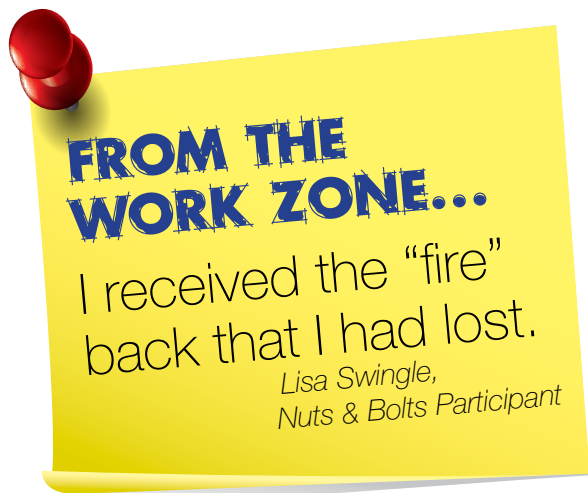


## For Cyber Citizens

Here are some proven apps that support writing and literacy:



### JACK SAYS:

Set up a review committee to discuss your previously taught lessons and units. Give students a voice on what worked and what didn't.

Jack Berckemeyer is the Director of Professional Development for Incentive Publications. Visit his website at [www.jackberckemeyer.com](http://www.jackberckemeyer.com).

## Nuts & Bolts: A Principal's Testimonial

Blueprint asked Dr. JoJean Callison, principal at Whittier Middle School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to share with us her experiences with Nuts & Bolts. JoJean has attended Nuts & Bolts a number of times, taking with her core and encore teams from all grade levels, as well as counselors. Here are some of her responses to our questions:

- B:** What changes have you seen in your teachers as a result of attending N&B?
- JJ:** I believe that teachers who attend Nuts & Bolts come back with a renewed commitment to this grade level (middle school), as well as new strategies and techniques to implement in their classrooms and on their teams. There is also an affirmation of passion that teachers have for their profession and for their students.
- B:** What benefits for your students have occurred as a result of your attending N&B?
- JJ:** When teams are better organized, which they are when they implement what they have learned at Nuts & Bolts, students benefit. Students also benefit from more engaging lessons.
- B:** What changes have you seen in your school?
- JJ:** We have examined our teaming practices. We've implemented COWS (from *Wow! What a Team*) and 3-5-3 meetings (Jack Berckemeyer). Many teams use management techniques they learned from Mark McLeod. A lot of teachers were interested in Web 2.0 tools Chris Toy presented, and they have integrated those tools into their lessons.
- B:** Any closing thoughts?
- JJ:** A big impact of N&B is that, about four years ago, one of our teachers walked out of a Rick Wormeli session and announced that she wanted to try standards-based grading. What began as one teacher trying something new because of an idea from N&B has since evolved into a 2011 district-wide implementation of standards-based grading in all of our middle-school core classes. We are also adding PE and SPED classes to the mix. As our tech support people are ready, we will add the rest of the encore classes. It has been a huge paradigm shift and a great adventure!

As long as there is funding, we will attend Nuts & Bolts.

# Ninth-Grade Academy

**Yikes! The End Is Coming!**

Spring is still around the corner, but the end of the academic year is arriving fast. It's not too early to discuss goals and opportunities for ninth graders as they transition into being sophomores. Meet with your advisees individually to discuss their successes so far this year, their challenges, and what they can expect in grade ten.

Whereas the ninth-grade curriculum may have been almost the same for every student, tenth grade often offers some variance not only in electives, but also in core subjects. A student who excelled in math in grade nine, for instance, might have a few different choices going forward not available to a student whose math skills are weak. The same might be true in the humanities. A student who is still struggling with basic usage skills probably shouldn't be thinking about a class in creative writing.

These topics of conversation are important for ninth graders to consider now, not in the pressure of final exams and end-of-the-year activities. It's also not too late to remedy some past slipups, especially when doing so would open new avenues next year.

Yes, there is still a lot of school before the end, but your life is incredibly busy and so are your students'. Take a little bit of time now to prepare for what comes all too fast.

## No Mystery to Motivation

Teachers sometimes think that there is some magic involved in motivating students. Why else would a student be motivated one day and apathetic the next? Or why would a class activity work first period and not sixth? While it is clear that the various students in our classrooms are motivated by equally varied forces, there are some factors that are common to all middle schoolers. Having these in place enhances a teacher's possibilities for success in spite of opposing forces like a bad hair day or a friendship spat.

In every classroom, a student must first of all feel that he or she is safe—safe from looking stupid, safe from teacher or peer put-downs, and in general safe from being embarrassed in the class.

Next, the student must feel engaged—the work should be relevant, interesting, or fun; and the objective should be enough of a reach to be challenging, but not so lofty it can't be attained. (When students are actually involved in making educational choices for themselves and setting goals, this sense of engagement rises significantly.)

Also, students must experience success. When learning strategies are in place that fit students' needs and offer clear, nonjudgmental feedback, students will believe they can succeed. And they do succeed!

With these basics in place, much of the mystery about motivation is dispelled.

**BLUEPRINT** is published by Incentive Publications for all those working to educate adolescents.

**ABOUT THE EDITOR:** Judith Baenen, a former classroom teacher, speaks and writes about middle-grade students and the issues that affect them. She is a coauthor for Incentive Publications' *Elements of Effective Teaming* professional development curriculum.

[incentivepublications.com](http://incentivepublications.com) [nutsandboltsymposiums.com](http://nutsandboltsymposiums.com) [info@incentivepublications.com](mailto:info@incentivepublications.com) 800-421-2830 (f) 615-385-2967

## IP PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

### Learn to Love Teaching Again

Tips and Tools for Every Educator

By Dr. Debbi Herrera with Dr. Brenda Cole

This is a lifesaver for every educator who is headed toward burnout—bogged down with too much to do, too little time, standardized tests, endless paperwork, changing expectations, new programs, loads of take-home work, hard-to-handle students, difficulties with parents, lack of community respect, feelings of isolation, and burdens of accountability (all with seemingly little support). It's filled with hundreds of practical tips, tools, and stories to help educators recognize and reduce stress; build positive relationships with colleagues, parents, and students; keep (or regain) sanity; and rekindle the joys of teaching.

#IP 456-2...\$22.99

(256 pgs...978-086530-050-7)

