

AFRICAN EDUCATION IN FOCUS

SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT RESEARCH

A publication of the African Studies Working Group and the Center for African Education at Teachers College, Columbia University

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**From George Clement Bond (CAE Director and William F. Russell Professor of Anthropology & Education)
Gerard P. Alolod (CAE Coordinator) & Stephanie Bengtsson (Graduate Assistant)**

This current issue of *African Education in Focus* seeks to cast a *Spotlight on Student Research*. The College has long been a hub for cutting-edge research in the field of International Education. This issue highlights the research efforts of our students working on topics related to education and the African continent and diaspora.

We at the Center for African Education (CAE) are proud of our students who have helped to keep the study of Africa and the Diaspora alive at TC, and are happy to have the opportunity to showcase their efforts in this issue of the journal. The student-run African Studies Working Group (ASWG) held its first symposium on African Education, *Interrogating Quality in the African Context*, which was a resounding success and is featured in this issue. We would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing ASWG co-chair and CAE graduate assistant, Chidimma Agwu-Jones, for all her dedication and efforts.

We also follow the progress of our students, who traveled to Charleston, SC in March for the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) to present on a wide range of topics of importance to Africa and the Diaspora. Prior to their departure, the Center organized a preparatory workshop for these students, to give them support in developing and practicing their presentations and the opportunity to showcase their research.

In a special feature entitled "Curating Cultures: Revision" we hear from Dr. Roome and her students about unveiling the process of repre-

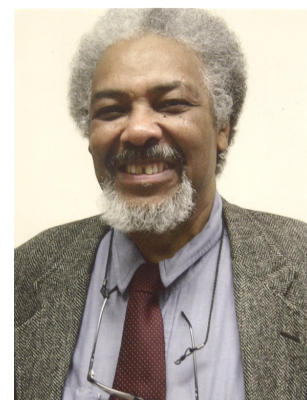
sentation through an innovative and exciting class offered over the Spring. For this class, students submerged themselves in literature to do with curating, and then had the opportunity to put together an exhibition of photographs from Burkina Faso by acclaimed photographer, Patricia Blanchet.

We cast a spotlight on one of our doctoral students, Anne C. Smiley, who was recently awarded a Fulbright scholarship and will be traveling to Lesotho from July 2009 to April 2010 to work on her dissertation research on secondary school access for children orphaned and made vulnerable by AIDS.

We also review some of the events organized and co-sponsored by CAE, including brown bag lectures (Dr K. Crehan, and Dr R. Eglash), book talks (Justice A. Sachs, and Dr J. Jansen) and film festivals (organized by the African Diaspora Film Festival).

This issue includes an update on the first phase of the *Teaching Africa Series*, an initiative using monographs and workshops to help New York City Public School educators serving students who have recently emigrated from West Africa. Funded primarily by the TC Provost's Investment Fund and the Columbia Business School CIBER, we are excited for this much-needed opportunity to reach out to schools city-wide. We are also excited to report that the Center has been accredited by New York State to grant a Certificate in African Education to concentrators in African studies.

Finally, on a sadder note, we would like to take this opportunity to



Professor George C. Bond

say goodbye and a heartfelt thank-you to our Coordinator, Gerard P. Alolod, who has served tirelessly in this position since 2007, and has been instrumental in raising the profile of the Center, and strengthening the study of Africa at the College. We wish him all the best, and look forward to following his progress in the years to come.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *African Education in Focus* and are eager to see you at our events in the 2009-2010 academic year!

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This Spring with ASWG



The African Studies Working Group is a cohort of graduate students interested in Africa and the Diaspora. The group aims to explore issues relating to culture, education, and humanitarian concerns through research, advocacy, discussion groups, informal learning opportunities, and social events. We welcome members from different disciplinary backgrounds, degree programs, and departments and encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative partnerships between students and other organizations.

In addition to its monthly general meetings, ASWG hosted a number of exciting events this spring, including the first annual *Student Symposium on African Education*, which united graduate students interested in African Studies from across various disciplines, in a conference setting. The annual ASWG Book Breakfast featured a discussion of Helene Cooper's book *The House at Sugar Beach*. Our members also got together to enjoy a Senegalese feast at Africa Kine for an evening social.

We look forward to welcoming new (and old!) members in the fall, and hearing new ideas for a productive and rewarding 2009-2010 academic year! We encourage you to attend our events and to join our listserv by emailing aswg@exchange.tc.columbia.edu.

Thank you for your interest!

Chidimma Agwu-Jones, ASWG Co-Chair (outgoing), cea2112@columbia.edu
 Kathleen Dowling, ASWG Co-Chair, kd2250@columbia.edu



Mission Statement

The Center for African Education promotes research and teaching about education, broadly defined, in Africa and the African Diaspora. Its central aim is to create a community of students, faculty, and staff with common interests and commitments to the fields of Education and African Studies. Interdisciplinary study and discussion across Teachers College and Columbia University are promoted through research projects, conferences, lecture series, and courses. The Center integrates the study of African education in different programs at the College. It also promotes linkages with African universities by hosting visiting scholars, policy makers, practitioners, and activists who will present their research and experience from different disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. The Center provides a forum for students to discuss their research and interests with African scholars, Africanist faculty, and colleagues at conferences, public lectures, and seminars. It is also preparing to undertake joint activities with educational institutions and international organizations in New York City and with universities, research centers and non-government organizations in Africa, Latin America and other regions of the world. In accordance with Teachers College's main focus on education, psychology and health, the Center will pursue problems within these domains as well as contribute to the College's understanding and promotion of educational equity.

