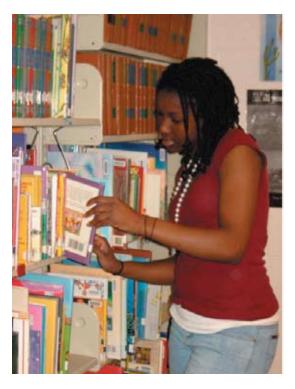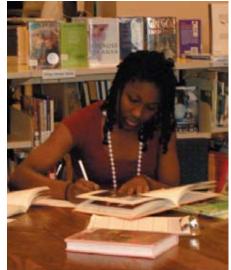# Poetry Express
Case Overview

The Library at Pinion Creek Middle School is working with the Language Arts program to host a monthly poetry slam called 'Poetry Express' in an effort to attract students whose creative voices would otherwise not be heard. Pinion Creek Middle School is a small school in the Midwest with a student body of approximately 550, and a staff of 22 teachers. The surrounding community employs a diverse mix of factory workers, professionals from the neighboring junior college, and technology businesses. The population is growing at a steady pace of an average 3% per year. The school has an innovative and creative curriculum, and the staff turnover is low. Many teachers hold a master's degree and the average class size is 26.

At the poetry slam, students read their own poems. The librarian wants to increase the reading of poetry and increase the library's usage, while the teachers also want to develop the public speaking skills of the students in their program. The school counselor is excited about Poetry Express because it gives students an outlet to express their creative thoughts and feelings.

The librarian creates a special performance area in the library, once a month. Setting up the poetry slam in the library lets the students see what the library offers, if they don't normally visit. A new display each month keeps it fresh in the minds of the students. The librarian shows the classes the materials available, such as monographs, websites, videos, and theme poems that are offered in the library.

The Language Arts teachers are structuring a standards-based curriculum for the poetry unit, introducing a 'poet of the month' reading in class prior to the Poetry Express session. A Spoken-Word Artist speaks to students, followed by monthly workshops for the students on oral presentation. The 4-H agent also has program materials such as the 'Hands On in the Classroom' that help to develop leadership skills; working with the students helps him enroll poetry entries for the county fairs. The Language Arts teachers post sign-up sheets each month for presentations to be given during lunch 1 and lunch 2. The students will have time in class to polish their wording, flow, and style with the help of the teacher.

Timing is critical--students need to time the length of their presentations so no one is 'bumped'. Most lunches last 25 minutes, and it takes a couple of minutes for students to find a seat. A microphone helps, but most students have never spoken in a microphone before and need training to avoid being surprised to 'hear their voice', causing distraction at first.

The parent volunteers assist in each monthly meeting by helping to organize seating, call up speakers, and just be visible in the room, along with the librarian, teacher judges and spoken-word artist. Follow up meetings with the students are very important because the students want feedback on how they did. Whether they come back the next month depends on if they like the experience.

Profiles of Stakeholders

These are fictional statements typifying attitudes and illustrating needs, not actual direct quotations.

Pinion Creek Librarian

"We have excellent resources for students in the subject areas of poetry and public speaking, and we want students to take advantage of them. We can help students create their own poems in collaboration with their English teacher, or help during a special poetry unit in class. We want to do more to help our teachers and students, and let them know what resources we have."

English Teacher

"We want to make our English classes exciting for our students, drawing out their creative abilities by calling upon personal experiences and feelings. Poetry is very popular right now, and students want to express themselves. There are so many different types of poetry out there, and if we combine the creative potential of students with the opportunity to showcase their creations, I'm all for it. And, it's always good for students to be exposed to varying perspectives. Our Principal is always looking for ways for students to be exposed to different opinions, ideas and thoughts."

County 4-H Extension Agent

"The stereotype of 4-H being about cows, plows and sows doesn't fit the clientele we serve these days—in urban and suburban settings as well as rural. Young people often lack the opportunities for leadership training. So this is where I fit in. I'm excited to be a part of the poetry workshops. I hope to involve more students in 4-H activities, develop their leadership skills, and then showcase their efforts in exhibits at the county fair each year. We get great public turnout because parents want to see how their kids' poems stack up against the other entries. (Of course theirs will be better!) Helping with Poetry Express is a win-win situation: the kids learn more about developing their speaking abilities, and I get to meet staff members who could be future judges in 4-H activities."

