



# NEWSLETTER

SERVING FLORIDA ENGLISH TEACHERS SINCE 1924

## *Motivation: The Key in the Ignition*



Antonia  
Lewandowski  
*staff writer*

When we see a student working hard, we know what we're looking at. Motivation: it's the key that gets our motor started and keeps us chugging along when times are tough. As teachers, we're constantly occupied with nurturing this spark of energy in others as well as in ourselves. We know that without motivation, the school day is long and hard, not only for students, but for us as well.

Workshops, journal articles, surveys, all describe the benefits of teaching in a highly motivated environment. The trick

is to make it happen, and on a daily basis. Let's take a brief look at some practices that may help remind us how to fire that spark - and maintain it in the new academic year.

Meet Connie O'Brien. A veteran secondary language arts teacher with National Board Certification, Connie has taught everything from ninth grade English to upper division honors. And she, like many others in our field, moderated the school newspaper and the yearbook. Always working with a full plate, Connie also participated in district

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### ***Kylene Beers Elected Vice President of the National Council of Teachers of English, Will Assume Presidency in 2008***

Kylene Beers has been elected Vice President of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Beers won the majority of votes cast by NCTE members and will assume the Vice Presidency during the NCTE Annual Convention in Nashville, November 16-19, 2006.

Beers, a resident of The Woodlands, Texas, is Senior Reading Researcher, Comer School

Development Program, Yale University, and chair of the National Adolescent Literacy Coalition.

Beers says, "My initial motivation to join NCTE was simply to subscribe to English Journal, but a few years after becoming a 'journal-reading member,' a professor of mine, Dr. Richard Abrahamson, en-

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# A Message from FCTE President Ginny White

I invite everyone to join us at the Orlando Renaissance from Thursday, October 12, through Saturday noon, October 14, for our annual Institute for Professional Development. I assure you this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, masterfully crafted by Program Chair Dr. Joan Kaywell to provide us all the chance to learn, to become informed and inspired, and best of all, to be together. FCTE has been my “well” for being an accomplished and enthusiastic teacher in my classroom. I cannot imagine missing it ever, but this year promises to be one-of-a-kind with a plethora of YA authors, experts in English education, and, of course, our best teacher colleagues. We created the pre-conference workshop with Kylene Beers as a five-hour training especially to help teachers secure staff development funds, so register now. This conference is the place to be from beginning to end.

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Letters, articles, suggestions and story ideas from readers are welcome. The newsletter editor will assume that such letters and articles are offered for publication unless clearly marked otherwise. The editors reserve the right to select and edit articles for purpose and fit. Please send any information or inquiries to 1101 Bear Crossing Drive, Orlando, FL 32824 or by E-mail to [gorneya@ocps.net](mailto:gorneya@ocps.net). *FCTE Newsletter* is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement. Advertising inquiries and requests should be directed to the address above.

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## *Having Jane Eyre Sensibilities in the Age of Jerry Springer*

I suppose that when I began to hear curse words in the hall more often than the word “hello,” I realized that maybe I might be some sort of relic—like Jane Eyre, a part of a distant past that held in esteem the qualities of good manners and kindness.

Oh, Gentle Reader, where did all the good boys and girls go? Am I so old that this world is now too hard to understand? Is it true that our civilization

is indeed in decline, and we are experiencing the beginnings of The Fall? Maybe.

With so many of our students living with parents who must work long hours to keep body and soul together—we find a clientele that is too often left to its own devices. Therefore, our students watch an inordinate amount of television, play video games for hours a day, and listen to a great deal of music with words that would make a



Dorothy Fletcher  
*staff writer*

1. We should never allow anyone to denigrate us or anyone else in the room or school. We must assertively, but gently remind students that unkindness is never acceptable. More times than not, assailants will back down when their misdeeds are confronted by assertive persons in the right.
2. We should encourage students to know each other by name. Knowing the names of ones peers should be part of every class, so that no one is likely to refer to a classmate as “Hey, you!” We have names for a reason—a literal meaning and a familial meaning. Names do matter if only because they eventually become symbolic of self. When all of us honor one another by name, we make it hard to treat each other as objects.
3. We should never argue with students. Some students seem to enjoy making a scene and all manner of subjects can become “a cause.” We need to gently tell disgruntled students that they may speak to us after class or at the end of the school day when there is more time to explain things to them thoroughly—like grading procedures, curriculum or local policies. Then, we need to cheerfully move on in the lesson. NOTE: We should remind students at the beginning of a year that individual grades are not discussed during class time.
4. We should always model the kind behavior we want to see in our students. We should avoid raising our voices in anger, and we should laugh at ourselves once in a while.

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sailor blush. Our poor students are exposed to an endless parade of outrageous behaviors, vulgar words and anti-social ideas in the media that often defines their world. Students are being tempted in ways earlier generations would have found unbelievable, and many students are surrendering to instinctual behaviors because there is no one there to tell them otherwise.

