Special Edition:
A look at the Social Issue Media Festival

Professor Lalitha Vasudevan, Ahram Park, and Ronny Bernstein are the brilliant minds behind Teachers College’s Social Issue Media Festival (SIMF) that took place on May 6, 2010. Professor Vasudevan, a faculty member in the Communication, Computing, and Technology in Education Program, has been aware of and involved with social issues media through the Media That Matters Film Festival at Teachers College. She obtained a Dean’s Grant for Diversity in Teaching to support a student to work with her on a project related to issues of diversity. Continued on page 4.

Alumni Spotlight:
Dr. Karen Swan, Computing and Education, 1989

Current Student Spotlight:
Nate Finney, Science Education, 2010

TCETC 2010

Scratch Day at TC
Highlighting Three Outstanding Filmmakers

**Lori Falchi: “The Mother”**

Lori Falchi, a doctoral student in Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, heard through the grapevine about a wonderful teacher named Professor Vasudevan. So Lori decided to take her course on Media, Culture and Education last fall. For her final project Lori created a video, called “Arts in Schools”, about her son’s school’s Studio in School Art program. Lori describes, “I was thinking about what is meaningful to me. I have taken courses with Maxine Greene, people who are really outspoken about the power of art education, and I realized my son’s school has something very unique. As it [the Studio in School Art program] is at the end of its 3 year grant cycle, I wanted to get involved to help continue funding the program.” Being selected as a finalist for the Social Issue Media Festival was a real honor and privilege to Lori since this is her first film. Lori’s research interests are focused on the study of multilingual children’s participation literacy in bilingual programs. “The students’ participation in literacy is more than just reading and writing. My view of literacy is a broader way of seeing all different modes of expression including visual, spatial, gestural – all of the different modes we use to communicate are part of what I consider literacy.” Lori continues, “As a parent and as a teacher too, I feel like the creativity in our schools is something that on the one hand we know is so important and valued, and on the other hand is under-funded and being edged out by the standardized testing and the movement to measure everything. And some very important things cannot be measured. We need to shift gears to be perhaps a little more cognizant about what the outcomes are going to be if we continue on this path.”

**Nate Wight: “The Advocate”**

Nate Wight, a Teachers College Speech-Language Pathology graduate and graduate student in the School of Engineering at Columbia, is an up and coming filmmaker. Currently working at Alfred E. Smith Career & Technical Education High School (AES) he has been an integral part of a movement to save the school from being phased out. His filming began innocently enough by documenting a project to build a green roof on the school – this wonderful addition to the school will be finished this August. Then the news of a possible phase out motivated him to use film to fight to keep the school open. This drew him to create a more emotional film and submit “Student Voices: The Phasing Out of A Career & Technical HS in the South Bronx” (http://vimeo.com/9262368) to the Social Issue Media Festival. This is not the only short film that Nate produced to fight to keep his school open. The New York Times and WNYC reported on a video that included original rap lyrics, performed by an AES alumnus, during the phase out turmoil. More videos can be seen on his production blog (http://closingaes.wordpress.com/).
from the Social Issue Media Festival

Melanie Hibbert: “The Pro”

Melanie Hibbert, a doctoral student in the Instructional Technology and Media program and EdLab video producer, is an amazing filmmaker. She submitted two videos for the Social Issue Media Festival and received recognition from the jury as a special award winner. One of her films is called “Books Through Bars” and can be seen here (http://vimeo.com/11367280). This short video showcases the organization that sends books to prisoners. The other three minute film, “Rural Schools”, is viewable here (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwH7rJ2TFk4). Melanie collaborated with Amanda Rosenburg on this film for Professor Vasudevan’s course. This film has footage that is part of a longer piece about a village located in Alaska. While living in Alaska as a Teaching Fellow, Melanie wanted to document the fascinating environment that she was living in off of the Yukon River. This turned into shedding light on how her school “didn’t have any money for the cafeteria – so people in the community hunted a moose and brought it in and cancelled classes for the day to help cut the moose and package it for food.” Melanie wanted to show how they are underserved yet how community involvement is so positive and important. This project turned into 30 hours of footage. Melanie edited it to an hour long piece that she screened at Duke University when she lived in North Carolina. She really enjoyed being a part of the Social Issue Media Festival and says that it was “a great way for TC to showcase student work and I hope it continues because it was really awesome.”

