

Highlights of the Poetry Suitcase Meeting

Pam Nelson stole the audience with her passion and enthusiasm for reading poetry by introducing "Grab Your Suitcase for a Poetry Get-Away". Nelson was delighted and heart warmed to be able to present at Eastern Illinois East Central Student Reading Council. Both of her children and daughter-in-law graduated from Eastern Illinois University, and she could not stress enough how proud she was too able to be a part of this University. Nelson was overjoyed to see so many students aspiring to become part of the teaching world. With over fifty students, the room was packed with laughter, oh's and awes. Nelson stated that it is important for children to understand the meaning of a poem, but it is also more important in how poetry can have meaning for the child.

Nelson introduced a method for teachers to teacher poetry by placing objects such as a plunger, fig Newton's, a peacock, a butterfly, dinosaur tooth, large pencil and many more into a suitcase. Nelson explains how classrooms can at times feel overwhelming, and in these times it is great to pull out the suitcase. A student can come up and chose an object, the object then relates to a poem in a poetry book. Nelson also stressed how it is important to only pick one or two items; therefore student will see objects and begin to grow curiosity for certain objects wanting to continue to explore poetry. The suitcase can also have themes such as animals, sports, food, rainforest etc. One object that was pulled out was the plunger; many might think what kind of poem is about a plunger? The plunger related to the book full of unusual occupations, where one was a Plummer. Each of the Poems read during Nelsons presentation brought smiles and laughter's to everyone in the audience. Eastern Illinois was honored to have Pam Nelson share her ideas and collection of poetry to the East central Student Reading Council.