It is the mark of a strong organization to recognize emerging trends and adapt them for its own. Teachers College is no different. As the world becomes smaller and the means of interaction easier and simpler, changes must be made to communicate more effectively with people of different backgrounds and cultures. The Certificate Program in Teaching Chinese to Students of Other Languages, or TCSOL, is a new TC program that reflects this idea. Dr. ZhaoHong Han, Associate Professor of Language and Education, recently received a $20,000 Provost's Investment Grant for Program Development Initiatives. The grant became seed money for TCSOL's development, and its first class of students entered TC this fall. The Certificate Program is a collaboration of three groups: TESOL and Applied Linguistics at TC, the Chinese Language Program in East Asia Languages and Cultures (EALAC) at Columbia University, and Asia for Educators at SIPA. Dr. Han remarks that the cooperation of the three schools creates an opportunity for “pooling our strengths together and building on our strengths.”

This Program could not be coming at a better time as the demand for teachers of Chinese is higher than ever. The U.S. Government recently designated Chinese as one of the critical languages Americans should be learning. This announcement came shortly after a National Virtual Translation Center report that indicated that 300 million Chinese are currently learning English while only 34,000 American college students are studying Chinese.

Nevertheless, more and more students of all ages want to learn Chinese, as demonstrated by the growth of AP Chinese in high school. Dr. Han explains that the increased American demand for learning Chinese has led to a “severe shortage” in the number of qualified teachers to meet it. Furthermore, as most of the United States is an “input-poor” environment for Chinese – that is, people hoping to learn the language have little exposure to it outside the classroom — having qualified and capable teachers is all the more important for students to learn the language well. The new Certificate Program is a way for Teachers College to help address this fast-growing demand for learning Chinese here in the United States. While there are not enough teacher education programs for Chinese, they are on the rise. This makes the climate ideal for TC to establish itself as a strong choice for people looking to pursue this option.

Dr. Han reports that this first class is an incredibly dedicated group of 16 students, who meet 12 weekends during one academic year to take classes. Dr. Han notes that the students are also a diverse group, including English majors, students who have earned or are earning an M.A., doctoral students, and people who have been Chinese teachers in private schools. There are also several students looking for a change in career; the demand for teachers of Chinese makes this Certificate Program particularly attractive. This diversity of backgrounds,
Dear Colleagues,

What an exciting time to be at TC! With the creation of the new Provost Investment Fund in 2007, our faculty now have more opportunities to pursue innovative ideas in education. Through a competitive application process, the Fund distributes $400,000 through a series of $20,000 grants to stimulate new ideas and enhance existing programs. Over the past two years, the Department of Arts and Humanities has been fortunate to receive ten grants from the PIF fund.

Several of the recipients and their projects are profiled in this issue. Though these initiatives stretch across many programs in and beyond the Department, they share an emphasis on collaboration, creativity, and innovation. These projects recognize the importance of building and improving on the strong foundation already in place at TC.

In addition, this issue of the A&H newsletter highlights recent events that explore cross-cultural dialogue through other avenues. It is hoped that these articles will help further the kind of exciting intellectual and programmatic exchange that we value so highly in the Department of Arts and Humanities.

I look forward to hearing your reactions as well as ideas for future issues. If you’d like to contribute an article to a future edition of the newsletter, please let us know!

Best,
Margaret Crocco

Special Thanks To:

Professor Harold Abeles
Professor Renee Cherow-O’Leary
Professor Margaret Crocco
Professor ZhaoHong Han

Professor Olga Hubard
Professor Joan Jeffri
Professor Anand Marri
Professor Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz

for graciously agreeing to be interviewed for this issue

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and Rebecca Solow for taking the beautiful pictures of the A&H Department featured in this issue

Interested in being included in the next issue of the Gazette?
Please contact Professor Margaret Crocco (crocco@tc.columbia.edu) or Allison Curran (amc2254@columbia.edu) to set up an appointment.

Layout design and interviews conducted by Allison Curran
Many schools these days focus largely on reading and math. As a result, many other subjects have been given less attention. Considering this, how can teachers ensure that the arts get the attention they so desperately need? Harold Abeles, Professor of Music Education, received a Provost Investment Fund grant on behalf of the faculty of the arts at Teachers College to help answer this question. He explains that its goal is to “establish collaborative research and service” that would enrich and encourage the fostering of creativity and imagination across Teachers College as well as throughout New York City.