Nate would like to produce a feature length documentary film based on the phase out debacle students and staff faced last school year at AES. Through the use of film Nate and the entire staff at AES managed to keep the Automotive Technology program intact.

Nate is currently working with the leadership team and industry partners to create a new school proposal that would keep the Building Trades alive as well. Nate comments on the idea of media as a powerful communication and advocacy tool: “Here’s what’s interesting to me. I can’t tell you how many well-articulated and sourced letters and emails I’ve sent to people about our school. Then I put together the music video and within minutes of sending it out to a couple people it got through to UFT and they sent it to the New York Times and it landed in Sharon Otterman’s inbox. Literally within 5 minutes she was calling AES and asking for me. That’s the point. A lot can be done with a short video. People have a more emotional connection to it than a piece of paper.”
Social Issue Media Festival
(continued from front cover)

She decided to teach her Culture, Media and Education course in fall 2009 through the lens of social issues media and required each student to produce a piece of social issue media. At the end of the semester, the class had an internal film screening. This started the buzz about the possibility of having a college-wide film festival focused on social issues. “What would it mean to have something here at TC that highlights not only the ethos of TC, which is connected to pursuing social issues, but bringing it together with our interest in media?”, explains Professor Vasudevan.

Ahram, an EdM student in Instructional Technology and Media, was the teaching assistant chosen to work with Professor Vasudevan through the Dean’s Grant. Professor Vasudevan praises Ahram stating that “Ahram was the main coordinator of the festival.” Ronny, a graduate of the Instructional Technology and Media Program and board member of the Media Professional Educators at TC, is a whiz at FinalCut and helped put the festival’s trailer together. He is the self-named “support man” for the group.

The festival had a two-tiered jury process. One pass through Lalitha, Ahram and Ronny, as the executive board, and another jury of nine selected from the greater Columbia community. The submissions were judged on the following three criteria: does it contain a social issue, does it carry a message throughout, and does it evoke social action at the end. After the initial pass by the executive board, Ronny says that it “helped us frame what the festival was going to be about. We were trying to understand what our identity was as a social issue media festival.” The second pass by the jury created a conversation reflecting the backgrounds of the jury members. Professor Vasudevan describes them as a “nice mix of roles at the University and backgrounds in media and social issues.” The jury gave their opinions and ideas about

the submitted media to the executive board who made the final decision on what ten submissions to include in the festival.

The day of the festival around 50 people came to the screening. The audience had a chance to watch the films together as one “movie”. Then afterwards the filmmakers went up to the front of the room and there was a panel discussion where the audience had an opportunity to ask questions. Following the panel discussion was a reception that produced many conversations regarding social issues. “One of the things that we were excited about is that we wanted to give the jury some kind of thank you. Ahram had the idea of giving them Donors Choose gift cards. I [Vasudevan] know somebody at Donors Choose and he said that he would like to sponsor the festival and that they would provide us with $25 Giving Cards for audience members and $100 Giving Cards for the winners of the festival.” Giving Card recipients could donate the funds to a cause of their choice which included a film school and classrooms in need.

The Social Issue Media Festival is unique in that the finished product did not need to be polished in the same way for all submissions. This is a festival that engages people in social issues in a raw form. Professor Vasudevan describes her fantasy of “wouldn’t it be great if we could gather independent youth-produced media and find a way to make it accessible to educator audiences.” This is the next project for Professor Vasudevan, Ahram and Ronny. They definitely expect to have another festival next year and currently are creating a website for the festival including announcements, highlights from this year’s festival, and resources related to social issues. Look for it soon and begin thinking about social issues affecting you and take action through media!
Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Karen Swan, Computing and Education, 1989; 2009-2010 MST Distinguished Alumnus Award Recipient