Instead of talking out a problem with a friend as a father might suggest, a child might just throw a punch as they have seen people do countless times on Jerry Springer. Instead of reasoning out a problem as Mama would surely encourage, kids might surrender to the temptation of having a temper tantrum as they have seen people do on Big Brother or Bridezilla. Instead of confronting a social problem "head on" as a grandparent might suggest, a kid might retaliate against an imagined foe with a libelous "rant" on myspace.com causing myriad complications in everyone's life.

I fear that much of this

exposure to the media, especially without parental involvement, can lead to behaviors in the teenager subculture with frightening results. So, we teachers have much work to do.

I suggest that we teachers remember how influential we are in the lives of our students, and that we consciously begin to influence the children of America. We all need to send the message that "manners" and "kindness" are good and powerful forces in the classroom, the workplace, and the world. We need to counter the messages of the media with real life activities that help children understand how civilized people need to behave so that our cultures—all of them—can co-exist and thrive.

So how do we achieve this lofty goal? Slowly. Very, very slowly. At the very least, we teachers need to take control of our own environment, and using four very simple ideas, slowly influence those who are in our care.

## **The Greatest Catch: A Life in Teaching by Penny Kittle**

**By Lee Ann Spillane**

**An English teacher for more than fifteen years, Lee Ann Spillane currently serves as the teacher coordinator of the Reading Writing Center at University High School in Orange County, Florida.**

Tom Romano tells us to “Read Penny’s stories of teaching and learning. Then write your own.” Romano is right. Kittle’s book, *The Greatest Catch: A Life in Teaching*, preserves epiphanies of the ordinary that all teachers will recognize. The first half of the book is a collection of short essays. These narratives tell stories of students and classrooms. David, for example, a fifth grader turned animated pinball. Kittle discovers bottles of vanilla flavoring in his desk. Could he be an alcoholic? Kittle confronts such dilemmas with dignity giving readers a clarity that is developed from obvious reflection.

*The Greatest Catch: A Life in Teaching* is a collection of moments: opalescent teaching moments that have transcended time and left a lasting impression on Kittle. Undoubtedly, they will leave a lasting impression on readers as well.

Kittle has chronicled the students we all remember. Of Lucas, she writes, “He played ball at recess; he wrote dutifully in his journal. Lucas was breathing, but he wasn’t living. I know it now, but I didn’t think it through at the time.” How many of us have had a Lucas in our classrooms? I am reminded of my own student, Jennifer, senior star of the volleyball team. She wore long sleeves everyday and worked in the Reading Writing Center. She died her hair black and got quieter. And

quieter. Eventually, she uncovered the scars that ran tracks up her arms. Ultimately, she put her pain into words, poetry, and made me read. Lucas reminds me of that student, Jean, who at the end of our year together

**Ken’s story gives me a measure of hope...**

wrote, “thank you for making me laugh when all I wanted to do was cry.”

Have you ever realized just in time that a student was floundering? Were you able to help? With Lucas, Kittle did help. She listened. She valued his voice as a student and as a writer. Kittle captures her learning for us in prose that is as clear as the rivers she must have fished as a child. Craft knowledge is important. Kittle provides us with a model for telling our stories which rings true and is easy to follow. There is a truth to the not-so-happy endings she shares. Kittle does not limit her stories to the “good kids.” In her own words Kettle reminds us that she “wanted to tell the stories of students who drop out of school, because there are too many. [She] designed [her] “narrative in two voices” because[she] wanted a student to tell his side of the story. That student was Ken.” Ken’s narra-

**spotlight**

tive included toward the end of the book is a testament to the fish that got away. Ken, a ninth grade repeater twice over, talks about his failure and the lessons he's learned along the way. How many times have I wished to hear from a student who'd dropped out? Ken's story gives me a measure of hope. Kittle's frank reflection on failure lends a depth and truth to her voice that we don't find in other professional books. In contrast to the books that seem to regale us with one golden moment after the next, Kittle's narrative is a down-to-earth of what really happens in the trenches and what a true teacher thinks about those events over time.

Romano urges readers to take up pen and paper. Kittle gives us a road map to get there. The last sections in the book, Craft Notes, detail aspects of Kittle's own writing process. It's a case history written in the voice of the teacher across the lounge. Kittle details different aspects of the writing process for each of the narratives in the book. Kittle segments the craft notes into:

prewriting, drafting, rereading, revision, polishing and letting teachers will glean insight about teaching writing. Often I found myself highlighting phrases or whole quotes that will be useful in my own classroom. I scrawled big Bs in the margins, my own code for "book," where Kittle mentioned good titles or resources. I loved how these craft notes belied the depth of the river Kittle fished as a teacher.

In reading Kittle's work about teaching the words of Nikki Giovanni come to mind, "mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to the error that counts." However, Kittle's response, *The Greatest Catch: A Life in Teaching* is not a book solely about error. She shares her learning from a career filled with celebrations and yes, some errors. She shows us how she came to know through reflection and writing. Such reflective writing is what forges new frontiers in teaching. It helps us get a glimpse inside the all too often closed door.