Parent Volunteer

"Middle school has got to be the toughest place for any kid to navigate—you have peer pressure, your face decides to break out right before the 'Snowflake Serenade' and you just don't know where you fit in. I want my child to be immersed in a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment at school. Poetry Express is so positive because all those feelings and ideas have got to come out somewhere. Just try it, and see what happens. You could be reaching out and making a connection with other kids your age. As far as speaking in front of others, you may not like it, but it will help you expand as a person. I keep telling my kid to 'try new things, meet new people, and get out of your comfort zone once in a while— that's what makes you grow.'"

Logic Model Worksheet

I.	Situation: program partners and stakeholders
What is the program's **name**?	**Pinion Creek Poetry Express**
What **partners** are involved?	Pinion Creek Middle School Library Language Arts Department Parent Volunteer group Local 4-H County Extension Agent
Who are the program's **stakeholders**? (Be sure to include yourself, your target audience, partners, funders and any other stakeholders.)	What does each **stakeholder** want to know?
Student	Will the coaching help me get over my nervousness? Will my friends like my poetry?
Librarian of Pinion Creek Middle School	Will holding a poetry slam increase the numbers of students using the library? Will holding a poetry slam increase the students' interest in reading books about poetry? How can the library help Language Arts teachers?
County 4-H Extension Agent	What times will I be needed to participate in this program? What materials will I need to bring? Is there any cost involved? Is it an ongoing program or does it have a beginning and an end? How many students will I reach as a result of this program?
Language Arts Teacher	Will this program increase interest in the poetry unit? Will the poetry slam allow students to demonstrate effective use of poetic language? Will the poetry slam allow students to express themselves creatively through writing and performance? Will students' fear of speaking in public be reduced? How does this project relate to our mandated state standards? How much extra preparation time will the class segment require? Will this help with their test scores?
Parent Volunteers	Will our kids gain self-confidence in dealing with their fears and presenting their feelings?

II. Program planning: connecting needs, solutions, and results

Who are the **audiences**?	Students in grades 5-8
What are the **needs** of the audience?	•Teachers, parents and librarians are concerned that some students do not have a creative outlet for their emotions and feelings. In turn, student self-confidence and self esteem suffer, resulting in lower academic achievement. •Students who will someday be employed need to know how to speak effectively in public in order to compete for careers which have higher skill-set requirements.
What are some **audience considerations?**	•Some students are unable to attend extracurricular activities due to lack of transportation, so lunchtime scheduling would be better than after-school. •Many studies support a wide range of activities that develop a community of learners who acknowledge each other's gifts. •The school lacks outlets for student creativity. •Peer pressure has a strong influence on children in this age group. •Students lack confidence in expressing themselves. •Maturity levels differ between 5th and 6th graders and 7th and 8th graders. •There are limited opportunities to practice public speaking and receive constructive feedback.

What **solution** fulfills the needs?	•Recruit students through Language Arts classes to participate in a poetry slam to be held in the library during lunch, one day per month (optimally during teacher development work days, 1/2 days for students). •Students in grades 5/6 will perform during 1st lunch, and students in grades 7/8 will perform during 2nd lunch.
What will be the **desired results?**	•Students will have a creative outlet to express their emotions and feelings. •Students learn the art of performance poetry, thus gaining confidence and self-esteem. •Students will learn how to write creatively in several facets of poetic form and will gain an appreciation for poetry. •Students will learn communication skills through creative oral expressions and will receive constructive feedback about their poetry from teacher judges. •Students will have fun!

II.   Logic model summary: program purpose statement

We **do** what?	We host a poetry slam in the library once a month during the school year.
For **whom**?	Students in grades 5-8

For what **outcome**/benefit(s)?	•Students learn to write and think creatively.
	•Students learn public speaking skills.
	•Students gain confidence and self-esteem by expressing their feelings and emotions.
	•Students increase their interest in poetry.