Karen Swan began her involvement with technology during her assistantship at Keene State College in 1983. The assistantship involved working with gifted students in the lab school at the college. The principal of the school wanted the students to use computers. “At the time I thought computers were like the devil,” remarks Dr. Swan regarding the technology of the time. So she decided to register for a computer course on LOGO programming taught by Molly Watt, one of the first LOGO teachers. As she learned about LOGO, she also found her love of programming. She recalls, “it was the first time I started to understand mathematics.” Dr. Swan took her experiences with the gifted children and applied them to become a LOGO computer teacher at Bi-Cultural Day School, a private K-8 school in Stanford, Connecticut. She was also attending Teachers College for her EdD at this time and eventually completed her dissertation work at Bi-Cultural Day School.

Dr. Swan has many fond memories of her time at Teachers College. She states, “I never could have survived without Professor John Black as my advisor. He’s a wonderful research designer. Robbie McClintock is one of the smartest people I ever met and Bob Taylor is one of the most moral.” During one of her courses taught by Professor Black, she felt that her instructional design and task analysis assignment was not very good. But Professor Black allowed his students to resubmit for a higher grade – which she did and felt more satisfied with her work. This is a teaching technique that Dr. Swan implements in all her courses now. Professor McClintock’s course about multimedia design gave her the opportunity to work in Watson Labs, the IBM Research Center in upstate New York, to make a video disk. This led to making a commercial video disk on civil rights, involving historical footage, which she really enjoyed – even though the process took two years!

Since Dr. Swan had such knowledgeable and hands-on professors at Teachers College, she knows the importance and responsibility of being a mentor to students. She reflects fondly of her time at the University at Albany where she served on many dissertation committees. Dr. Swan still keeps in touch with many of her doctoral students from Albany and recently took a trip to upstate New York to see two of her students. She believes that working with students as an advisor “expands your own thinking – especially if you let people do what they want… and allow them to grow.” Currently, she holds the James J. Stukel Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS).

Although Dr. Swan may have been skeptical of technology at the beginning of her teaching career, she is quite strong in her belief that technology is critical to teaching well in today’s society. “Academia really needs to get beyond its reliance on print. There has to be other ways of creating, synthesizing, assessing and communicating knowledge.” UIS has a fabulous online program; the department she works in has an online program and one that is blended. The online aspect allows teachers to stay up to date with their teaching and the freedom of not having to travel to a campus. Dr. Swan teaches all of her courses at UIS entirely online. She finds that assigning multiple small assignments each week helps in fostering student-to-student and student-to-professor relationships.
Dr. Karen Swan – Continued

Growing up in Connecticut and then moving to Vermont for most of her adult life, she now resides in Illinois near Chicago. Dr. Swan has three children: her youngest daughter is going to school at the College of Saint Rose in Albany to become an elementary teacher, her eldest daughter makes a profitable living with her husband by creating bobble heads that resemble people who purchase them, and her only son recently was awarded his PhD in History. She and her husband own two dogs and three cats, all rescue animals. Dr. Swan takes pleasure in being with her family – which is made easier because two of her three children live in Illinois as well.

Reading mystery books, walking in the woods and cross country skiing are activities that Dr. Swan enjoys. With all of her accomplishments including numerous book chapters, journal articles, and being the 2009-2010 Mathematics, Science and Technology Distinguished Alumni Recipient – it seems that Dr. Swan is enjoying both her personal and professional life, “I can’t complain at all. I am blessed.”

Mathematics Education Program Updates

“Mr. Goroff Goes to Washington”

Distinguished Visiting Professor Daniel Goroff taught popular courses this past year on the “Nature of Proof” in the fall and on “Probability and Decision Theory” in the spring. He is now taking some time off from the classroom, however, and is spending his “summer vacation” in Washington working for the President’s Science Advisor in the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). His new title there is Assistant Director for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences.

Journal of Mathematics Education at Teachers College
Call for Papers

The “theme” of the second issue of the Journal of Mathematics Education at Teachers College will be “International Mathematics Education.” A total of ten (10) articles are planned for this issue which is scheduled to appear in late November, 2010.

