

## Public poetry project

At Uni, active learning isn't limited to science classes. Many of our faculty have embraced active learning strategies across the curriculum. Theater classes perform plays at local elementary schools, journalism and yearbook students produce our school publications, and poetry students this year brought poetry to the masses with their public poetry projects.

Poetry teacher Dr. Elizabeth Majerus created the Public Poetry Project to get students working on projects that enable them to draw on a wide range of intellectual, creative, artistic, and practical skills and because she thinks poetry needs to have a public face in order to be truly vital.

This year, three students in the class held a poetry game night in the library, while another group held a Speak It Loud, Speak It Proud event at Pizza M. Other projects included a magnet poetry project (<https://magnetpoetry.wordpress.com/>) in Uni's kitchen, where anyone was welcome to compose their own magnetic poetry on a large magnetic board, and a poetry graphs project (<http://nich-liu.github.io/poetrygraphs/>) dedicated to exploring the visual aspect of poetry through a web site that creates poetry-based graphs.

Majerus said the students begin by researching and analyzing a "big" public poetry project during the first quarter, and then create their own project during the second quarter. She designed the assignment to combine academic and life skills – students get to pursue their passions, be creative, use technology and hands-on crafting skills, and draw on their strengths to create a project, but they also are forced to use "real world" skills like communicating with organizations and individuals they need help or permission from to make their projects happen. The project also gives students the opportunity for collaboration and communication with the community

"The project is good for the students and good for poetry, and hopefully helps students be more aware of poetry in the public sphere and understand why we as a culture need public art and why art needs a public role," Majerus said.