Professor Abeles explained that with the decreasing amount of time spent on the arts in schools, it is important to shift the approach towards creating an integrated curriculum. This approach is designed to show how music and the arts can be blended with other school subjects for a more creative, interactive, and exciting classroom. The funds will be used towards development of a focus on “Creativity and Imagination” in conjunction with other faculty members in the Department of Arts and Humanities.

The initial grant proposal hopes to “create, test, and refine interdisciplinary approaches to school and community-based programs in arts education, with a targeted focus on service and research directed at youth populations in urban public school settings.” Professor Abeles explains that blending the arts with other subjects can preserve the arts in the classroom as well as inject a fresh approach to teaching. As the proposal explains, creating projects that do this “explicate how learning in the arts is essential to the development of the ‘creative class,’ and necessary for national economic sustainability and growth.”

The emphasis on creativity and imagination is by no means exclusive to the Department of Arts and Humanities. Expanding this focus beyond the Department allows not only for a broader range of ideas but also a greater opportunity to communicate and collaborate with other faculty with related interests. This interaction can stimulate faculty to find the common threads that will pinpoint school experiences conducive to developing creativity. Professor Abeles explains that a group of scholars will be asked over the next year to develop position papers, statements, and suggestions for how different fields relate to this “big idea.” TC may then sponsor a national symposium on creativity and imagination with the papers serving as the catalysts for panels and discussions and, it is hoped, lead to future research projects and grant proposals.

As far as student involvement goes, Professor Abeles explains, “students can support this work in a variety of ways.” The proposal emphasizes a “commitment to intra- and inter-departmental faculty/student collaboration and recognition of the importance of scholarly work-in-practice as an essential tool for substantive societal change.” He likens an ideal approach to that utilized by science research labs, many people in all different levels of education incubating new ideas and working towards a common goal. In this case, the research and service go toward answering the question “what are good ways to develop children’s creativity in schools?” The results can also be used towards the development of curricula or different models of developing creativity.

With these tools, it is possible that the American classroom can begin the shift back to the kind of diversified education it has been missing over the last twenty years in many places. Professor Abeles mentions that President Obama has given the promotion of creativity and imagination a strong show of support. In his arts education platform, Obama noted that “To remain competitive in the global economy, America needs to reinvigorate the kind of creativity and innovation that has made this country great.”

- President Barack Obama

“To remain competitive in the global economy, America needs to reinvigorate the kind of creativity and innovation that has made this country great...In addition to giving our children the science and math skills they need to compete in the new global context, we should also encourage the ability to think creatively that comes from a meaningful arts education.” With some dedication and persistence, as well as the encouragement of a Provost Grant, it is possible that this goal may become a reality sooner rather than later.
Listening to the “Voices from the Field”

Maintaining a strong relationship with alumni is a way for Teachers College to hear directly how its former students are doing in the field and how best to prepare the next generation of educators. One research project that has taken this opportunity to learn from alumni is “Voices from the Field: Examining the Experience of English Education Graduates,” which recently received a PIF grant. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Visiting Professor of English Education, explained that one of the study’s goals is to “use [the alumni] experiences to shape a program that really meets teachers’ needs for the 21st century.”

Professor Sealey-Ruiz came to TC in January of 2008 and wanted to dive into the work that the school was already doing to better itself and its students. She thought this kind of study was the ideal opportunity to connect the goals of the English Education Program to the goals outlined in the College’s self-study. Rather than create a program from scratch, she explained that she first looked at what the program was doing, reviewed the outcomes of the program’s self-study and designed a research project with her colleagues that could result in important changes to the program. Because the English Education Program, like other TC programs, is always looking for ways to grow and improve, it made sense to talk to alumni and “have them teach us” what worked and what could be improved upon. Professor Sealey-Ruiz also explained that she recognizes a need for TC to “create more of a bridge between what we’re teaching and what’s happening in urban schools” and that this study will “give us a chance to get particulars” directly from teachers in the field.

The “Voices from the Field” study consists of several components. The entire English Education faculty submitted questions that they most wanted the Program’s alumni to answer: what was most helpful from their experience at TC, what needed improvement, and whether the Program met their current needs as teachers. The questions were compiled and streamlined into the alumni survey mailed out by the Office of Accreditation and mailed to 235 English Education alumni. An electronic survey is scheduled to be mailed to alumni teaching outside the country and to those alumni who did not return the paper survey. The questions submitted by the faculty were also used to develop the interview protocol used during alumni focus groups.

