Poetry Emotion or Effective Literacy Practices for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Rosanne J. Westgate Pesola

An Article Published in

TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus

Volume 4, Issue 5, May 2008

Copyright © 2008 by the author. This work is licensed to the public under the Creative Commons Attribution License

Poetry Emotion or Effective Literacy Practices for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Rosanne J. Westgate Pesola

Abstract

Why use poetry to enhance the individual's ability to read and understand the text? How do we assist people with intellectual disabilities, specifically Down syndrome, with an opportunity to bring richer and deeper meaning to what they read? The special education community is waking up to the possibilities for expression which exist for individuals with Down syndrome. For several decades we have assumed that an IQ or intelligence number can assist professionals in determining just how far someone can go or how much we can teach. In reviewing the literature for individuals with other learning disabilities, and those very distinct and effective strategies, we can now ask, why not use these same strategies for the intellectually disabled, specifically those with Down syndrome?

Keywords

down syndrome, developmental delay, poetry

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Westgate Pesola, R. J. (2008). Poetry emotion or effective literacy practices for individuals with intellectual disabilities. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus*, 4(5) Article 5. Retrieved [date] from http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/tecplus/vol4/iss5/art5

The special education community is waking up to the possibilities for expression which exist for individuals with Down syndrome. For several decades we have assumed that an IQ or intelligence number can assist professionals in determining just how far someone can go or how much we can teach. In reviewing the literature for individuals with other learning disabilities, and those very distinct and effective strategies, we can now ask, why not use these same strategies for the intellectually disabled, specifically those with Down syndrome?

In a very informal writing workshop setting, specific techniques have been embedded in poetry lessons to assist individuals with Down syndrome with an opportunity to socially connect with each other and their world, understand it, and express themselves. Although the population referenced is adult, it is suggested that these techniques be generalized for school-aged students as well.

> ***Poetry of the moment gives meaning to the hour…***
>
> ***Luis Rodriguez, Jr. (2004)***

According to William Dillon (1994), poetry is rarely employed in teaching basic reading skills. It is found that for students with cognitive disabilities, poetry can encourage listening, participation and reflection. It can enhance the art of careful listening, extend attention skills, provide an opportunity for an auditory-visual match, increase sound-symbol awareness, foster the social connect through one's experiences, as well as poems being visually manageable. Teachers won't hear the usual from students, "Oh, do I have to read all that?" or "Look at all those words!" Reading poetry becomes a total emotional experience in respect to the utilization of the senses. In addition, students do not need to master all aspects of a poem. By connecting with one's emotions and each other, it can allow for visualization, imagery, and deeper word meaning. If carefully supported through the use of visual strategies, poetry can afford the individual with Down syndrome an opportunity to work with a literary form which can elevate meaning from the literal and grounded experience to the inferential and rich one that enhances memory and learning. Reading poetry with individuals with Down syndrome provides the opportunity for individuals to relate experiences in their own life which deepens their understanding through the sharing of stories and the social connection attributed to social communication (Ryndak, Morrison, and Sommerstein, 1999). This connection is not to be taken lightly, as so many of the individuals involved in the project were noticeably more social and communicative and looked forward to the next opportunity when they could relate life experiences and make the necessary connections between the author, the poem and the reader.

Susan Buckley (2001) refers to the scarcity of published information on the reading development and reading achievements of individuals with Down syndrome. In 2001, studies from Australia and the United Kingdom indicated that some 60 to 70% of individuals with Down syndrome can achieve functional levels of literacy by adult life.

One of the few articles written to enhance reading strategies for individuals with Down syndrome or moderate mental retardation, describes specific methods used for the acquisition of phonics skills (Otaiba & Hosp, 2004). The concern in this study was the fact that students with Down syndrome were re-

ceiving as little as one hour of reading instruction per week. Little is known regarding the levels of reading achievement which are attainable for this population (Carr, 1988; Oelwein, 1995). The tutoring model which was developed for students with Down syndrome was delivered by tutors who were trained to implement scientifically based reading strategies. The delivery of these services were individualized with segments of the reading block devoted to phonological awareness, phonics, sight-word fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, and progress monitoring.

