

POETRY of the CITY

The Power of Poetry in Education

Life Saving – Life Changing – Life Giving

the
CHURCHILL
fellowship

Hannah Maria Stanislaus
Churchill Fellow, 2023



THE
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The research to complete this report was funded by The Churchill Fellowship, in partnership with the Mercers' Company.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Poetry in America was researched in Massachusetts, New York, Texas and Arizona.



QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED FROM THE RESEARCH IN THE USA.

1. **Could** poetry be taught to children, of any age, as a separate subject to English?
2. **How** does poetry help children with mental health, social, emotional and communication development and a sense of identity?
3. **Would** the UK Education system benefit from a change in the National Curriculum, regarding poetry, for future generations?

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Poetry **CAN** be taught, 5 days a week, as a separate subject to English to children of any age.
2. Poetry **CAN** help children to navigate their mental health positively, aid social, emotional and communication development and assist them to understand who they are and where they come from – **THEIR** identity, as well as looking at equality, diversity and inclusivity.
3. Poetry **CAN** benefit the UK Education system by changing the National Curriculum for future generations to learn poetry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Poetry to become a standalone subject, on the UK National Curriculum, for primary and secondary school children.
- Poetry to become a GCSE subject by 2035.
- Poetry to become prominent in English for children to write, analyse and read, with the focus on promoting social emotional and communication development and navigating mental health, identity, equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- Poetry to become part of Teacher training and further CPD to ensure Poetry is understood by teachers before taught.



BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

I was permanently excluded from school at the age of thirteen.
I was an angry and vulnerable child.
I was falling into the hands of a paedophile.
I was someone who hated the world and everyone in it.

I wrote my first poem at the age of thirty-three.
I published my first poetry collection at the age of thirty-four.
I started to teach poetry workshops to children at the age of thirty-five.
I decided to embark on this Fellowship at the age of thirty-six.

What could I have achieved, at the age of thirteen, if I had the power of poetry in education to save me?

In 2022, I delivered poetry workshops to 300 children in 4 Primary Schools: Shaftesbury Park Primary School, Southmead Primary School, Trinity St Mary's CofE Primary, The Deaf Unit at the Hague Primary School.
Every child wrote a poem or the start of a poem.

It was after this that I decided to apply for my Churchill Fellowship to research Poetry in America.

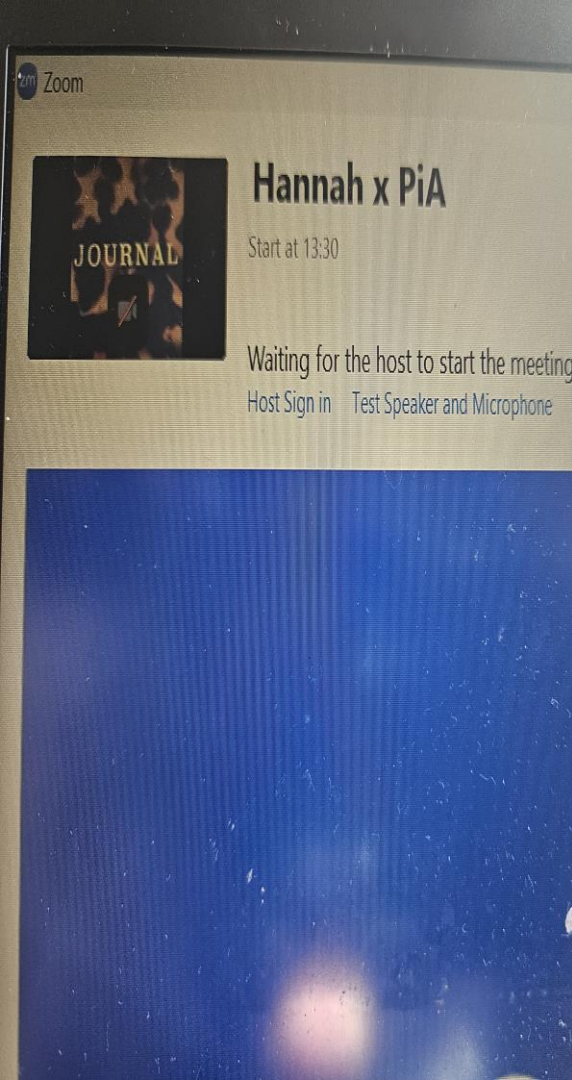
What I know is the UK National Curriculum could provide poetry as a standalone subject to be taught to OUR children in OUR schools, based on what I have learnt in the USA. The benefits of my findings to the UK – Life-saving, life-giving and life-changing for our children now and our future generations. Poetry should be read, discussed, analysed and written at every level of primary and secondary school in the UK.

The power of poetry in education can promote equality, diversity, inclusivity, good mental health, expression of self, discovery of identity and social, emotional and communication development.



Pictured above:
Hannah's first collection
'Extremely Aggressive,
Uneducated and Rough'.

Photo credit : Hannah
Stanislaus.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To find out how PiA became the multi-platform educational phenomenon it had become and whether poetry is strong enough to be a standalone subject on an Education curriculum.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To inform the UK Government that changes are needed in our National Curriculum for Primary and Secondary schools, in relation to poetry, the time is now.
- To provide the UK Government with substantial and valuable evidence that poetry is a viable subject to be studied independently and that a new GCSE could be created, by 2035, for Secondary school children.

APPROACH / METHODS

- **Interviewing key UK organizations that have knowledge and understanding of literacy in education to Primary and Secondary school children in all 4 UK countries.**
- **Researching the UK National Curriculum and the teaching of poetry at every Key Stage.**
- **Delivering poetry workshops in schools and witnessing the need for change.**
- **Attempting to speak to the Education Secretaries in all 4 UK Countries.**

PRE-TRIP FINDINGS - The Guardian, article 2023

- ‘Many UK primary schoolchildren ‘drastically’ missing out on poetry’
- **Research in January by Macmillan and CLPE found limited books and lack of teacher support means majority study or hear poetry less than once a week**
- [Sarah Shaffi](#) - Wed 15 Mar 2023 06.01
- ‘Teachers felt they didn’t have the knowledge of poetry’ ... a primary school classroom.
- Photograph credit: Peter Titmuss/Alamy



A few quotes from the article in The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/mar/15/many-uk-primary-schoolchildren-drastically-missing-out-on-poetry>

‘Schools in the UK have “limited poetry book stock” and there are “many barriers” to the teaching of poetry.’

‘The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and Macmillan Children’s Books carried out a survey of primary school teachers that found poetry is read aloud less than once a week in 93% of schools. In nearly 20% of schools, children never have the opportunity to hear a poem read aloud.’

After reading this article, I contacted UK organizations to get a deeper insight into what was happening in classrooms nationwide.

I spoke to :

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)

The Poetry Society

English Association (EA)

United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA)

The English and Media Centre.

Poetry in Primary Schools

What we know works

1. Provide teachers and children with regular exposure and access to poetry, from a range of poets, in a range of voices and in a variety of forms.
2. Provide professional development opportunities to build teachers' knowledge, confidence and expertise.
3. Give poetry a place within and across the curriculum.
4. Recognise the benefits of poetry to develop core literacy skills.
5. Encourage openness in children's responses to poetry, enabling them to make connections with their own lives and the world.
6. Provide varied opportunities to lift poems from the page and bring them to life, including through performance.
7. Work alongside professional poets to understand the motivation to read and create poetry.
8. Use a range of models and approaches to support children to read and write poetry.
9. Allow children to have choice and voice, develop tastes and preferences and write from their own motivations and experiences.
10. Give children's own poetry an audience, so that they see themselves as poets.

PRE-TRIP FINDINGS – UK Organizations.

I visited the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and I spoke with Charlotte Hacking, the Learning and Programme Director.

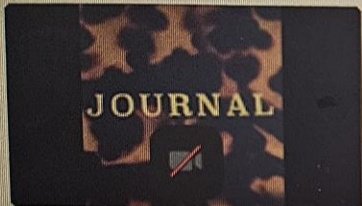
Here are the key points from our discussion:

- Poetry is 'nice to have rather than core entitlement' for our primary schoolchildren and secondary school
- Teachers 'are not taught how to deliver poetry'.
- Teacher training has 'no CPD' in poetry and this is not reflecting the value of poetry for our schoolchildren.
- Pictured are the 10 recommendations for poetry from the CLPE. Published in 2023.

My findings from this interview

Teacher training must give teachers knowledge on how to teach poetry.

Primary schoolchildren need to be taught poetry on the UK National Curriculum.

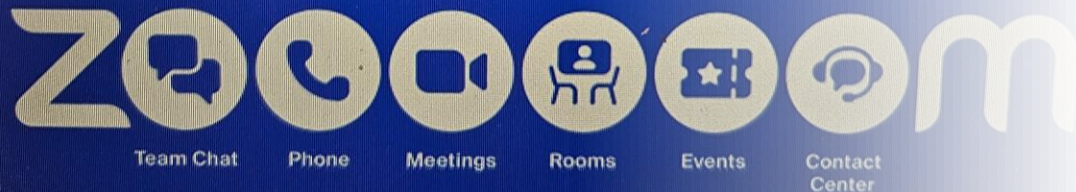


Hannah & The Poetry Society ch

Start at 11:00

Waiting for the host to start the meeting.

