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## President's Message

By: Beryl Rogers, FLCA President  
Menendez High School Reading Coach/teacher  
St. Johns County Public Schools

A number of well-qualified candidates for Reading Coach of the Year have been submitted. I am impressed to see how many dedicated coaching professionals, with vast knowledge and experience, work in Florida. I hope we can continue to do this valuable work providing help and guidance to teachers and students!

As I read philosophies, resumes, and recommendations, I realize how important it is for us, as coaches, to reflect on our practice. Many times we dwell on the obstacles we face in our role as literacy leaders; instead we need to focus and reflect on our successes. We **are** making a difference in schools. We **are** helping our peers along their professional careers paths. We **are** helping to impact students' lives.

This reminds me of the book *Teach with Your Strengths: How Great Teachers Inspire Their Students* by Rosanne Liesveld and Jo Ann Miller. In the book the authors explain the impact teachers have on their students' lives. Great teachers and not so great teachers have a lasting effect on students, some for the good and some not. It's important for us to know our faculty and staff and find their unique talents and strengths. Our job is to recognize those qualities and help them develop as great teachers.

*Beryl Rogers, President*



## Upcoming FLCA Events

April 3, 2009 UCF College of Education  
Annual Literacy Symposium  
[http://education.ucf.edu/litsympo  
sium/index.cfm](http://education.ucf.edu/litsympo<br/>sium/index.cfm)  
Orlando, FL

May 15-16, 2009 Secondary Reading Council  
Orlando, FL  
[www.flsrc.org](http://www.flsrc.org)

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States: Pennsylvania &  
South Carolina

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## By The Numbers

559 Current membership  
61 Districts Represented  
2 Other states represented

## Bit's N' Pieces...

### Use the Budget Cuts to Your Advantage

By: Heather Henderson, Reading Coach  
Volusia County Public Schools

Is your district singing the staff development budget blues? Due to the state budget crunch, many districts are abandoning face-to-face staff development in favor of online staff development;



however, not all participants like this format. Reading Coaches are the cure for the blues! Now is the time to advertise your services as a reading professional and low-cost staff development expert. Create a flyer for your principal, Curriculum Specialist and department chairmen showcasing the various workshops you have already facilitated. Be sure to note how workshops can be customized to the needs of each department (especially Math).

Think outside of the box and offer flexible meeting times (like a series of lunchtime workshops rather than one multi-hour workshop). Remind staff that they are saving money by not driving to another location. Remember, your staff needs you now more than ever (and, let's be honest, you need to be visible and indispensable). With a little nudge

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from the state budget, that resistant teacher who never needed your services might not be able to resist the lure of on-campus convenience and credits toward re-certification.

Have you visited the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse website [www.literacycoachingonline.org](http://www.literacycoachingonline.org)? Check out this great resource sponsored by NCTE and IRA whose mission “to enhance the important work of literacy coaches, reading coaches, reading specialists, and instructional coaches as they strive to increase the quality of teacher instruction and student achievement” is one we should all believe in.

## From the Front Lines

By: Pamela Donehew, Reading Coach  
Hillsborough County Public Schools

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The term *metacognition* has a foreboding sound, like some sort of a sophisticated scholarly pursuit. Certainly, one would think that only a skilled academician could make such a formidable sounding endeavor understandable to a student. However, teaching students to be metacognitively aware can be as simple as modeling what a good reader does, by means of a “think aloud.”

Simply stated, metacognition is “thinking about thinking.” To fully understand metacognition one must take the definition one step further, which is, using this self-awareness to regulate learning by employing strategies to improve the learning process. Although “thinking” is something that most students do without being cognitively aware that they are doing it, demonstrating our thought processes in action opens a window for our students to see the thought processes in action. It allows them to see what goes on in our minds as we read, which in turn will help them to understand their own thought processes. The task of educators is to acknowledge, cultivate, exploit and enhance the metacognitive capabilities of all learners.

Students who demonstrate a wide range of metacognitive strategies have better comprehension and perform better on tests. Students with metacognitive awareness and strategies recognize when they encounter roadblocks to learning, or when learning breaks down, and can implement steps to remove the roadblocks or repair the breakdown in learning. When “tools” are general and independent of context, they are more likely to be useful in different types of learning situations.

An excellent strategy to demonstrate metacognition in the classroom is a “think aloud.” A think aloud can be done using a textbook, poem, short-story, novel, or any reading material. Careful planning and rehearsal of the material before attempting to execute a think aloud in a classroom is vital. It is imperative to include before reading, during reading, and after reading

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thoughts. By thinking aloud, teachers show students what good readers do. A think aloud is a way of reporting everything the reader is aware of in their mind: what they notice, see, feel, ask, and understand as he or she reads. It permits students to see how a good reader thinks about the reading strategies being used within the content of the piece being read.

To begin with, demonstrate your “pre-reading” thoughts. Think (out loud) about the text’s topic. Think about how various text features can help in understanding the reading. Read the title and author, front and back cover notes, and table of contents or the foreword in the book. See how many pages you will be reading and make a quick plan as to how you will breakdown your reading. Study illustrations, photos, and graphics, including labels and captions. Skim for bold-faced words, headings and subheadings, and summaries. Think about what you know, what connections you can make, and what questions you might want answered.

Next, you need to demonstrate what you are thinking while you read. Show your students what a good reader does as they monitor their own comprehension. Model what you might think if confusion exists. *Do I understand what I just read? Or what does the author really want me to understand about this?* Readers who take responsibility for their own comprehension constantly question the text and their reactions to it. While you are conducting the think aloud, make sure to weave examples of making connections, making predictions, making inferences, using context clues to demystify difficult vocabulary, and writing comments or questions on *Post-it* notes or in the margins.