The guidelines for accessing the general curriculum for students with developmental disabilities, specifically Down syndrome, and the much needed learning strategies for success are few. A large percentage of special education teachers (85%) believe that their students with severe disabilities should not be held to the same standards as students without disabilities, and over half (53%) of these teachers have reported that their school district has no clear plan for ensuring access to the general curriculum (Lee, Amos, Gragoudas, Lee, Shogren, Theoharis & Wehmeyer, 2006). Much of the research and application of learning strategies for students with significant cognitive disabilities has highlighted the role of technology in accessing general education curriculum (Rose & Meyer, 2002; Wehmeyer, Lance, & Bashinski, 2002). Deshler's work with curriculum adaptations has been significant for the learning disabled (Deshler, Shumaker, Harris, & Graham, 1999), but little has been done in this regard for those with cognitive disabilities.

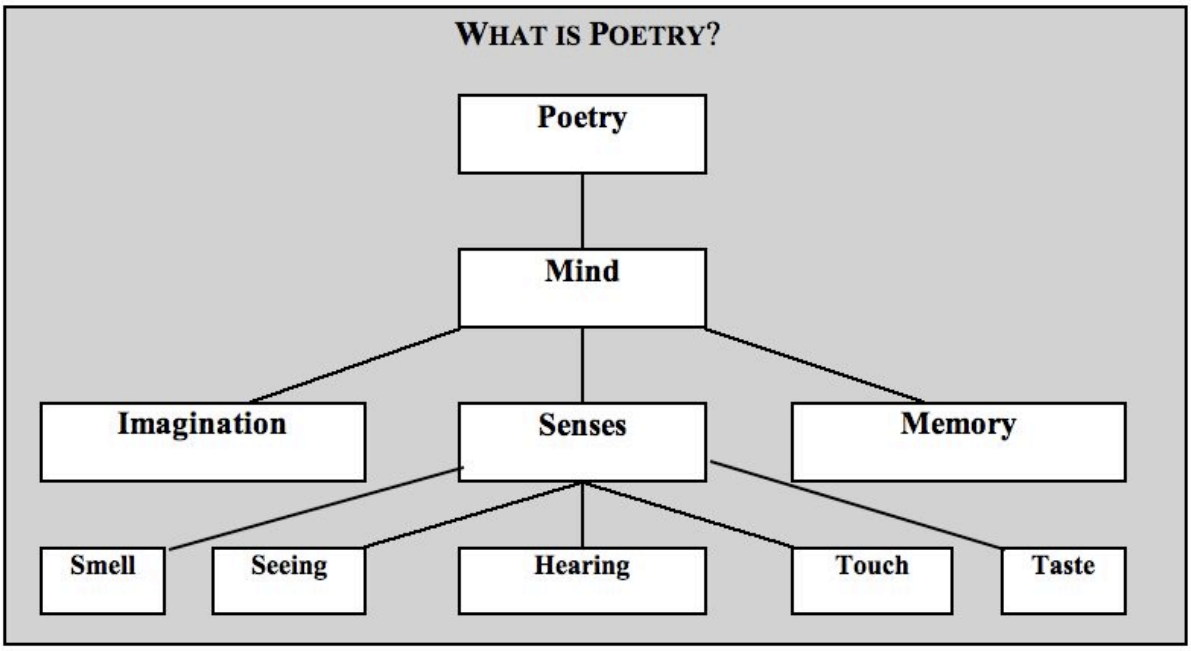
Learning Strategies

The adult population with Down syndrome is the primary focus in this article. Participating as a teacher in a literacy class, in which approximately 15 adult students in three different sessions, all with Down syndrome, were enrolled at 'night college' (as the students refer to it), has yielded some meaningful qualitative results in the direct application of very specific learning strategies. Their ages range from the late twenties to the late thirties. The class met one time per week for an hour in the evening for four months. This group of adults has a wide range of abilities in terms of language, oral and written expression, and artistic abilities. The poetry selected was matched to the ability ranges with a variety of forms.