This “call for papers” is an invitation to mathematics education professionals, especially Teachers College students, alumni and friends, to submit articles of approximately 2,500-3,000 words describing research, experiments, projects, innovations or practices related to international and comparative mathematics education. Articles should be submitted to JMETC’s corresponding editor, Ms. Krystle Hecker, at JMETC@tc.edu by September 1st, 2010.

The November issue’s guest editor, Dr. Julianna Connelly, will send contributed articles to editorial panels for “blind review.” Reviews will be completed by October 1st and final drafts of selected papers are to be submitted by November 1st. Publication is expected in late November.
Nate Finney grew up in an environment from of a scientist’s dream, Sonoma County, California, an hour and a half north of San Francisco and twenty minutes from the beach. His parents were obsessed with science and allowed Nate and his younger sister and brother, who are twins, numerous opportunities to go see marine wildlife or watch stars. His mother worked as a lab assistant at a local community college in the Astronomy Department and would go out with students as well as her own children to Lake Sonoma to track stars and look at Jupiter. His sister graduated from University of California, Davis this month with a degree in Biological Sciences with a focus in Neurology, Physiology, and Behavior. His brother is a professional martial arts stuntman and marketing video editor at Telltale games in the bay area. “My parents have always kind of just supported whatever it seemed like we were interested in and helped us to get wherever we wanted.”

His memories of science include an impassioned young 3rd grade science teacher, named Mr. Johnson. “He really prescribed to the theory of multiple intelligence because he really let us access science in any way we wanted or could.” The class would go outside and draw insects and take notes and Mr. Johnson frequently complimented Nate on this drawing skills. “That was when I began to realize science could be reconciled with art.” Nate considers Mr. Goldberg, his high school physics teacher, his greatest teaching inspiration. During high school, Nate wanted to be a professional snowboarder; but he liked science and really loved his physics class. “Mr. Goldberg had a great way of presenting physics, which was through questions and inquiry. We would start the class with 10-15 minutes of everyone asking questions and then trying to answer them.” From that class, Nate knew he wanted to pursue a career in physics.

At the University of California, Berkeley, Nate had the opportunity to be a part of a cohort of researchers at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory working in the accelerator and fusion research division designing particle accelerator magnets. At the end of the program each student had to produce a paper that was published in an undergraduate research journal. Nate did not forget his passion for art while at college; he graduated with a double major in physics and art.

After graduating, Nate intentionally focused on an art career as a graphic artist – he needed a break from the science world. But within a few months he realized that nothing is as interesting or challenging as physics. “Doing MySpace graphics of twinkling stars while sitting by myself at a computer did not seem to cut it.” In 2008, Nate had the chance to work for the Obama campaign in Florida. He really enjoyed “organizing and working on a tough problem that involved people and required creative skills.” This made him realize that he had to somehow combine his love of physics with his love of people – teaching seemed to be the ideal role for him.

Nate became an after school teacher at the Lawrence Hall Science Museum in Berkeley. He realized he wanted to be a full-time teacher and narrowed his applications to teacher certification programs down to Teach for America in Oakland or coming to Teachers College. “It was a really hard decision: either up-root and have an adventure or stay in California and immediately start working.” Dr. Jessica Riccio helped him make his decision to come to Teachers College. “TC exactly aligns with my feelings about inquiry and student generated learning.” Not only TC but New York City seems to agree with Nate. He enjoys visiting science museums as well as art museums. He loves bringing his sketchbook to MOMA and believes that the Hall of Biodiversity at the American Museum of Natural History is one of the best exhibits in New York City. Nate – considered a silly guy by close friends –
Genzeb Jan Terchino presenting

exudes his philosophy that “teaching is fun – science is awesome.” Nate graduated with his Masters degree from Teachers College this past May. He loved his cohort and states that “they all will be amazing science teachers for a long time.”

Nate now has a teaching position at the Columbia Secondary School (CSS). It is easy to see that Nate has found his calling. “We as teachers are professionals who are absolutely responsible for the emotional and physical well being of our students. It is easy to forget that when we get nerdy about the ins and outs of curriculum design. You are their temporary guardian for the day.” His position at CSS involves teaching engineering, mathematics, art and even skateboarding! This summer he is continuing his own education by taking a physics modeling course at Arizona State University, which he will apply to his own teaching at CSS next year.