Farewell from the Coordinator

Gerard P. Alolod

Center for African Education Coordinator

This year we say goodbye to the Coordinator of the Center for African Education, Gerard Alolod. Gerard is a PhD Student in the Applied Anthropology program. He has served as Coordinator since 2007. We wish Gerard the best of luck in his future endeavors and thank him for all his efforts!

Tanzania's first president – the late Julius Kambarage Nyerere – once wrote, "...intellectuals have a special contribution to make to the development of our nation, and to Africa. And I am asking that their knowledge, and the greater understanding that they should possess, should be used for the benefit of the society of which we are all members." Mwalimu Nyerere's words should be a reminder to academicians that noble and necessary responsibilities lay beyond the regalia at commencement and a university's hallowed halls. For myself, the last two years at the Center have been a similar cue.

Rather than speak about the Center's numerous achievements, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those, who have contributed to its success. Without a doubt, the membership and leadership of the African Studies Working Group were a crucial and substantive thrust in the Center's service and outreach; I thank them for their partnership. Ramatu Bangura, Kiran Jayaram, Kasia Krynski, and my predecessor Leslie Williams, introduced me to the Center's mission, and their dedication lives on in Grace Dodge 375A. This past year's staff members – Chidimma Agwu-Jones, Stephanie Bengtsson, Katie Keenan, Matthew Thomas, and Shana Sun Roberts – are owed special thanks for investing their passion, time, and talents while undertaking the sometimes formidable tasks of reviewing grant applications and research proposals, planning events, and strategizing the Center's future. My assumption of the Coordinator position would not have been as seamless without their encouragement, support, and laughter. I am also grateful to Annie Smiley, Matthew Hayden, Marty Spence, Dianne Sadnytzky and Mark Owen for their guidance and insight on College policies, as well as their willingness to offer feedback. The Center's allies throughout the University system – Professor Mamadou Diouf, Sarah Walsworth Diouf, Diarah N'daw-Spech, and Kristine Roome – cannot be thanked enough for their collaborative spirit and



Gerard Alolod

support. Professors Frances Vavrus, Monisha Bajaj, and Andrew Okolie served as true examples of how scholarship and service are not mutually exclusive. They have shown me that scholarship and service are necessary complements. Last but not least, I am indebted to the Center's Director, Professor George Clement Bond. While several scholars have similarly voluminous careers in and on Africa, few others have been able to reconcile intellectual rigor and *engagement* with mentoring compassion. I shall always cherish my conversations and travels with him.

As I leave the Center to spend a few years on public health research and my own dissertation fieldwork in Tanzania, I am comforted by the promise that the Center and its affiliates hold in keeping the study of Africa and the Diaspora alive and relevant not only at Teachers College but also beyond its New York City block. I gain solace also knowing that Stephanie Bengtsson, the next Coordinator of the Center for African Education, will undoubtedly bring our mission to newer heights. I await excitedly to hear about the good things to come.

Asanteni sana na ninaothamani ushirikiano wenu!

Center for African Education Student Profiles

Coordinator, Center for African Education

Gerard Alolod is a Ph.D. student in Applied Anthropology, sits on the Graduate Committee for African Studies at Columbia University and is also a former co-chair of the African Studies Working Group (ASWG) at Teachers College. He has conducted fieldwork on women's microfinance in Tanzania, and his areas of interest include postcolonial critiques of international 'development' and 'aid,' elite formation, and civil society. Gerard earned an M.A. in Anthropology & Education from Teachers College and has a B.S. in Foreign Service and Certificate in African Studies from the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.



Coordinator, Teaching Africa Series

Chidimma Agwu-Jones is a student in the Advanced Master's program in International Educational Development in the Department of International and Transcultural Studies and a current co-chair of the African Studies Working Group. Her research interests are gender issues, non-formal education, and educational policy. Prior to joining Teachers College, Chidimma was the Program Coordinator for Penn Lauder CIBER at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. While at Penn, she earned a certificate as an ESL Language Specialist and Masters in Education in Intercultural Communication. Chidimma received a B.A. in French Language and Literature, with a minor in Spanish from the University of Virginia.



Katharine Keenan is a Ph.D. student in Applied Anthropology, President of the Society for Anthropological Studies at TC, and outgoing Managing Editor of the Journal of Current Issues in Comparative Education. She has studied in Germany and the Republic of Ireland, and has done fieldwork in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on political murals and the construction of social space. Katharine's interests include anthropology of the visual and of performance, as well as issues of segregation, post-conflict redevelopment, and urban public policy. She currently lectures in Introduction to Anthropology at York College, City University of New York. Her B.A. is in Anthropology from Boston University, 2004.