These learning strategies include graphic organizers, chunking, mnemonics, goal-setting and problem-solving, student-directed learning strategies, and self -determination (Rosenthal-Malek & Bloom, 1998). I have included "the senses" and "visualization" as two additional learning techniques.

According to Meyen, Vergason & Whelan, (1996), graphic organizers are "visual displays teachers use to organize information in a manner that makes the information easier to understand and learn." The use of poetry in enhancing the necessary reading components, particularly comprehension, was effective in that these specific learning strategies could be directly applied utilizing the motivating material found in poems. Poems by Wadsworth and Frost were read and a thematic or seasonal approach was utilized. One of the first evenings the class met with an enrollment of five individuals, we discussed the concept of 'poetry.' The students responded immediately to a visual web of ideas in Figure 1 (graphic organizer), and decided that 'poetry' was an expression of feelings and how one creates a poem. They were told throughout the course it was not critical to make their poems rhyme.

Figure 1: Graphic Organizer, What is Poetry?



What is Poetry?

In one of the first poems read, "Dust of Snow" by Robert Frost, a semantic web (graphic organizer) was used to present the concept in this poem and a clearer understanding of the word 'rued' gave depth to the reading of this selection. One student took the phrase regarding the 'hemlock tree' even further, and remembered reading somewhere how hemlock stood for something magical, a sort of "magical powder" as he called it, which changed the mood of the person. In understanding the word 'rued,' the students were asked to act the poem out and feel the change that came over the writer, as a result of the dust of snow on a day in which he had given up hope. We even took an evening walk in which we could shake the snow off a tree bough and reenact the poem.

In continuing with the theme, the next meeting found the class creating a large graphic organizer of winter, with seasonal photographs the individuals took themselves and other scenes from the internet. The students were asked each week to bring their journals and 'student-made textbooks,' which included samples of collected poems and the students' own work. Other graphic organizers were created around the sensory experiences or some haikus that were seen, heard, felt, and smelled from the poem, which became a total VAKT (visual auditory, kinestetic, tactile) experience. Venn diagrams were also used to visually display what the writers of poems were seeing/feeling, what the reader was seeing/feeling, and what the two had in common. This technique allowed the students to bond with the poets.

In "Stopping By The Woods On A Snowy Evening," Frost's poem gave us access to visualization techniques as we pictured what the poet was inviting us to 'see.' We looked at winter photographs and spoke about winter, and how winter makes on feel through the experiences one has.

Vocabulary lists were developed through the discussion of photographs. A warm-up game of "Synoword" (author's ver-

sion) was played each session to have the class think of alternate words for common words used in their everyday speech. To enhance automaticity, the students were asked to name as many alternatives as rapidly as possible. Each student chose a word from a pile of cards, such as 'night,' and then developed lists for future reference with synonyms such as 'evening,' 'dusk,' 'dark,' etc. The class took a walk to experience a winter evening through the senses. We brought snow inside and when one of the individuals was asked what snow smelled like, she replied, "Nothing." The students were asked to use white chalk on black paper to draw a picture of what winter makes one feel like doing. The memories of a first-hand experience, when the group took a walk on a silent winter evening in the country, assisted in the understanding of Frost's poem. Often having difficulty with short-term memory tasks, one of the students was able to talk about snowflakes falling on his tongue, etc., but exhibited some difficulty in recalling what he said long enough to get it down on paper. This student and I employed a 'cognitive rehearsal strategy' of repeating his thoughts over and over until he was able to bridge the gap from speech to print. The concept of 'miles to go before I sleep' and the continual repetition of this phrase was effective in having one individual equate 'miles' with 'much to do.' This would be another use of cognitive rehearsal strategies as well as the attachment of a multi-sensory experience.

THE DUST OF SNOW

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree
Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Robert Frost

Another example of this would be found in the poem, "The Daffodils" by William Wadsworth. The lines of this poem encouraged the reader to become the daffodils and flutter and dance in the breeze. How can one understand the depth and breadth of this visual landscape unless one actually is the daffodil and flutters and dances like one?

