

By Diana Fingal

Excellent Educ

ISTE's award winners exemplify what it means to be innovative, engaging, and connected.

It isn't difficult to find excellent educators among ISTE's membership. After all, people who join ISTE tend to be some of the most innovative teachers in the world. What is difficult is selecting the best from the vast pool of teachers, technology coordinators, administrators, library media specialists, and teachers in training. Each year dozens of judges are charged with that task—poring through scads of award applications and selecting those who rise above the rest.

We'd like to introduce you to the best of ISTE and share what makes them great, because learning from each other is the ISTE way!

Bijal Damani, ISTE's 2011
Outstanding Teacher

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The Outstanding Teacher Award honors a teacher who has improved education through the effective use of technology.



Bijal Damani, Outstanding Teacher

Higher secondary teacher specializing in business education, S.N. Kansagra School, Rajkot, Gujarat, India

It's hard to encapsulate the single project, idea, or characteristic that sets Damani apart. Colleagues boast about her focus on the whole child and teaching through project-based learning. Perhaps the best example of this is the Galaxy Bazaar, a project she started with her high school commerce students in 2005. That first year, 29 students organized and put on a huge bazaar at the school and made about 8,000 rupees (about \$177 in today's U.S. dollars) of profit, which they donated to charity. The project has grown substantially since then. Last year, the project earned 400,000 rupees (\$8,888).

Students sell gifts and food and run a game zone where bazaar-goers can play laser tag and other games. Students work all year planning and organizing the event and even sign on sponsors. They create promotional materials, work with wholesalers, contact the media, and manage dozens of other behind-the-scenes tasks that not only make the event a success, but also teach students volumes about commerce. They donate the money to a charity that educates underprivileged children in the city.

Damani uses technology in every aspect of teaching. Her school website is packed with resources for both students and their parents. Her students create e-portfolios, use digital cameras to illustrate their perspectives of the world, and use Google Docs and Spreadsheets to share their mock investment portfolios.

What her nominator says: "The characteristic of an outstanding teacher is the ability to make the moment of learning exciting and creative, a moment never forgotten. This happens through the infusion of one's own excitement and acquired knowledge into the process of learning. Ms. Damani is extremely creative and converts social networking media like Facebook into an educational and collaborative tool, helping and guiding the students on the correct usage." —*David Morris, India Council for Integral Education*

What her colleagues say: "Gifted with an innovative mind, Bijal always looks for solutions and ways to draw out the best from her learners. Over the years, I've been a witness to many such practices. Her pioneering work in integrating ICT in the classroom began with the e-classroom. She has also successfully encouraged all her students to develop e-portfolios of their own, thus gifting them with the most crucial ICT skills needed by 21st century learners." —*Sujata Kini, English teacher, S. N. Kansagra School*

What the judges say: "Her integration of project-based learning, her concern for each individual child, and her bringing together of social activism with entrepreneurship is very powerful."

What she says: "Each child is a unique individual having various talents and skills. Teachers have to identify and tap the latent potential within each child. I believe in development of the 'whole child'—the physical, intellectual, and spiritual."

Learn more: <https://sites.google.com/site/bijaldamanisclassroom>



Monica Beglau (right), ISTE's 2011 Outstanding Leader, is pictured with ISTE Board President Holly Jobe.

The Outstanding Leader Award goes to an administrator—at the school, district, state, or national level—who improves education through the effective use of technology.

Monica Beglau, Outstanding Leader

Executive director of eMINTS (Missouri Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies) National Center, University of Missouri, USA

Monica Beglau is all about bringing educational technology to the masses. She is executive director of Missouri's eMINTS Program, an intensive two-year technology professional development program designed to help teachers learn how to integrate a specific suite of technology into their classrooms using instructional strategies that promote inquiry-based learning and encourage collaboration and community building among students and teachers.

Colleagues laud her for her ability to forge partnerships with businesses and other organizations to stretch dollars and extend programs to reach more students.