Host Sign in Test Speaker and Microphone



Team Chat

Phone

Meetings

Rooms

Events

Contact
Center

My next conversation was with Natasha Ryan, Education Manager and Billie, a tutor, from The Poetry Society.

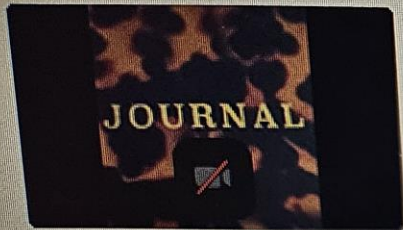
Here are the key points from our discussion:

- They were able to inform me that secondary schoolchildren are 'not recognizing themselves' in poetry, as the perception of poetry is 'old and musty'.
- The 'lack of diversity' in poetry is where schoolchildren 'lose passion'.
- The education system teaches schoolchildren to 'Pull the poem apart' and schoolchildren do not know how to dissect a poem, thus leading to disinterest in poetry.
- Performance poetry is a huge part of the language of poetry and increases engagement for those who are Year 10/11.

My findings from this interview


Secondary schoolchildren would benefit from poetry being taught in different ways – Performance poetry, slam poetry, written poetry.

Interest of poetry in secondary school would lead to a greater A-Level English uptake.



Hannah (Churchill Fellow) x Becky (EA)

Start at 13:00

Waiting for the host to start the meeting. 

[Test Speaker and Microphone](#)

My next meeting - The English Association (EA), speaking to Rebecca Fisher, CEO.

Here are the key points from our discussion:

- Rebecca spoke about the 'power and importance of poetry' with particular emphasis on performance poetry and the 'transformative' curriculum that could come about with using all forms of the poetry genre.
- The 'appetite for change' had to come at the 'right time' for schoolchildren to learn poetry for 'self-exploration and self-development'.

My findings from this interview

The power and importance of poetry is what schoolchildren need to be taught.

The time is now to make these changes, transforming the UK National Curriculum would be beneficial for future generations.

My final meeting, before the USA, was with the UK Literacy Association. I met with Debra Myhill, the President of the UKLA.



Here are the key points from our discussion:

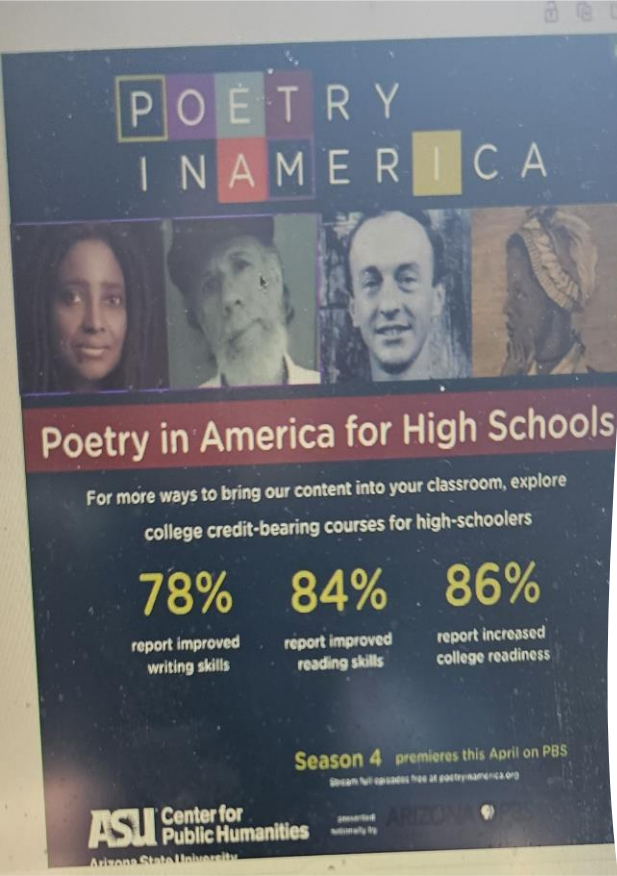
- Firstly, Debra shared with me a co-authored article from 2013: Playing it safe: Teachers' views of creativity in poetry writing Debra Myhill, Anthony Wilson, University of Exeter.
- The article end with this line 'In this sense the 'schooled' version of creativity, as seen in these statements about teaching poetry, has not kept up with and no longer mirrors the world beyond it'.
- Debra explained how poetry can help schoolchildren with their mental health and wellbeing and the evidence from the research completed at the University of Exeter.
- Also discussed was the need to build teachers' enthusiasm, passion and knowledge for poetry.

My findings from this interview

In over 10 years, not much has changed in terms of the UK education system for poetry.

Teaching teachers' poetry as part of their training and ongoing professional development is desperately needed. Teachers must have a connection to the subject to be able to teach it.

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY IN AMERICA



- Poetry in America (PiA) was started in 2013, by Dr Elisa New, as a professional development extension program at Harvard University. Next, Dr New co-founded Verse Video with Leah Reisdennis, a non-profit educational organization that records content for education and material for their TV seasons.
- In 2016, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) screened season one of PiA, Dr New directs and interviews some of the world's biggest names to discuss poetry. There has now been four seasons of Poetry in America, those who have appeared include : President Joe Biden, President Bill Clinton, Senator John McCain, Amanda Gorman and Bono.
- In 2019, PiA started a wraparound High School course, meaning High School students could earn High School Credits and College Credits simultaneously. PiA has been delivered to 5,000 students in 28 states plus Washington D.C, due largely to the partnership with the National Education Equity Lab (NEEL) to ensure delivery in schools and this figure is growing rapidly. In the same year, a dual enrolment program was set up at Harvard University.
- In 2020, PiA expanded and a Dual Enrolment course, at Arizona State University, began to be rolled out and is now based at the Mary Lou Fulton building. PiA are also commissioned to create courses for Amplify, one of the biggest organizations in the USA delivering education for K-12, 'High-quality programs' for subjects such as Literacy are what PiA produce.
- **These are the reasons I wanted to research Poetry in America, to find out exactly how the power of poetry in education has transformed the lives of students in the USA and how it can be transferred to create a new poetry syllabus for the UK National Curriculum.**
- In just 11 years, Poetry in America has transformed the lives of the students that enrol on the course and it is growing exponentially. I contacted Dr New to ask if I could undertake my research, she agreed and I applied to the Churchill Fellowship.
- I was invited to meet the team in Boston, bear witness to the Dual Enrolment course in New York, join the team at the SXSW EDU Conference in Texas and visit Dr New in Arizona.

Pictured above: Proof of the phenomenal success that PiA is having with students across the USA.

Photo Credit: Poetry In America.

My first stop on my Churchill Fellowship schedule : Boston, Massachusetts.

I was invited to Harvard University, the birthplace of Poetry in America, where I met with Brie Martin, Operations Manager at PiA.

Brie gave me a tour of the University and a tour of the PiA office, where I was introduced to the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Here are the key points from our discussion:

- In 2013, Dr New started filming herself lecturing and along with that, she started to focus on having conversations with interesting people about poetry.
- She ended up with the material for courses that would not have been turned into a lecture. That is how Poetry in America courses started at the Harvard Extension School.
- These were continuing education courses for adults. The price tag was steep, around \$4,000, for a semester long course. That was not accessible. And that's why that's not the end of the story. It was the very beginning.
- In the same year, Dr New and Leah Reis-Dennis co-founded a non-profit organisation called Verse Video Education, which started out as a production company, going into classrooms of students in K-12. Dr New began an archive of material, used to visualize the poems with the words, of which to date is managed by an Archive Researcher.
- **She realised that this material on poetry was a really good way to teach teachers how to teach. Hearing a lot from teachers in the US saying things like 'I never learned how to read poetry' and 'I have no idea how to teach poetry because I never really understood it'. The general feeling was a very deep discomfort with teaching poetry.**
- PiA started professional development programmes or PD programmes. That's what their teacher training programmes are.
- In 2016, Professional Development Courses (PD) for teachers started to be offered in partnership with the Harvard Extension School. Offering a scholarship to teachers for \$250, from the original \$3000-\$4000, a teacher can take one of the courses in a semester.
- To the present day, it is still just \$250 and teachers are still taking advantage of this life-changing course.



Pictured above: The place where PiA began.

Photo credit: Hannah Stanislaus.