Another instance of this occurred on an evening in which we read a haiku about migrating snow geese.

Migrating geese
Once there was so much
To say.

After reading the poem, one of the adults related how he saw "a moving white field" one morning. The individual revealed a whole story on how a large cornfield, covered with snow, appeared to be moving as if the field of snow was taking off! It was not until one cold January afternoon that I had the same experience observing geese and I could readily connect to the student, and the connection deepened both our understanding of the poem and the author.

Chunking

Chunking is another learning strategy applied through the reading and writing of poetry, and is the process of combining related elements into units which are manageable for students (Sylwester, 1995). Chunking assists students with the recall of specific information and adds to the development of explicit memory. It can also assist with fluency, thereby enhancing comprehension. This technique can be influential in the individual establishing his/her own metacognitive learning style. Through repetition and rehearsal of phrases within a poem, or the comparison of like and unlike concepts (metaphors) in po-

etry, students begin to organize thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

For example, to create a poem describing a bird's nest, it was important to chunk the information we could gather regarding the types of nests different species of birds build. By studying nests and different birds, the students had more information with which to write their own poems. 'Nesting birds,' 'migrating geese,' 'loons and their cries,' all led to the understanding of imagery and the haiku form.

Another evening there was a crescent moon shining as we read the haiku:

The child
Points at the moon
And says, 'bird.'

This was a perfect scenario to provide individuals with Down syndrome an opportunity to see something very literal, the crescent moon, and then to encourage them to "see what else this could be." One student was able to draw the crescent moon and then transform it into a bird. We then discussed that sometimes simplistic poetry, specifically haiku, offers a description which can actually mean something else. As one of the students put it, it can be "fantasy."

There are opportunities for a teacher to have the students 'see' something and not just 'look' at it. A photograph of a bird's nest was inspirational in having a student write a haiku of his own. The task was to look at the photograph and write three lines of poetry comparing the picture to something else the individual might be familiar with, such as holiday lights, robins' eggs, sunspots from the sun, etc. Chunking meaningful phrases as one reads, "nesting birds," "loon's cry," "migrating geese," "paper window's hole," "dust of snow," can be categorized into phrases which make one feel, phrases which express a particular emotion, or phrases which recall visual information, as in Jeffrey Peterson's poem below.

The shade
Of the tree
Red to green,
To red again.
Indian paintbrush.

This type of clustering of descriptive concepts is helpful in improving fluency when reading, by scooping phrases together, and ultimately improving comprehension.

In terms of writing poetry, the concepts of think, read, write, and meditate with graphics were displayed. We spent considerable time studying these tenets of haiku (www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk). This is effective in terms of chunking and then fading from the individual as he/she attempts the reading and writing of poetry. This is a valuable tool that the students can maintain in their notebooks or journals which will assist them in moving into more independent and self-regulatory type experiences.

Reading and re-reading from journals and each others' writing can enhance expression, fluency, working memory, and the emotive quality of poetry. The reading and writing of poetry becomes more of a puzzle-solving opportunity than a problem. Puzzle-solving is a process used to identify available information and design solutions in order to achieve one's goal (Agran, Blanchard, Wehmeyer & Hughes, 2002). After reading and reflecting on a poem, the class was asked to identify the problem, or ask questions in terms of things they were concerned about, or did not understand. Identifying the missing puzzle pieces to their questions or to the poem was important in the review of the text, the discussion of the

