to review my project in order to protect the best interests of the students. Along with the IRB submission, I will need to provide the board with letters of approval from the principal or another representative of the school. In order to indicate your approval, please sign and date below and **fax** this form to the Arts & Spirituality Center at **(215) 222-1015**. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (850)339-7680 or deirdrechurch@yahoo.com. Thank you very, very much for your time and consideration.

Have a wonderful day!

Regards,
Deirdre Church

HARRIS TAHIR (Principal)
Print Name and Title


Signature

January 28, 2010
Date

January 22, 2010

Dear Abdus Rahman,

My name is Deirdre Church. I wanted to contact you regarding an addendum to the HeartSpeak poetry program that has been taking place in your school through the Arts and Spirituality Center. I am working toward a master's degree in public health at Drexel University and I have been working alongside the Arts and Spirituality Center to develop a way for the participants of HeartSpeak to be able to reflect on what they have learned and allow the Center to get feedback regarding the impact of the program. In order to do this, the classes that are already participating in the poetry program will take part in one session of reflection after they have already participated in several workshops. This session will be no more than 40 minutes and will involve the facilitation of a "reflective conversation" and students writing responses to several questions. The children's current poetry instructor and I will facilitate the session and a transcriptionist will take notes during the conversation. I have attached a list of the questions that will be asked.

The findings from the conversations and questions will not be published. Rather, copies of the findings will be given to the Arts and Spirituality Center and each school that participates. The primary purpose for this session is to help the children understand what they have learned in the workshops so that they can utilize these strategies of self-expression and healing throughout their lives.

In order to begin these sessions, Drexel's Institutional Review Board (IRB) will need to review my project in order to protect the best interests of the students. Along with the IRB submission, I will need to provide the board with letters of approval from the principal or another representative of the school. In order to indicate your approval, please sign and date below and **fax** this form to the Arts & Spirituality Center at **(215) 222-1015**. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (850)339-7680 or deirdrechurch@drexel.edu. Thank you very, very much for your time and consideration.

Have a wonderful day!

Regards,
Deirdre Church

Abdus Rahman
Print Name and Title

Abdus Rahman
Signature

1/26/10
Date

APPENDIX F



**DREXEL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

Office of Regulatory Research Compliance

APPROVAL NOTICE (EXEMPT)

TO: Nancy Epstein , MPH
Provost / School of Public Health
Mailstop:660

FROM: Sreekant Murthy, Ph.D.
Sreekant Murthy, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Research Compliance
Drexel University College of Medicine
1601 Cherry Street, Suite 10444, 3-Parkway, Philadelphia, Pa 19102
Tel: 215-255-7864 Fax: 215-255-7874

SUBJECT: EXEMPT APPROVAL
TITLE: The Arts and Spirituality Center's HeartSpeak Program: Analyzing Data from a Reflective Conversation
SPONSOR: Internal
PROJECT No: 1043675, PROTOCOL No: 18883 , ACTION No: 54161 Type: New
Period: 1 Seq: 1 , DETAIL No: 262932
CURRENT APPROVAL PERIOD: , EXPIRES:

RE: 03/01/10 - Approved Exempt Category 1. This study will review 200 de-identified questionnaires from the Arts and Spirituality Center, Al Aqsa Islamic Academy, and Villanova Academy for Honor.

Date: 3/1/2010

On behalf of the Committee, I am pleased to inform you that the subject protocol has been reviewed and approved as **EXEMPT research** (45 CFR 46, 101(b) (1)) for the period indicated above. We operate under many Government requirements. As a result, this approval is granted with the following understandings:

1. If this is a sponsored project, then the study may not be activated until the Clinical Research Group has received BOTH a fully executed sponsored agreement AND appropriate letter(s) of indemnification by the sponsor. If this is not a sponsored study (designated "internal"), the costs of the project must be identified and a cost center designated. Please call 215-255-7857 if you have any questions regarding these procedures.
2. You must advise the IRB of the activation date. Use the attached form for this purpose.
3. Protected Health Information (PHI) cannot be collected without a Waiver of Authorization per HIPAA regulations.
4. Any change to the protocol must be submitted in writing and approved by the IRB in advance.

