Professor Bruce R. Vogeli, Mathematics Education

Professor Bruce R. Vogeli is the Program Director for Mathematics Education and the Clifford Brewster Upton Professor of Mathematics. He has been a professor at TC since 1965 and the program director since 1972. Attending Mount Union College for his undergraduate degree, Vogeli majored in both mathematics and chemistry. He had worked in a lab for a short time and did not enjoy “bottle washing and meter-reading,” so he began to consider a career in mathematics. Having enjoyed being a YMCA counselor, Vogeli realized that he wanted to pursue his career in mathematics education. He adds that in teaching mathematics, he “didn’t have to worry about explosions in the chemistry lab.”

One of Vogeli’s passions has always been comparative education and he was an avid reader of journals in Spanish, German, Russian and French. In the early 60’s, President Kennedy helped to create a program to develop professional international exchanges in mathematics. At the time, Vogeli was teaching at Bowling Green State University, and, due to the fact that he could speak Russian, received an invitation from JFK to teach in Russia. He taught at both Moscow State University and the Lenin Pedagogical Institute. Besides teaching in Russia, Vogeli has also taught in many other countries, including India, Chile, Argentina, Iceland and China. While teaching in India, he was actually teaching for TC as the Visiting Foreign Service Associate Professor. It was this experience that Vogeli credits with earning him an appointment as a faculty member at TC. All of these experiences in other countries had an impact on his views of mathematics and its teaching. Years ago, Vogeli says that he was a strong supporter and advocator of modern math. But, he states, “I have come to temper my activism.” He began to realize that “modern math” did not work well in developing countries and says, “Educational programs are not very exportable or importable. They need to be homegrown.”

Aligned with his interest in comparative education, Vogeli has been the coordinator of the Mathematics Study Tours, in conjunction with CEO&I. Over the past twelve years, he has led students all over the world, including East Africa, People’s Republic of China, Korea, and Finland, Chile and Argentina. Vogeli has written an immense number of books and publications throughout his career. Most notably, he has written over 200 mathematics textbooks, ranging from kindergarten to graduate level. Most recently, he has been a senior author of Houghton Mifflin, a company developing elementary-level mathematics textbooks.

Currently, along with Professor Alexander Karp in the Mathematics Education Program, Vogeli is the co-editor of a two-volume series, entitled, “Russian Mathematics Education.” This is the first major work in Russian education in thirty years, consisting of contributions from both educators in Russia and across the globe. This two-volume series will examine both the history and international significance of Russian mathematics education, as well as programs and practices in Russia.
MST Professors Awarded Grant from GE Foundation

Teachers College and Columbia’s Engineering School recently received a $5 million grant from the GE Foundation to form a partnership with ten public schools in Harlem to improve teaching and learning in the areas of mathematics, science and technology. Faculty members from the department that are involved with the project include Professors Christopher Emdin, Alexander Karp, Felicia Moore, Ann Rivet, and Erica Walker. This project will involve a coordinated and collaborative intervention, including curriculum planning, professional development and school-university partnership development. The goals of this project are to improve science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teaching and learning, heighten interest in STEM topics and careers among public school students and provide an easily replicable model for other K-12 schools. One topic emphasized, that tends to be missing in K-12 curriculum, is engineering. Engineering in schools “effectively illustrates how science works in the real world”, while also being “an effective way to teach mathematics,” as stated in the grant proposal.

To achieve the goals of this project, four major areas will be addressed, as they are believed to be the groundwork for increased STEM learning and teaching.

♦ Ensure that schools have a coherent inquiry-based curriculum in mathematics and science that conforms to national and New York State standards and promotes high levels of student learning.

♦ Improve public school teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge of the STEM topics they teach.

♦ Enhance public school teachers’ pedagogical practice in STEM fields.

♦ Develop innovative methods to achieve high levels of academic success for both English Proficient students (EP) and English Language Learners (ELL) in STEM classrooms.