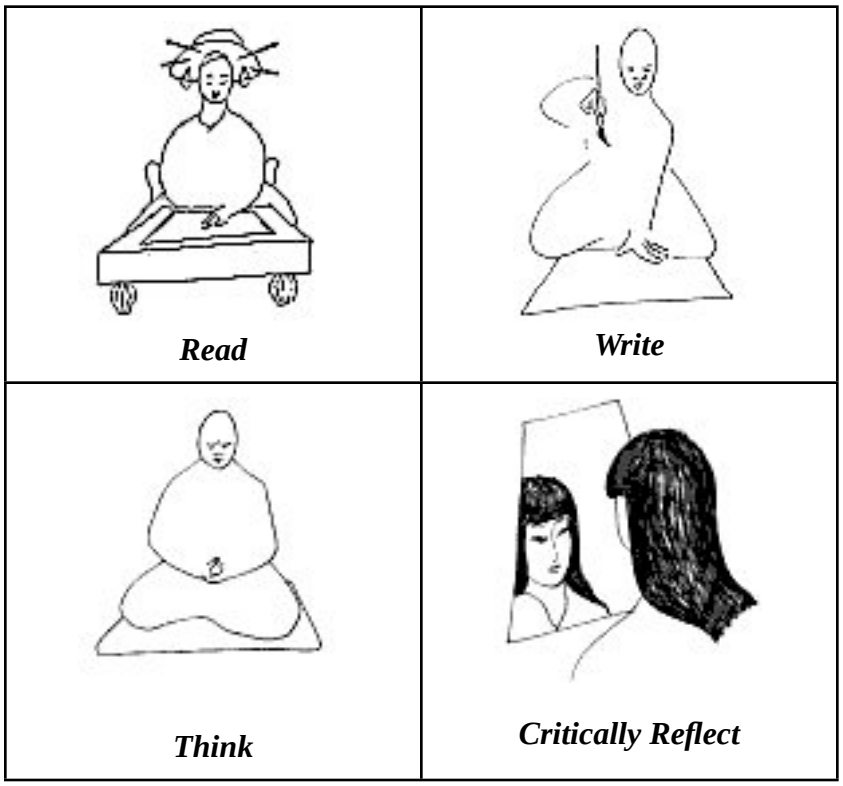
text, the visualization of the picture, and the utilization of essential strategies for solving the puzzle. Specifically in the following haiku,

> *Early spring sun —*
> *the spinster combs out her hair*
> *for nesting birds.*

The students were asked: "What time of year is it?" "What is a nesting bird?" "What is a spinster?" "What else could a spinster be?" "What does the word spinster 'sound' like?" One young man reflected on spinster and developed the concept of one who spins, and was able to bridge the gap of how a woman's hair could be used by birds to create nests. Of course, the conversation quickly evolved into how unkempt hair can look like a 'bird's nest.' The questions of what something is, what does it look like, and what it could be guided the group in reading additional haiku.

Another interesting activity to understand puzzle-like haikus is to collect photos of nature and have the students match the poems and the pictures they might represent. This process could perhaps assist students in processing information and making auditory-visual matches and bridge the gap from written text to comprehension.

Figure 2: Mnemonics and Poetry



Mnemonics

Visual Mnemonics, such as pictures of natural landscapes, mountains and lakes, provided opportunities to expand vocabulary and word meaning. Mnemonics are systematic procedures for enhancing memory by providing effective cues for recall as a 'cognitive cuing' structure such as word, sentence or picture devices (Bellezza, 1981; Lombardi & Butera, 1998). Pictures of these mountains,

waterfalls, valleys, and the like were used as illustrations to recall information for a more facile retrieval. The group brainstormed after looking at photographs of mountains, and moved from a literal description of:

There are mixed colors
Mountains have stripes

To a more abstract haiku of:

God's love has lifted me up
Over huge blue waves
Of ridged mountains.

Photographs of natural landscapes provided the necessary image to enhance acoustic memory through imaginal linking. "So what other words can you think of to describe this mountain?" Answers included 'sharp cliffs," "stone stairway," "striped-candy;" Ah, we are getting somewhere!

Color and Emotion

The use and understanding of color can be a very dramatic and pronounced way to comprehend and express feelings. Emotions and colors can be taught using mnemonics, chunking, graphic organizers, visualization, the senses, and other learning strategies. The class went beyond the description of what something looked like, to what feelings a color might evoke in an individual. Warm-up activities included one sentence lines such as, "What things look blue?" "What things smell blue?" "What things feel blue?"