So far, the research team has interviewed ten alumni who are currently teaching in different types of schools: private, public, and charter. During the focus group interviews, the alumni have the opportunity to discuss their experiences in the classroom, the most helpful aspects of the English Education Program, and which areas could be enhanced to best prepare its current students. Additional focus groups are scheduled for March and April, 2009. Professor Sealey-Ruiz explains that this study is a fantastic way for the English Education Program to self-assess, and believes “who better to inform us how we need to adjust than the people [working in the classrooms] every day?”

The data has yet to be compiled and the themes yet to be examined, but Professor Sealey-Ruiz is already excited to see how the alumni’s responses can be translated into changes for the Program. As a general observation, she mentioned that those alumni who are teaching in private schools particularly appreciated the theory they learned from the Program, while those in public schools most appreciated the practical classes that gave them strategies. The results of the study will be reviewed with the English Education faculty, and any enhancements to the program will be facilitated by the English Education Program Committee that formed in January, 2009, shortly after the Program’s self-study report was issued.

In addition to TC benefiting from the alumni’s experiences, Professor Sealey-Ruiz also remarked that it was wonderful to welcome these alumni back to share their experiences. Many who attended the focus groups commented that returning to campus was like “coming home again”. She also commented on the importance of keeping TC as a presence in their lives. She believes that asking alumni to come back and talk to us shows them how much TC values their experiences and wants to learn from those who are “bringing to fruition the ideas and philosophies they developed while in the program”. She explained that studies like “Voices” lets the “alums know we want to hear from you and we’re listening to what you have to say.” This sentiment is certainly one that many programs at TC echo, and it is hoped that studies like this one will keep those lines of communications open for many years to come.
Macy Gallery Exhibitions
Located on the fourth floor of Macy Hall, Room 444

Currently Showing:
Italian Works on Paper Part 1
March 2 - 13, 2009
Curators: Filippo Fossati and Maurizio Pellegrin

Upcoming Exhibitions:
Harlem Expressions: TRUCE Youth Artists Explore Community
March 23-April 3, 2009
Curators: Kim Elniski, Laura Vural
Reception: March 27, 5-8 pm

Exhibition from Advanced Studio
April 6-17, 2009
Curator: Maurizio Pellegrin
Reception: April 10, 5-8 pm

Student Spring Exhibition
April 20-May 1, 2009
Reception: April 24, 5-8 pm

Student Teacher Exhibition
May 4-18, 2009
Reception: May 8, 5-8 pm

Burkina Faso: Portraits by Patricia Blanchet
May 4-18, 2009
Curator: Kristine Roome
Reception: May 22, 5-8 pm

Latin American Art presented by ALAS (Association of Latin American Students at TC)
June 7-13, 2009
Curators: Marcelo De Stefano and Javier Iturralde de Bracamonte
Reception: TBA

Recent Shows:
Adolescent Voices: Works of Students from the Frank Sinatra School for the Arts
February 16-27
Curator: Judith Burton

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Image from the Tribal Art from Africa exhibition, produced in collaboration with Bangally African Expo, New York (February 2-13)
More Zen, Less Phobia: A Film Screening and Discussion on Violence in South Africa

Editor’s Note: Professor Steven C. Dubin generously submitted this article to the Gazette about a film screening and discussion last November. In keeping with this issue’s theme of using the arts as a catalyst for discussion, self-reflection, and innovation, this article presents a creative way of dealing with and growing from a situation fraught with crisis and violence:

Locals and members of the world community alike were shaken when widespread violence broke out in South Africa in May 2008 against people who were perceived to be “foreigners.” It was especially ferocious in Johannesburg, but flared up in the Cape Town and Durban areas as well. After it subsided, 62 people had been murdered and an additional 70,000 traumatized men, women and children had sought refuge in emergency camps. As it turned out, a third of those who were killed were actually South African citizens.

One of the few bright spots in all this was the response of a group called Filmmakers Against Racism: its members produced public service announcements with well-known SA personalities which played on television and at movie theaters, and they completed nine films about what had occurred. These works were featured at the Tri-continental Film Festival in South Africa in August, merely three months following the events.