In addition to her role with eMINTS, she oversees eLearning for Educators, a self-sustaining online professional development program in Missouri that has trained more than 1,200 teachers.

As if that weren't enough, Beglau is the project director for a \$12.2 million Investing in Innovations (i3) grant, awarded to the University of Missouri to implement eMINTS at 60 middle schools in the state.

What her nominator says: "Dr. Beglau's entire career has been focused on the effort to improve the quality of education for students. She views the eMINTS Program as a way of leveling the playing field for students who may be at a disadvantage." —*Cathie Loesing, program coordinator of eMINTS National Center*

What her colleague says: "Monica's work at the state, national, and international levels has made a significant difference in the educational opportunities students are offered through technology in their schools. Monica was an early advocate for the ISTE NETS. She promoted changes in state and national standards for the instructional use of technology to mirror the ISTE standards. Her strong beliefs about the role technology can play in supporting student achievement have translated into changed educational practices." —*Barbara Treacy, director, EdTech Leaders Online*

What the judges say: "Impressive record of facilitating the use of technology for teacher preparation programs. This nominee has also forged international partnerships."

What she says: "Schools with strong eMINTS programs are exciting, lively, and interesting places to be. Students and teachers alike are fully engaged in learning and use technology as a way to explore the world, learn new ideas, and solve real-world problems. Students in eMINTS classrooms use technology to become independent thinkers who are also active team members and creators of knowledge."

Learn more: <http://emints.org>

Adam Bellow, ISTE's 2011
Outstanding Young Educator

The Outstanding Young Educator Award honors an educator under age 35 who has demonstrated vision, innovation, action, and transformation while using technology to improve learning and teaching.



Adam Bellow, Outstanding Young Educator

Director of educational technology for College Board Schools,
New York, New York, USA

Adam Bellow is a tireless advocate for sharing. He has invested countless hours—and dollars—putting together a comprehensive website chock full of resources for K–12 teachers. His site, eduTecher.net, groups thousands of websites according to grade level and subject matter. But it's not just a list of links. The site allows teachers to keep a backpack of resources that they can categorize, annotate, and share with friends. He also posts video tutorials.

But that's technically just his hobby. His real job is director of technology for the 17 low-income schools on the East Coast of the United States that are designated as College Board Schools. Although some district-level technology directors seldom walk into a classroom, Bellow loves to meet with teachers, listen to their ideas, and suggest ways that technology can improve their lessons. His favorite thing, he says, is to find an educational use for a technology that was not originally designed for education.

What his supervisor says: “Adam is a key addition to our team in so many ways. He is a true collaborator and solution seeker and has a highly developed sense of humor that serves to better the dynamics and health of our team and the College Board as well. Early on in his employment at the College Board, Adam co-led a technology project with our Advanced Placement division that has proven to be highly successful and may lead to a new and interesting project in support of AP students.” —*Helen C. Santiago, vice president of College Board Schools*

What his colleague says: “Adam is like no other administrator I have met. He is a responsive, caring, dedicated person and a most patient teacher. Adam is what I think of when I hear the term *lifelong learner*. He puts students and teachers first and helps thousands of people every day. It is because of Adam, his website, and his hard work as director of educational technology that I am able to do a lot of the great projects I am doing with my students. He has made a tremendous impact on my colleagues, myself, and the culture of our school.” —*Marie Cooper, teacher*

What the judges say: “Adam is the ideal young educator for ISTE to showcase—knowledgeable, helpful, eager to share what he knows both through the hundreds of teachers he supports each day in his job and with the thousands of educators who access his eduTecher site.”

What he says: “Learning how to use all the wonderful technology available today opens up worlds to our students and new avenues in which to reach and teach them. Learning how to use the tools responsibly and safely is the key to making it all work. I am never satisfied walking away from the educational buffet of tools, resources, and content out there because there is always something to learn and share with others in order to help teachers reach their students using successful integration of instructional technology.”