Jennifer Kotler, Adjunct Assistant Professor, CCTE

Jennifer Kotler is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Communication, Computing, and Technology in Education (CCTE) Program. This semester, she is teaching MSTU 4024, Television and the Development of Youth. Jennifer received her B.S. from Cornell in Human Development and Family Studies, her M.A. from the University of Kansas in Human Development and her Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin in Child Development and Family Relationships. Besides teaching at TC, Jennifer is also currently working as the Assistant Vice President for Domestic Research at the Sesame Workshop. In this position, she oversees research on US Sesame Workshop productions and projects. This research includes testing materials on the “experts,” the children, to make sure that the content is both educational and developmentally appropriate. Jennifer is also responsible for keeping up with the current trends in both education and educational policy, to inform Sesame Workshop in what area it would be best to focus their efforts. Jennifer has always had a passion for media and its effects on individuals. She says, “My mother tells me that the number one reason I wanted to learn to read, when I was five, was that I wanted to read the TV Guide to find out when my favorite shows would be on.” As she got older, Jennifer maintained that passion for the media, but also found an interest in statistics, research and working with children. She even, at age 18, that she would be working at Sesame Workshop. “One day a professor, named John Condry, gave a talk during my freshman year of college and he mentioned that they have a director of research at Sesame Street. It seemed to fit everything that I always wanted to do! And at that moment, at 18, I said, ‘I must have that job!’ I have been studying media effects ever since.” In her spare time, Jennifer enjoys singing karaoke and playing tennis; her women’s team went to the city finals last year. As for teaching at TC, she adds that it is both an honor and a pleasure to be working with such a group of “very interested and interesting students.”
Professor Moore Speaks at University of Illinois

Professor Felicia Moore, Assistant Professor in the Science Education Program, was invited to speak at the inaugural colloquium in the College of Education at the University of Illinois Chicago, on December 6th and 7th. The colloquium series focused on mathematics and science education researchers. Her presentation entitled "Novel Approaches in the Preparation of Science Teachers for Diverse Classrooms," highlighted three approaches that she uses in her elementary pre-service research out there."

Dwight Pierre, Student, Mathematics Education Program

Dwight Pierre is currently an Ed.D. student in the Mathematics Education Program. He received his B.S. degree in Applied Mathematics from Union College, and his M.A. in Pure Mathematics from SUNY at Albany. While working towards his Master’s degree, Dwight began teaching pre-calculus to undergraduates at SUNY at at BMCC, and has been there ever since. While there, Dwight has taught Developmental Mathematics, Pre-calculus, Calculus I, II, and III and Differential Equations. Dwight says he came to Teachers College to “finish what I started.” Dwight calls himself an “educator/performer” and enjoys “creating new ways of explaining something.” Some of Dwight’s other passions are photography, reading, tap dancing, playing piano and music, in general. He also loves to travel to places he has never been before. On the study tours, sponsored by the Program in Mathematics and CEO&I, Dwight has traveled to Guatemala, Iceland/Finnland, Korea and Nepal/Tibet. Dwight uses his traveling as a learning experience to incorporate into his teaching. The term he has created to describe his classes at BMCC is “multiversity”: a combination of multiculturalism and diversity. Many of his students have been educated in different countries and have different worldviews, so by traveling to other parts of the world, Dwight feels that he is able to connect on a different level with them. After traveling to China as a Fulbright scholar and working with the Educational Testing Service (ETS), Dwight became very interested in the area of assessment, and has focused his research in this area. He believes that students should be assessed in various aspects of mathematics conceptual learning and application, including reading, writing and articulation of mathematics. Dwight prides himself on teaching mathematics as more of a philosophy than a utility and sums up his interest by saying, “I’m just committed to teaching and improving my pedagogical style continuously and implementing various forms of research out there.”