One of the most intriguing and all-ages appropriate books for the class was *Hailstones and Halibut Bones*, (O'Neill, 1961). Several passages were read to the students with an emphasis on the feelings colors inspire. We then played the familiar childhood game, *I See Something*, which encouraged the students to truly see the object which represented the color. There is much to be said for the difference between looking at something and really seeing it. A scavenger walk with a color swatch enhanced the students' opportunities to connect between what a color is, and what emotions it can bring. They understood that if they could not bring a sample of the color (*the blue sky)* back to the writing table, they could write down what they had seen on their spring walk which represented a specific color. We collected blades of green grass, white blossoms, and other tangible representations. The phrases in *Hailstones and Halibut Bones* enhanced and encouraged memory by the very activity of verbally rehearsing lines like 'glittery gold,' 'winter white,' 'ruby red,' and 'lilac lavender.' After this warm-up, we worked from a large worksheet which became the framework for their poems, once again using a graphic organizer. The students were asked to choose a color, and then fill in the worksheet with what a particular color tastes like, smells like, sounds like, and feels like. They used water color to paint images of various objects which matched a specific color. The challenge came when the class went beyond the literal level and spoke about how color can make one feel. The students were able to retain their sensory experiences and identified some very telling feelings regarding color. One woman realized that the chain around her neck which was given to her by her father was the color of gold. To her this represented the bond of love. She recalled how, "It helped as well as the feelings from that time."

Another student wanted to discuss the color black and how it reminded her of her grandmother's gravesite and those emotions. She took the color beyond the literal sense and stated how black was the sound of "noth-

ing" and how it smelled of dirt and spiders, tasted of licorice, and made her feel sad in connection with the death of a family member.

Black Is

Black is sorrow, dark and spooky.
Black is the taste of licorice.
Black is the smell of and spiders.
Black makes me sad.
Black is the sound of nothing.

Linda McCord

Comments on the color red included how it "smells like tomato sauce and flowers." The individual who appeared to have had the most difficulty expressing her feelings and moving beyond the concrete was able to use color to expand her understanding of emotions. She stated, without prompting, how yellow "makes her feel better" and drew a picture of her bed, a place of recuperation. She added that yellow "was the sound of music, and the yellow brick road." The discussion and use of color in poetry had a very direct impact on the emotions as noted here. The immediate and delayed recall of words and ideas obtained by learning with drawings is higher than that obtained using mental images or the auditory condition (de la Iglesia, Buceta & Campos, 2005). Perhaps the use of color and the memories it triggers can aide in the development of mental images, imagery, and what is needed to comprehend prose.

Emotions

The recognition of facial expressions of emotion by persons with mental retardation is difficult as a group. Although adults with mild intellectual disabilities were more proficient at this task than those with moderate intellectual disabilities, this finding was not true for children. There is a difference in this skill between children with moderate retardation and their peers without disabilities. They have difficulty with the recognition of disgust, but not anger, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise (McAlpine, Singh, Kendall & Ellis, 1992). In another study (Harwood, Hall & Shinkfield, 1999), adults with intellectual disabilities were significantly poorer at identifying anger, fear, disgust and surprise, although along with an adult group without intellectual disabilities, performed much better on the moving as opposed to static display of sad and angry emotions. All of this background was critical in the poetry class when it came to the students' identification of a visual representation of an emotion as expressed by language. For example, how does one understand the negative emotion of depression, unless we view a face with this expression and read a line from a poem to depict this?

In reading *Your Catfish Friend* by Richard Brautigan (1989), the class discussed what a catfish looks like, and how it might feel to be a fish alone on the bottom of a pond. We looked at black-and-white caricatures, and tried to put an emotional word with these drawings. One lady had difficulty in identifying the emotion depicted in one particular graphic. However, her ability to motor encode the same emotion greatly improved through the game of charades.

There were about 20 or so of these caricature symbols on a page. In retrospect, there might have been too many images for these students to process accurately in terms of feelings and expressions. The students may have also been more successful in this exercise if actual photographs had been used, given their real-life experiences in decoding facial expressions.