Learn more: www.edutecher.net

And the 2011 ISTE Award Winners Are...

Outstanding Teacher: Bijal Damani, S.N. Kansagra School, Rajkot, Gujarat, India

Outstanding Leader: Monica Beglau, executive director of eMINTS National Center, Columbia, Missouri, USA

The Outstanding Leader and Outstanding Teacher awards honor individuals who have demonstrably improved education through the effective use of technology.

Outstanding Young Educator: Adam Bellow, director of educational technology, College Board Schools, New York, New York, USA

The Outstanding Young Educator Award honors an educator under 35 who has demonstrated vision, innovation, action, and transformation while using technology to improve learning and teaching.

Emerging Leaders: Caroline Haebig, social studies educator, Bradford High School, Kenosha, Wisconsin, USA; Josh Stumpfenhorst, sixth grade social science and language arts teacher, Lincoln Jr. High School, Naperville, Illinois, USA; Crystal Beach, English teacher, Lakeview Academy, Gainesville, Georgia, USA; Merry Willis, teacher, Carmel Elementary School, Woodstock, Georgia, USA; and Ashley Talley, special education teacher, Eaton Elementary School, Lenoir City, Tennessee, USA

Emerging Leaders are young educators who are leaders in technology integration.

Public Policy Advocate: Becky Fisher, representing Virginia Society for Technology in Education, Greenwood, Virginia, USA

Public Policy Advocacy Trendsetter: Michael Walker, representing Technology Information Education Services, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

The Public Policy Advocate awards recognize outstanding leaders and mentors who advocate for educational technology policy at the local, state, regional, national, and/or international levels.

Kay L. Bitter Award for Excellence in Technology-Based PK-2 Education: Amanda Marrinan, Year 2 teacher, St. John Vianney's School, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

The Kay L. Bitter Award honors a PK-2 educator for vision and creativity in a project or program that effectively integrates technology.

Sylvia Charp Award for District Innovation in Technology: Vail Unified School District, Vail, Arizona, USA; Kevin Carney, director of the Beyond Textbooks program, and Andy Chlup, director of technology

The Sylvia Charp Award, presented by ISTE and *THE Journal*, recognizes district innovation in technology.

SIGMS Innovation Technology Award, primary school winner: Mary Carole Strother, library media specialist, and Bryce Kennaugh, second grade teacher, Finch Elementary School, McKinney, Texas, USA, for "Maybelle the Cockroach"

SIGMS Innovation Technology Award, secondary school winner: Cynthia Cassidy, media specialist, and Michelle Cook, language arts teacher, Mount Olive Middle School, Budd Lake, New Jersey, USA, for "Who Owns History?"

SIGMS Honorable Mention, primary category: Karen Kliegman, library media specialist, and Noel Forte, technology integration facilitator, Herricks School District, Searingtown School, Albertson, New York, USA for "Survivor MD"

SIGMS Honorable Mention, secondary category: Jennifer Kelly, library media specialist, and Debbie Hague, social studies teacher, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, First Colonial High School, Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA, for "Conflict Everywhere"

The SIGMS Awards, sponsored by Linworth Publishing Inc, and Follett Software Company, honor a school librarian and collaborating teacher who have conducted an exemplary technology program extending beyond the media center.

SIGOL Learning Award, first place: Diane Heitzenrater, Stacy Rotchford, and Andrew Osborne from Hatboro-Horsham School District, Horsham, Pennsylvania, USA for "Internet Safety 101"

SIGOL Learning Award, second place: Lisette Casey and Toni Oliver-Barton from Springs School District, Manitou Springs, Colorado, USA for "We've Got Sole Manitou"

SIGOL Learning Award, third place: Janine Lim, Berrien Springs, Maryland; Sue Porter, Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Elaine Shuck, Sturgis, South Dakota, USA for "Read Around the Planet"

SIGOL honorable mentions: Saskatoon Catholic Cyber School, Saskatoon, Canada; Herricks School District, New Hyde Park, New York, USA; Blue Springs School District, Vesper Blue Springs, Missouri, USA; Henrico County Public Schools, Henrico, Virginia, USA; and Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

The SIGOL Awards, sponsored by the ISTE Special Interest Group for Online Learning, recognize creative educators for their pioneering use of online networks for students in grades K-16.