- The teacher programme started to gain momentum, involving a critical mass of teachers. PiA said, ‘What if we were able to provide for high school teachers have wraparound experience that they can take into their classroom, during which students can study on a dual enrolment programme’.
- **A student from a school that's under resourced, possibly doesn't think of themselves as somebody who might go to college, maybe because your parents didn't. It shows you that you're capable of taking a college course. That is the benefit that looks important to PiA, ensuring that students from all types of high schools can come to college with the writing skills and critical reading.**
- When PiA teach a teacher who's teaching poetry, usually they're an English teacher. More recently, they have been creating interdisciplinary curriculum that includes, the science of poetry, that history of poetry, the politics of poetry, and that material is geared towards teachers of other subjects and could be integrated into any subject.
- Creating this material, which is video and wraparound curriculum that lives on a platform like canvas, allows teachers and their students to access content in the classroom, supported by Teaching Assistants (TA) in the PiA centre.
- Their main partner, the National Education Equity Lab (NEEL) are really in need of the pilot programme for teachers of other subjects. In addition, the whole mission is of NEEL : Talent is evenly distributed but opportunities are not. NEEL want to bridge the inequality gap in Education in the USA.
- Particularly, they focus on what they classify in the US as a ‘Title 1 High School’. That classification has to do with what level of resources that are provided by the government to the school. The network of schools PiA get access to under resourced schools, recruiting school districts, not students and their families. The programme is at no cost to the student and it's paid for by the school district. In comparison to the UK, a change in the UK National Curriculum would be Countrywide and benefit schoolchildren.

MY FINDINGS FROM THIS INTERVIEW

We, in the UK, are facing huge social inequality in our education system. What Poetry in America has done in the USA, is desperately needed in our schools and that is evident from the conversations I have had. The benefits, of a UK National Curriculum policy change, would be transformative and progressive. Acknowledging the differences in the Education systems in both countries, a program model could be specifically made for the UK National Curriculum. Teachers can benefit from being taught poetry, whilst undertaking teacher training, eliminating any issues around the subject.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Phillis has two poems, one of which is called ‘To the University of CAMBRIDGE in NEW-ENGLAND’, that feature in Season Four of Poetry In America.

The Old South Meeting House is located on the Freedom Trail in Boston, Mass.

Phillis Wheatley was taken from West Africa, at the age of seven, being taken on the ship ‘The Phillis’ to Boston. Her slave owner’s name was ‘Wheatley’, hence the name Phillis Wheatley.

Phillis was taught English and Latin, by her owners, a rare anomaly for a slave. She was taught to read and began to write poetry. Her poems were ‘Of the day’ written about what she witnessed in the 1770’s.

She was first published in 1773, the title of her poetry collection ‘Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral’, in London on a visit with her owner’s son.

Phillis even performed her poetry to a certain George Washington, who would later become the first President of the newly founded United States.

She was the First African American woman to be published and only the third woman to publish a collection of poetry.

Phillis died at the age of thirty-one, after giving birth to her child who also died, penniless and without family.

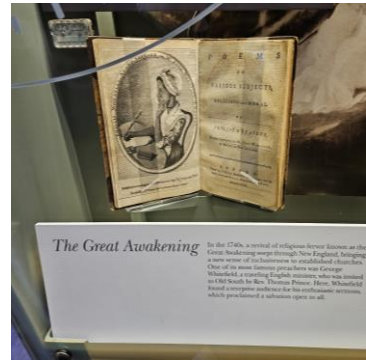
There is a statue of Phillis and a copy of her collection in the Old State Meeting House.

The UK would benefit from a diverse, inclusive list of poets to be taught on the UK National Curriculum.



Pictured above : Statue of Phillis Wheatley.

Pictured below: Phillis’s first published collection.



My next interview was with Peter Rhodes – Senior TV Editor, who is based in Porter, Mass.

This was an excellent chance to ask questions about the creative decisions that bring a poem to life on screen.

The TV show 'Poetry in America' is now in to season four, with Dr New interviewing prominent politicians, celebrities and influential figures about a selected poem in a 30-minute episode.

Here are the key points from our discussion:

- Firstly, using the interview bites, as opposed to a full narration, the aim is to try and get the ideas in the poem across. By what people share, with most poems, the show takes the viewer through the poem in line order. The key thing is just trying to make it as clear as possible.
- **The second part, of the process, is how to visualise things that are basically words. Using the usual tools of documentaries: Photographs, stock footage (which is minimal), graphics and text graphics. Always showing the poem on screen so people are reading and listening at the same time.**
- Episodes that are most satisfying are the ones where it's relatively complicated and there's some real things the poet is dealing with.
- Every single poem creates its own challenges when editing, even though it is not started out of nothing. In terms of how are you going to get this poem across? It's different every time.
- **Intensely looking at the language of the poem. Sometimes dealing with a poem but also with the life of the poet. Most importantly, it's not always about the format of the poem, but the content and the relatable nature of the poet/poem.**
- The visual aspects of the show contributes a lot and seeing the poem helps viewers to understand it better. Dr New has her own extensive archive of researched material that can be used for the visuals on the show.

MY FINDINGS FROM THIS INTERVIEW

Due to the lack of poetry on the UK National Curriculum, we currently do not have anything like this on our television screens. Future generations could greatly benefit from the change in our education system.

Poetry in America has successfully merged TV and Education by the production of the show and both entities co-exist together, ensuring the success of PiA.



My next meeting was with Steven Allardi and Samantha Corsini, both are Video Editors for PiA and Video Researchers.

Between them, they collect the content for Education and the TV show and cut/edit for final usage. Historically, Steven has been with PiA since day one and Samantha joined in 2018. They work very closely with Dr New to ensure the material is exactly what they are looking for.

Here are the key points from our discussion:

- They are building a new course for health humanities. This is to teach Doctors, Nurses and any other future Health Professionals. Most medical establishments are now realising that they need to put the humanities back into their curriculum.
- Interviews of people who are poets or doctors or anyone who is using the humanities in their lives right now. The courses that they are building include listening to people read the poems, introducing literature (prose and smaller pieces) plus Art in a brand-new way.
- Modules are how the course is built. Module one is 3 different units, module 2 has themes to it, being built from current material that PiA have.
- There was a little bit of a desert out there. A place became available for a poetry television show, which works in conjunction with the Education side of PiA.
- Process starts with going through transcripts of content – 1st look at content, Steven and Sam watch everything and concise it into an episode reel. Choosing B-Roll which is Archival footage.
- Video is one of the most effective ways of teaching Poetry in education for PiA.
- Storytelling, images on screen with words, less is more.

MY FINDINGS FROM THIS INTERVIEW

Poetry can be taught in a different way on the UK National Curriculum, that is engaging and successful. A change in the way we teach poetry can be effective to ensure students understand what is being taught.

Robert's poem 'Those Winter Sundays' features in Season One of Poetry In America.

Those Winter Sundays by Robert Hayden

- Robert Hayden was a poet in the 1940s, he published his first poetry collection 'Heart-Shape in the Dust', exploring the concerns he had about race that stemmed from his interest in African American history.
- International recognition came about in 1966 when he was awarded the Grand Prize for Poetry, at the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal. This was for his book 'Ballad of Remembrance'.
- From 1976 – 1978, he held the post of what would be known as the 'US Poet Laureate', serving as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress.
- One of his most famous poems 'Those Winter Sundays' was discussed on the PiA tv show between Dr New and President Joe Biden, who was Vice President at the time of airing.
- Robert passed away, in Michigan in 1980. He was just 66 years old.

Pictured left: Still of the TV show.

Photo Credit: Poetry in America website.

I met with Caitlin B. Rajagopalan is the Director of Education and Strategy, who gave me a full introduction to the team's education programs and strategy. Caitlin has been with PiA for 9 and a half years and her role oversees the whole organization, both Education and TV, ensuring that positive connections are made for the success of PiA.

Here are the key points from our discussion:

- Middle School and High School students are the most vital year groups for PiA. Content is appropriate, there is more demand/support for those age groupings and commercial viability is at the highest seen in education.
- I was introduced to the main partner of PiA, National Education Equity Lab, who ensure delivery of the course in the Title One schools. They started in 2019 and have accumulated 25,000 students, across the USA, in just 5 years. They partner with 400 High Schools to deliver courses to under-funded students.

‘National Education Equity Lab is forging a new kind of relationship between our nation’s colleges and high schools rooted in our belief that while talent is evenly distributed, opportunity is not.

OUR STRATEGY

We empower colleges to take a more active role in developing and inspiring the next generation of leaders at scale, at no cost to students. In partnership with pioneering universities, we deliver and support online college credit-bearing courses into teacher-led high school classrooms across the country. By enabling high school students from historically underserved communities to take actual college courses from college professors, students can build the skills — and confidence — needed to apply to and thrive in college. Participating students earn widely-transferable college credits and have access to mentorship and hands-on support’. **(This information was taken from the NEEL website homepage).**

- Evaluation plans (sourced from the partner of PiA – NEEL) are where they receive ‘quantitative feedback’ from teaching staff.
- Periodic meetings happen with the co-teachers/TAs, to find out what is going well and what needs improvement.
- Teaching teachers has been successful in building a ‘positive exposure’ to poetry and they have a ‘scaffolding structure’ for course content.

My findings from this interview

Middle School and High School students are benefiting immensely from the Poetry in America courses, with the uptake across the Country growing rapidly. These are students between the ages of 11 and 18, who may have never been introduced to poetry without PiA and NEEL. Teachers are taught and supported to teach poetry in their classrooms, they are listened to in what works and what does not work in the material provided and changes are made based on that vital input.