Shana Sun Roberts is a Ph.D. student in Anthropology & Education and CAE Research Assistant. Shana Sun recently returned from a 7-year stint abroad — where she spent extensive time in China teaching English, studying Mandarin and engaging in research. She also served as a teacher in South Korea and completed graduate work in Contemporary Chinese Studies at the University of Oxford in England. Shana is presently engaging in a study on the conception of ethnic 'identity' amongst Korean (American) adoptees in New York City. Her research interests reside in issues of identity, political economy and power constructions with concentration in China and Korea, to include the diasporic movements. Shana Sun earned a B.A. (1999) in Sociology, with a double minor in Psychology and Education, from the University of South Carolina.



Stephanie Bengtsson is a doctoral student in the International Educational Development program. She has been working as an intern at the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and as a consultant and researcher on Africa for UNICEF. Her research interests include inclusive education in Sub-Saharan Africa, emergency education, education and fragile states, and education policy discourse. She is currently working on her doctoral dissertation, a critical analysis of the global education policy discourse surrounding fragile states, exploring definitions and conceptualizations of fragility and education, in order to contribute to a smoother education aid mechanism. Stephanie holds an AB (cum laude) in English from Harvard University, and an MPhil in Special and Inclusive Education from the University of Cambridge.



Center for African Education Updates

Teaching Africa Series

Work is currently well underway on the first phase of the exciting *Teaching Africa Series*, a set of regionally based monographs and workshops on West, North, East and Southern Africa. The Series aims to provide information and guidance to educators who wish to incorporate Africa in the classroom or who serve students who have recently emigrated from the continent. The first phase focuses on West Africa as the number of students of West African origin in NYC schools is increasing and there is a general lack of resources on how to include these students in the classroom, and on teaching Africa in general. This initiative targets NYC public school educators, aiming to provide them with training which, we believe, will improve outcomes for West African students.

The monograph will serve as a guide for educators by:

- *Providing them with general, didactic information on the socio-cultural, political and economic contexts of their West African students*
- *Offering them the tools and the means to build upon the cultural heritage and educational background of these students*
- *Enabling them to address the challenges and barriers that prevent this relatively new group of immigrant students from gaining access to a quality education*

This Spring, the Center solicited and collected a number of chapters from key scholars for the monograph, and consulted with NYC-based teachers in

Proposed Chapters

- * *Introduction * Geography * Peoples, Nationalities & Cultures **
- * *History: Pre-colonial, Colonial & Postcolonial **
- * *Economy & Environment * Family Life & Gender Relations **
- * *Education & Socialization **
- * *Indigenous Science & Technology * Religious Life & Worldviews **
- * *The Arts * Literature * Current International Relations **
- * *Health, Sickness & Healing * Politics, Conflict, Peace-Building, Security **
- * *West African Diaspora (in NYC): Impact on Children **

order to determine in which ways the Series would be most helpful to their work.

This Summer the Center will work hard to complete the monograph. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the Center will collaborate with Teachers College students with interest in Africa and curriculum and pedagogy to develop and host workshops for small groups of NYC public school teachers on teaching the materials from the monograph.

Certificate Program in African Education

The Center for African Education has been accredited by New York State to grant a Certificate in African Education to concentrators in African studies. The Certificate Program reflects the growing demand within schools and other agencies for people knowledgeable about the diverse institutions and historical processes shaping Africa and its educational systems. There is also an unprecedented need for educators and policymakers who understand fundamental changes in African education stemming from decentralization, democratization, and privatization as well as religious and political movements.

The certificate program provides students with a foundation in African studies through courses on cultural studies of education in specific African countries. Those who pursue this certificate will be prepared for further academic studies as well as professional careers in teaching, policy-making, and international development. Students are encouraged to consult with one of the faculty affiliated with the program to select courses from other departments at TC as well as from programs at Columbia University.

Students interested in pursuing careers in Africa are encouraged to take an African language, such as Wolof, Swahili, or Zulu, which are offered through Columbia's Institute of African Studies.

Students pursuing the Certificate in African Education are expected to gain a high degree of proficiency in African studies and African education through the completion of (A) a 15-credit track of coursework and (B) an integrative paper or masters thesis addressing an essential issue of concern in Africa or for African Educators. This can be completed over the course of one year and summer of full or part-time study, or may be pursued in conjunction with any of the other programs offered at TC.

Of the 15 required credits, 3 will be fulfilled through a core course on Africa (TBA), and up to 3 credits may be fulfilled with an internship or independent study. Up to 12 credits may be fulfilled with electives, determined in consultation with an advisor, from among any of the courses on Africa and African Education at TC and Columbia.

ASWG Student Symposium

By Kathleen Dowling

ASWG Co-Chair



The African Studies Working Group (ASWG) of Teachers College, Columbia University held its first annual Student Symposium on African Education on February 27, 2009.

The Symposium focused on the theme of educational quality in Africa and welcomed students, researchers and practitioners from inside and outside Teachers College. Dr. Portia Williams, Director of International Affairs at Teachers College and one of the founding members of ASWG, opened the conference with inspirational words of encouragement and support.