Dr. Steven Dubin, Professor of Arts Administration, organized a screening of two of the films on November 17, 2008 in Russell Library at TC, and enlisted two South Africans, Dr. Hloniphia Mokoena (Columbia University Anthropology Department) and Francois Verster (an independent filmmaker and Queen Wilhelmina Visiting Assistant Professor of the history, language and literature of the Dutch-speaking people at CU), to serve as co-respondents with him.

The films that were shown were The Burning Man, about a laborer from Mozambique who was burned to death in Johannesburg (pictures of him ablaze became a grisly symbol of the xenophobic violence), and Affectionately Known as Alex, shot in the Johannesburg township of Alexandra in the months preceding the violence (revealing the feelings of residents about the immigrants living in their midst) and also during the hostilities. The selection of these particular films was deliberate. The first was a straightforward narrative that investigated the life and death of a specific victim. The second demonstrated a more verité style: rather than recounting one story from start to finish, it took the pulse of a community.

The films provoked an energetic discussion from an audience representing various backgrounds, perspectives, and associations with the university. This dialogue turned out to be as complex as the reasons for the outbreak of violence, including such issues as acute competition for scarce jobs and housing; large numbers of political refugees and economic migrants streaming into the country; dissatisfaction with government corruption and inadequate service delivery; and a major transition of political power.

The debate about what occurred, and why it did, will continue for a long time. This event succeeded in opening up a community conversation about it.

See page 5 for a complete list of the exhibitions in Macy Gallery

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Solow
Teaching Financial Literacy in Schools

Reading (a Balance Sheet), Writing (Checks), and 'Rithmetic:

Adjusting to the new rules and responsibilities of adulthood is never easy for young people, no matter their upbringing. Arguably, one of the most difficult aspects is learning how to be financially responsible. In an age when everyone from the President to one’s parents is emphasizing the importance of fiscal responsibility, it is important that students learn how to manage their money properly and resist the lures of credit card debt and carefree spending.

Anand R. Marri, Assistant Professor of Social Studies and Education, recognizes this reality. He is currently beginning a study to encourage and improve financial and economic literacy in urban schools. The PIF grant he received is going towards the implementation of this project, which will begin over the next few months. Professor Marri plans to look at a set of sample schools to discover what kind of financial education their students are already receiving. He believes it is most effective to implement this kind of curriculum by integrating it into what the students are already learning, rather than create an after-school program that might not reach as many. The best way to get the information to students is to have their teachers incorporate it into lessons. Because of TC’s location, he hopes to begin in Manhattan, ideally in three nearby schools in Harlem. Talks are currently underway to partner with Columbia’s Economic Department, which could help provide the content for the curriculum.

While New York students traditionally do not study economics until senior year, Professor Marri plans to focus on grades 7-12 so students can develop financial literacy earlier, particularly when one considers that credit card companies often target high school students. In the study, Professor Marri will “look at what they know” about financial literacy, based on classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and administration of a financial literacy survey to students. He will also examine whether finance lessons turn up in classes like math or social studies.

Professor Marri says the curriculum may be based on I.O.U.S.A., a 2008 documentary about United States national debt. The movie focuses on the United States’ many types of debt: savings debt, trade debt, leadership debt, and the (potentially bleak) future of the American economy. While I.O.U.S.A. does not focus on secondary school, Professor Marri hopes that the curriculum might “use the movie as an impetus for teaching about economic literacy.”

Not only will having a sound financial education help students be more savvy with their money, it also ties into the idea of active citizenship, a concept about which Professor Marri feels strongly [for more about active citizenship in Professor Marri’s research, see the October 2008 edition of the Gazette]. Professor Marri notes that finance is tied into all aspects of citizenship and national awareness. For example, “pull up the New York Times,” he says, and “the front-page articles are about the stimulus package and Merrill Lynch bonuses.” Citizens need financial literacy in order to understand, and therefore fully participate, in making decisions about such issues.