I was invited to PiA’s weekly team meeting on Zoom. Employees live in Arizona, California, Chicago, Massachusetts, New York and Washington.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Director of Education and Strategy
- Manager of Grants and Partnerships, Special Project Editor.
- Digital Content Writer
- Curriculum and Teaching
- Production
- Education Outreach Coordinator
- Postproduction Manager
- Media Management

Here are the key points from the team meeting:

- Teachers can speak to the team directly with any issues they have.
- Feedback on all the courses, that PiA deliver, are discussed here.
- The advertisement in the National Council of Teachers of English called the Council Chronicle. 25,000 teachers can potentially access the course interest form, to sign up for Poetry In America PD course.
- Submission to Poetry Foundation for funding.
- Large Scale Pilot Scheme, a project they are designing in collaboration with support from the Carnegie Foundation and XQ Institute.
- Offering Internships for students to work with PiA.

My findings from this meeting

In terms of Education, carefully considering the differences between the USA and the UK, a similar model could be implemented in the UK National Curriculum.

A working model of how to teach poetry exists, proven beyond doubt that it is successful, that is growing rapidly in the USA education system.



EDNA ST VINCENT MILLAY

Edna's poem 'Sonnet IV; I shall forget you presently my dear' features in Season Three of Poetry In America.

A poet from the 1920s. She was a real kind of Bohemian student. She liked lots of booze and sex. She broke out of the role that women had been in.

Her poems are very short and very simple. One of her most famous poems is a single Stanza poem called 'First Fig'.

"My candle burns at both ends
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends -
It gives a lovely light."

Edna was the first woman and only the second person to win the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1923, this was for her poem 'Ballad of the Harp-Weaver'.

In 1943 Edna was to be the sixth person and second woman to win the Frost Medal, which was awarded for her lifetime contribution to American poetry.

Edna passed away at home, October 19th, 1950. She was just 58 years old.

Pictured left – Edna St Vincent Millay

Photo Credit : Poetry in America website.

Understanding the difference between the UK and USA education, the grants and partnerships team are tasked with raising money to make their place in Education work.

I met with Adam Kosan who is Manager of Grants and Partnerships/Special Projects Editor and Samanta Mendoza Lagunas, Grants Operations Manager.

Here are the key points from our discussion:

- Public funding from the state/city is not granted in huge amounts for the Arts organizations.
- Federal funding can be awarded, from the National Endowment for the Arts, independently to an organisation. Upper funding can be \$75,000 and the average award is between \$10,000 - \$30,000. Also, the National Endowment for the Humanities can award, to an organization like PiA, between \$250,000 - \$300,000.
- Verse Video Education, which produces the TV show, is a non-profit organization.
- Royalties and licensing must sometimes be paid to use images/videos. These can be minimal and even free when over 100 years old.
- Grants are applied for and managed to meet the needs of the business.
- Long term partnerships have been overseen and maintained to ensure the continued success of PiA. Without grants and partnerships, PiA would not exist.
- Collaborations, at Federal/State and City level, bring in revenue to fund PiA.
- Private donors, who align with PiA's values and missions, have no expectations of editorial decisions.

My findings from this meeting

**Considering carefully the differences in the UK education system and the USA education system:
Implementing a change in the UK National Curriculum, in terms of the introduction of poetry, could bring significant fundamental changes to schoolchildrens' mental health, emotional, social and communication development and learning about equality, diversity and inclusion for self-identity, far outweighing the cost of implementation.**

I was ready to learn just how poetry was taught in schools in the USA. I wanted to know what the course content was all about.

I met with the Curriculum Development Team. Gillian Osbourne has been with PiA since 2017 and Jeff Careyva joined in 2019. Gillian is the Director of Curriculum and Jeff is one of the Content Creation Co-Instructors.

Here are the key points from our discussion:

- Gillian started out as a co instructor with Dr New for the first courses that were developed at the Harvard Extension School. She was working directly with the students and leading discussions of poems over zoom and grading papers.
- Gillian was further hired, to be the curriculum lead, on a new course for teachers called ‘Poetry of Earth, Sea and Sky’ which was environmental poetry. She spent two years developing the course intensively and learning a lot about how to create a video-based course, which also included writing and activities.
- Choosing of course content had come from a ‘poetry survey’ that Dr New had conducted when she was a Harvard Professor. Courses were modelled from the history of American Poetry – 1600s to World War II.
- Gillian was then hired as a Curriculum Developer. The Dual Enrolment program, for High Schoolers, was adapted by Gillian and others from the ‘Poetry In The City’ course, which was the course for teachers to learn how to teach poetry.
- Over time, the evolution of learning has taken place. High Schoolers that PiA work specifically with are students in underserved areas, many of whom had very little reading or writing instruction in the past.
- The work that PiA do is to make poetry, as a genre, very accessible and portable.
- Course content is comprised of visual graphics, video content, poems being shown on screen, interactive text boxes, discussion questions, reading pieces of poetry, writing essays. The course is delivered, as part of a school timetable, as a separate lesson to English and is fully markable as a separate subject.
- These are topic-based courses with a chorus of poets’ voices, introducing a multitude of specific perspectives, exploring the history of poetry.

- Jeff has been revising past courses, working on the newly established Health Humanities course.
- Jeff further works on assignments for teachers, who teach third grade to graduates, using creative writing prompts.
- The courses PiA deliver are scored, tested and graded. At High School level, 12 poems a week are looked at and weekly quizzes are given, focusing on historical content and continued learning.
- There is a creative midterm piece, which can be a written piece in response to the pieces looked at, a piece of art in response to the pieces looked at or a performed piece in response to the pieces looked at.
- Poetry has been highly successfully integrated into subjects such as : Science, History, Humanities.
- All texts on the course are free and no books are paid for by the schools.
- The partner of PiA, NEEL, survey teachers consistently and frequently to find out what material is working and what is not working. This is then fed back to PiA who can adjust or amend courses as required. Communication is very important.
- Courses are mainly aimed at Title 1 schools, where 60% of students live below the poverty line, where transformative and engaging teaching is taking place because of PiA.

My findings from this meeting:

Considering the differences in education, in both the UK and the USA, Poetry in America has achieved the almost impossible.

Having Poetry as a separate subject to English, for ages 11-18, where it is discussed, read, analysed AND written.

Ensuring contemporary poetry is taught alongside older poetry, diverse and inclusive poetry is evidently used, and equality is promoted on all course content for students who find self-identity and can express themselves because of this.

Teaching teachers how to deliver poetry to students in their classrooms. Feedback from schools themselves are listened to and acted on, showing that vital input from teachers is valued.

William Carlos Williams

William's poem 'This is just to say' features in Season Two of Poetry in America.

- William was born in Rutherford, New Jersey in 1883.
- William, who was of Latin American descent, had an interesting life as a poet and a physician.
- William was associated closely with modernism and imagism. He practiced general medicine and pediatrics.
- His poem 'The Red Wheelbarrow' is one of the USA's most recognized anthology poems in education.
- William believed that there was extreme power and importance in 'Self-expression' and 'Freedom of the human imagination'.
- He posthumously won the 1963 Pulitzer Prize for the collection 'Pictures from Brueghel and other poems', as well as the gold medal for Poetry, which was given by the National Institute of Arts and Letters.
- His poetry spanned over four decades' and he passed away in 1963, aged 79.

Pictured right: Still of the TV show.

Photo Credit: Poetry in America website.

This Is Just to Say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

My last interview in Boston was with Maggie Farron, Education Outreach Coordinator and Hogan Seidel, senior instructional designer and media producer. Having joined PiA under a year ago, Maggie was one of the newest members of staff. Hogan has been with PiA since 2017, where they started working on the TV show and transferred over to Education. This meeting was where I was given access to the syllabus.

Here are the key points the Poetry in America syllabus – Shared by Maggie and Hogan with permission to use for the purpose of this report.

English 131: Poetry in America, 1850-1945
Spring 2024

Course Creator

Elisa New, Director, Center for the Public Humanities, Arizona State University; Founder & Director, Poetry in America; Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature, Emerita, Harvard University

Instructor

Tom Nunan, MA, American & New England Studies

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

As the second course in a historical sequence enabling students to study American history and culture through the lens of American poetry, this course spans a critical era in American literature, beginning with antebellum and Civil War poetry, entering the twentieth century, and traversing the transformative modernist era.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Course Overview

Beginning with the poetry of the American Civil War and the series of major events and social movements that followed it, we read such poets as Herman Melville, Julia Ward Howe, Walt Whitman, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, and Emma Lazarus, and examine the language of patriotism, pride, violence, loss, and memory inspired by the nation’s greatest conflict. As we enter the twentieth century, we encounter modernism, a movement that spanned the decades from the 1910s to the mid-1940s, and whose poetry marked a break from past traditions and past forms. We read such poets as Robert Frost, T.S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, Langston Hughes, William Carlos Williams, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Claude McKay, Dorothy Parker, and Wallace Stevens. We study how these poets employed the language of rejection and revolution, of making and remaking, of artistic appropriation and cultural emancipation.

III. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Poetry in America courses are anchored in four central learning outcomes, or “pillars,” which form a foundational approach to close reading literary texts. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- 1. Make Observations**, with a focus on such skills as gathering and drawing conclusions from textual evidence; noticing patterns; tracing the development of central ideas and themes; detecting shifts in voice, tone, and point of view; and drawing comparisons across texts.
- 2. Understand Structure and Form**, with a focus on analyzing structural features and patterns, such as the relation of structural sub-units (the sentence, the stanza) to one another and to the whole; and the impact of formal choice (rhymed couplet or free verse, sonnet or limerick, lyric or narrative) on a given text.
- 3. Situate Texts in History**, with a focus on analyzing the relation of authors and texts to particular cultural, historical, and geographical contexts.
- 4. Enjoy Language**, with a focus on cultivating the pleasure and fun of poetry in the classroom, and on analyzing the function of such elements as figurative language, word choice, sound, and imagery within a literary text.

The four pillars will help you achieve these additional learning outcomes:

Develop Critical Writing Skills. Using the four pillars, you will practice developing argumentative claims, supported by textual evidence, in writing.

Make Connections between Literature, Culture, and History during the time period covered in this course.

IV. ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS

Weekly Requirements All students should plan to complete the following on a weekly basis

Course Videos Each week features a series of videos, including tutorials by Professor New and conversations with guest discussants. All videos are required (and content is fair game for formative quizzes and summative exams) unless it is clearly indicated that viewing is optional.

Course Readings Course readings comprise all written material on individual course pages, and PDFs of poems and other literary readings. PDFs of readings are available both on relevant course pages and as a Reading Packet for each unit. *You do not need to purchase a textbook for this course.*

Graded Assignments Graded assignments are required, and count toward the final grade. **Students must submit all assignments via Canvas** unless otherwise instructed. Each assessment has submission instructions. Please find an overview of the assignments in this course below:

Note on Formative and Summative Assignments: Formative Assignments allow you to develop and practice content knowledge and writing skills before you are assessed in these areas. Use Formative Assignments to help gauge your preparation and growth, and to ensure you are prepared to submit your best work for Summative Assignments—which count for more of your Final Grade.

Reading & Writing Assignments (RWAs) (8 Formative; 3 Summative): Formative RWAs support your active engagement with course readings and other students in your section, and prepare you to submit summative RWAs through practicing annotation and written analysis. Formative RWAs count toward your Participation Grade, and receive credit upon completion. Summative RWAs are graded by TAs using a rubric and are worth 5, 15, and 20% of your grade.

Midterm Project: The Midterm Project provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your learning in the first half of the course, through a creative project in a medium other than writing (audio, visual, video). Projects are shared within sections and self-assessed by students.

Quizzes and Exams (10 Formative Quizzes; 3 Summative Exams): All quizzes and exams are multiple choice and will assess student mastery of concepts and content covered throughout the semester. Formative Quizzes are based on a unit's readings and video materials. You must complete them by the stipulated deadlines in the course schedule. There are 10 formative quizzes, all of which will count towards your participation grade and will help prepare you for the summative exams. Summative Exams follow each part of the course, and cover mastery of concepts and content covered in that part, with the exception of the Final, which is cumulative. Summative Exams for Parts 1 & 2 are worth 10% each; the Final Summative Exam is worth 20%.

Participation: The participation grade in this course is quantified by submissions of formative Reading & Writing Assignments, formative Quizzes, attendance and participation in weekly Zoom sections, and completion of course surveys. Weekly Zoom sections are required for all schools whose schedules align with Zoom section times. Students are excused from weekly Zoom sections when their school is not in session

Grade Percentages Final grades are based on the number of points you earn on the course activities listed above. **There is no extra credit available.** Final scores will be absolute as follows: 90% or better will receive an A, 80% or better a B, 70% or better a C, below 70% is a failing grade. There will be no + or - added to grades

Credit Eligibility: You must pass the course with a grade of C (70%) or higher and have taken the final exam.

Note: You have up to one year to transcript this course for ASU credit after you become credit eligible. Please see Section IX, below, "Taking this Course for ASU Credit" for more information.

Item (number)	Forms of Feedback	Weight
Summative Reading & Writing Assignments (RWAs) (3)	TA grading & community feedback	40% Total: <i>RWA 1: 5%</i> <i>RWA 2: 15%</i> <i>RWA 3: 20%</i>
Summative Content Exams (3)	Automatic grading	40% Total: <i>Part 1: 10%</i> <i>Part 2: 10%</i> <i>Final: 20%</i>
Creative Midterm Project (1)	Self-assessment & community feedback	10%
Participation: formative RWAs (5), formative quizzes (10), course feedback surveys, weekly Zoom attendance.	Automatic grading upon submission	10%

What you see in the last four pages of this report is conclusive proof of the following:

- Poetry can be studied, as a separate subject to English, marked and graded. The USA have a syllabus that is transferable to the UK National Curriculum and there is no logical reason why poetry cannot be taught, in the same way, in the UK.**
- By comparison of the two countries and because of the way our policies are made by the UK Government, the implementation of poetry onto the UK National curriculum would be easier to achieve and would benefit generations for many decades.**

Whilst in Boston, I performed at a few poetry events, I wanted to share my experience with you.



Club Passim
Open Mic Night
Harvard, Massachusetts.



The Cantab Lounge
Underground
Boston, Massachusetts.



Lizard Lounge Poetry Slam

I performed here and I won.

I was invited back for the Slam
Team Semi-Final in April 2024.

After everything I had learnt in Boston:

I believed that the education program, created by Poetry in America, was something the UK must adopt for schoolchildren.

The challenge would be to implement a Government policy change, in terms of Education, to see poetry on the UK National Curriculum.

It was time to see the course in action.

I went to New York to visit a High School in the Bronx.

RESEARCH TRIP FINDINGS – NEW YORK

- This trip to the Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School, was solely organized because of my Churchill Fellowship research visit.
- In 12 years, that Poetry in America have been running their courses, they have never had such an opportunity to witness their program being delivered. I felt extremely proud and I wanted to share this with you, the reader of this report.
- BCC Prep High School is a Title I school, meaning the Federal Government supports low-income students, 60 percent of students here qualify for reduced or free lunch.
- The money is a supplement and Title I funds are to add to the students' day of education, not just pay teachers and curriculum. I was invited to the High School, to meet Principal Winn, along with:

Caitlin B. Rajagopalan, Director of Education and Strategy, Poetry in America.

Ann Powell, Communications Advisor, National Education Equity Lab.

Asheley Siewnarine, Student Success Director, National Education Equity Lab.



**I met: Ashley, Daniel, Gracie, Isis (Graduating a year early) and Shadman - All are in 11th Grade.
Mustafa and Pasquale – Both are in 12th Grade, senior year.**

Through the course, students are taught about a specific era and poets of that time. This is to cement ideas about culture/identity/heritage/social classes and students find self-identification in the poetry that they are learning by understanding words and texts learnt.

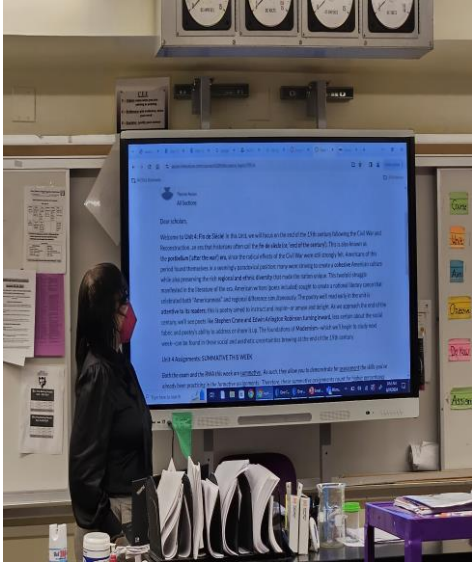
Quotes from the students:

Gracie ‘My English teacher saw that I have the potential to do this class, so I signed up for it. What I like about this class is it helps me manage my time, it pushes me to reach the limits I haven’t reached yet and it makes me think outside the box’.

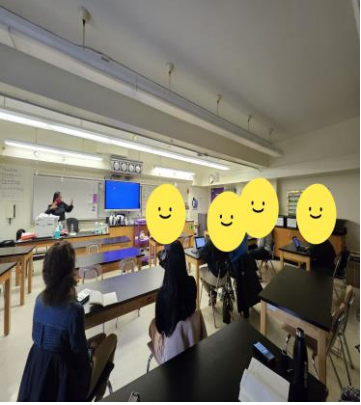
Pasquale ‘This class I was not interested in, but my teacher recommended me to it. Never had an interest but it was a smart decision because of the class, it has helped me to see the literary elements and that has helped me to learn poetry and I like it’.

