

MEMBER profiles

Joanne Barrett

A Passion for Helping Students on the Margins

Teaching is Joanne Barrett's second career. "In my previous life I was a computer programmer who coached volleyball as a hobby," she says. "I realized that girls were in the minority as programmers and engineers. I thought that by becoming a computer teacher, I could get more girls enthusiastic about technology—and begin to bridge the gender divide."

That passion to help right the wrongs of our society is what keeps Barrett, an ISTE member since 1998, excited about her career choice. "One of the neatest things about being the computer teacher is that I often see another side of my students that the classic core (English, math, history, etc.) teachers do not see," Barrett says. Students who are not successful

in traditional courses often excel in her class. "I remember receiving my first thank-you note from a parent. She thanked me for the grade her daughter had received in my class. . . . Although her daughter had her share of difficulties in other classes, she loved the opportunities and success she was able to experience and achieve because the computer complemented her learning style."

The ever-changing world of technology also keeps Barrett passionate. "It's more than a full-time job to keep pace with the materials that are already out



there, she says. But the really exciting thing is that "I don't know what I will be teaching at this time next year. Technology is all about flexibility and being able to learn from your students."

Barrett is currently the middle school com-

puter coordinator/teacher at Stone Ridge School, an independent Catholic girls school in Bethesda, Maryland. She also coordinates the eighth grade laptop program.

ISTE SIG

New Group Focuses on Equity Issues

As one of the four SIGs approved in the October 2005 board meeting, SIGDE is one of ISTE's newest special interest groups.

According to its president, Robert T. McLaughlin, "The roots of SIGDE go back to 1999 when several dozen project directors funded by the U.S. Department of Education's PT³ (Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to use Technology) program formed a 'Digital Equity Network' to identify promising and proven strategies for improving K–12 students' equitable access to learning technology resources and to bring them to the attention of teacher educators and preservice teachers na-

tionwide. We developed a conceptual framework of critical dimensions of the digital divide in education, then built a free portal (<http://digitalequity.edreform.net>) pointing educators to proven strategies for addressing each of these dimensions."



<http://www.iste.org/sigde>

The SIGDE section of the ISTE Web site links to the digital equity portal and other resources, including what McLaughlin calls a digital equity toolkit, "pointing educators to the best known free resources (free e-mail account providers, donors of refurb-

ished computers, providers of exemplary digital academic content, etc.)."

Beginning with NECC 2006, McLaughlin continues, SIGDE will host an annual summit to help education leaders learn how to identify and address equity issues.

"In all of these efforts," McLaughlin concludes, "our aim is to equip educators with tangible resources they can use to improve their students' access to high-quality learning technologies."

Chair: Robert T. McLaughlin, mclaughb@nici-mc2.org

Co-chair: Joyce Pittman, pittmajc@uc.edu

Secretary: Joy Wallace, joy.wallace@comcast.net

Treasurer: Bonnie Bracey, bbracey@aol.com

Riverside Publishing: The Power of Information

Riverside Publishing traces its involvement with education back to the early 1850s, when Henry Houghton opened a book printing plant in Boston. Today, as a wholly owned subsidiary of Houghton Mifflin, the company offers a wide range of products and services to provide scoring, reporting, and other assessment data to educators.

“We consider ourselves a partner in education with our customers,” says Deval Clearwater, Riverside’s product marketing manager. “Our products are designed to help serve students. We provide information to educators to help students achieve success at whatever level needed.”

According to Tracey Barrett, Riverside’s senior director of strategic marketing, the information derived from assessment products is the key to educational success.



<http://www.riverpub.com>

“The need for information is not going away—in fact, with legislative mandates, the need is greater,” Barrett says.

“Riverside provides reporting and scoring mechanisms. Our customers are looking for real-time information. They don’t want autopsies. We’re empowering teachers to act more closely with their constituents.”

Among Riverside’s product categories are assessments designed to support NCLB by determining mastery against standards, tests designed to support Reading First legislation by providing detailed information on student reading performance, and measurements that support IDEA legislation by helping school psychologists identify student strengths and weaknesses, Clearwater says. “All of

our products are supported by technology, including computer scoring and secure Web-based reporting.”

“We’re one of the few assessment companies that are part of the ISTE 100 membership,” Barrett says. “We understand the power of ISTE, the ability to interact with the corporate membership, participating in call-ins or initiatives. When I receive an e-mail about something that needs to happen, I pass it on to the sales team. It’s another resource that we provide to our customers.”

“ISTE has done a good job of keeping us informed,” Clearwater concludes, “especially about funding and legislation that affects our companies, and bringing the tech companies together to create best practices. The companies have a united standing, making the best for everyone. It’s been a positive relationship.”

Meet ISTE’s New Director of Research and Evaluation

Maribel Sevilla has joined ISTE as director of research and evaluation. She brings a strong background in education technology, international development, quantitative and qualitative research, and in-depth practical experience in developed and developing countries including several in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Explaining why she chose to join ISTE, Sevilla says, “It is an exciting opportunity to contribute to the field and work collaboratively with the members and ISTE 100 companies that are on the edge of building new teaching-learning environments with technology.”

Sevilla holds a PhD in K–12 educational administration from Michigan



State University with specialization in international development, and an MA in education policy, planning, and management from the University of

Brasilia. In her most recent position, Sevilla was a consultant for different organizations focusing on child labor, education assessment, and efficacy measures for literacy programs.

Sevilla will lead the R&E Department to realize ISTE’s mission by focusing on developing a series of pilot experiments, research projects, and

studies to address how to apply new technologies and new ed tech integration strategies in the education sector. The department will contribute to disseminating technologies and new knowledge fostered by our ISTE 100 member companies, affiliates, and individual members.

The department will offer our partners technical assistance for project monitoring, evaluation, and opportunities to disseminate their innovations to reach all continents. R&E will also focus on key issues of ICT and development worldwide, build international policy forums to discuss country strategies for ICT in education, and research emergent topics.

Sevilla works out of ISTE’s Washington, D.C., office. She can be reached at msevilla@iste.org or at 1.202.861.7777.