While the most recently received grant is going toward beginning the project, some of it will also be used as a “springboard” for seeking funding for later phases. Professor Marri hopes to continue the project by studying existing financial education literature with an eye towards “adapt[ing] it in a way that makes sense for urban kids.” He also hopes that future grants will go toward training 200 teachers in New York City to teach the curriculum to their students. He also said that Suzanne Murphy, Vice President for Development and External Affairs, and Provost Thomas James have taken a particular interest in the project and are helping find donors, for which he is grateful. He hopes to apply for five additional project-related grants over the next year. The PIF, he explains, serves as the “catalyst” for this endeavor as it “gives you time to explore possibilities.” With any luck, adapting high school curricula to encourage financial literacy will help create a new generation of active citizens – as well as make the transition to adulthood for these students a little bit easier. If only adults would also learn these lessons!
Broadening the Arts Administration Field: a New Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program

In many respects, the arts are the embodiment of innovation: constantly changing, adapting and reacting to the outside world and bringing together seemingly disparate elements to a common end. It makes sense, then, that an academic program in the arts is similarly broad-minded in its approach. All those who study and focus on the arts need to learn how to incorporate a variety of disciplines and areas of study and learn how best to apply them in practical settings. Joan Jeffri, Coordinator of the Program in Arts Administration, and Steven C. Dubin, Professor of Arts Administration, recently received a Provost Investment Fund grant to develop a proposal for an interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Arts and Cultural Policy and Management. This Program would be the only one of its kind in the country and incorporate a wide range of disciplines in order to help the field of arts administration education reach a new level of research and inquiry.

Professor Jeffri explains that currently there is no broad international Cultural Policy and Management doctoral degree available worldwide. Doctoral programs that do exist in this general area, like Theater Management, are extremely targeted. A Ph.D. degree at a great research university is a “felt need in the field.” According to the proposal for the Program, now being reviewed at the College, coursework, dissertation, and defense will likely take four years to complete. The degree program will have a very small cohort, with students selected every two years. Professors Jeffri and Dubin hope that the first class will be inducted in either 2010 or 2011. The Program will be designed to educate people who work in cultural institutions, in government here and abroad, in foundations, corporations or other philanthropic organizations, and as arts teachers, among many others.

The Arts Administration Program at TC is already known for its interdisciplinary nature; students in this program study at Columbia Business School, work with professors from Columbia Law School, and have the option to take electives from the Graduate School of the Arts and SIPA, among other schools on the greater Columbia campus. Similarly, the doctoral program would have a “very deep interdisciplinary” nature, consisting of three core areas: International Cultural Policy, International Arts Heritage and Preservation, and Cultural Economics/Cultural Marketing/Cultural Institutions. There will also be some “anchor courses” in the School of the Arts, where the program originated, as well as at the Columbia Business School. The advisory committee is also interdisciplinary, consisting of professors from many different programs in and beyond TC.

The interdisciplinary nature of the Program will allow students to focus on many different areas; for example, it is possible for one student to focus his Ph.D. on public art and another to center hers around cultural economics. The Program will also incorporate many international comparisons, as well as look at critical theories and examine them across a series of international arts landscapes. It is crucial to examine the arts across an international spectrum as cultural policy systems vary widely from country to country. Essentially, Professors Dubin and Jeffri “constructed a degree we’d want to take.”

The Program will allow the Arts Administration field to “develop its own kind of intellectual underpinning” instead of being largely focused on practice. This Program, Jeffri explains, will provide a “very rich environment for people to develop ideas with other critical thinkers.” Being able to articulate and utilize different ideas, theories, and philosophies about arts and cultural management and administration is something that can originate in the classroom but needs to go beyond classrooms. Since the “field is so reactive,” it can be very difficult to do much other than keep up with the management of institutions. A great need exists for bringing theory to bear on practice in a way that will allow the field to advance beyond this reactive, practice-focused orientation.

It appears that there will be no problem in attracting students to the Program. Professors Jeffri and Dubin have already conducted a nationwide market survey of 400 alumni of Arts Administration Master’s programs. Of these, two-thirds were “interested” or “very interested” in such a program. Professor Jeffri says that

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Learning to Read Between the Pictures

Picture books are a big part of a child's early literacy education. Images that complement a text are a wonderful way to engage children with a story. But what role do images play in children's ability to construct meaning? How do the meanings of images and text interact in a child's mind? Olga Hubard, Assistant Professor of Art Education, along with her colleagues from the International Education Program, are trying to answer some of these questions with their "In Search of Metaphors" study, which recently received a PIF grant.

Professor Hubard says she got involved in the project when her colleagues from the Bilingual and Bicultural Education Program spoke with her about a research project they were doing studying "read-alouds," where the teacher reads a story to the class in Spanish-English dual language classrooms. They spoke about the role of metaphors in the stories as well as language and cultural development. Professor Hubard says she asked whether they paid attention to the pictures in the stories. When they said no, she became involved.