1601 Cherry Street, 3 Parkway Building, Suite 10444 • Philadelphia, PA 19102 • Phone 215-255-7857 • Fax 215-255-7874
www.research.drexel.edu • www.drexelmed.edu

In the tradition of Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and Hahnemann Medical College®
*Philadelphia Health & Education Corporation d/b/a Drexel University College of Medicine is a separate not-for-profit subsidiary of Drexel University.
Drexel University is not involved in patient care.*

APPENDIX G

MOST COMMON POSITIVE & NEGATIVE RESULTS FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 1: What did you learn about yourself through poetry? 1) Learned something positive about themselves/their personal characteristics 2) Growth in confidence 3) Recognized their abilities through poetry 4) Poetry helped them to see or let out their emotions 5) Poetry helped them develop skills 6) Learned new things about poetry 7) Learned that they are not talented at writing poetry	36 (51%) 33 (47%) 27 (39%) 18 (26%) 13 (19%) 12 (17%) 2 (3%)
Question 2: How do you feel when you share your poetry with others? 1) Confident, proud, and that they did a good job 2) Nervous 3) Feel good/enjoy it 4) That they are expressing themselves 5) Shy/Timid 6) Unsure of themselves and/or others' reactions 7) Scared 8) Embarrassed 9) Nothing	18 (26%) 11 (16%) 10 (14%) 8 (11%) 7 (10%) 6 (9%) 4 (6%) 4 (6%) 3 (4%)
Question 3: How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry? 1) Feel good/enjoy it 2) They learn about their classmates and begin to understand them more 3) See their classmates' abilities 4) Feel that they did a good job and/or are proud of them 5) Bored, disinterested, or do not listen 6) Negative feelings about themselves or jealousy 7) Nothing 8) Negative feelings toward those presenting 9) Mixed good and bad feelings	24 (34%) 18 (26%) 16 (23%) 14 (20%) 6 (9%) 4 (6%) 4 (6%) 3 (4%) 3 (4%)
Question 4: Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary. 1) Could name at least one place of sanctuary in their lives 2) Bedroom 3) Home 4) A place of worship or spiritual activities	62 (89%) 39 (56%) 30 (43%) 25 (36%)

5) Nature or being outdoors	13 (19%)
6) Internal places (mind, heart, abilities, their imagination, etc.)	11 (16%)
7) School	11 (16%)
8) Library	7 (10%)
9) Nowhere	4 (6%)
Question 5: What is your favorite thing about the poetry program?	
1) The opportunity for them and others to be able to express themselves	20 (29%)
2) Writing/rhyming	15 (21%)
3) Sharing poetry and/or listening to others' poetry	9 (13%)
4) Nothing and/or they do not like poetry	1 (1%)
Question 6: What would make the program better?	
1) Undecided	11 (16%)
2) Nothing/ It's fine as it is	7 (10%)
3) Allowing more time for writing and/or sharing poetry	9 (13%)
4) Students being able to choose their own writing topics	8 (11%)
5) A more caring environment	2 (3%)
6) Students paying more attention and being quiet	2 (3%)
7) Getting rid of the program	1 (1%)

MOST COMMON RESULTS FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

Total students = 70
(100%)

Question 1: What did you learn about yourself through poetry?

1) Learned something positive about themselves/their personal characteristics	36 (51%)
2) Growth in confidence	33 (47%)
3) Recognized their abilities through poetry	27 (39%)
4) Poetry helped them to see or let out their emotions	18 (26%)
5) Poetry helped them develop skills	13 (19%)
6) Learned new things about poetry	12 (17%)

Question 2: How do you feel when you share your poetry with others?