SIGTE Research Paper Award: Susan Sutton, St. Cloud State University, for "The Preservice Technology Training Experiences of Novice Teachers"



Congratulations ISTE 2011 Making IT Happen Winners

Jeanne Biddle, ISTE Board member and director of technology for Scott County Schools, Georgetown, Kentucky, USA

Scott Merrick, SIGVE chair and virtual learning curriculum specialist for Metro Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Dan Meyer, ISTE Board member and CEO of Atomic Learning Inc. Little Falls, Minnesota, USA

Ben Smith, ISTE Board member and physics teacher at Red Lion Area High School, Red Lion, Pennsylvania, USA

Amanda Marrinan, winner of ISTE's 2011 Kay Bitter Award for Excellence in Technology-Based PK–12 Education

The Kay L. Bitter Award for excellence in Technology-Based PK–12 Education recognizes educators for vision and creativity in a project or program that effectively integrates technology.



Amanda Marrinan, Kay L. Bitter Award for Excellence in Technology-Based PK–12 Education Teacher

St. John Vianney's Primary School, Manly, Brisbane, Australia

Even some of the most devout educational technology advocates haven't tried what Amanda Marrinan does in her classroom as a matter of course: She encourages her 5-year-old students to blog. She opens her classroom three days a week for a bloggers café, providing students a space where they can blog, network, learn new skills, mentor one another, and even help staff and parents.

In 2007, she connected her class with teachers and students across the world using Skype, and she has participated in global collaborative projects. One of those projects, Voices of the World (<http://onevoice.ning.com>), connects educators who share recordings that their students make to introduce children to languages, accents, and dialects from around the world.

Marrinan is able to engage her students in international projects due to the connections she's maintained with educators in the United States, Canada, and Australia. She also shares her tech knowledge by facilitating workshops for teachers and parents during lunch breaks and after hours.

What her nominator says: "Amanda's students participate in online, collaborative projects that support their learning across literacy and numeracy as well as develop an awareness of the whereabouts and culture of others within our global community. The children connect, learn, share, and collaborate via wikis, VoiceThreads, and video as well as through tools like Skype and Twitter. Amanda truly embodies the qualities of a lifelong learner. She is passionate about embracing technology as a way of differentiating

learning for her students." —*Sheila Adams, teacher, Rye Junior High School, New Hampshire, USA*

What her principal says: "Amanda remains ahead of her time as an early adopter of innovative, creative technological advances. She has amazed me with her energy, passion, and diligence as she follows the trail of new web 2.0 tools that will enhance learning for her young students. The staff and students of St. John Vianneys have benefitted immensely from Amanda's work in promoting the use of technology in the classroom." —*Karren Strahan, principal of St. John Vianney's Primary School*

What the judges say: "Amanda is truly an educator who embraces the use of technology not only to encourage her students' learning but the global community as well. She exemplifies the Kay Bitter Award."

What she says: "Learning is lifelong, and it's important to me that I model being a reflective, lifelong learner with my students. I don't consider myself the master teacher, the holder of all knowledge, and I'm comfortable telling my students, 'I don't know. How could we find out?' I strive to create a learning environment where everyone is valued as a teacher and learner, where students are given a voice, learning is negotiated, and they have a say in what and how they learn. We're on the journey together."



Diana Fingal is senior editor of L&L. She has been writing for and editing periodicals for more than 20 years. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, USA. She also taught English in a K–11 school in Yalta, Ukraine, as a Peace Corps volunteer.