III.   Program elements

Inputs	Outputs (or counts)
Dates for poetry slam reserved each month	
Computer lab times reserved for students to research poetry online	Hours of computer lab used
Language arts teachers present lessons on types of poetry, how to write poetry and recruits students to present poetry each month.	Number of teachers involved
4-H agent meets with Language arts teachers and librarian in the fall to explain 4-H entry rules and criteria for entering poetry in the local fair; enrolls students' submitted work in poetry competition in the spring.	
Activities	**Outputs (or counts)**
Plan with 4-H agent, librarian and English teacher.	
Recruit spoken word artist as mentor	
Recruit students through English classes	Number of students, in their classes, participating in creative writing in English classes Number of students, in their classes, participating in oral presentations in English classes
Post and set speaking schedule	Number of students (up to 10) performing during each lunch period

Program is promoted via flyers, brochures, and school announcements.	
Arrange for AV equipment for presentations.	
Set-up presentation and seating areas	Number of students (up to 30) viewing the performance during each lunch
Design portable stage and backdrop in collaboration with the Art and Industrial Tech or Agriculture Science department.	
Arrange with staff teachers to critique performances (judges).	
Judges create Poetry Express rubric that offers constructive criticism	
Consult with spoken word artists	
Display poetry books and public speaking books in the library.	Number of poetry books circulating in the library Number of public speaking books circulating in the library
Post web sites of online poetry in the library.	
Send monthly reminders to staff about the poetry slam.	
Create procedure for students to follow when presenting poem.	
Services	**Outputs (or counts)**
Provide lessons on creative writing and oral presentation.	
Spoken word artists serve as mentors.	
Provide feedback meetings to discuss poetry critiques.	
Collect poems for entry in the 4-H county fair.	Number of poems entered in the local 4-H county fairs in the spring

Host the poetry slams each month in the library.	Number of students (up to 30) viewing the performance during each lunch Number of students reading poetry

V. Outcomes

Outcome 1: *Students write and think creatively through poetry.*

Indicator(s)	Applied to	Data Source	Data Interval	Target
The number and percent of students who create an original poem by applying at least 50% of the techniques learned in class lessons. **AND**	Students submitting poems for the Poetry Slams	Participant projects, examined for techniques	At the end of each month's poetry slam, and cumulatively through the school year.	60%
The number and percent of students who create a poem that conveys energy and emotion that is consistent with and enhances the ideas and mood of the poem.	Students submitting poems for the Poetry Slams	Participant projects, judged by spoken word artists and Language Arts teachers	At the end of each month's poetry slam, and cumulatively through the school year.	65%

Outcome 2: *Students speak confidently in front of their peers as they deliver their expressive poems.*

Indicator(s)	Applied to	Data Source	Data Interval	Target
The percent and number of students who deliver their poem with skill and confidence, according to the rubric, during monthly meeting time. **AND**	All 5th-8th grade students participating in the poetry slam	Observation by teacher judge and librarian judged on a public speaking rubric *	At the end of each month's poetry slam, and cumulatively through the school year through the last poetry slam.	40%
The number and percent of students who rate themselves as confident (moderately or highly) after poetry slam participation.	All 5th-8th grade students participating in the poetry slam.	Survey of participants	After each poetry slam	50%

Outcome 3: *Students have an interest in poetry.*				
Indicator(s)	**Applied to**	**Data Source**	**Data Interval**	**Target**
The number and percent of students who check out one or more poetry books from the library from the beginning of Poetry Express to the end of the school year. **AND**	All 5th-8th grade students participating in the poetry slam	Circulation data	As the poetry slams are announced and at the end of the school year	25%
The number and percent of students who rate themselves as confident (moderately or highly) after poetry slam participation.	All 5th-8th grade students participating in the poetry slam	Survey of participants	After each poetry slam	50%

* Speaking Confidently Rubric

Very confident speaker: Makes eye contact with audience at least 80% of the time
Entire presentation is clearly audible throughout audience
Fewer than five "ums" or other non-words; no more than one re-start.

Confident speaker: Makes eye contact with audience at least 50% of the time
Most of presentation is audible to first two rows of audience
Some "ums" which are not majorly distracting; no more than 2 re-starts

Less confident speaker: Looks down/avoids audience eye contact at least 50% of the time
Needs to be prompted more than once to speak loudly enough
Has more than two breaks in delivery or many 'ums'

Beginning public speaker: Makes very little (less than 10%) eye contact with audience
Needs more than two prompts about speaking clearly or loudly
Has many breaks in delivery; it is difficult to follow what he/she is saying.