1) Confident, proud, and that they did a good job	18 (26%)
2) Nervous	11 (16%)
3) Feel good/enjoy it	10 (14%)
4) That they are expressing themselves	8 (11%)
5) Shy/Timid	7 (10%)

Question 3: How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry?

1) Feel good/enjoy it	24 (34%)
2) They learn about their classmates and begin to understand them more	18 (26%)
3) See their classmates' abilities	16 (23%)
4) Feel that they did a good job and/or are proud of them	14 (20%)

Question 4: Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary.

1) <i>Could name at least one place of sanctuary in their lives</i>	62 (89%)
2) Bedroom	39 (56%)
3) Home	30 (43%)
4) A place of worship or spiritual activities	25 (36%)
5) Nature or being outdoors	13 (19%)
6) Internal places (mind, heart, abilities, their imagination, etc.)	11 (16%)
7) School	11 (16%)
8) Library	7 (10%)

Question 5: What is your favorite thing about the poetry program?

1) The opportunity for them and others to be able to express themselves	20 (29%)
2) Writing/rhyming	15 (21%)
3) Sharing poetry and/or listening to others' poetry	9 (13%)

Question 6: What would make the program better?

1) Undecided	11 (16%)
--------------	----------

2) Nothing/ It's fine as it is	7 (10%)
3) Allowing more time for writing and/or sharing poetry	9 (13%)
4) Students being able to choose their own writing topics	8 (11%)

TOTAL RESULTS FOR QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS	
	Total students = 70 (100%)
Question 1: What did you learn about yourself through poetry?	
1) Learned something positive about themselves and their personal characteristics	36 (51%)
2) Growth in confidence	33 (47%)
3) Recognized their abilities through poetry	27 (39%)
4) Poetry helped them to see or let out their emotions	18 (26%)
5) Poetry helped them develop skills	13 (19%)
6) Learned new things about poetry	12 (17%)
7) Gained hope through poetry	2 (3%)
8) Gained a new perspective or learned a life lesson	2 (3%)
9) Felt heard	1 (1%)
10) Felt similar to others through poetry	1 (1%)
11) Learned that anyone can be a good poet	1 (1%)
12) Learned that they are not talented at writing poetry	2 (3%)
13) Undecided	2 (3%)
14) Unable to decipher response	2 (3%)
Question 2: How do you feel when you share your poetry with others?	
1) Confident, proud, and that they did a good job	18 (26%)
2) Nervous	11 (16%)
3) Feel good/enjoy it	10 (14%)
4) That they are expressing themselves	8 (11%)
5) Shy/Timid	7 (10%)
6) Prefer to keep their poetry private	(6) 9%
7) Unsure of themselves and/or others' reactions	(6) 9%
8) Happy	(5) 7%
9) Scared	(4) 6%
10) Embarrassed	(4) 6%
11) Weird/Funny	3 (4%)
12) Nothing	3 (4%)

13) Feel that they are able to be an influence on other students through poetry	2 (3%)
14) Okay if their poetry is not personal	2 (3%)
15) Feel that their views are the same or similar to others	2 (3%)
16) Feel that they are different or that their views are different from others	1 (1%)
17) Honest	1 (1%)
18) Courageous	1 (1%)
19) That s/he is learning	1 (1%)
20) Angry	1 (1%)
21) Feels that s/he is with his/her family	1 (1%)
22) Bad about himself/herself	1 (1%)
23) Undecided	1 (1%)
24) Did not respond	1 (1%)
25) Unable to decipher	1 (1%)
Question 3: How do you feel when you hear your classmates read their poetry?	
1) Feel good/enjoy it	24 (34%)
2) They learn about their classmates and begin to understand them more	18 (26%)
3) See their classmates' abilities	16 (23%)
4) Feel that they did a good job and/or are proud of them	14 (20%)
5) Feel that it encourages them to do better	4 (6%)
6) Feel that listening to their classmates' poetry gives them ideas for their writing	3 (4%)
7) Feel more connected to their classmates and similar to them	3 (4%)
8) Out-going	1 (1%)
9) Bored, disinterested, or do not listen	6 (9%)
10) Negative feelings about themselves or jealousy	4 (6%)
11) Nothing	4 (6%)
12) Negative feelings toward those presenting	3 (4%)
13) Mixed good and bad feelings	3 (4%)
14) Disagrees or feels differently from his/her classmates	1 (1%)
15) Believes that the students' work does not make sense	1 (1%)
16) Believes that the students do not care about their own work	1 (1%)
17) Undecided	1 (1%)
Question 4: Name all the places in your life that you consider to be a sanctuary.	

