

## **Melanie Boulet**

Melanie Boulet learned what hard work is on the back deck of her father's shrimp boat in southeast Louisiana. Her first year of teaching was in the South Bronx because someone had told her that, if you teach there, anywhere else would be a "piece of cake." While that person was definitely wrong, it did lead to her getting bitten by the teaching bug. She remembers walking down the streets of New York City and thinking, "I could do this for the rest of my life!"

She returned to her home state and taught a year in New Orleans, but then decided to join the United States Peace Corps to use her undergraduate focus in international development. She was sent to the country of Paraguay where she learned to speak its native American language, Guaraní, and where she learned to be resourceful.

Being resourceful and working hard are two lessons that she has applied in her sixteen years in the classroom. Her diverse teaching experience includes teaching in a maximum security prison and at a high school for the emotionally disturbed. Her favorite level is middle school, and her favorite subjects to teach are social studies and math. She co-sponsors three clubs at Montegut Middle – the Chess Club, the Wetland Workers, and the Future Teachers of America Club.

Her professional development experience includes two NEH fellowships, a presentation on "Group Testing" at the National Middle School Association annual conference, a 30-hour seminar on teaching about East Asia, and recent selection as one of twenty teachers to participate in a 3-week Study Tour of China. She firmly believes that teaching is the most challenging, rewarding, and important job there is, and advocates for her profession on a daily basis.