Sue Monk Kidd comes to mind: ...it's not knowing what's right that's hard it's choosing to do it...

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Sam Reisner teaches ESOL and IB Theory of Knowledge at Cypress Creek High School in Orlando, FL

## Slan: A Review

By: Sam Reisner

After being exposed to Science Fiction their whole life, a modern reader might suppose that one of the first novels in the genre might be a little dull; they couldn't be more wrong. Although many elements of this story have become Hollywood cliché, (The underdog hero unsure of his powers, an equally scrappy love interest, and an oppressive government that is trying to destroy them both)

Slan has a freshness and a sense of adventure that makes the reading snap along. Struggling readers may discover what it is like not to be able to put down a book, while more experienced readers will remember how fun reading can be.

Slan  
A.E. Van Vogt  
A Tom Doherty Associates Book  
New York

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curriculum projects and became an early adopter of Pinellas County's Classroom Learning System, a set of integrated management practices for planning, delivering, and assessing learning.

Some of her basic beliefs are similar to yours and mine. "Parents are key." In teaching, help students to see that "everybody's on the same side." Use assessment practices that "give credit for in-class completion of work and opportunities for revision." If you'd walked into Connie's classroom, you would have recognized features of extrinsic motivation. The Wall of Fame specified a location where students vied

with each other to post top scores in vocabulary and reading. Successful papers received stickers and personal Post-it Notes messages. Practice exams allowed students to self-assess and measure progress.

For intrinsic motivation, Connie relies on communication techniques, by particularly using humor to defuse anxiety and build support for her classroom agenda. With professional realism, Connie understands that parents and guardians who want to know how their children are progressing can also be defensive. She identifies the rejoinder, "I was never good in English either,"

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as a typical conversation closer. Other problems in communication involved the indirect or tacit message given by parents to their children that lack of success is the teacher's fault; he or she is "not doing a good job of teaching."

To counter these and other negative attitudes, Connie factors in alternative strategies. "Make sure the parents get good news." Positive calls home, recommended by all motivation experts and championed for years by followers of Harry Wong, are an important part of Connie's strategy. Humor also plays a role. Calling a parent whose child is perilously close to not graduating on time, Connie begins by saying, "This is Save-our-senior-from-himself Week." The ensuing conversation then becomes lighter in tone, yet every bit as intentional. For those parents or guardians "who don't see the course, only the grade," Connie suggests using evidence from portfolios to focus the conversation toward improvement.

Today Connie teaches in the cyber classroom of the Florida Virtual School(6-12). Riding on a new wave of energy, Connie interacts with more than 150 stu-

dents registered in her classes. Her tools are the prescribed curricula, her laptop, and the Internet. She says that learning goes more smoothly because the students are "there by choice." There is always a close connection with parents, minimally once a month and more if the student has problems.

The virtual school uses a questionnaire as a feedback mechanism, one that inquires about students' internal and external motivations. The personal insight resulting from these surveys helps to build self-directed learners. For example, when one of Connie's students realized he responded best to extrinsic motivation, he set up a reward system. "Give kids an instrument to understand what motivates them," she suggests.

As with all forms of learning, desire and discipline work hand in hand. Our passion for words and expression, for examining life-giving themes and fostering powerful habits of mind must combine with good motivational practices, strategically employed, throughout the curriculum. Better than enforcing rote learning or relentlessly teaching to the test, we can best spend our energies building and maintaining the desire to learn.

## **A Message from the 2006 FCTE Program Chair:**

Dear FCTE Members and English Language Arts/Reading Teachers,

When I started planning for the 2006 FCTE Professional Development Institute, I tried and so many of you helped me try to get Oprah Winfrey to attend. Who better than Oprah for a conference with a theme, "Saving Our Students with Literature and Laughter"? Although I was only successful at getting the attention of Harpo Studios, the experience made me determined to honor Florida teachers by developing a very special conference. I wanted to bring something to Florida that I have the wonderful opportunity of being able to attend each year—that is, the National Council of Teachers of English Conference (NCTE) and NCTE's Assembly of Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) Workshop. As I tell my students when I teach methods of teaching English to prospective teachers, NCTE is the heart of our profession. The Florida Council of Teachers of English (FCTE) is the bloodline to and from NCTE with all the local councils in our State, serving as continuous arteries. ALAN is the energy or personality of our profession because it is through literature that we come to know ourselves as teachers and our students as individuals. As a former President of ALAN and its current Membership Secretary (go to [www.alan-ya.org](http://www.alan-ya.org) if you want to join), I have the unique privilege of knowing so many wonderful authors of children's and young adult literature. As a result, I am delighted that 17 award-winning novelists have agreed to attend. Rather than include their bios here and because this FCTE Newsletter is being sent electronically, I've included their website addresses so you can conveniently check out who's coming this year.