1) <i>Could name at least one place of sanctuary in their lives</i>	62 (89%)
2) Bedroom	39 (56%)
3) Home	30 (43%)
4) A place of worship or spiritual activities	25 (36%)
5) Nature or being outdoors	13 (19%)
6) Internal places (mind, heart, abilities, their imagination, etc.)	11 (16%)
7) School	11 (16%)
8) Library	7 (10%)
9) Writing/diary/journal	6 (9%)
10) Secret place or being alone	6 (9%)
11) Parents/Parents' room	5 (7%)
12) Recreational activities/places	5 (7%)
13) Friends	3 (4%)
14) Reading/books	3 (4%)
15) A particular city, country, or other political place/symbol	3 (4%)
16) Car	2 (3%)
17) Peaceful places	2 (3%)
18) Familiar places	1 (1%)
19) Enjoyable experiences	1 (1%)
20) Poetry class	1 (1%)
21) Any place where s/he is welcome	1 (1%)
22) Expressed desire for other places of sanctuary (such as an imaginary, secret place where they could be alone)	3 (4%)
23) Nowhere	4 (6%)
Question 5: What is your favorite thing about the poetry program?	
1) The opportunity for them and others to be able to express themselves	20 (29%)
2) Writing/rhyming	15 (21%)
3) Sharing poetry and/or listening to others' poetry	9 (13%)
4) The program is encouraging/inspiring	4 (6%)
5) The program is fun (enjoyable) and/or funny	3 (4%)
6) Choosing topics	3 (4%)
7) The poetry instructor	2 (3%)
8) Drawing	2 (3%)
9) Seeing the talents of others	2 (3%)

10) The program is peaceful/calming	1 (1%)
11) Missing class	1 (1%)
12) The program helps him/her successfully deal with emotions	1 (1%)
13) Enjoys the mental challenges	1 (1%)
14) The program helps improve poetry skills	1 (1%)
15) Everything	1 (1%)
16) Nothing and/or they do not like poetry	1 (1%)
17) Undecided	2 (3%)
18) Did not respond	1 (1%)
Question 6: What would make the program better?	
1) Nothing/ It's fine as it is	7 (10%)
2) Allowing more time for writing and/or sharing poetry	9 (13%)
3) Students being able to choose their own writing topics	8 (11%)
4) Opening the program up to include more people	5 (7%)
5) The sessions being provided more often and more time being allotted for them	5 (7%)
6) Implementing more projects, hands-on activities, and/or exercises involving other supplies and computers	4 (6%)
7) Confidence-building activities	3 (4%)
8) Giving children the opportunity to share their work publicly	3 (4%)
9) Going on field trips (possibly to places of sanctuary)	3 (4%)
10) Providing food/snacks	3 (4%)
11) Hanging up the poems	2 (3%)
12) More time for discussion/talking	2 (3%)
13) More artistic and creative	1 (1%)
14) More drawing	1 (1%)
15) Giving everyone a chance to read	1 (1%)
16) Having only the students and the poetry instructor in the room during the sessions	1 (1%)
17) A more caring environment	2 (3%)
18) Students paying more attention and being quiet	2 (3%)
19) Getting rid of the program	1 (1%)
20) Undecided	11 (16%)
21) Did not respond	3 (4%)
22) Unable to decipher	2 (3%)

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