

## **Interview Schedule/Focus Groups**

### Read Informed Consent Statement:

As you know when you agreed to be interviewed, I am asking for your help on a research project about how sociology students learn sociology. We hope to use this information to develop strategies for our teaching, curriculum, and student support that will improve the learning of our discipline by our students. Your participation is voluntary, you may refuse to answer questions or quit at any time without penalty, and your responses are confidential. The interview will take about 30-60 minutes. I will be taking notes on your responses. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Kathleen McKinney ([kmckinne@ilstu.edu](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu)) or the Research and Sponsored Programs Office at 438-2528. I greatly appreciate your assistance with this important study.

### Questions:

1. Tell me how you became interested in Sociology and how you became a Sociology major. (probes: What attracted you to the discipline? What do you like about Sociology? Why did you decide to major in Sociology?)
2. Think about your career as a Sociology student. Tell me about the strategies you have used that you believe have really helped you learn sociology, understand the sociological imagination, and so on. (probes: How do you prepare for class? How would you describe your study style? How often do you miss class? How often and in what ways do you interact with your sociology peers? Faculty? How important is doing the reading assignments? Are there any particular experiences you would mention here?)
3. We often learn things outside of class. What types of out-of-class learning experiences have been helpful in learning sociology? Do you ever attend soc club meetings? Have you engaged in research with a faculty member? Do you go to hear research presentations on campus? Do you do volunteer work? To what organizations do you belong? How have these experiences influenced your learning of Sociology?
4. Compare this to classes and learning outside of the field of Sociology? Do you think you learn in the same way or different ways? How so? Examples?
5. What about learning outside of school? What types of things do you do to learn a new sport or hobby or musical skill?
6. What would be an example of a difficult moment in learning sociology? Why was it difficult? How did you manage to get beyond this moment of difficulty?
7. Please give me a definition and/or example of the sociological imagination in your own words? Was this difficult to learn and understand? Are there any significant experiences or behaviors or situations that helped you to learn this idea?