### Florida Authors:

Ed Bloor - <http://www.edwardbloor.net>

Lois Duncan - <http://loisduncan.arquettes.com>

Adrian Fogelin - <http://www.adrianfogelin.com>

### Authors from All over the United States and One from Thailand:

Michael Cart - <http://aolsvc.teenreads.aol.com/authors/au-cart-michael.asp>

Lynne Cox - <http://www.lynnecox.org>

Patricia Hermes - <http://www.authorsillustrators.com/hermes/hermes.htm>

Robert Lipsyte - <http://robertlipsyte.com>

Ben Mikaelson - <http://www.benmikaelsen.com>

Donna Jo Napoli - <http://www.donnajonapoli.com>

Marilyn Reynolds - <http://www.marilynreynolds.com>

John H. Ritter - <http://www.johnhritter.com>

Neal Shusterman - <http://www.storyman.com>

William Sleator - website unavailable/author of *Interstellar Pig*, *House of Stairs* and too many more to list

Eleanora E. Tate - <http://www.eleanoraetate.com/>

Rita Williams-Garcia - <http://www.ritawg.com/>

And Two Poets:

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Brod Bagert <http://www.brodbagert.com>

Linda Oatman High <http://www.lindaoatmanhigh.com>

All of this literature isn't worth much if we don't have students who can read text. With the emphasis currently being placed on reading, we decided to open the conference with an affordable PRE-Conference Workshop from the leading reading expert on teaching SECONDARY students who are struggling readers (emphasis intended). We are honored to have Dr. Kylene Beers, the Senior Reading Researcher at Yale University and author of *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*, co-author (Carol Jago) of *Cohesive Writing: Why Concept Is Not Enough*, program author of *Elements of Literature, Grades 6-12*, and co-editor (Bobbie Samuels) of *Into Focus: Understanding and Creating Middle School Readers*. Kylene won this year's NCTE election and will become the next NCTE President.

For those who cannot attend this PRE-Conference 5-hour workshop, Kylene will open the 2006 FCTE Institute for Professional Development on Thursday evening. After the opening session, teachers will then enjoy a cocktail party where they can talk informally to authors and presenters and then attend a special Preview screening of the not-yet-released film of the classic *Charlotte's Web*.

We start the morning with a kick off session by leading middle school reading expert Dr. Janet Allen. Janet is an international consultant, researcher, author, innovator, veteran educator, and has become a major force in literacy work with at-risk students. She has written numerous groundbreaking books on literacy; these are just the titles since 2001: *Reading History: A Practical Guide to Improving Literacy*, 2005; *Tools For Teaching Content Literacy*, 2004; *Reimagining Reading: A Literacy Institute*, 2002; *Using Literature to Help Troubled Teenagers Cope with End-of-Life Issues*, 2002; *It's Never Too Late: Leading Adolescents to Lifelong Literacy*, 2001; and *There's Room for Me Here*, 2001.

Throughout the day, participants will have to choose between listening to the aforementioned authors or attending several first-rate presentations by excellent teachers, educators, and consultants. Because adolescent literature complements the classics of literature ([http://www.christopher-gordon.com/Authors/kaywell\\_thmb.shtml](http://www.christopher-gordon.com/Authors/kaywell_thmb.shtml)), I am happy that a representative from the Folger Shakespeare Library will be here to give a workshop that gives teachers techniques and materials to engage students of all ability levels with Shakespeare's plays. Because of the popularity of Elizabeth Thomas (<http://www.upwordspoetry.com>), she is coming back to present how to maximize poets/poetry in classrooms. The day is packed with sensational sessions that address the teaching of all of the language arts: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. Randy Testa from Walden Media (<http://www.walden.com/web/teach/home>) will present a three-hour workshop on the use of film in the classroom. This year for the first time ever, there is a strand specifically for the Florida Writing Project. Finally, political minded people will enjoy the "fishbowl session" where award-winning educator Dr. Bob Probst will moderate a conversation among middle and secondary teachers of English and reading with Department of Education (DOE) representative and FCTE member-at-

large Susan Watt (English), DOE representative Dr. Evan Lefsky (Just Read, Florida), and DOE representative and FCTE Facilities Chair Kevin Smith (Just Read, Florida).

We will close Friday with lots of laughter. Long time educator and comedian, Barry Lane (<http://www.discover-writing.com>) will dazzle us with "Reading, Writing, and Laughing across the Curriculum." In the evening, a band from Rock'n'Write (<http://educators.rocknwrite.com>) will put students' poetry—and a special surprise—to music for our listening pleasure.

We open Saturday with a breakfast and Dr. Doug Fisher's keynote address on how we create literacy rich schools for adolescents. Doug is a former secondary school teacher, author, and professor in the Department of Teacher Education at San Diego State University. He has published numerous articles and books on reading and adolescent literacy and has been recognized with an International Reading Association Celebrate Literacy Award and a Christa McAuliffe award for excellence in teacher education. After another amazing day of sessions, Dr. Beverly Chin will end the conference with the closing keynote, "Inspiring Our Students through Multicultural Literature." Beverly Ann Chin (Montana) is Professor of English, Director of English Teaching Program, and former Director of Montana Writing Project at the University of Montana, Missoula. She has served as President of NCTE, Board Member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and Secretary of the Conference on English Education (CEE). Currently, she is Member-at-Large for the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) and the Senior Project Consultant for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Assessment in 2011.