Emotion Bingo is another good exercise to have the individuals think of various

synonyms for ‘happy’, ‘sad’, and ‘angry.’ We utilized these same words in charade-type activities, and again in sentences to accompany the emotional word. Obviously, sign language, or in this case, motor encoding, provides an opportunity for the less verbal individual to express himself and his understanding of emotions. One woman had much difficulty matching words such as ‘nervous,’ ‘grouchy,’ and ‘fearful,’ to the caricatures, but did a superb job in the motoric interpretation of these feelings.

Looking Ahead

For many years, special education has addressed the teaching of reading for students with severe cognitive disabilities with very specific instruction in the use of sight words for functional and everyday use. This practice has led to setting limitations for those with cognitive disabilities in general. As a whole, the *assumption* has been made that those with cognitive disabilities experience ceilings on learning due to weak executive functioning, without professional attempts to consistently apply effective reading strategies which have been successful for students who have other classifications, such as learning disabilities. Literacy instruction is often provided to children with Down syndrome in the initial years of primary school, but is gradually withdrawn at about the fifth grade, when it appears educators assume a learning plateau has been reached (Gallaher, Van Kraayenord, Jobling & Moni, 2002). Therefore, as a special education community, the art and discipline of reading needs to be the focus if those with cognitive deficits are to achieve individual potential and gain greater access to what is valued in their lives (Chhabra & McCardle, 2004). Reading abilities play a fundamental role in the acquisition of personal autonomy (Verucci, Menghini & Vicari, 2006). Chapman (2006), challenges the concept that children with Down syndrome cease to learn language when they reach their teens. She maintains that individuals with Down syndrome often acquire language and other skills well into their adult years.

Much of the research has involved small groups of students with severe cognitive disabilities who have significant deficits in language usage and understanding (Alvares, Falor, & Smiley, 1991).

Through working intensely with those with Down syndrome in adult literacy classes, effective research practices have been applied with some interesting results. The use of poetry and free verse in combination with the visual arts was found to enhance social skills and create a deeper connect with the printed page *and* among group members. Students who perform better on comprehension tasks also demonstrate better decoding skills, global language skills, and the elements of reading comprehension. (Franklin, Roach, & Clary, 1992; National Reading Panel, 2001).

Students need to know that what they do will be in an atmosphere of trust and a certain amount of support for their feelings. No observation is unacceptable. The poetry classes seemed to provide the necessary support for this risk taking.

References

Agran, M., Blanchard, C., Wehmeyer, L. & Hughes, C. (2002). Increasing the problem solving skills of students with developmental disabilities participation in general education. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*, 279-288.

Alvares, R., Falor, I., & Smiley, L. (1991). Research on nonlingusitic communication functioning of individuals with severe or profound handicaps. In L. Sternberg (Ed.). *Functional communication: Analyzing the nonlinguistic skills of individuals with severe or profound handicaps* (pp.18-37). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Bellezza, F. S. (1981). Mnemonic devices: Classification, characteristics, and criteria. *Review of Educational Research, 51*, 247-275.

Brautigan, R. (1989). *Your catfish friend. The pill versus the Springhill mine disaster.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Buckley, S. (2001). Reading and writing for individuals with Down syndrome – an overview. *The Down Syndrome Educational Trust*.

Carr, J. (1988). Six weeks to twenty-one years old: A longitudinal study of children with Down syndrome and their families. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 29*, 407-431.

Chapman, R. S. (2006). Language learning in Down Syndrome: the speech and language profile compared to adolescents with cognitive impairment of unknown origin. *Downs Syndrome Research and Practice, 10*(2): 61-6. Sarah Duffen Centre/University of Portsmouth.

Chhabra, V., & McCardle, P. (2004). Contributions to evidence-based research. *The voice of evidence in reading research*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks.

de la Iglesia, C. J. F., Buceta, M, & Campos, A. (2005). Prose learning in children and adults with Down syndrome: The use of visual and mental image strategies to improve recall. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, 30* (4), 199-200.