Thirteen presenters participated in four panels:

Critical Concepts in Educational Quality

H. A. Williams (Teachers College)
C. Willott (University of Bath)
S. Hoyt (American University)
T. Callender (Teachers College)

Improving School Quality through Inclusive Approaches

A. C. Smiley (Teachers College)
B. A. McElroy (Teachers College)
A. Rehman (Cornell University)

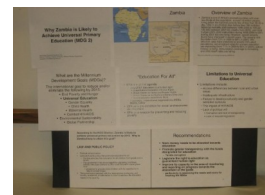
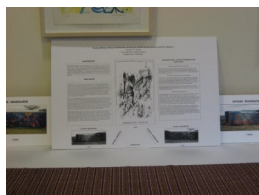
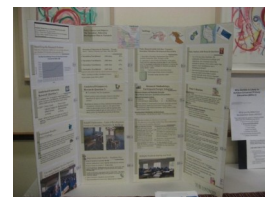
Questioning Curriculum: Alternative Approaches to Teaching & Learning

M. A. M. Thomas (Teachers College)
N. Moland (New York University)
A. Odele (Teachers College)

Universal Primary Education: Influences, Impact, and Effects on Quality

J. Lopez (Teachers College)
V. Kandiwa (Cornell University)
A. Maikish (New York University)

The presenters took a variety of different views and many examined the topic through a critical, yet optimistic, lens. There were also three poster presentations that examined various educational issues in Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya.



Over 80 attendees listened to the enriching presentations throughout the day. Many offered positive feedback, expressing that the symposium provided them with new information and perspectives on the topic of educational quality in Africa. In the evening, Dr. Mahmood Mamdani gave the keynote address to a rapt audience, focusing on the crucial importance of building up quality higher education systems across the continent. The lecture was based on his 2007 book, *Scholars in the Marketplace: The Dilemmas of Neo-Liberal Reform at Makerere University, 1989-2005*.

The Symposium was declared a resounding success, and ASWG is looking forward to hosting the second annual Student Symposium on African Education next year. For more information and to view the presentations online, please visit our website at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/students/aswg/>



Students at the Comparative & International Education Society Conference 2009

By Stephanie Bengtsson, EdD student - International Educational Development, Teachers College, Columbia University

About the Conference

Teachers College, Columbia University had the honor of hosting the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) in collaboration with the University of South Carolina and the College of Charleston. This year's conference, entitled *The Politics Of Comparison*, ran from March 22 – March 26, 2009, in Charleston, South Carolina. A number of our students presented on Africa- and Diaspora-related topics at this prestigious event.

According to the CIES committee, the theme of "The Politics of Comparison" was chosen because educational researchers and practitioners working

beyond national boundaries are often compelled to grapple with the phenomenon of "traveling reforms" or so-called "best practices" that are transferred from one country to another. Also, the field of comparative and international education is very often steered by international standards, global benchmarks and national targets, which often rely on international comparison.

This article describes student preparations for the conference, and presents some reflections from students themselves on their conference experiences. We look forward to following our students at the next CIES conference in Chicago in 2010!

Preparations—Presentation Workshop

To give students presenting at this year's conference the opportunity to showcase and workshop their research in preparation for their panels, the Center for African Education hosted an event entitled *Showcase and Workshop of Student Research on Africa and the Diaspora*. This event took place on March 7. After a quick breakfast, four students presented their work—Maika Watanuki, Carolyn Casale, Matthew Thomas, and Stephanie Bengtsson. Unfortunately, two of our presenters (Anne Smiley and Michelle Reddy) were unable to attend because of ill-health. The small group of interested colleagues and friends in attendance gave detailed and constructive feedback, and animated discussions resulted, which continued over lunch.



Presentations

New curriculum towards effective HIV prevention for adolescents in Lesotho
MAIKA WATANUKI

Implementing active learning in Ethiopia
CAROLYN CASALE

Zambian Teachers' Perceptions of Expert Teaching: Resourcefulness, Punctuality, and Sobriety
MATTHEW THOMAS

Fragile States and Fragility in Global Education Aid Policy: The Need for a Critical Analysis of the Discourse
STEPHANIE BENGTSOON

Student presenters seemed very happy with the supportive atmosphere created at this event, and said that they would like to see this workshop become an established tradition through CAE, as they felt that this had helped them prepare for the CIES conference. It is hoped that in the future, such workshops can be held more regularly, as a source of support and help for students, currently working on research related to Africa and the Diaspora. To find out more about this event, and to access the abstracts of student presenters, please visit:

www.tc.edu/centers/cae/index.asp?Id=Research&Info=Student+Research

Students at the Comparative & International Education Society Conference

Student Perceptions of CIES 2009

Having attended the CIES Conference for many years, I am always impressed by how CIES connects established scholars and new students who share similar interests. My conference experience in Charleston reminded me of this close CIES academic circle in many ways. Firstly, as a New Scholars Forum mentor, I was delighted to be paired with colleagues that I had met in previous conferences and also in the field. Secondly, as a panel chair and presenter, I had the opportunity to meet new scholars in my field, and receive excellent and relevant feedback on my work in an academically nurturing environment. Finally, as I have been doing fieldwork away from Teachers College, the CIES conference was an academic homecoming, serving as further inspiration for my dissertation.