So now you can see why I am excited about this year's FCTE Professional Development Institute, and I hope you are too. Please, while you're thinking about it, go to the FCTE website (<http://www.fcte.org>) and register for the conference. I hope to see you on October 12-14 at the Renaissance Hotel Orlando Airport, 5445 Forbes Place, Orlando, FL 32812. When you call for reservations at 1-800-228-9290 or 407-240-1000 be sure to ask for FLORIDA ENGLISH TEACHER RATE! The hotel rate is \$110/night single or double occupancy.

Create peace,

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## ReLeah Cossett Lent's *Engaging Adolescent Learners - A Guide for Content-Area Teachers*

By: **Linda Tuschinski**

**L i n d a  
Tuschinski is  
the FLARE  
Area 6 Coor-  
dinator at  
the FLARE  
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ing Academy.**

ReLeah Cossett Lent's *Engaging Adolescent Learners - A Guide for Content-Area Teachers* with a forward by Brian Cambourne is the author's third book. The author has taken Cambourne's "Model of Learning" and woven it into a plethora of practical and usable classroom practices and activities to re-ignite the student's innate desire for learning for its own sake rather than extrinsic motivations such as the grade or passing the test. Teachers will also find themselves renewed with Lent's insights and commentary. This is not a book of strategies, rather a book that walks us through the learning process with thought-provoking questions and activities requiring us to reflect on our own learning experiences such as "think about a time when you had to learn something very difficult..." What type of pressure were you under to learn? Were you successful?" or "Think about a time when you enjoyed learning something. What made the learning rewarding?" (p.3) We become immediately immersed in the reflecting on learning and begin to look at it through different eyes especially pertaining to young learners. Content of the book is liberally sprinkled with quotes from notables such as Oscar Wilde, Helen Keller, Albert Einstein, Joseph Joubert, to name

just a few.

Progressing through the book, the reader finds favorite, personal pertinent parts among all of the valuable information provided. This is accomplished by the author sharing many personal and private experiences in addition to her research. For example, in chapter 9 she shares how a discussion revolving around a disagreement with her parents ended with words from her father that had a lasting profound effect on all of her future learning and teaching. The experience proved how powerful feedback and response are in motivating students or anyone. It can go either way, as she states, "Response is a powerful force; it can be a stimulating motivator or a suffocating inhibitor." (p.100) After her statement, as she continually does, she asks the reader to connect this concept to a personal learning and teaching experience, whether positive or negative, and reflect on the effects. Part of the power of this book is the ongoing encouragement to reflect.

Study groups, reading leadership teams, and learning communities are all aptly addressed in depth with suggestions for implementing and ensuring lasting success. Consider putting this book in the hands of every educator.

# Recipes for Classroom Success

## Teaching Voice and Character Using a Mock Myspace Page

Allen J. Gorney

**Grade Levels:** 9-12

**SSS:** LA.D.1.4, LA.E.1.4

**Skills taught:** Understanding Voice, Understanding Character

**Objectives:**

To develop an understanding of voice and character using a mock myspace page.

**Steps:**

1. The student should pick a character from a literary text.
2. The student should determine the stylistic aspects of that character's voice and style from both dialogue and description
3. The student should fill out the required sections of the myspace template.
4. The basic myspace template should include a place for a picture, a section for a short biography of the character, and a section for blogs.

This myspace page should allow the student the opportunity

to explore a character and the elements of voice while also providing them the opportunity to be creative. The picture can match the description of the character in the literary text. The blog should comment, in the character's voice, on an episode in the plot. The short "about me" biography should also be written in the voice of the character. It helps for the teacher to visit a myspace page to understand the purpose of the assignment better as well as to tweak the assignment to fit his or her needs. Please note that the assignment in no way requires students to create an real myspace page online.

**Increasing the rigor of the lesson:** If the literary text is not contemporary, have the students do research on the time period to create a friends list, a general interests section, and even fake advertisements. For example, if the student has chosen Nick from *The Great Gatsby*, the student could research various titles of literature that were published during the 1920's that Nick may have read. This assignment could also work as a cross-curricular assignment with a History class and could be used to understand a historical figure.

