Dr. Ann Rivet, Assistant Professor, Science Education

Ann Rivet is an Assistant Professor in the Science Education Program. She completed a Bachelor's degree in Physics at Brown University, and was awarded a M.S. and Ph.D. from University of Michigan Ann Arbor. Both degrees were in Science Education with an emphasis in Earth Science. Her passion for Science Education sprung from an experience in a college Physics classroom. She recalled staring at the back of her professor’s head, watching him scribble Greek letters and equations on the board. “There has to be a better way to learn this!” she thought to herself. Since then, Ann has devoted her academic life to finding ways to do just that. During her Ph.D. studies, she collaborated on an Urban Systemic Grant sponsored by the National Science Foundation. Through this grant, Ann worked in Detroit public schools, gaining a foundation for her urban science education interests. Her Ph.D. dissertation explored the “Driving Question” that structures the unit of Science instruction. She said, “This question is supposed to engage the students with the content and structure the ideas to be presented, but nobody could really tell me how to create the question.” She asked, “What is this [“Driving Question”] actually doing?” Her conclusions revealed that careful attention to how instruction is contextualized can produce a drastic increase in student learning. After she finished at Michigan, Ann did Post-Doctoral work at Northwestern University. In her sixth year at TC, Ann is juggling three major research projects: first, a Carnegie Foundation sponsored grant assisting pre-service science and social studies teachers with integrating reading and writing skills in secondary education Science classrooms. Second, partnering with Dr. Xiaodong Lin of Communication, Computing and Technology in Education, exploring student and teacher expectations and perceptions in the context of the Science classroom, and third, serving on the GE Grant staff, studying inquiry based learning and teaching in middle school classrooms in Harlem (See page 5). In addition to research, Ann teaches Concepts in Earth Science and Curriculum and Pedagogy in Science Education. Ann values creative teaching. “Ideas are at the heart of the work I do” she said. Her focus is the relationship between learning and teaching. “There is a science behind how people come to understand ideas.” She focuses her students on designing instruction to fit within that framework, instead of saying “this is how we’ve always done it.” In winter 2007, Ann was asked to join a team of TC faculty and staff, including President Fuhrman, to visit Jordan. The visit was a part of the Educational Exchange program, crafted to bring the top Jordanian educators together and explore new ways to improve their education system. “Jordan was amazing” she said. “You have an impression of the Middle East based on the images in the media, but what I have now is real grounding experience there. I know people there, and I have something to connect it to.” Ann was impressed by the community’s “true love of life” and found the Jordanian teachers warm and enthusiastic. Outside of academia, Ann is devoted to her family and enjoys working on projects at her home. She is especially proud of her brother, who is a firefighter in New Hampshire. Her 3-year-old son and loving husband are “the center of [her] life.” On a weekend you will find her in the garden or the park, enjoying her New Jersey community.
**Upcoming Study Tour to Antigua, Guatemala**

The Summer Spanish Language Study Tour features one-on-one intensive Spanish language instruction in the historical world heritage city of Antigua de Guatemala—the colonial capitol of the 16th century’s “New Spain”. Register for 2 or 3 points in IND 4005 for the two-week Tour from January 4th - January 17th, 2009 and receive 60 hours of language instruction with your own private “native-speaker” teacher at beginning, intermediate or advanced levels and, if you wish, with emphasis upon mathematics, computing or science classroom vocabulary. A limited number of non-credit registrants may be admitted. Hotel costs of approximately $50 per night per person, meal costs of approximately $20 per day and airfare of approximately $600 are anticipated and are in addition to Teachers College tuition and the $1000 non-credit fee. Registration for the Fall 2008 Spanish Language Study Tour to Antigua, Guatemala is open. If you wish to join this Tour, call or email Krystle at (212)678-3381 or hecker@tc.edu.

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**Dr. Sadie Bragg, Alumnus, Mathematics Education**