DONNA C. TONINI

*The Secondary Education Development Plan in Tanzania:
International Influences, Policy Choices and Impacts*

CIES 2009 was my first opportunity to present in public, which was a great experience to internalize my research on HIV prevention in formal school curriculum in Lesotho. I presented my masters project to wrap up all my masters studies, so the presentation was all about what I have learned at TC! Moreover, there were many interesting presentations and people, so I also have learned from these peers. This was the great place for academic exchange!

MAIKA WATANUKI

New curriculum towards effective HIV prevention for adolescents in Lesotho

My experience at CIES this year, the third that I have attended, was extremely positive. Not only did I appreciate and enjoy the relaxed Charleston atmosphere, but I was able to attend many informative sessions on topics that interest me – namely, those on African Education, education and conflict, and education and vulnerability. My own panel focused on education for vulnerable populations, and I had the opportunity to share findings from a study that I conducted in Lesotho during the summer of 2008 on a scholarship scheme for orphans and vulnerable children. I made a lot of connections, was inspired by numerous presentations, and felt a sense of being “at home” with the people and the conversation. Perhaps most importantly, I was extremely impressed with the high level of scholarship displayed by our own students, faculty and graduates, reinforcing my feeling that TC is in many ways a center for the field of comparative and international education.

ANNIE SMILEY

*Schooling for Orphans and Vulnerable Children:
Evaluating the Implementation of Lesotho's Secondary Education Bursary Scheme*



CIES 2009 was held in Charleston, SC

The 2009 CIES conference in Charleston, SC marked my second experience as a participant and first as a presenter. Like last year, I found myself invigorated by the event; I was fascinated by the wealth of research and scholarship represented there and excited about opportunities for personal growth as a researcher and practitioner. In addition, I thoroughly enjoyed delivering my presentation, receiving feedback on my research, and meeting others interested in Africa and the Diaspora.

MATTHEW THOMAS

*Zambian Teachers' Perceptions of Expert Teaching:
Resourcefulness, Punctuality, and Sobriety*

CIES 2009 was my second academic conference experience. After the glow of my first conference dimmed, I had high expectations for interesting and exciting dialogue in Charleston. A few presentations captured my interest, however I hope to see more innovative and exciting ideas unleashed at next year's conference. The current financial crisis necessitates active defense of the importance of human development, as budget cuts to education are alarmingly pervasive even in rich donor countries.

MICHELLE REDDY

*The Politics of Comparison:
Inter-Agency and Government Initiatives Regarding
Child Labour and Migration in West Africa*

Curating Cultures: Revision

By Stephanie Bengtsson

A couple of years ago, as Professor Bond, Professor Dubin, and Dr. Roome were looking through some photographs from South Africa and thinking about putting together an exhibition, an idea for an innovative class on Africa emerged. Dr. Roome felt that there was so much to be learned by students if they got involved in the curating process. For Dr. Roome, preparing for an exhibition is a way to combine theory and practice, through the physicality of art, while simultaneously allowing students to “unveil the process of representation.” While the South Africa exhibition never materialized, conversations about involving students in curating their own exhibition continued, until eventually, this idea was crystallized as the “Curating Cultures” class offered in the Spring of 2009.

Dr. Roome approached acclaimed Haitian-born photographer, Patricia Blanchet, asking her if she would be interested in having students work with her photographs documenting everyday life in the small West African nation of Burkina Faso and put together an exhibition of her images as part of a course offering at Teachers College. For Dr. Roome, an exhibition using Blanchet’s photographs had the potential to challenge some of the problematic representations of Africa today, which often involve a deep-seeded sense of afro-pessimism or are dominated by images of the noble savage. By highlighting the diversity of the everyday, this exhibition would potentially allow for a cascade of multiple identities.

The class brought together students from very different backgrounds and interests, who worked hard to prepare for an exhibition, which was to be named *Revision*. What all students shared was an interest in the power of art to educate, and the role of the curator in harnessing that power in a gallery/exhibition setting. The potential to utilize this power to educate others about Africa was not missed by those with an interest in the continent. As one student put it:

“African education isn’t necessarily what we think of as in the classroom. This *is* African education. It’s just a different type of that education: a different way of getting that point across.”

Another student admitted that she did not know much about Africa at the beginning of the course,

and that what she did know was colored by afro-pessimism, but that through this course she had discovered a fascination for the African continent. Yet another student pointed out the significance of curating an *artistic* exhibition versus an *anthropological* one on Africa, suggesting that art is at once universal and personal, and can thus draw people in a way that anthropological exhibitions may not.

Students spent half a semester with a really heavy reading load, which allowed them to come up with a number of categories related to the work. In the second part of the semester, as work on putting together the exhibition began, they initially selected images to fit into those categories, but soon the selection process became more organic, and they began to pull out those that were aesthetically most pleasing. They were inspired by the artist, calling her a “cool artist chick” with a “postmodern vibe about her photography” and described how they discovered that she would hold her camera at chest-level so that she could connect with and speak to her subjects. Meeting the artist forced students to ask questions about meaning-making and the process of representation. How do you present the subjects, the artist, *and* the curators fairly in one exhibition? How do you allow the audience to make meanings for themselves, but simultaneously guide them away from thinking about Africa as a uniform place, and away from thinking that this exhibition on Burkina Faso is somehow representative of West Africa, or Africa as a whole? As one student put it:

“It’s about perspective. This exhibition is not just for Africans or about Africa. It’s about how we look and judge and see people. We have to challenge our initial thought and look further, harder, and deep.”