We're looking for your "recipes for classroom success." Please send an original lesson idea to Allen Gorney at [gorneya@ocps.net](mailto:gorneya@ocps.net). Be sure to include the following information: **grade and skill level, corresponding Sunshine State Standard, objective, steps and assessment.**

**classroom**

Dr. Beth Scanlon currently teaches at Cypress Creek High School and the University of Central Florida

*Uglies*  
Science Fiction  
By Scott Westerfield  
ISBN: 0689865384  
Simon Pulse, 2005, 448pp, \$7.99

In the future, turning 16 is still a rite of passage. Tally Youngblood, however, is not anticipating a driver's license as her birthday approaches, but a new look. Soon Tally will abandon the Uglies and join the ranks of the Pretties. Every Ugly eagerly waits for the day that they will become physically perfect. The glamorous life of the Pretties will then be open to them. Then Shay shows up and challenges Tally's assumptions about the world by introducing her to the

rebel settlement called The Smoke. Tally is faced with a dilemma after Shay disappears. Although the book is long, the action in the story will compel teen readers to continue. From an instructional standpoint, the story raises complex questions about standards of beauty. The theme of doing the right thing pairs well with *Antigone*. The decisions that Tally has to make about betraying her compatriots also make this book an interesting companion to *Julius Caesar*. Readers are unfortunately left hanging at the end, but can learn about Tally's and Shay's fate in the next two books of the Uglies trilogy, *Pretties* and then *Specials*.

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**Continued from page 1**

couraged me to attend the NCTE convention. Then, he offered me a chance to serve on the Books for You committee he was chairing. He never missed a chance to remind his students that the best way to get much out of the Council was to give much to it. His students believed him and set about making NCTE our professional home. I have been privileged to serve NCTE in several roles that helped me to grow as a professional, so, while serving as the newest member of the Presidential Team is unbelievable personally, it also represents what this organization is all about: helping teachers develop professionally."

Beers, formerly a seventh-grade teacher, was editor of *Voices from the Middle* and an inaugural member of the Middle Level Section. "I am immensely proud of my association with the Middle Level Section and honored to have been elected to this position from that Section," she explains.

Beers says she wants "to be a strong and effective voice—not only to teachers but to the public and leaders in government—about the work of the Council. If, at the end of four years, I've realized that, then I'll leave this position with a sense of accomplishment."

# *"Saving Our Students with Literature and Laughter"*

*FCTE 2006 Institute for Professional Development*

*October 12-14, 2006*

*Renaissance Orlando Hotel*

## *Registration Form*

*Last Name* \_\_\_\_\_ *First Name* \_\_\_\_\_

*Home Address* \_\_\_\_\_

*City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *Zip* \_\_\_\_\_

*Home Phone ( )* \_\_\_\_\_ *E-mail* \_\_\_\_\_

*School Name* \_\_\_\_\_

*School Address* \_\_\_\_\_

*E-mail* \_\_\_\_\_ *School/Cell Phone* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ *This is my first FCTE conference.*

\_\_\_ *I am a presenter.*

\_\_\_ *I became a NBCT in* \_\_\_\_\_ *(year).*

\_\_\_ *I am a local council officer.*

*Title of office:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Name of council:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ *I plan to participate in the IDEA EXCHANGE.*

\_\_\_ *I am a student attendee with sponsoring professor's signature below:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Sponsoring Professor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of College/University*

*Enclose a check or money order made payable to FCTE.  
No purchase orders allowed. Payment due with form.  
Registration postmarked on/before October 1, 2006.*

*Member\** \$100.00 \_\_\_\_\_

*Non-Member* \$120.00 \_\_\_\_\_

*Student\*\** \$40.00 \_\_\_\_\_

*(\*\*full-time, degree seeking student)*

*On-site registration. (Do not mail after 10/1/06.)*

*Member\** \$120.00 \_\_\_\_\_

*Non-Member* \$140.00 \_\_\_\_\_

*Student\*\** \$40.00 \_\_\_\_\_

*Friday Luncheon* \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

*Total* \_\_\_\_\_

*\*FCTE membership year runs from Oct 1 to Sept 30.*

### **GENERAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION**

- *All breakout session presenters must be registered conference participants.*
- *Purchase orders will NOT be accepted.*
- *Receipts will be in registration packets.*
- *All refund requests must be made in writing.*
- *No refunds will be made after October 1, 2006.*
- *No confirmations will be sent.*
- *Students attending conference must have a sponsoring professor sign registration form.*
- *Pre-conference Workshop: Use separate registration form.*

### **Free Events—Please reserve your place!**

*Thurs. evening reception* \_\_\_\_\_ *yes* \_\_\_\_\_ *no*

*Thurs. evening movie event* \_\_\_\_\_ *yes* \_\_\_\_\_ *no*

*Friday evening event* \_\_\_\_\_ *yes* \_\_\_\_\_ *no*

*Saturday breakfast* \_\_\_\_\_ *yes* \_\_\_\_\_ *no*

*Send registration form and payment to:*

*FCTE 2005 Conference*

*10921 Pine Acres Road*

*Jacksonville, FL 32257*

*Pre-conference Workshop with Kylene Beers — Thursday, October 12*

*Come to a five hour workshop with the author of When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do.*

***Separate registration form MUST be completed.***

*Pre-conference Workshop with **Kylene Beers**, author of  
When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do  
Thursday, October 12, 2006  
10:00 to 4:00*

**Workshop Description:**

***Closing the Reading Achievement Gap: Strategies that Build Success***

*When kids can't read, students face more problems than just low grades and the threat of failing required tests. When kids can't read, they begin a downward spiral that at best results in on-going low-level literacy performances and at worst results in dropping out of high school. Stopping this downward spiral means helping these underachieving students gain needed strategies for not only catching up, but keeping up. This means teachers and principals must know how to accelerate comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency skills as well as build needed motivation. In this day-long workshop we'll examine the strategies that build those skills. We'll pay particular attention to comprehension strategies that help students understand narrative and expository texts, vocabulary strategies that build word knowledge across contexts, and fluency strategies that help both with word recognition and expressive reading.*

**Workshop Cost:**

**Pre-conference workshop with  
Conference registration:**

- **Member\*\* \$50** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Student\* \$25** \_\_\_\_\_

(\*full-time, degree seeking student)

(\*\*paying for the conference as a non-member makes you a member for one year.)