Deshler, D., Schumaker, J., Harris, K., & Graham, S. (1999). *Teaching every adolescent everyday: Learning in diverse middle and high school classrooms.* Cambridge, Massachusetts. Brookline Books.

Dillon, W. M. (1994). Using poetry in teaching reading to special education students. *Poetry in the classroom: Incentive and dramatization.* Yale New Haven Teachers' Institute (Vol. 2). New Haven: Yale.

Franklin, M. R., Roach, P. B., & Clary Jr., E. (1992). Overcoming the reading comprehension barriers of expository texts. *Educational Research Quarterly, 16*, 5-14.

Frost, R. (2002) *You come too. Favorite poems for all ages.* New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Gallaher, K. M., Van Kraayenord, C. E., Jobling, A., & Moni, K. B (2002). Reading with Abby: A case study of individual tutoring with a young adult with Down syndrome. *Down Research and Practice*, 8(2), 59-66.

Harwood, N. K., Hall, L. J., & Shinkfield, A. J. (1999). Recognition of facial emotional expressions from moving and static displays by individuals with mental retardation. *The American Journal on Mental Retardation, 104* (3), 270-278.

Lee, S. H., Amos, B. A., Gragoudas, S., Lee, Y., Shogren, K. A., Theoharis, R., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2006). Curriculum augmentation and adaptation strategies to promote access to the general curriculum for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities: 41*(3), 199-212.

Lombardi, T., & Butera, G. (1998). Mnemonics: Strengthening thinking skills of students with special needs. *The Clearing House. 71*, 284-286.

Marsh, G. (1999). In the moonlight a worm silently drills through a chestnut. CIS/ Waning Moon Press. Retrieved October 18, 2007 from www.haiku.insouthsea.co.uk/ teachbasho_sec1.htm.

McAlpine, C., Singh, N. N., Kendall, K. A., & Ellis, C. R. (1992). Recognition of facial expressions of emotion by persons with mental retardation. *Behavior Modification, 16*(4), 543-558.

Meyen, E. L., Vergason, G. A., & Whelan, R. J. (1996). *Strategies for teaching exceptional children in inclusive settings.* Denver: Love Publishing.

National Reading Panel, (2001). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Pub. N0. 00-4754). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

O'Neill, M. (1961). *Hailstones and halibut bones.* New York: Delacorte Press.

Oelwein, P. L. (1995). *Teaching reading to children with Down syndrome: A guide for parents and teachers*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Otaiba, A., & Hosp, M. (2004). Providing effective literacy instruction to students with Down syndrome. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 36* (4), 28-35.

Rose, D. H., & Meyer, A. (2002). *Teaching every student in the digital age: Universal design for learning.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Rosenthal-Malek, A., & Bloom, A. (1998). Beyond acquisition: Teaching generalization for students with developmental disabilities. *Best and Promising Practices in Developmental Disabilities*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED. 139-155.

Ryndak, D. L., Morrison, A. P., & Sommerstein, L. (1999). Literacy before and after inclusion in general education settings: A case study. *The Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, *24*, 5-22.

Sylwester, R. (1995). *A celebration of neurons: An educator's guide to the human brain.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision of Curriculum Development.

Verrucci, L., Menghini, D., & Viaari, S. (2006). Reading skills and phonological awareness acquisition in Down syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, *50* (7), 477-491.

Wehmeyer, M. L., Lance, D., & Bashinski, S. (2002). Promoting access to the general curriculum for students with mental retardation: A multi-level model. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, *37*, 223-234.

Wordsworth, W. (1804). Daffodils. Retrieved 20 May 2008 from www.poemhunter.com/poem/daffodils

About the Author:

Rosanne J. Westgate Pesola, Ph.D., is the Director of the Kennedy-Willis Center on Down Syndrome at Pathfinder Village. The Village is a one-of-a-kind residential community for children and adults who have Down syndrome, and is located near Edmeston, New York. More information is available at www.pathfindervillage.org. She is also a full-time adjunct for SUNY Cortland.