Unfortunately, for logistical reasons, the exhibition, while fully planned, was never hung. However, the students produced a catalogue and a postcard which serve as a beautiful record of the hard work that was done.

If you have any questions regarding Curating Cultures, please contact Dr. Roome: kar2005@columbia.edu

The Center for African Education congratulates Dr. Roome, Lauren Click, Julia Lee Hong, Alison Jean, Bianca Moña and Kara Roop for all of their hard work for this class, and thanks them for taking the time to participate in interviews for this article.

Student Spotlight

Anne C. Smiley

Fulbright Scholar

We would like to congratulate one of our students, Annie Smiley, on receiving a Fulbright Scholarship. Annie is an EdD student in International Educational Development, concentrating in African Education. Annie will travel to Lesotho in July 2009 to pursue her dissertation research, combining her scholarly interests in education in emergencies, international humanitarian issues, orphans and vulnerable children, and HIV/AIDS.

We wish her the best of luck in her efforts and look forward to hearing more about her work when she returns to New York.

I will be conducting dissertation research in Lesotho from July 2009 to April 2010 with support from the U.S. Student Fulbright program. As an EdD Candidate in International Educational Development with a concentration in African Education, I will be focusing on the issue of access to secondary schooling for children orphaned and made vulnerable by AIDS. Lesotho is a very small country that is completely surrounded by South Africa, and has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the world, with almost one quarter of all children having been orphaned by the disease.

I first went to Lesotho in the summer of 2008 with Professor Gita Steiner-Khamsi's excellent course on International Educational Policy Analysis, which was an opportunity that opened many doors for me. For that course, I worked with two local colleagues to conduct mixed-methods research to evaluate a government-run scholarship scheme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

Thanks to this great opportunity offered by TC, I will continue along the same lines for my dissertation project. At this point, little research has looked into the effects of educational interventions for OVC on the lives of scholarship beneficiaries and their families, such as shifting household structures, changing family dynamics, and the educational experiences and life aspirations of scholarship recipients and other children with whom they live. Anecdotal evidence points to the possibility that there may be "spillover" effects from OVC-targeted educational interventions, both positive and negative, resulting from the infusion of resources into homes with qualifying OVC.

The primary research question that will be addressed is: For sponsored OVC and their household members, how do OVC-targeted educational scholarships shape household structures and dynamics,

the experience of schooling, and personal life aspirations? My research will be carried out at the national, school, and household levels, using a mixed-methods design over the course of nine months.



Annie Smiley

During my stay in Southern Africa, I will be sponsored by the National University of Lesotho's Institute of Education. I look forward to this exciting opportunity to explore a fascinating part of Southern Africa, and I know that I will learn a great deal along the way.

CAE Events

Brown Bag Discussion with Professor Kate Crehan

By Shana S. Roberts

PhD Student, Applied Anthropology

On February 12, the Center for African Education, proudly kicked off the 2009 Spring Semester with a Brown Bag Lecture featuring Professor Kate Crehan, Professor of Anthropology at the College of Staten Island and the Graduate Center, CUNY. Professor George Bond, Director of the Center, delivered opening remarks, as Teachers College students representing International Educational Development, Comparative and International Education and Programs in Anthropology settled in for the afternoon event. The talk entitled *Zambia 1980/New York 2009: Some Feminist Reflections* addressed important gender issues by engaging with data Dr. Crehan generated from the beginning of the late 1970s continuing through the 1980s in rural northwestern Zambia. Professor Crehan discussed how her work in Zambia has contributed to understandings of gender, including “continuities and discontinuities between an impoverished, rural region of Zambia and contemporary New York.” Student reactions ranged from queries on the particularities of rural Zambian conditions to social practices and the role of gender. The discussion was lively, and greatly facilitated by Dr. Crehan’s expert knowledge and openness to student inquiries

and contributions. CAE, as well as the larger Teachers College community, send a warm thanks to Professor Crehan!

Biography

Educational Background:

Kate Crehan’s educational background includes a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Manchester (1986).

Research:

Professor Crehan’s research interests include political economy, gender, development, and Southern Africa. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in Zambia. She has also carried out fieldwork in Britain. Among the issues she works on are gender, social differentiation and ‘development’. Running through all her work is a concern with the issue of power, and the ways in which it is materially and discursively grounded. She has recently published a book on Gramsci and anthropology.