Professor Hubard's expertise lies in the realm of museum education, a sphere that works specifically through engagement with images and objects. She explains that she hopes this project will create a dialogue between art education and dual language programs. She explains that many educators discuss multi-literacy, or the idea that people can communicate more effectively through different languages. However, she points out that often multi-literacy approaches "don't consider visual imagery." Since so many elementary school classrooms use picture books regularly, this project is a way to find out "how, if at all, teachers in dual language programs help students learn through engagement with images."

Currently, the project is in the first research phase, where her colleagues are studying a range of public schools to identify schools where teachers utilize picture books in dual-language classrooms. Once the initial phase is completed, Professor Hubard plans to observe the classes in action and interview some of the teachers. She insists that she is "coming in with no assumptions" about what the classes will reveal. However, she hopes that the study will be able to bridge the gap between museum education and the classroom to help Latino students and, more broadly, to initiate a greater dialogue between art education and dual language learning.

Broadening the Arts Administration Field

(continued from page 8)

other schools with Arts Administration Master's Degree programs contact her frequently to check on the status of the program and notes that many she has spoken with are "hungry" for a program like this; some TC Arts Administration alumni, eager to return to TC, contact her every month to check in about the Program's development. With such strong interest, there can be no doubt that this program will do much to encourage the interdisciplinary spirit which is a focus of Teachers College as well as in the management and policy-making arenas of the arts, both here and abroad.

Come see a display of recently published books by our faculty in the Arts & Humanities Office, 334 Horace Mann
Extending a Hand, for History and the Planet: Two New Initiatives from Social Studies

Innovation and collaboration often go hand-in-hand. In order to be more innovative in one’s work, people look outward, to others’ models and methods for success. Collaboration is a hallmark and a result of this outward-looking process. Margaret Crocco, Professor of Social Studies and Chair of the Department of Arts and Humanities, recognizes the importance of collaboration, as evidenced by the title of her PIF grant proposal: “Building Bridges to Columbia University through History and Environmental Education.” The proposal itself was a collaborative effort with Professors William Gaudelli and Anand Marri, and is designed to strengthen the relationship between the Program in Social Studies and other programs within and outside of Columbia.

The “Building Bridges” project is actually two separate initiatives from the Program in Social Studies. The first half of the grant will go towards the development of a joint B.A.-M.A. program with the History Department at Columbia University. Professor Crocco explains that she has had a series of conversations with her colleagues in the History Department over the past five years about collaborating but, despite mutual interest, no formal plans had ever been made. The two departments hope that this grant money will help create a seamless program for history students interested in becoming teachers. While Teach for America is a popular option for many Columbia graduates, Professor Crocco explains that many who choose TFA only spend two or three years teaching. Although they may continue working in education afterward, they often do not remain in teaching. The new integrated program would offer an alternative to TFA with a “seamless” transition from the History Department into TC. Professor Crocco remarks on the fortuitous timing of this initiative, as the “lure of Wall Street” for many graduates has “dimmed” over the past few months. She, along with a graduate student helping to write the proposal and her colleagues at TC and Columbia are currently creating the degree proposal. Ideally, she says, the program could begin as early as the fall of 2010.

The other half of the PIF grant will go towards developing a relationship between the Program in Social Studies and the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation (CERC), a part of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. This relationship is not to develop a degree program, but rather to put a greater emphasis on sustainability in the Program in Social Studies. Dr. Crocco explains that the CERC initiative is a way to “revitalize that component” of “the tradition within our field of teaching social issues.” She cites Dr. Diana Hess’s course on teaching controversial issues, as well as the “Teaching The Levees” project as related examples. While she notes that teaching about the environment has always been part of the traditional approach of social studies, the “extraordinary seriousness of global climate change” is forcing people to take a closer look at the present curriculum and how to impart the seriousness of these issues.