Photograph by Dwight Pierre, taken on the Korea study tour.
CCTE Professor and Student are “Making it Happen”

The New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education (NYSCATE) honored Dr. Ellen Meier with the “Making it Happen” award in November, 2007. This award was due, in part, to her work as Co-Chair of NY’s Technology Policy and Practice Council. The Council is working with 30 technology leaders from higher education, museums, K-12 schools, public broadcasting and libraries to advise the Board of Regents on technology policy for New York. Making it Happen is an internationally known awards program for educators in the field of educational technology integration. The program recognizes educational technology leaders around the world for their commitment and innovation. In January, 2008, Putnam Valley Middle School Principal Edward Hallisey, a masters student in CCTE, also received the “Making It Happen Award.” In 2003, Ed Hallisey began a 1:1 Laptop Program in his school, where children in grade seven were provided with a laptop at home during the school year. As he points out, that initial program has expanded greatly. “When the program was launched in 2003, the students in grade seven were given 150 laptops to use during the school year,” he says. “Now we have 1,250 laptops in grades six through eleven. Our youngest program participants will have had eight years of technology experience before they ever get to college.” NYSCATE is an affiliate of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and represents more than 2,000 technology-using educators and administrators in New York State. ISTE provides leadership and service to improve teaching, learning, and school leadership by advancing the effective use of technology in PK–12 and teacher education. Home of the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), the Research in Educational Technology (CARET), and the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC), ISTE represents more than 85,000 professionals worldwide.

Did you Know?

Barnard’s new president will begin on July 1st. Debora L. Spar, a Harvard Business School professor, has written about the economics of the human fertility industry and the evolution of the Internet. “Women in our generation grew up thinking that all of our problems had been solved,” she said in an interview on campus. “But while some easy barriers have come down, that does not mean all the problems are solved. The barriers that remain are more subtle.” – NY Times

Dana Wilber, CCTE Alumnus

Dana Wilber is an alumnus from the CCTE program. She received her Ed.D. in Communication and Education, with a focus on literacy and technology, in the summer of 2005, although she did not attend TC for the entire duration of her degree program. After graduating from a state school in Denver, she decided that she would only apply to the top three programs in literacy education; TC, Harvard and Vanderbilt. She was accepted to all three schools, and jokes that it may have been that those schools did not have anyone from Colorado. She decided on Vanderbilt, because Chuck Kinzer (who worked there at the time) interviewed her for a graduate assistantship to work with him on his research. When Professor Kinzer left Vanderbilt to come to TC, Dana came with him to continue her work on the CTELL (Cases to Enhance Literacy Learning) project. During her degree program, Dana’s research was on the implementation and student use of a multimedia study environment in an undergraduate course. Currently, Dana is an Assistant Professor, as well as the Literacy and Program Coordinator of the Associate Library Media Studies Program at Montclair State University in New Jersey. She has taught a wide variety of classes there, including Developmental Reading, Content Area Literacy, History of Literacy and Video Games, and Adolescent Literature. Dana credits her passion for literacy with the activities she engaged in during her undergraduate years. As the managing editor of the college newspaper, she taught the accompanying course and realized that she “loved working with students and peers, particularly in literacy activities.” She also adds that, “Reading is my purest form of pleasure, and teaching in this area gives me the opportunity to do a job I love.” After she graduated from college, Dana taught balanced literacy and social studies in an urban seventh grade charter program, which was also a laptop program; teaching there got her interested in how technology affects literacy. Another cause that she is passionate about is helping English language learners succeed in college, and not just in the first year. “All universities have the responsibility to teach the students they admit and if those students continue to struggle with reading and writing, we need to change what we are doing.” She gives credit to her experiences at TC for getting her to where she is now, saying, “I had a great experience in my doctoral studies, and particularly in having Chuck Kinzer as my advisor. Thanks to him, I graduated with many publications, which has made all the difference in giving me a jumpstart toward tenure when I took the position at Montclair State.”

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Recent Accomplishments

Meghan Marrero, student and instructor, presented a talk entitled, “Signals of Spring ACES: Enhancing Ocean Literacy Using Animals as the Hook,” at the Annual Conference of the North American Association of Environmental Educators held this past November in Virginia Beach, VA. In her presentation, she discussed the NOAA-sponsored program developed for middle and high school educators.