You can check out some of Nate’s science and art projects online at www.natefinney.com.

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**TCETC 2010:**
Technology, Media & Designs for Learning

During the weekend of May 15-16, 2010, Teachers College held TCETC 2010: Technology, Media & Designs for Learning. A graduate student conference focused on “research, development, and applications of new technology in K-12 classrooms, distance learning settings, higher education, and corporate learning environments.”

MST Times spoke with Caron Mineo, one of the chairs of the conference, to get the “behind-the-scenes” perspective on the event.

The conference has its beginnings about five years ago with Dana Cammack and Manu Kapur as leaders. Last year, Marion Goldstein and Antonios Saravanos served as chairs. This year Caron, Carla Engelbrecht Fisher, and Darnel Degand co-chaired the committee, with Paul Acquaro, Melanie Hibbert, Julian Oddman, Reshan Richards, and Selen Turkay assisting. Caron describes the purpose of the conference as “an opportunity for students to present on new ideas, developments, and original research. This forum supports the representation of all students, and encourages participation across a range of interests and experience.” TCETC 2010 provided a warm and friendly environment for presenters to try something new, be a mentor, or show leadership for their peers. “What I liked most was that we brought people together from across the College – math, sociology, musicology at Columbia. We had a number of students from other Universities, professionals from local non-profits and schools, and welcomed back alumni for the event.” The presenters even included three game designers from Wisconsin!

Selen Turkay piloted an online component to the conference. This included using Skype and SecondLife as modes of presentation. People from Toronto, Taiwan and Mexico joined in via the online technology during the conference. Selen created a live stream of face-to-face conference presentations into the
amphitheater on the TC’s SecondLife Island, and conversely welcomed presenters at a distance to the digital podium. A doctoral student from Pakistan gave a talk – through the online tools – about students that are being displaced in Pakistan. She talked about creating online learning environments for them to provide education to the children who cannot get to school. Including the six online presentations, there were about 50 traditional talks. This blind peer-reviewed conference, attended by almost 100 people this May, will definitely continue next year providing students with opportunities to present their research and learn more about the wonderful educational benefits of using technology. Check out the TCETC 2010 website (http://www.tc.edu/mst/ccte/index.asp?Id=Announcements&Info=TCETC+2010%3A+Technology%2C+Media%26+Designs+for+Learning) for information about next year’s conference.

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Scratch Day at TC 2010

On Saturday, May 22, 2010, Teachers College was home to a flurry of young emerging programmers. It was Scratch Day, a free day of presentations, workshops, and a Game Jam, organized by Cameron Fadjo (MA ’07 – Communication, Computing, and Technology in Education (CCTE) and PhD student in Human Development (HUD)) and sponsored by the departments of Mathematics, Science and Technology, HUD, the Institute for Learning Technologies (ILT), and the Office of School and Community Partnerships here at Teachers College. MST Times spoke with Cameron to learn more about Scratch Day at TC 2010. Fadjo, with help from Lance Vikaros (PhD student – HUD), introduced TC to Scratch Day last year and continued with it again this year. To enhance the experience of the attendees for Scratch Day at TC 2010, Cameron thought, “Since we have such a diverse population that come to Scratch Day, why don’t we capitalize on it and have different presentations showcasing some of the student work from several areas at the College.” These non-Scratch related presentations, for example, included Jessica Mezei (EdD student – CCTE) presenting on Lit: A Mobile Intervention For Nicotine Smokers and Karen Schrier (EdD student – CCTE) talking about her new book Ethics and Game Design: Teaching Values through Play. One of the highlights of the day was the keynote presentation by Idit Harel Caperton, who worked with Seymour Papert on the theory of Constructionism, which is the foundation of the Scratch programming language.