Focusing on the environment is as much a civic issue as a scientific one. Professor Crocco explains that “in a democracy like ours, people need to be well informed” about environmental issues and the importance of sustainability. She says that, as citizens, there is a “series of choices we’re going to have to make...if we’re going to handle successfully the challenges global climate change is presenting.” Her colleagues Professor Marri and Professor Gaudelli are each working on modules for their own courses that highlight sustainability, to “begin to infuse this content into what we’re already doing.” While the priority is to impart the seriousness of the sustainability issue into the TC curriculum and collective mindset, a secondary purpose might be to create online classes, workshops, or symposia to reach a broader audience. Professor Crocco has already met with Drs. Nancy Degnan, Executive Director of CERC, and Shahid Naeem, Director of Science. The Program may also collaborate with the TC Science Education Program, and could possibly pilot some offerings as early as next year. The grant money will also go towards discovering what other education programs nationwide focus on sustainability. Dr. Crocco explains that this “investigation of possibilities” may also bring about closer collaborations with other

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organizations. Based on the number of collaborations from this one grant, it seems that the Program in Social Studies is not so much building bridges as becoming a hub, a point of convergence for many different collaborative programs and, from that, a hotbed of innovation.

Exploring Digital Media: Mapping Technology at TC

It goes without saying that we live in an increasingly digital age. This is fast becoming a society where a presentation without PowerPoint is a rare occurrence; social engagement can occur in a dozen different electronic forms; and people send more missives via their computers than the post office. Anyone who has ever walked into Horace Mann 234 knows that TC possesses an incredible wealth of technological resources. With so many different technological innovations and updates virtually every day, it can be difficult to keep track of who knows the kinds of technology is available, let alone who uses which type and when. Professor Renee Cherow-O’Leary, Assistant Professor of English Education, along with Professors Ellen Meier and Lalitha Vasudevan in the Math, Science, and Technology Department, plan to find some of these connections with their PIF grant, entitled “More Than One Way to Connect the Dots – Linking Technology and Education.”

The first stage of the project consists of data collection to learn who is using technology at TC and how. Professor Cherow-O’Leary and her colleagues plan to explore how 21st century technology and digital media are used and can be used at TC as well as find ways to identify how these resources are transforming teaching and learning through the TC community.

Outside of this project, Professor Cherow-O’Leary studies the “social impact of new technologies on education” and helps people “navigate [these] new texts.” She encourages working with new media because digital technologies have so much potential to enhance teaching and learning since they are by nature interactive, complex, and interdisciplinary. With the Provost’s Investment Grant as a structure, Professor Cherow-O’Leary and her colleagues plan to explore where the “data will lead us” and they plan to create a multimedia representation of the data, naturally incorporating some of the innovative technology they are studying. More than anything, Professor Cherow-O’Leary hopes the study will create resources and “a place of play for these ideas to grow.”

This study will create a description of technologies and their application to education, “not a prescription” about how best to utilize them. With a better knowledge of what tools are available, educators can better utilize these resources in their classrooms. By connecting the dots across technological resources and TC departments, TC’s educators can make their pedagogy more responsive to the fast-paced digital age.
she explains, has made class discussions incredibly dynamic and stimulating. All the students in this class had to meet a high level of Chinese proficiency in order to be accepted. When they graduate, they will be looking for teaching jobs “either here or elsewhere.”

Classes are conducted primarily in English since they will be teaching students whose primary language is English. The students and professors occasionally switch to Chinese in order to explain particular concepts. The courses themselves are not about raising speaking proficiency among participants but about explaining, to some degree, how the language works in order to explain it to future students. The students receive opportunities for “microteaching” before working with students in the schools. Professor Han remarks that although having classes all weekend can be taxing for the students, the quality of their work has been excellent. The students, through writing in their course journals, reciprocate this sentiment, writing about their excitement for and interest in their classes, as well as their respect and admiration for Professor Han.

The Program is already growing in popularity, with people contacting TCSOL about applying to and collaborating with the Program. Professor Han says the TC community has offered much support. Currently the Program is trying to reach out to other institutions, among them the Asia Society in New York City, the Association for the Teaching of Chinese, and a government-funded office in Beijing. The growth process, as with any program or organization, is challenging. As the Program develops, it will ideally establish its own brand and expand in terms of both the number of participants and institutional partnerships. Overall, a strong indicator of growth will be the number of people who contact the Program instead of vice versa. There is some indication that this has already begun. Based on the level of skill and dedication of the current students, the Program seems likely to grow in the future. So while spending twelve weekends in intensive study may sound difficult, Professor Han admits that “if we want to do something good for society... we have to stretch ourselves.” This seems like an excellent motto for the Program and an important life lesson as well.