

# MEMBER profiles

Rachel Kleinberg

## Talking about a Revolution

For Rachel Kleinberg, library media specialist at the Montauk Public School in Montauk, New York, being an ISTE member is about transforming education from the ground up. Kleinberg joined ISTE in fall 2004. The membership was required by her graduate program, a master's degree in educational technology from Long Island University.

Attending NECC 2005 was the basis for a three-credit summer semester course, and it was well worth it. "Within 15 minutes of arriving at the Philadelphia Convention Center for NECC in June, I was able to meet and greet with Tom March and Kathy Schrock, among others," Kleinberg says. "I felt like a star-struck fan at a rock concert! ... I even met author/illustrator Peter Reynolds—creator

of *The Dot*, *Ish*, and *The North Star*—jackpot for a librarian!"

ISTE's services and publications have helped Kleinberg in many ways. "It would be impossible to be a library media specialist in today's world without having heard of NETS," she says. "*L&L* tackles the subjects and issues that I deal with every day. Last year, I led a forceful effort to convince our school's administration and board of education to create a technology coordinator position in our school. ISTE's *Technology Coordinator Handbook* was invaluable to me as I outlined and explained the nature and importance of the position."



Kleinberg's goals for Ed Tech are nothing short of revolutionary. "I have always felt limited by the rigidity of the classroom, teaching periods, and stagnation of our educational system. These limitations are articulated so well in Peter Senge's *Schools That Learn*," Kleinberg says. "Students need hands-on experiential, individualized education that incorporates technology and collaboration. We also need to take a long hard look at our current methods of assessment and how we utilize the results. Even the most dynamic, dedicated teachers can not help but teach to the test when it is so central to how a school is funded and regarded."

ISTE SIG

## New Special Interest Group Sends Out Signals

One of four new SIGs launched October 1, 2005, the Special Interest Group for Interactive Videoconferencing (SIGIVC) has precious little history but plenty of potential and excitement.

According to SIGIVC secretary Ruth Blankenbaker, "the idea for a SIG that focuses on videoconferencing and other advanced, 'big bandwidth' technologies grew from the numbers of educators gathering at NECC in New Orleans in 2004. We recognized that information about and the use of these technologies came with their own specialized needs."

We had lots of questions, she continues. "Individually, we knew we did not have all the answers; collectively, we felt we could address the questions and respond to those who



needed responses. Creating a special interest group within the largest professional membership organization for education technology users felt like the most proactive move we could make."

Jan Zanetis, SIG vice president, and Blankenbaker met with ISTE CEO Don Knezek in fall 2004. With the assistance of Camille Cole, who became the SIG's first president, an application was submitted. According to Blankenbaker, simultaneously, they began building the community. "We encouraged professional colleagues with whom we worked and communicated to consider their own needs to help us define and give shape to a SIG that would benefit them. We were able to solicit the support of approximately 150 educators interested in SIGIVC." The SIG was officially announced during NECC 2005.

## Plato Learning: Ed Tech Pioneer

Plato Learning Inc. was conceived more than four decades ago out of an assessment grant from the University of Illinois. Today, the company remains a leader in instructional software and curriculum assessment tools for educators in reading, language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science.

Bernice Stafford is the vice president of school strategies and evaluation for Plato. “Our training and products evolve out of what we refer to as a student achievement model: assess, align, instruct, evaluate,” Stafford says. “We have a complete process that allows us to take outcome effectiveness of a



<http://www.plato.com>

Plato component. We try real hard to manage that variable. The more information we can get back, the more precise we can be, and the better we get at helping our schools implement the programs effectively.”

To support the technology, Plato has a full-time staff of professional developers who work with teachers in the classroom to implement their solutions and determine the effects of the company’s software on each individual student. “No technology product should be taken as one-size-fits-all,” Stafford maintains. “Technology is best when used as much in an individualized way as possible.”

Plato considers ISTE an important partner. “We view ourselves and ISTE along the same plane, we have the same responsibilities,” Stafford says.

“Our growth, our flexibility in continuing to solve problems, requires the entire industry to move policymakers along, beyond just funding. I think educational technology will continue to grow regardless of the funding streams, but in order to advance understanding, you’ve got to have proponents, honest brokers. ISTE is that broker. ISTE has that leadership role.”

Despite recent declines in the educational software market, Plato remains optimistic. “All industries go through cycles. We’re bullish,” Stafford says. “We’re investing a lot of money in new products. We believe that technology will always have a place. We always need to be thinking how to make the supply chain of curriculum more productive. Only technology can serve that purpose.”

## Partners and Professional Development Are Key to State Group

Arizona’s Ed Tech organization defines itself by its partnerships. The Arizona Technology in Education Alliance (AzTEA) has approximately 1,100 members from all levels of education throughout the state.

In addition to public, private, charter, and higher education institutions, AzTEA prides itself on counting the Arizona Department of Education, Arizona Schools Services through Educational Technology, the Arizona K-12 Center, and many corporations among its partners.

A partnership the group has just begun will allow it to participate heavily in NECC 2006 in San Diego, California. According to Helen Padgett, Affiliate Representative on ISTE’s Board of Directors and members of the AzTEA Board, “As an Affiliate in a western

state, AzTEA will work closely with California Computer-Using Educators (CUE) to make NECC a positive professional development experience for all of their members. ISTE, CUE, and AzTEA will promote conference strands with key regional issues, such as English Language Learners (ELL).”

Professional development, says Padgett, is AzTEA’s raison d’être. “AzTEA’s major emphasis is on providing high-quality, face-to-face sustained professional development focusing on the integration of technology through a year-long conference series, with conference strands presented in each of the three main geographic areas of Arizona.” The three regional conferences will occur in

November 2005 in Flagstaff, in January 2006 in Tucson, and in April 2006 in Glendale. The AzTEA Web site has more information on the focuses of these conferences.



<http://www.aztea.org>

Partnership with ISTE helps AzTEA achieve its goals. In fact, Padgett says, “AzTEA purposely organized as an ISTE

Affiliate because we wanted to be part of a larger national and international organization with a shared mission of improving teaching and learning by advancing the effective educational uses of technology. Our relationship with ISTE widens the scope of our advocacy that brings the voice of local educators to state and national policymakers helping them to recognize technology’s educational benefits.”