In attendance were teachers and researchers from throughout the tri-state region, along with students of all ages. For a teacher from MS 223, it was his second year coming to Scratch Day, both times bringing a group of his students to enjoy the day. “Prior to attending Scratch Day at TC, these students had very little experience with Scratch,” explains Fadjo. “After spending a day with us the students are able to increase their technology literacy and experience first hand what it means to make a computer program.” On the other hand, there are students who have used Scratch for years and have a lot of their work published online on the Scratch website. “It is second nature for them to have a place to hang out and do Scratch.”

At the end of the day a wrap-up session was held where the kids in the Game Jam and Workshops could present their projects. The Game Jam “was a full-day group design fest culminating in a show and tell for all to see and share.” Many Game Jam participants, including Owen, the 4 year old son of Eric Carson (EdM
Scratch Day – Continued

’10 – CCTE), were able to showcase their projects and share what they enjoy most about programming and learning with Scratch. This student-run event gave all attendees the opportunity to learn about the educational possibilities of using technology in a fun, exciting way. Fadjo hopes that TC will be home to another Scratch Day and Game Jam next year. “The purpose of Scratch Day at TC is to provide under-served students in the neighborhood with an opportunity to explore, create, and share with Scratch while improving their 21st century literacy skills.”


Game Jam Wrap-up Session

MST Familiar Faces

Professor Lalitha Vasudevan, Dr. Alexander Karp, and Dr. Erica N. Walker during Dr. Karen Swan’s MST Distinguished Alumnus Award Reception
MST Department Announcements


Melina Furman’s (graduate of the Science Education Program) *The Adventure of Teaching Science* (Furman and Podesta, 2009, Buenos Aires: Aique Publishing House) received the Best Education Book of the Year award given by the “El Libro Foundation”, a very prestigious foundation based in Argentina. This book was partly based on her work at the Urban Science Education Center at Teachers College.

MST Department Accomplishments

Congratulations to Professor Felicia Moore Mensah on receiving a grant from the Dean’s Fellowship Program for Teaching and Diversity (2010-2011). She will sponsor Joyce Mixson, a current TC student, as a Fellow for this project. Professor Mensah has successfully implemented book club within her science methods courses and would like to implement a similar project at an East Harlem elementary school by developing an afterschool science and literacy program for grades 4 and 5. Students will read about African American scientists, their lives, contributions and experiences, while also developing reading and writing skills. This research project also advances the College’s work in outreach to the broader community of Harlem. In the past, elementary students from local elementary schools have participated in science classes on the TC campus. With this grant, Professor Mensah wants to continue meaningful relationships with local schools focused on motivating students in science. Further congratulations are due to Professor Mensah for her work on the Editorial Review Board of Cultural Studies of Science Education as a Lead Editor. The journal provides an interactive platform for researchers working in the multidisciplinary fields of cultural studies and science education.

Dr. Michael J. Passow (M.A.T. ’71; Ed.D. ‘74) is among the organizers of the GIFT (Geophysical Information For Teachers) workshop at the American Geophysical Union Joint Assembly of the Americas in Iguassu Falls, Brazil, in August. “Rocks, Rain, and Climate” is the GIFT theme. Co-presenters are professors from several universities in Brazil. Dr. Passow will also share a poster about the Earth2Class Workshops for Teachers at Columbia’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. Dr. Passow recently completed his two-year term as President of the National Earth Science Teachers Association.
Faculty, Adjunct, Student and Alumni
Publications and Presentations


O. R. Anderson – Chapter 2


Check out MST Times online for the videos mentioned in this issue, active links, and article archives.

http://blogs.tc.columbia.edu/mst

Kenny Nienhusser, Director of Academic Administration for the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology, created MST Times in Fall 2005.

Each year, the MST Department Graduate Assistant is responsible for writing and editing the newsletter. Below, editors and respective volume numbers are listed.

Volume I (2005-2006): Raven Hebert
Volume V (2009-2010): Amy J. Rae
Volume V (Summer 2010): Diane R. Murray, drm2132@columbia.edu

If you would like a copy of the MST Times, please email your request, including full name, phone number and mailing address to Kenny Nienhusser, at nienhusser@tc.edu.