*Please send in conference registration form and pre-conference workshop form together.*

*Do not mail forms after 10/1/06.*

**Pre-conference attendance only:**

- Member \$125** \_\_\_\_\_
- Non-member \$145** \_\_\_\_\_
- Student\* \$50** \_\_\_\_\_

**Last Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **First Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone ( )** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_ **School/Cell Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

- **General Conference Information and Rules Apply. See conference registration form.**
- **Seating will be limited to the first 250 paid registrations. On-site registration for Pre-conference workshop may not be available.**
- **Send this registration form and payment (Check or money order made payable to FCTE. No purchase orders.) to:**

*FCTE 2005 Conference  
10921 Pine Acres Road  
Jacksonville, FL 32257*

# Florida Teens Read

By: Dr. Beth Scanlon

Dr. Beth Scanlon currently teaches at Cypress Creek High School and the University of Central Florida

The Florida Teens Read program was developed by the Florida Association of Media Educators (FAME) to encourage high school students to read. Last spring FAME kicked off the inaugural program; *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini won. The list is comprised of 10-15 titles that have been published in the last three years and would engage high school readers. The books on the list represent a range of genres, reading levels, and viewpoints. Some of the books are intended for more mature readers and deal with sensitive subjects. Teens are encouraged to read at least three of the books

on the list and vote for their favorite. Teachers can work with their media specialists or literacy council to develop a program at your school. At Cypress Creek High School in Orange county, participating teachers received the books for their classroom library. Students then participated in round table discussions about the books, voted for their favorites, and then attended the Academy Awards for reading. For more information about the program, go to [www.floridamedia.org](http://www.floridamedia.org). This year's list includes the following titles:

*Alt Ed* by Catherine Atkins  
*Can't Get There From Here* by Todd Strausser  
*East* by Edith Pattou  
*Fade to Black* by Alex Finn  
*Fat Kid Rules the World* by Kelly Going  
*Kipling's Choice* by Gaert Spillebeen  
*Maximum Ride* by James Patterson  
*My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Piccoul  
*One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies*  
by Sonya Sones  
*The Queen of Second Place* by Laura Peyton Roberts  
*So Yesterday* by Scott Westerfield  
*Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer

# Assessment

## Frequently Asked Questions about Assessment

### What makes an assessment “high-stakes”?

A single test determines the outcome of an important event such as passing a grade/course, graduating from high school, or changing the funding for a school.

### Are high stakes assessments required by law?

Yes. No Child Left Behind mandates that every state test children in reading or language arts and math every year between grades 3 and 8 and once between grades 10 and 12. Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, science assessments also become mandatory. Federal law does not mandate the testing of any other subjects (including writing); however, states can assess these other subjects at their own discretion.

### What is AYP and how does it relate to assessments?

AYP stands for adequate yearly progress. All students in a school must make a certain (state determined) progress each year for the school to make AYP. Progress is determined by performance on the high-stakes assessments. If the school does not make AYP, they may suffer serious sanctions including the complete restructuring of the school. The progress students make each year must be such that all students (including all disaggregated subgroups) will be proficient, as measured by the state assessments, by the 2013-1014 school year.

After consulting state and local leaders, the U.S. Department of Education issued a letter in July, 2002 clarifying the definition of adequate yearly progress, a provision of the No Child Left Behind Act. [The letter is available here.](#)

### What is disaggregation and why is it important?

All test scores are not just judged by the full school but also by small subgroups of students. The subgroups represent minorities, learning disabilities, socioeconomic status, English language learners, etc. All subgroups must make AYP for the whole school to make AYP.

**High stakes assessment**-High stakes assessments determine the outcome of an important event such as passing a grade/course, graduating from high school, or changing the funding for a school.

**Disaggregation**- All test scores are not just judged by the full school but also by small subgroups of students, such as minority, disabled, or ELL students.

**Summative vs. Formative Assessments**-With summative assessments, students are evaluated upon completion of the work and the focus is on the final product. With formative assessments, students are evaluated during the work process and the focus is on improving the process. For example, a summative assessment would be a state achievement test and a formative assessment would be a teacher response to journal entries.

**Holistic Evaluation**-Holistic evaluations are assessments that focus on overall quality of the work and not just the correctness of a single answer. Holistic tests are generally considered more comprehensive than multiple choice tests and better measure deep understanding. In assessments of writing, holistic evaluation is a “general impression” of the entire piece.