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Kate Crehan in action

CAE Events

Brown Bag Discussion with Professor Ron Eglash

By Katie Keenan

PhD Student, Applied Anthropology

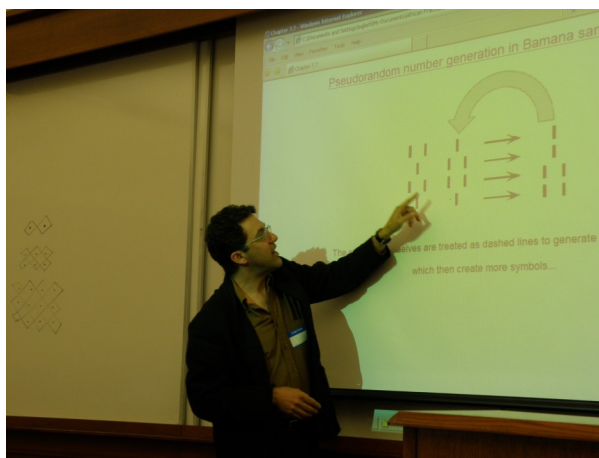
On April 23, a small group of people interested variously in education, math, and Africa gathered for a talk on *African Fractals*. Eglash, whose ted.com talk inspired the event, spoke about African designs in which recursive repetition (which forms fractals) produces distinctive artistic, architectural and functional patterns. Recursive repetition is found in nature, where the same shape is repeated over and over on smaller and smaller scales, until a complex shape with a unique pattern is achieved as can be seen in trees, leaves, shells, and so on. Mathematically the fractal is a paradox in that it enables infinity to exist within a bounded space. The use of recursive repetition in design is unique to Africa, Eglash argues, though a range of patterns and algorithms exists across the entire continent, and their use is either traditional or intentional, but never simply intuitive. Fractals work into cultural logics in diverse ways, whether in architecture by physically partitioning space into meaningful patterns, or in education, where increasingly complex recursions become standards by which learning advances, and in practical engineering, such as wind-guard fences in which patterns repeat recursively to make work more efficient for fence weavers, and fences more efficient at blocking wind.

Eglash's broader philosophy is that the fractal pattern represents the center of a continuum between order and disorder, as well as the apex of a range from less to more complexity. Take for example the relative simplicity of periodic systems such as the sound wave and disorderly systems such as white noise, as compared to the pleasing and surprising complexity of a piece of music. The same logic, Eglash argues, may (and should) be applied to politics, information systems, and economics, to create systems that are both efficient and sustainable.

Finally, Eglash draws his findings into direct educational tools. His Culturally Situated Design Tools (see <http://www.rpi.edu/~eglash/eglash.htm>), are made for free public and educational use. These are web applets that allow students to learn, reproduce, and manipulate the algorithms of fractals found in African design, cornrow braids, graffiti, breakdancing, and even Latin music, along with tuto-

rials about the history and use of each pattern.

The event was very well received, with excitement from all participants. Eglash is a soft-spoken, modest scholar, whose work has great potential for making African and African-American ethnomathematics a prominent and valuable part of an everyday curriculum.



Ron Eglash in action

Biography

Educational Background:

Ron Eglash's educational background includes a B.S. in Cybernetics, an M.S. in Systems Engineering, and a PhD in History of Consciousness. A Fulbright postdoctoral fellowship enabled his field research on African ethnomathematics.

Research:

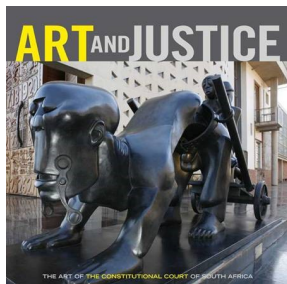
Professor Eglash's research examines the ways in which information technology, mathematical modeling, and other science and technology practices are intertwined with cultural categories such as race, gender, and class, and explores interventions in these relationships. His current project, funded by the NSF, HUD, and Dept. of Education, translates the mathematical concepts embedded in cultural designs of African, Native American, Latino, and heterogeneous urban youth communities into software design tools for secondary school education.

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Book Talks

Justice Albie Sachs: Art & Justice



On February 4, the Center for African Education, in collaboration with Columbia University School of the Arts, and the Gottesman Libraries, hosted a book talk on *Art and Justice: The Art of the Constitutional Court of South Africa*, by Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, designed by Ellen Papciak-Rose, with photographs by Ben Law-Viljoen. At this event, students had the opportunity to partake in a conversation with Justice Albie Sachs about this book, documenting the exciting vision for bringing together art and justice in the South African Constitutional Court, with an Introduction by Dean Carol Becker.

The book, originally launched in October 2008, documents the artworks collected for the Constitutional Court of South Africa, which was established in 1994 by South Africa's first democratic constitution, and formally opened by President Nelson Mandela on the morning of 14 February 1995, who told the Court:

"The last time I appeared in court was to hear whether or not I was going to be sentenced to death. Fortunately for myself and my colleagues we were not. Today I rise not as an accused, but on behalf of the people of South Africa, to inaugurate a court South Africa has never had, a court on which hinges the future of our democracy."

David Krut Publishing prepared the book, working closely with the Constitutional Court Artworks Committee headed by Justices Yvonne Mokgoro and Albie Sachs. The book describes the process of utilizing art in what is thought of by many as South Africa's most important new building, to send a message of justice and equity. The Court collection has taken shape around key works by artists such as Dumile Feni, John Baloyi, William Kentridge, Judith Mason, Gerard Sekoto, Marlene Dumas, and others. *Art and Justice* serves as a record of the Court's growing collection of paintings, prints, fibre art and sculptures, and pays tribute to an extraordinary vision: to bring together art and justice in a building that would welcome all citizens of the country.

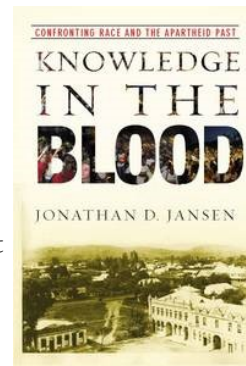
On behalf of the attendees at the event, we thank Justice Sachs for sharing this seminal work with us.