Janell Catlin, Postdoctoral Fellow, was awarded the 2008 National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST) Equity and Ethics Committee “Equity Scholar Award”. She will present her research at the 2009 NARST meeting in a special symposium.

Professor Erica Walker has been invited to speak at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ (NCTM) Annual Meeting in 2009 in Washington, DC. She has also been selected for the advisory board of a new journal, entitled, “The Journal for Urban Mathematics Education.”

Professor Chris Emdin received the 2008 award for “Best Paper on Innovation in Teaching Science Teachers” at the Association for Science Teacher Education (ASTE) International Conference. This was for his paper “Expanding the ways in which urban students participate in science education: rituals, transactions, and fundamental interactions.” Also, his dissertation entitled, “Exploring the Contexts of Urban Science Classrooms: Cogenerative Dialogues, Coteaching and Cosmopolitanism” has recently won the Phi Delta Kappa Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award for 2008.

Recent Publications


Recent Presentations


PS 57 Students to “Graduate” from TC

Professor Felicia Moore and Postdoctoral Fellow Janell Catlin are working on developing a new school partnership for elementary pre-service teachers in science. This new partnership, with PS 57 in East Harlem and “Say Yes to Education,” will involve two exciting components. First, the elementary pre-service teachers will participate in a semester long after-school science program at the school by teaching lessons to encourage hands-on, minds-on inquiry science learning. Also during the semester, the elementary teachers will visit science classrooms during the day to learn alongside the science classroom teachers and to work with students in small group work and tutoring. Second, Professor Moore and her Concepts in Biology pre-service secondary student teachers will do a two-day outreach program for students at PS 57. Approximately 70 3rd graders from the “Say Yes to Education” initiative will visit the TC campus on April 8th and 15th to take “college science courses.” The biology pre-service teachers will teach two science related lessons, and after the third graders have completed their two classes, they will receive a “transcript.” This outreach activity is to educate young learners in the importance of receiving an education, to expose them to college life at a young age, and to excite them about learning science.

Susan Licwinko, MST Representative for Student Senate

Susan Licwinko is currently the MST representative on the TC Student Senate. An Ed.M. student in the Mathematics Education Program, Susan says that she wanted to run for this position on the Student Senate because of last year’s senator. She adds, “Beth Bellantoni did a great job last year and I wanted to make sure that our representation was maintained, both in the Senate and in the college, itself.” Last semester, Susan organized many socials for students in the department. One reason is little connection between themselves and faculty. By due complaints that TC holding these “Casual Conversations,” closer social activities. By running these socials, students were able to connect and develop relationships with their peers. Susan also helped the Student Senate in running “TC Game Night,” which was held both last semester and this semester. Susan’s main focus for this semester is on holding “Casual Conversations” for each program in the department. This initiative was proposed by the Student Senate because many students feel that there is little connection between themselves and faculty. By due complaints that TC holding these “Casual Conversations,” closer social activities. By running these socials, students were able to connect and develop relationships with their peers. These issues range from the idea of tracking students to technology in the classroom. Susan plans on having three “Casual Conversation” sessions for each program in the department. On her participation on the Student Senate, Susan says, “I’ve enjoyed my experience as a part of the Senate. I’ve been able to see how certain things are accomplished that I never would have known about, had I not been a part of this.”

Darnel Degand, Illustrator for Book Series

Darnel Degand, a CCTE student, has been named the illustrator for a children’s book series entitled, “Coomacka Island.” This series was inspired by Afro-Caribbean folktales about the Macka tree, which is said to have spirits living within it. One legend says that the first Macka tree provided every fruit known in the Caribbean and nourished the first people of the world. In these books, four travelers search out the truth behind the legendary tree. Currently, the first three books are available and can be ordered via their website, at www.coomacka.com.