Isis ‘I think I've found myself in poetry. I don't know how to explain it exactly. But there's a sense of identity that comes with being able to put yourself in the poet’s shoes. I did things that I didn't know I could do in this course. I didn't know I was capable of reading so much stuff. I read for fun but poetry is a different level. Also, I realised I'm able to analyse words. I didn't know I was capable of understanding on a deeper level than what I normally do’.

Daniel ‘This course really helped me, just like Isis said, you see things from a different perspective and then a deeper meaning. Also, with the assignments on this course, it's about 400 words minimum and I want to exceed that because I like the stuff we are learning’.



**Principal Winn delivers the ‘Poetry in America’ class.
Photo credit : Hannah Stanislaus**



Shadman 'The thing I learned from this course, I'm really bad with time and this course has really helped me to break that'.

Mustafa 'I realised that I needed to prepare for college and I was a little worried. I could have graduated early, by taking the course I realised I haven't got to worry'.

Ashley 'I like that this course helps me, especially in other subjects like my class in History. I really like the poetry as it connects me to the author's perspective and what they went through and how they felt'.

After the class, I was able to sit with Principal Winn to have a more in-depth discussion.

**Pictured above:
Students in class
studying Poetry in
America course.**

**Photo credit: Hannah
Stanislaus**

Quotes from the Principal:

'The students have been wonderful, some have had accolades from professors, The kids. They've been against it, when the young man said about time management, that's real'.

'I really appreciate the co-teacher resources because it just makes my job much easier in terms of this information that's going to be given to me. There's this weekly touchpoint with a member of the teaching team, Wendy is great'.

'Another thing that I wanted to share with you is two of the students in this class, our ELL students, English language learners, Gracie and Ashley'. We have noticed a tremendous increase in the student's ability to learn English in a way that we hadn't noticed earlier. Their interaction with language and interaction in the English class is being transferred from the Poetry in America course'.

'This is an opportunity for the scholars to gain credit to graduation, but also to have a college experience that prepares them for the future. Not just to read or take any given test, but to have automatic analysis of language. And they view it as an opportunity that they know that they shouldn't take for granted'.

**This is just one example of what Poetry in America has achieved in the schools
they provide the program to.**

It is a life-saving, life-giving and life-changing experience for these students.

**I believe that the UK could and would benefit from a similar Education syllabus
that has poetry as a separate studied subject.**

**The challenge would be to change Education policy; however, I strongly believe
that UK schoolchildren would have an equally life-saving, life-giving and life-
changing education experience.**

Next stop – Austin, Texas for the SXSW EDU Festival 2024

RESEARCH TRIP FINDINGS – TEXAS

I was invited to the SXSW EDU Conference in Austin, Texas.

Dr New was leading a panel discussion, Teaching Literature and Civics with Phillis Wheatley, alongside:

Dr. Lois Brown – Director of the ASU Center for the Study of Race and Democracy and Foundation Professor of English.

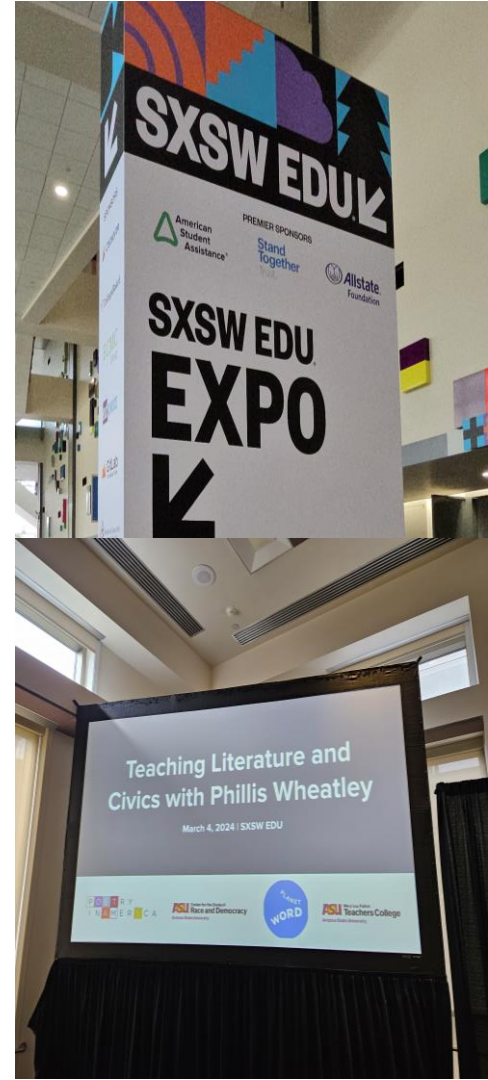
Ann B. Friedman – Founder and CEO, Planet Word Museum. Based in Washington D.C.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PANEL:

- Poetry can be used to teach democracy and help people to learn the English language.
- Poets in the 18th Century, like Phillis, communicated through media outlets without censorship.
- Writing is powerful and the power in words is evident with poetry.
- A literate society creates a stronger democracy.

QUESTIONS THAT CAME OUT OF THE PANEL:

- **Where is the mirror to be found to hold up to the people of today?**
- **Where can we teach our children to use the power of words for freedom?**
- **How can we use poetry to influence those in power for more democracy?**



Here was day 2 of the conference and I attended the event ‘A Knowledge of Self : Poetry Performance, Workshop and Open Mic’. Facilitated and led by:

- Crystal Endsley Taylor, Associate Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
- Dr. Toby Jenkins, Professor Kemp Associate / Dean for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, The Grad School, University of South Carolina.
- Dr. Tony Keith Jr, CEO Ed Emcee Academy.
- Justis Lopez, Founder and CEO, Just Experience LLC.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PANEL:

Hip-Hop was born in 1973 and this culture lesson is used to create an extremely unique classroom experience.

Explanation of the Hip-Hop Culture:

A DJ is the music behind the words.

An MC is not a rapper or a poet.

Breakdancing is performed between the breaks and beats.

Graffiti is for the poor, oppressed artist.

Knowledge of self-philosophy is knowledge of identity – The more you know about who you are, the more power you have.

We need to help our children to learn who we are so they can know who they are.

SXSW EDU2024

MARCH 4-7AUSTIN-TX

MARCH 4-7AUSTIN-TX

MARCH 4-7AUSTIN-TX

KNOWLEDGE OF SELF:
POETRY PERFORMANCE, WORKSHOP, AND OPEN MIC









CRYSTAL LEIGH ENDSLEY, PHD.

TOBY S. JENKINS, PHD.

TONY KEITH JR., PHD.

DJ FARO, JUSTIS LOPEZ









MARCH 5TH 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Hip-Hop Culture

(peace, love, unity, and having fun)

dj'ing

mc'ing

breaking

graffiti

knowledge of self













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I COME FROM BY HANNAH STANISLAUS

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED AT THE SXSW EDU 2024

I come from London Where the rich get richer And the poor just die You don't survive Without quick feet And a clear-sighted mind.	I come from England Which is seen as being The whole of the UK, Even though technically We have 4 states I say 'Hi' and you say 'Hey'.	I come from blackness West Indian born Whether we are Black British, Or African American We descend from slaves Who picked cotton and corn.	I come from the island Of fish and chips Pickled onions, A gherkin The land I was born in Was where my ancestors came to work in.
--	---	--	--

I come from the distant land Of jerk chicken Curry mutton, Rice and peas My heritage is peppered To give me everything I need.	I come from my grandparents Stephen Edwin Stanislaus Krystyna Anna Maria Zielinski, Gone now Missed like crazy Forever with me.	I come from descendants I don't know their names Yet they paved the way for me, To rise like smoke from the flames That burn poetry Into my brain.	I come from the furniture I brought for myself When I left, A women's refuge With everything I owned Fit on one shelf.
---	--	---	---

I come from possessions That don't own me I own them, But they are only given If I share them With my family and friends.	I come from talking done When my family Wanted to hide, Generational shame Inherited blame And internal pain.	I come from it's your fault When my mum wanted To avoid blame, But I felt her pain From not having a mum and growing up in care How could she know how to be one?
--	--	--

I come from trees cut down to make way for affordable housing.
I come from parks that look like landfill because we are not proud of them.
I come from a city of brick gardens and patioed front lawns.

I Come From...

a poetry workshop & open mic

Deep Breathing/Affirmation/Invocation
"I honor and reverence my mind, body, and spirit."



I come from JUST FOR TODAY

I come from TO KEEP IT I HAVE TO GIVE IT AWAY

I come from TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

I come from UNTIL YOU CAN LOVE YOURSELF, WE
WILL LOVE YOU

I come from PAUSE WHEN AGITATED, TAKE A
MINUTE TO BREATHE.

I come from KEEP COMING BACK, NAH FORGET
THAT

JUST STAY AND DON'T LEAVE UNTIL THE MIRACLE
HAPPENS.

Day 3 of the SXSW EDU conference. I attended a panel, led by Jenna Li, which was Community Lab: How to Build Public Creative Spaces.

Jenna is a former DJ and music producer. She is the Lead Media Lab Specialist at New York Public Library.