Jonathan D. Jansen: Knowledge in the Blood

On April 2, CAE hosted a book talk at Milbank Chapel with Jonathan D. Jansen, on his latest work: *Knowledge in the Blood: Confronting Race and the Apartheid Past*. The event, entitled *On the Clash of Martyrological Memories: Race, Memory, and Identity in Post-Apartheid Classrooms*, was well-attended and followed by a reception, during which attendees were able to continue their conversations with Dr Jansen.

The book tells the story of white South African students and how they remember and enact an Apartheid past they were never part of. How is it that young Afrikaners, born at the time of Mandela's release from prison, hold firm views about a past they never lived, rigid ideas about black people, and fatalistic thoughts about the future? Jansen offers an intimate look at the effects of socio-political change after Apartheid as white students first experience learning and living alongside black students. He reveals the novel role pedagogical interventions play in confronting the past, as well as critical theory's limits in dealing with conflict where formerly clear-cut notions of victims and perpetrators are blurred.

Dr Jansen is Honorary Professor of Education at Witwatersrand and Visiting Fellow at the National Research Foundation, South Africa. An Honorary Doctor of Education from the University of Edinburgh and a recent Fulbright Scholar to Stanford University, where he also received his PhD, Professor Jansen is former Dean of Education at the University of Pretoria. His scholarship and leadership focuses on how to integrate students and staff from different racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds through critical dialogues and interventions designed to give education a broader meaning in such contexts.



The Center was delighted to host such an eminent scholar from South Africa, and looks forward to future opportunities to connect with Dr. Jansen and his colleagues.

African Diaspora Film Screenings

African Diaspora Film Festival at TC

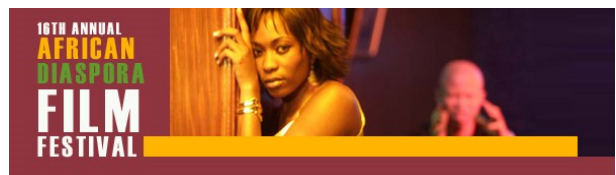
Throughout the year, members of the Teachers College community are fortunate to have access to a number of exciting films related to Africa and the Diaspora. These film screenings are sponsored by the African Diaspora Film Festival, The Office of the President, Diversity and Community Affairs and the Center for African Education.

Reinaldo Barroso-Spech, a TC graduate with a doctorate in foreign languages and education, first started collecting films about Africa and the African Diaspora fifteen years ago, in order to use them as tools to interest his public school students in learning foreign languages. It soon became clear to both Dr. Barroso-Spech and his wife, Ms Diarah N'Daw-Spech (MBA), that adults were eager to watch the films too, as there were few venues in New York City for films that celebrated the experience of people of African descent. This led the TC couple to launch the African Diaspora Film Festival (ADFF), which has now become a major NYC event that retains an educational focus. Over 100,000 people have attended the Festival since its inception, and it has grown from being a seven-day, 25-film event to a 17-day event showing 100 films. It is now considered to be one of the important film festivals of its genre in the Tri-State area, and is now a source of programming for television stations such as Starz!, BET J, and CUNY TV.

According to ADFF, despite the fact that there are more films by black directors, more films on the black experience, and more films with featured black actors enjoyed by all audiences, than at any time, the international Black communities, continue to play a disproportionately marginal role in the art of cinema.

ADFF's mission is to present these films to diverse audiences, redesign the Black cinema experience, and strengthen the role of African and African descent directors in contemporary world cinema. In response to this mission, ADFF features the work of emerging and established filmmakers of color. Most important, ADFF distinguishes itself through its presentation of outstanding works that shine a different or comprehensive light on African Diaspora life and culture—no matter what the filmmaker's race or nationality.

By placing the spotlight on innovative films that would otherwise be ignored by traditional venues, the Festival offers a unique platform for conveying African Diaspora artistic styles and craft in film. The ADFF is a bridge between diverse communities looking for works that cannot be found in other festivals and talented and visionary filmmakers and works that are part of Africa and the African Diaspora.



*Please look out for more information about
The 17th Annual African Diaspora Film Festival
to be held from November 17 to December 15*

This past spring and early summer, TC hosted a number of mini African Film Festivals, which were co-sponsored by ADFF, The Office of the President, Diversity and Community Affairs, and CAE. This included the exciting *Griots & Oral Tradition in Africa Film Series* from May 29 to May 31, which featured films from Belgium, Chad/France, Burkina Faso/France, Tanzania/UK, and Senegal. Please see the schedule of events (below) for opportunities to attend future film series related to Africa and the Diaspora.

Schedule of Events

June 26 to June 28:
Laughing Out Loud—Film Series
Comedies and the African Diaspora

July 31 to August 2:
African American Independents Film Series

August 25 to August 27:
Stories of Immigration Film Series

November 17 to December 15:
Annual Film Festival (TBA)

*All screenings are free and open to
TC Faculty, Students and Staff with a valid ID.
More details about the screenings are available at
www.NYADFF.org*

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