Dr. Sadie Bragg is Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Borough of Manhattan Community College and an MST Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia with a B.S. in Mathematics. She lived in Petersburg with her parents until her second year, when she persuaded them to allow her to move on campus. This transition helped her build relationships with fellow Math majors. She said, “you shouldn’t be sitting there doing math by yourself, it’s a group effort. Working together cooperatively to learn mathematics is really the way to go.” She utilized these skills through her position as a calculus and algebra tutor and as a member of Kappa Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honor Society. At Virginia State, she met her first great mentor, Ruben McDaniel. She said “[Dr. McDaniel] helped me be who I am—We all stand on the shoulders of giants.” Though she excelled in the classroom, she made it clear that she did not want to lead one: “I will never take a job as a teacher. I never want to be a teacher!” During her junior year, she was offered an internship with IBM in Poughkeepsie. After being there a short while, she realized she missed her true love, mathematics. This was her focus until she graduated. After Virginia State, she did post-baccalaureate study at Oberlin in Algebra through the Rockefeller Foundation. She never traveled far from Virginia, so “meeting students from all over the world” was life-changing. This experience prepared her for Manhattan, where she connected with the New York Urban League Street Academy, forerunner to Alternative High Schools. Once vehemently opposed to teaching, she found herself leading a classroom. She was promoted to Program Assistant for all of the street academies in Manhattan, and realized “I like this. I like teaching!” She jokes that her college friends tease her about her new career. What sparked the change? The students. “They don’t seem to know that they know math, but in their hearts they do. They use it! They see it! But it was never real to them in a way they could understand. To them, it was always about a formula or theorem and it wasn’t fun.” Her driving question became “how do we make Mathematics fun?” Sadie moved on to a position at the Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center in Harlem and worked there for twelve years. While at M.E.O.C, she realized she needed a doctorate. She wanted to be a better teacher, and enrolled at Teachers College in the Mathematics Education Program. Her mentor at TC was Bruce Vogeli, who she now calls a colleague and friend. He “took [her] under his wing” and introduced Bragg to textbook publishing. She published a wealth of material for K-12 mathematics education, and she is currently in a 2011 contract for another book. “I owe much to Dr. Vogeli, and I owe much to Teachers College.” She reflects on her two great mentors, and believes that “all of my undergraduate experiences were because of Dr. McDaniel, and all of the experiences I had at TC are because of Dr. Vogeli.” As Senior Vice President, she no longer teaches, but lives “vicariously through her math colleagues.”

In addition, she is active nationally. Specifically, she was in a Presidential role at the American Mathematical Association of Community Colleges for six years and is currently a member of the United States National Commission for Mathematics Instruction. “And I’m far too busy” she laughs, “but I love what I do. I’m motivated by the students. Every day I see them and what we do for them—how we transform their lives.” A New Yorker for forty years, Bragg is amazed how her “life is connected” and she is working in the “same circles.” In her free time, she enjoys relaxing with her childhood sweetheart and husband of 41 years, Alvin. Her adorable granddaughter Maya is a great joy. “If I don’t see Maya, my week isn’t complete!” She also enjoys time with friends, dancing, listening to music and watching old movies.
On Friday, October 17th, 2008, MST faculty, students and staff gathered to honor CCTE alumnus, Dr. Joseph Bowman, the recipient of the 2008 MST Distinguished Alumnus Award. Recipients are selected by the MST faculty, based on their contributions to the field. The award is typically given at the graduation reception held in May. Past recipients include: Jamie Sanchez, Sadie Bragg and J. Philip Smith.

Dr. Bowman is a Service Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Theory and Practice and the Director of Center for Urban Youth and Technology (CUYT) at the University at Albany, State University of New York. He is also a member of the Board of Regents for New York State.

CCTE Team Premiers Television Show: Word on the Street

Word on the Street is a digital video project developed by a team including: CCTE Students and Shawna Bu Shell, Internship Coordinator, TC’s EdLab and Harlem Live, a Harlem based youth media after school program. The aim of this project is to create a television show that takes a closer look at issues affecting the lives of teenagers, particularly those living in an urban environment like New York City. The intent of the project is to provide a venue for high school students to develop highly marketable digital video skills while critically reflecting on questions that directly affect them.

The first of five episodes, “Technology Dependencies”, takes a look at some of the technologies commonly used by teenagers and investigates the effects of the tools on their communication, self-expression and ability to learn about the world. This episode also investigates teenagers’ awareness levels when it comes to being dependent on technology, and the extent of its presence in their lives. The episodes are three to five minutes in length, and viewers should look forward to the next four episodes soon to come: High School Employment, SAT Support, Role Models and Health and Sex Education. Special thanks to CCTE and EdLab for supplying the equipment and resources for this project. To access the first episode, check out AfterEd.tv or follow the direct link below.

Still shots from Word on the Street’s first episode: “Technology Dependencies”

To access the episode, visit:
http://www.brightcove.tv/title.jsp/

CCTE to Partner in Microsoft Games for Learning Institute (G4LI)

Teachers College, through the program in Communication, Computing and Technology in Education (CCTE; http://www.tc.edu/mst/CCTE/), home of the Games Research Lab informally known as EGGPLANT (http://www.tc.edu/centers/gamesresearchlab/), is an integral part of the recently-announced Games for Learning Institute (G4LI) funded by Microsoft Research and a consortium of universities. The G4LI will conduct research leading to design principles for educational games that can enhance learning in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Its work will focus on middle-school aged learners and takes advantage of the huge interest that adolescent youth have in playing computer and video games. Chuck Kinzer is the principal investigator at the Teachers College site. His work, consistent with the goals of the G4LI, will study games across genres and contexts, and will provide interested TC masters and doctoral students with opportunities to participate in this research effort. The institute is funded for three years and is a consortium of universities that includes educational theorists, computer scientists, and game designers; it is co-directed by Ken Perlin and Jan Plass from NYU. In addition to Chuck Kinzer at Teachers College, the list of faculty partners includes: Ken Perlin and Jan Plass (co-directors), Catherine Milne, Helen Nissenbaum, and Jean-Marc Gauthier, (all of NYU), Steven Feiner (Columbia University), Bruce Homer (CUNY), Mary Flanagan (Dartmouth), Colleen Macklin and Alex Quinn (Parsons), Carl Skelton and Katherine Isbister (Polytechnic University at NYU), Andy Phelps (Rochester Institute of Technology). The press announcement about G4LI has been picked up by many news outlets. Interested readers can find these press releases and announcements through the following Microsoft Research link:

MST Honors Dr. Joseph Bowman, Distinguished Alumnus Award Recipient

Bowman with MST students

Bowman with MST Department Chair, O. Roger Anderson
Dr. Bowman is a Service Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Theory and Practice and the Director of Center for Urban Youth and Technology (CUYT) at the University at Albany, State University of New York. He is also a member of the Board of Regents for New York State.
Dr. Felicia Moore Mensah, Science Education, Invited to RWJF Research

Dr. Felicia Moore Mensah, Assistant Professor in Science Education, was selected to participate in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Connections Research and Coaching Clinic. The New Connections program is designed to expand the diversity of perspectives that inform the RWJF programming and researchers and scholars to the Foundation, while simultaneously helping to meet staff needs for data analysis that measures progress towards program objectives. The Clinic will be held during the 2008 American Public Health Association conference in San Diego, C.A. October 24-26, 2008. New Connections supports the careers of two types of researchers: Junior Investigators and Senior Consultants. Junior Investigators are individuals who received their doctorate within the last seven years. Senior Consultants have 10-15 years of conducting research in the community. Researchers must be from historically or underrepresented communities, which include individuals from ethnic or racial minorities, low-income communities, first-generation college graduates, or others who historically have been underrepresented in research disciplines supported by RWJF (Health Insurance Coverage, Building Human Capital, Childhood Obesity, Public Health, Quality/Equality, and Vulnerable Populations). Dr. Moore Mensah’s program of research, though not in the field of public health, was selected based upon her research in promoting science education for African American students and students of color, and her work in urban schools and teacher professional development. Dr. Moore Mensah is also an Executive Board member of Sisters of the Academy (SOTA) that supports scholarship, service and teaching among Black women in the academy, which aligns with the goals of the Foundation.

Dr. Philip Smith, Visiting Professor, Mathematics Education

Dr. Philip Smith is a Visiting Professor in the Mathematics Education Program and past recipient of the MST Distinguished Alumnus Award. His undergraduate study was at Dartmouth College, and he graduated with an Honors Degree in Mathematics. He was drawn to Dartmouth’s progressive mathematics program because “the math department just had so much energy.” He took this energy to Stanford, where he was awarded a Masters of Mathematics. During a Graduate Assistantship there, his mentor became ill, and he was asked to take over teaching a high-level mathematics course. He was challenged, and his passion was ignited, and he found his true calling: teaching. He graduated from Stanford and took a job in the Connecticut State University System. Dr. Smith was liked by his students, respected by his colleagues, and eventually was selected to be Chair of the Mathematics Department at Southern Connecticut State. Not much later, he was asked to serve as the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. Eventually, he became Vice President of Academic Affairs, and after forty years of service, was asked to serve as Interim President of Southern Connecticut State University while the trustees conducted a search for a new President. He is now retired, but still teaches one or two courses a semester and was awarded a PhD in Mathematics in 1973. His legacy was one of an organizer; He worked to connect the Math program at Columbia and the TC Math community. His favorite part of the TC Mathematics curriculum? “I want my students to do more than process information; I want them to solve problems.”

There are very few courses which are required, so “you can create for yourself a perfect program.” He was also delighted by the wealth of courses he could take as electives. When reflecting on his TC experience, he said “I could not have had better mathematics preparation.” He started teaching part time at TC in 1975 and was offered the opportunity to serve as Interim Chair of the Mathematics Education Department while Dr. Vogeli was on sabbatical. TC is a “great environment.” He said, “this is the only place I’ve been where the graffiti in the men’s room is positive: It says, “I love this place.” Outside of teaching, Phil is immensely proud of his children. He said, “they are successful professionals and interesting people.” A vacation for Phil involves reading 15-20 books or collecting historical postage stamps. He boasts “I have one of the best collections of American stamps in New England!”
Jessica Hammer, Instructor, CCTE