5 years ago, she started Studio 40, a public recording studio based at the Library, that is completely free to the public.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PANEL:

- Renovation of existing public spaces can help to build a community media space.
- The project is community based and volunteer run. Ages of the people involved are between 25 and 72.
- The space provides a hands-on lesson in how a recording studio operates, as well as having a green screen wall for video production and editing.
- Classes are taught in the same space for students who are interested in media, music and the arts.
- Some key considerations to be made for public space usage: Policies and rules, reservations, systems integration, IT needs, upskilling and training staff, having the resources for the space, grant applications and possible questions.

WHY MEDIA AND CREATIVE RESOURCES NEED TO BE IN PUBLIC SPACES:

- Promote positive mental health for the community.
- Aiding social, emotional and communication development.
- Diversity, equality and inclusion for all people regardless of specific or personal attributes.
- Creativity should not be costed or be restricted to those who can afford it or understand it.

Why Are Media Spaces Needed in Public Spaces?

- Access to media production resources and skills training typically exists behind a paywall or is subject to significant gatekeeping.
 - Creativity is not a luxury! Having the technical resources to share your voice is something that should be available to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic position.
 - Media production resources & skills training contribute significantly to an individual's ability to be a critical, active, and engaged citizen and leader in their communities.
- Programs that help learners access and utilize free resources and software help develop digital literacy, a necessity for all age levels navigating the information age.
- Early access to media and production spaces lowers the barrier of entry into the field and opens career paths for both young learners and later life career changers.
 - Public access media spaces empower individuals to pursue creative projects on their own terms.



37





THE PEDAGOGY



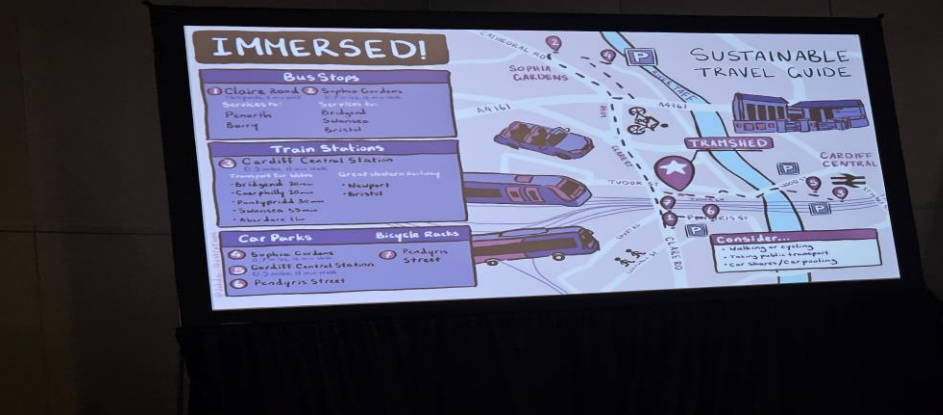
Day 4 of SXSW EDU was the last day of the conference for me.

The Power of Creative Education to Effect Positive Change was led by Lucy Squire, Head of Music and Drama, University of South Wales.

Lucy spoke about the 'Immersed' festival style at the Tramshed that was set up 6 years ago by students.

It is an annual event, with a different theme every year, that represents multicultural diversity as well as local inclusion. Music, art, poetry, dance are just some of the disciplines that make up the Festival content.

Creation Cardiff and Creative Wales awarded Art Grants for the project. There are private stakeholders, whose missions are aligned with that of the students.



KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PANEL:

- Developing culture of collaboration is critical for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Managing expectations of those involved keeps feelings and opinions in the correct balance.
- Mutually beneficial partnerships are formed, human or monetary, that work for a sustainability and green climate for our planet.
- Organizing and delivering a festival that is eco-friendly, globally responsible, health aware and ensures the marginalized in society feel part of.



WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS



NO POETRY WITHOUT THE PLANET.

**Texas taught me a lot about Education in the USA
There are many thing the UK can learn
from the panels I have attended.**

**The challenges would be of
money, time and commitment from a UK Government.**

**One of these panels was a Welsh based initiative
so would it really be that difficult
for the whole of the UK to prioritise poetry?**

**I hope that our country can benefit
from the positive changes we can make.**

Last stop

Tempe, Arizona.

RESEARCH TRIP FINDINGS – ARIZONA

My final destination was Tempe, Arizona. Tempe is the home of Arizona State University (ASU).

Housed in the Farmer Education Building, the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers' College has enrolled 1,000 students to start on the Poetry in America Health Humanities course in Fall 2024.

I got to meet Godsway Doriah, Business Operations Specialist for ASU's Center for Public Humanities and the Project Manager for PiA's Health Humanities course.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS INTERVIEW:

- PiA's course was originally part of the English Department of ASU, however, it was given its own home at the Uni.
- Godsway has been working with PiA for 2 years and is employed by ASU. He is the link between the Uni and PiA and oversees things such as Accounting, HR, Logistics and Grant Management.
- He is also involved in the process for hiring TAs for the Teaching team.

We were joined, in person, by Samanta Lagunas – Grants Ops Manager.

Samanta shared with me about the Internship Program that PiA offer. Applying for grants for each intern, students can join PiA and work on the following:

Poetry Outreach Social Media/Marketing

- How Poetry can reach broader audiences

Grants and Non-profit operations

- Students learn to apply for grants
- What it takes to run a non-profit in the humanities

Instructional Design – Offered through Harvard Uni.



Pictured above: The Mary Lou Fulton Teachers' College



Pictured right: Mary Lou Fulton Commemorative Plaque

I got to sit down with Dr New herself and I asked her how she went from the idea of Poetry in America to the phenomenal organization that it is today. The feeling that I got from Dr New was that after 20 years of teaching, as a University Professor, her passion for poetry had jumped out of the classroom and she wanted to change not just the lives of HER students but every single student's life in the whole of the USA.

KEY FINDINGS FROM DR NEW'S INTERVIEW:

- Harvard was where the conception of Poetry in America happened. The Uni were offering funding and Dr New hired a film crew to interview and discuss poetry with prominent people. She felt that she could record poems and teach what she had been to a wider student network.
- Dr New co-founded Verse Video, a nonprofit production company, to create the content she needed. Next, she was to start a very impressive and widely extensive archive of images and videos from as far back in US history she could go. This is where the course material is selected from
- Branching out to create the basis of the PiA Education Program, Dr New was picked up by PBS to film Season one of 'Poetry in America'. This was in 2016 and to date, there have been 4 seasons of the TV show. PBS Arizona have picked up the rights to Season 4, which aired in 2024.

Whilst I was in Arizona, I was asked by Dr New to be part of Season 5 of Poetry in America and we filmed the interview at her home. Season 5 is to be aired in 2026.

Considering Dr New interviewed Joe Biden, the President of the United States, when he was Vice-President to Barack Obama, I felt speechless and honoured.

Dr New told me that the success of Poetry in America comes hand in hand - The Education program and the TV show. One simply would not exist without the other.
The reason why Dr New does what she does, she simply told me 'Joy'.

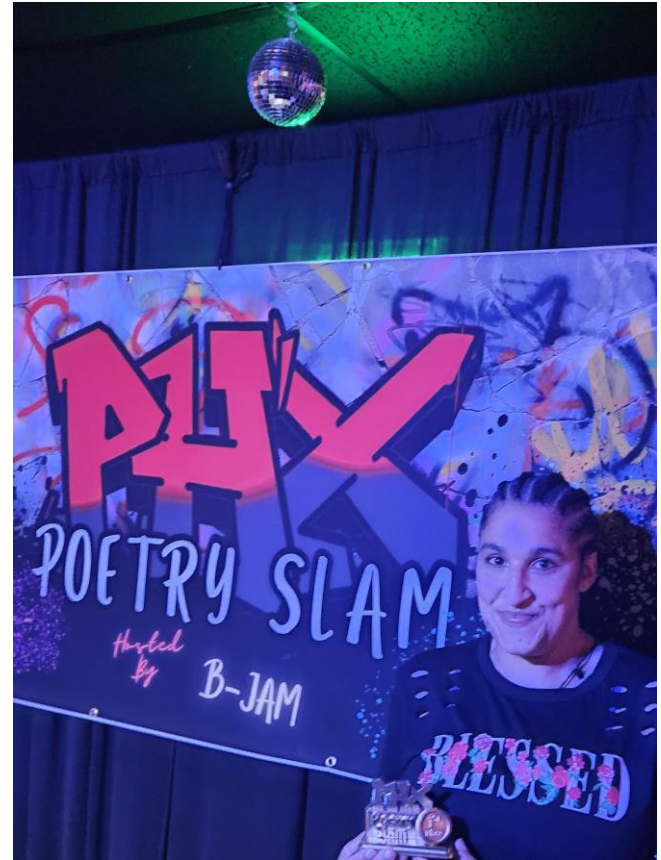
I believe that Dr New has created a program that is life-saving, life-giving and life-changing for all the students who have been blessed to study it.
I believe that UK schoolchildren can benefit in an equal way. I believe that a change is needed.