Another valuable strategy to model is what you do when you discover that you have fallen into the trap that many readers fall victim to when their comprehension breaks down. The voice inside their head is no longer focused on the text; you have forgotten to remind yourself to “pay attention.” I often model this pitfall by beginning to mentally make my plans for the upcoming week-end. Additionally, you should model how you recognize that you did not understand what you have just read. Model the lack of understanding and then reread the passage. Put the passage into your own words and then make a note to ask for help if further explanation is needed.

Finally, when good readers finish reading, they reflect on the strategies they used to determine whether their plan worked or whether they should try something else next time. This evaluative component of the metacognitive process is most valuable and should be carefully explained during the think aloud.

Teachers might think that students automatically use metacognitive strategies. However, when many students have been asked what they are thinking about while reading, their response often is that they are “not thinking.” Unfortunately, that simple, honest statement is true for students in all content areas who see reading, writing, math, science, and social studies as “subjects” rather than opportunities to think and reflect. Yet, only through using metacognitive strategies can they truly learn. These strategies will benefit all readers but are essential to model for our at risk readers.

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For further information on metacognition and metacognitive strategies, visit the following sites:

[http://www.teachertube.com/view\\_video.php?viewkey=821802aa44d35d531c9f](http://www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=821802aa44d35d531c9f)

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/612/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/thinkaloud.htm>

<http://www.benchmarkeducation.com/educational-leader/reading/metacognitive-strategies.html>

<http://academic.pgcc.edu/~wpeirce/MCCCTR/metacognition.htm>

## **Celebrate Literacy Week!**

**Despite finals week for most high schools, schools across Florida celebrated literacy  
January 12-16, 2009!**

In Sarasota, Mayor Lou Ann Palmer teamed up with The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Sarasota County to promote early childhood literacy for the children of Sarasota County. As part of Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida, Mayor Palmer read *You're Not My Best Friend Anymore* by Charlotte Pomerantz, aloud to children at Pines of Sarasota Child Care Center on January 14th. The ELC's participation in Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida coincided with the launch of their community awareness campaign to "Eliminate the 30 Million Word Gap," which refers to the huge difference in the number of words a child from a less talkative home would hear by age 3 compared to a child from a more communicative environment. This campaign teaches parents simple things they can do to promote early literacy skills in young children and provides incentives for families who actively participate. The ELC's awareness campaign is part of a community-wide initiative called LEAF (Literacy Empowers All Families).

In other parts of the state, students in Leon, Dade and Hernando counties dressed up as their favorite characters, published their own stories, listened to books read aloud by guest speakers, participated in literature circles, gave book talks, created public service announcements as well as many, many other literacy activities. Broward county students and their parents were invited to attend Family Literacy Night – Passport to Success, presented by the Dillard Innovation Zone. The event which featured fun-filled, hands-on family workshops were offered for students in all grade levels in reading, writing, math and science, was held Thursday, January 15, 2009, 5:30 p.m. at William Dandy Middle School in Fort Lauderdale. Parents became familiar with state and district education standards and expectations, and learned effective ways to support the school and homework assignments their children receive. The event included food, entertainment, games and door prizes.

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## Legislative Update

By: Jan Russo  
Foundation for Florida's Future

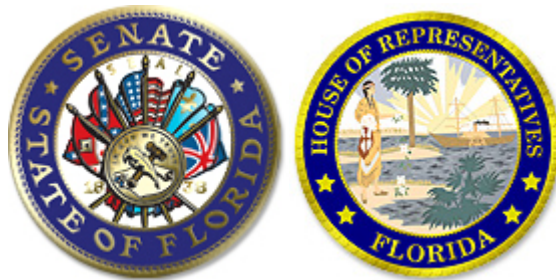
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### Legislative Update: Two Bills That Will Negatively Affect Reading Funding

There is no doubt that reading coaches have directly impacted the substantial reading gains for Florida's students. Unfortunately this fact has not deterred lawmakers this session from filing bills to jeopardize this progress.

HB 457, sponsored by Representative Dwayne Taylor (D – Volusia), and HB 803, sponsored by Representative Chris Dorworth (R – Seminole), would allow school districts to redirect reading funds **away** from reading... Reading coaches are primarily funded through these “supplemental reading instruction” funds which were instituted in 1999 through Jeb Bush's A+ Plan. Reading funds should be spent on reading until every Florida student has the skills necessary to read successfully.

The Foundation for Florida's Future is working to keep reading funds dedicated to reading. As a reading coach we need your help! You can contact Representatives [Taylor](#) and [Dorworth](#) to let them know all the great things these funds do for our students' reading and how vital they are to our children's education. Ask them to keep reading funding dedicated to reading.



**Please note:**

In order to maintain our high quality standards of the Florida Literacy Coaches Association Newsletter during these tough economic times the FLCA Board of Directors decided to publish the newsletter quarterly in March, June, September and December.

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## FLCA Area Representatives Email Addresses

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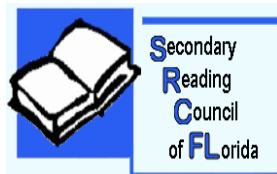
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Areas 12, 13 & 14 – Open

Come visit us at the Secondary Reading Council of Florida's annual conference  
May 15-16, 2009



[Sheraton Safari Hotel](#)

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<http://www.srcfl.org/conf2009/>