Jessica Hammer is currently an Instructor in the Communication, Computing and Technology in Education Department. Jessica was awarded a Bachelors Degree in Computer Science from Harvard University, an M.P.S. in Interactive Telecommunications from New York University, and is currently working on her PhD in the Cognitive Studies program here at TC. With a rich and diverse educational background, Jessica uses her expertise to ask meaningful research questions that connect seemingly unrelated fields. Her multifarious interests include stories, games and learning, creative communities, creating meaning, collaboration, rules and systems and technology. The question that fuels all of her research is: “Technology... so what?” Jessica wants to know how technology can help us with “addressing and answering the big questions in life: What am I here to do? How can I make a contribution to the world? How do I take care of the people around me? How do I find and create meaning in my day to day experience?” Most recently, Jessica served as an editor for the E-Learning Journal, working on the Games and Learning issue. Her philosophy for this position was to “close the divide between people’s perspectives on digital and non-digital games” and find “unity in diversity.” In addition, She is the proud instructor of a two-course sequence in the CCTE program at Teachers College in Gaming and Education. “For me, teaching is a very personal experience, and I feel a profound commitment to my students.” To Jessica, students are collaborators in her process of asking important questions about technology. She quotes the epigraph from her father’s book: “I have learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues, and most from my students.” On top of shared learning, Jessica is having a ball at TC. “The best thing about being here [at TC] has been the quality of the people I’ve been able to work with. Not everyone has the same research interests, but I’ve been really lucky to work with people who have a gift for asking troubling questions. I like to be troubled. There are faculty here who will trouble you. Other doctoral students who will trouble you. I feel lucky that my students trouble me!” She is delighted that being at TC provides her a context to study the areas she is “obsessed with”. Outside of academia, Jessica is a voracious reader; She averages about a book a day! As you may have guessed, she also enjoys playing video games. Right now, she is playing Patapon, a strategic rhythm game, in which players control an army by tapping out special beats. She also takes sailing classes and enjoys singing and playing piano.

GE Grant Update

In early 2008, Teachers College was awarded a five million dollar grant from the GE Foundation, the philanthropic branch of General Electric. The GE Grant is The Harlem Schools Partnership for Science and Math Education. The purpose of the grant is to provide professional development in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) for teachers in Harlem schools. TC will be partnering with ten to thirteen West Harlem schools to build relationships, empowering teachers with new innovative techniques in Math and Science Education. In addition, the grant provides support for both teachers and students. We have six MST faculty involved with the grant, including Ann Rivet, Christopher Emdin, Felicia Moore Mensah, Alexander Karp, Erica Walker and Ellen Meier. Currently, there are eight school partnerships confirmed.

Dr. Janell Catlin, MST Alumnus and Adjunct Faculty, is the Project Director for the GE Grant. She is most excited about “being able to practice what we discuss in theory so much, and having a first hand in helping to support Harlem schools.” She works within The Office of School and Community Partnerships, where one can find information about how TC is reaching out to the surrounding community. There are many opportunities for students to be involved. To learn more, stop by 758 Thorndike Hall or visit the website: www.tc.edu/oscp

Graduate Research Fellowship Information:

Three fully-funded doctoral graduate fellowships will be offered to students in the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology for the 2009-2010 academic year. Additionally, some part-time research fellowships for masters and doctoral students will be offered for spring 2009.
Recent Accomplishments

Scott Genzer, a Mathematics Education alumnus, is currently working for a U.S. Embassy school in Zambia. He serves as the head of the mathematics department and is heavily involved with the International Baccalaureate Organization’s mathematics curriculum committee. In addition, his book IB Study Guide for Mathematical Studies SL will be available February 2009 by Oxford University Press.

Manu Kapur, Assistant Professor of Learning Sciences & Technology at the National Institute of Education and CCTE alumnus, was invited by the European Union to give a keynote address during the annual European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning. Kapur will speak on his TC doctoral work: Productive Failure.

Janice Kelly, a 2006 CCTE alumnus, is currently an Assistant Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at Molloy College in Rockville Centre, NY. Last May, she received a $12,000 grant to study perceptions of fathers in the media, and her work was featured in USA Today.

Jae Ki Lee, Ed.D. candidate in Mathematics Education, will present The 2537 Rule, a combination of Korean and American math properties and a new approach to solve fractional problems, at the 2008 Association of Math Teachers of New York State conference in November.

Dr. Maritza B. Macdonald, alumnus and Adjunct Professor, is being honored at by the Educational Equity Center as an outstanding leader in educational equity issues.

Jessica Riccio, coordinator and advisor of the Secondary Preservice MA Program, successfully completed her Ed.D. this past May. She was appointed to the Science Education Faculty as a Lecturer, beginning September 1st 2008.

Sean Telles, a new M.A. student in Instructional Technology and Media, works for National Geographic Kids. His work is focused on a show called “Toot and Puddle,” set to premier on Noggin (Nickelodeon’s Preschool Channel) this November.

Link: http://www.noggin.com/shows/tootpuddle.php

Recent Publications


