

Poetry-based Method for Evaluating Youth Arts Programming

Wilder Research created this poetry-based method for evaluating youth arts programming as part of a larger project with the Minnesota State Arts Board. We used this method to help evaluate a poetry program for high school students. This document provides an overview of the method we used, instructions for youth program staff to implement the method, and a worksheet that youth program staff can duplicate to engage young people in the method.

Poetry-based method overview

There are many ways to evaluate youth arts programming, such as surveys, observations, or poetry-based methods. By “poetry-based methods,” we mean evaluation methods that incorporate poetry in some way. The poetry-based method we created invites young people to write a short poem about what they learned by attending youth arts programming.

Implementation instructions

This poetry-based method involves two parts: 1) introduction and creative activity, and 2) documentation and sharing.

Introduction and creative activity

To introduce the method, Wilder recommends that youth program staff use a script that goes over common outcomes of youth arts programming, such as art outcomes (like increased interest in the arts and improved arts skills), social-emotional outcomes (like improved peer skills, better emotional regulation, and increased connections to caring adults), and educational or career outcomes (like setting goals and making plans to achieve them).

Suggested introduction script: What can we learn by making art? We can get better at something by learning new skills or techniques. We can learn about ourselves and why we feel or think the way we do. We can make new friends and learn more about the friends we have. We can meet people in our neighborhood or community and learn about what’s important to them. We can learn what skills or support we need to accomplish our goals.

Creative activity prompt: Think about what you have learned by making art with .
Please use the worksheet to write a short poem about what you have learned.

Documentation and sharing

After writing a short poem and answering the question in the worksheet, youth program staff should facilitate an opportunity for young people to share their poem, including sharing their response to the open-ended question at the bottom of the worksheet. Youth program staff should take notes of young people’s responses or ensure that their writing on the worksheets is legible.

How have you changed by making art with**?**

In the box below, please write a short poem about the ways you have changed by making art with . After writing your poem, please write your response to the question at the bottom of the page.

Poem title: _____

What is the biggest way you have changed by making art with

?

Thank you for completing this worksheet! Please give it to someone from

.