**Performance Assessment**-A performance assessment required students to perform a task instead of simply answering a question with given set of answers. The task may be writing an essay or solving an open-ended math problem.

**Criterion Referenced Tests**-Assessments that have one, fixed performance standard for all students and student groups.

**Norm Referenced Tests**-Assessments that measure each child’s performance against the performance of other test takers so that the standard is the median performance of all test takers. Thus, half the population is expected to perform below average while the other half is expected to perform above average.

*Saving Students*

*with Literature and Laughter!!!*

# **Membership Application**

*The membership year is from October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007.*

Dr.    Mr.    Ms.    Mrs.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (   ) \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone (   ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*\*\*E-mail is required in order to receive FCTE correspondences such as the newsletter and Newsbox*

Alternate E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

*In some cases, servers block mass e-mails. In this case, FCTE will use the alternate address.*

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Public    Private    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

### AFFILIATION

- New Member.....\$20.00
- Renewal.....\$20.00
- 2 Year Renewal.....\$35.00
- Retired.....\$10.00
- 2 Year Retired Renewal.....\$17.50
- Student (One Year).....\$10.00

- Administration
- Elementary
- Middle/Junior High
- High School
- Community College
- Four Year College/University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Sponsoring Professor/school

Are you...

- a member of NCTE?
- willing to become involved in FCTE?
- a member of a local council?

Return this form with your check or money

Order (made payable to FCTE) to:

**Paula Clements**  
4912 Toni Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33813

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

a local council officer?

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*\*FCTE will not distribute e-mail addresses to any other entity.*



# FCTE

www.fcte.org

**A N N U A L**

**C A L E N D A R**

**2 0 0 6**

issue e-mailed  
Announcement of finalists for  
Beginning Teacher of the Year  
and English Teacher of the  
Year

September  
NCTE Achievement Awards in  
Writing - Coordinators submit  
the names of judges, winners  
and teachers to *Florida English  
Journal* by 9.30

October  
FCTE Membership Renewal by  
10.1  
FCTE Fall Conference  
Fall Board Meeting at FCTE  
Conference

November  
*Florida English Journal* fall issue  
mailed

December  
*FCTE Newsletter* deadline for  
post conference issue - 12.1  
All treasurer requests should  
reach treasurer before 12.10  
for end of fiscal year

*The FCTE fiscal year coincides with the  
normal calendar year: January 1-Decem-  
ber 31; The membership year is from Octo-  
ber 1-September 30.*

January  
Winter Board Meeting  
*FCTE Newsletter* mailed

February  
*FCTE Newsletter* deadline for  
spring issue - 2.1  
*Florida English Journal* deadline  
for submissions for spring issue  
- 2.28

March  
N/A

April  
*FCTE Newsletter* spring issue  
mailed, includes items for:  
\*Beginning Teacher of the  
Year  
\*English Teacher of the

Year  
\*Writing Awards Competition  
\*FCTE Honor Award  
\*NCTE Literary Maga-  
zine Awards Application

May  
Spring Board Meeting  
*Florida English Journal* spring  
issue mailed

DEADLINE OF 5.31

\*Writing Awards  
NOMINATIONS FOR:  
\*Beginning Teacher of the  
Year  
\*English Teacher of the  
Year  
\*FCTE Honor Award  
\*Nancy McGee Scholar

ship applications mailed to  
English teacher  
preparation programs  
throughout Florida

June  
FCTE Beginning Teacher of the  
Year and Teacher of the Year  
materials mailed to FCTE board  
members for judging

July  
*FCTE Newsletter* deadline for pre-  
conference issue - 7.1  
NCTE Literary Magazine  
Contest deadline - 7.1

August  
*FCTE Newsletter* pre-conference

## NCTE Supports English Language Learners

All English language learners face the obvious challenge of learning academic content in a language that is not their native language. What strategies and instructional writings are most helpful to English Language Learners?

- **Extend language development** to daily literacy activities that benefit ELL's and that use an English speaking genre.
- **Cultural is essential** among genres in regard to ELL's day-to-day struggle with learning a new language.
- **Clear is built and cemented** by understanding the process of student mis- or non-reading within the school and classroom setting.
- **For which more effective learning models** are built by acknowledging the value of students' home or community and social culture.
- **Help students build on their own learning** by closely examining the classroom practices of teachers and how they use students' language(s), lived experiences, and culture as pedagogical tools to legitimize new social relationships of power.



ELL/ESL/LEARN is an online professional development program created to meet the needs of today's multilingual classroom.

For help with your school's  
ELL/ESL Professional Development Plan, contact us today:  
phone: 800.875.6283 e-mail: [profdev@ncte.org](mailto:profdev@ncte.org)

National Council of Teachers of English...  
The Professional Home of the English Language Arts Community

## Build Your Professional Library with NCTE Selects *The Best Professional Publications — All in One Place!*

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[www.ncte.org/pubs/books/selects](http://www.ncte.org/pubs/books/selects)