I competed in the Phoenix Poetry Slam and I won.

This was the 2nd US State that I had won a Poetry Slam in.

This is the power of poetry in my life and because of this Churchill Fellowship, I hope it to be the case for UK schoolchildren because of a change in the UK National Curriculum concerning poetry.



CONCLUSION

I had already begun to deliver poetry workshops, in the UK, as seen in the background to the report:

In 2022, I delivered poetry workshops to 300 children in 4 Primary Schools: Shaftesbury Park Primary School, Southmead Primary School, Trinity St Mary's CofE Primary, The Deaf Unit at the Hague Primary School. Every child wrote a poem or the start of a poem. I knew that this was needed in schools in London.

The purpose of my report:

- To inform the UK Government that changes are needed in our National Curriculum for Primary and Secondary schools, in relation to poetry, the time is now.
- To provide the UK Government with substantial and valuable evidence that poetry is a viable subject to be studied independently and that a new GCSE could be created, by 2035, for Secondary school children.

As mentioned in my pre-trip findings to find out what was happening:

After reading this article, I contacted UK organizations to get a deeper insight into what was happening in classrooms nationwide.

The organizations that I spoke to cover the whole of the UK, for both Primary and Secondary School education, sharing with me that poetry is NOT taught to the degree that it should be, that our schoolchildren deserve.

In my Introduction to Poetry in America:

I wanted to research Poetry in America, to find out exactly how the power of poetry in education has transformed the lives of students in the USA and how it can be transferred to create a new poetry syllabus for the UK National Curriculum.

In my research trip findings:

Boston: I believed that the education program, created by Poetry in America, was something the UK must adopt for schoolchildren. The challenge would be to implement a Government policy change, in terms of Education, to see poetry on the UK National Curriculum.

New York - Just one example of what Poetry in America has achieved in the schools they provide the program to. It is a life-saving, life-giving and life-changing experience for these students. I believe that the UK could and would benefit from a similar Education syllabus that has poetry as a separate studied subject. The challenge would be to change Education policy; however, I strongly believe that UK schoolchildren would have an equally life-saving, life-giving and life-changing education experience.

Texas - Texas taught me a lot about Education in the USA. There are many thing the UK can learn from the panels I have attended. The challenges would be of money, time and commitment from a UK Government. One of these panels was a Welsh based initiative so would it really be that difficult for the whole of the UK to prioritise poetry? I hope that our country can benefit from the positive changes we can make.

Arizona – Researching what it is that they have done to effect change in the US Education system. I truly believe that Poetry in America have made such a significant and substantial change to the USA Education system.

In my Executive Summary, I highlighted my major findings which were:

- 1. Poetry **CAN** be taught, 5 days a week, as a separate subject to English to children of any age.
- 2. Poetry **CAN** help children to navigate their mental health positively, aid social emotional and communication development and assist them to understand who they are and where they come from – **THEIR** identity, as well as looking at equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- 3. Poetry **CAN** benefit the UK Education system by changing the National Curriculum for future generations to learn poetry.

There is a desperate need to introduce poetry, as a separate subject on the UK National Curriculum, as a way of expressing oneself. Our children, including my Lucy, need a way to emit emotions locked in their minds and hearts. Social, emotional and communication development with poetry at the heart of that, promoting positive ways of working out their young minds and building diversity, inclusivity and equality. That is my project. This change can be formulated and I know this is fundamentally essential for our future generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Poetry to become a standalone subject, on the UK National Curriculum, for primary and secondary school children.

Creation of a new poetry syllabus, for Primary and Secondary schoolchildren to study poetry, in addition to English. The UK Government, in charge of policies, would change the UK National Curriculum to reflect this. Introducing contemporary and relevant poetry, as well as older culturally appropriate poetry, to reflect the diversity of the children in UK education. The benefits of this would be almost immeasurable, including breaking down stigmas around race, religion, sexuality, gender and focusing on positive mental health, equality, diversity and inclusion.

Poetry to become a GCSE subject by 2035.

A GCSE syllabus to be created, based on the Poetry in America grading model, to be taken independent of the English Language/Literature GCSE. A comprehensive lesson plan and marking scheme would be needed, awarding bodies such as AQA and Edexcel to be revised to include the changes and all four home countries to change their equivalent exam to reflect the change.

The benefits would be that students could use the GCSE to choose the appropriate A-Level and further academic success can be in Creativity/Arts. The level of critical thinking and analysis taught in schools would aid students in their chosen academic route, creating better informed generations of future adults.

Poetry to become prominent in English for children to write, analyse and read, with the focus on promoting social emotional and communication development and navigating mental health, identity, equality, diversity and inclusivity.

In the immediate future, before any major Curriculum changes, poetry can be made prominent in the English lesson. This is a realistic achievement that could be done in a matter of months by consultations with UK organizations who can help to change the English lesson planning. The benefits would be transformative, schoolchildren would be able to begin to understand the basics of poetry before introduced a new poetry syllabus.

Poetry to become part of Teacher training and further CPD to ensure Poetry is understood by teachers before taught.

Teachers' training can be updated, with a similar model to Poetry in America, helping teachers to understand and deliver poetry in a better way. A change in Teacher training would benefit the whole of the UK and with the help of organisations, such as teachers' unions, an inclusive model could be made.

NEXT STEPS

The creation of a new Poetry syllabus to be written and developed for both Primary and Secondary schoolchildren.

A new Poetry GCSE to be written and developed for Secondary schoolchildren.

A new Teachers' training guide to be written for Poetry.

Teachers' CPD to be updated to include the new subject.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank the Churchill Fellowship for their gracious award and thank you to The Mercers' Company for funding my research. I believe in myself, because you both believed in me.

Secondly, I would like to thank Dr Elisa New, my inspiration and my friend. You welcomed me into the Poetry in America family, but you also asked me to be a part of it. For that, I will be eternally grateful.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the WHOLE Poetry in America team for talking to me and giving me the knowledge you have!

Brie Martin, for being there for me and for never letting me go wrong.

Samanta Mendoza Lagunas, for being the one who put together and organized my 6-week schedule without leaving me to get on with it.

Caitlin B. Rajagopalan, for being so patient and kind. Your insight is incredible and I am so proud to know you.

Peter Rhodes, for welcoming me into your home.

Steven Allardi and Samantha Corsini, Maggie Farren, Hogan Alexander Seidel They/Them, Jeff Careyva, Gillian Osbourne, Godsway Doriah, Adam Kosan, Matt Freund.

Gideon Leek, for updating the Poetry in America website with my blog and being a legend.

National Education Equity Lab, for allowing me to attend the school in the Bronx.

Principal Winn and the Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School, for allowing me into your classroom to meet your amazing students.

Dr Lois Brown, for your generous offer of the fellowship at the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy and your hospitality.

Peter Kahn, for your valuable input into what you achieved in the UK.

Thank you to the UK organisations I spoke to:

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) – Charlotte Hacking.

The Poetry Society – Natasha Ryan and Billie.

English Association (EA) – Dr Rebecca Fisher, CEO.

United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) – Prof Debra Myhill and President of UKLA.

The English and Media Centre – Andrew

Dr Julie Blake, for your thesis material.

K and L, for putting up with every single moment that I spent on this Fellowship.

A-Level – Advanced Level
ASU – Arizona State University
BCC – Bronx Career and College
B-roll – Supplemental footage
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
CLPE - Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
CofE – Church of England
CPD – Continuing Professional Development
DJ – Disc Jockey
EA - English Association
EDU – Education
ELL – English Language Learners
GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education
IT – Information Technology
K-12 – Kindergarten to 12th Grade
NEEL – National Education Equity Lab
PD – Professional Development
PiA – Poetry in America
Prep – Preparatory
SXSW – South By South West
TA – Teaching Assistant
TV – Television
Uni - University
UKLA - United Kingdom Literacy Association
UK – United Kingdom
USA – United States of America
US – United States

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS REPORT

My name is Hannah Maria Stanislaus.

I was a homeless single mum, on benefits, alcoholic/drug addict. I wrote my first poem on June 6th, 2020.

I was published in February 2022 and my first collection 'Extremely Aggressive, Uneducated and Rough' has sold 1000 copies.

I am the Creator of 'Lost Souls Poetry' which has been a sold-out open mic night for 2 years, 2 venues in South London, we are just about to start our first poetry slam.

I was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2023, researching Poetry in America. I was offered a job with the organisation after 6 weeks of research and I was filmed for season 5 of PiA to be screened on PBS Arizona in Fall 2026.

My next work on is Pauper, Politician, Poet. These have been my 3 biggest jobs in my 37 years of life. The book will tell of triumph from suicidal ideation and hope from despair.

The end of my Churchill Fellowship.

I began on the 12th of February in Boston, Massachusetts.

A trip to the Bronx, New York on the 26th of February for 2 days.

I landed in Austin, Texas on the 4th of March.

Finally arriving in Phoenix, Arizona on the 11th of March.

I came back to the UK on the 26th of March.

This is my report on my findings and I hope to bring change to the UK with it.

