

Excellence in Online Teaching Award Portfolio
Suzanna Roman-Oliver
Spring 2025

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Academic Affairs Excellence Awards

Application Form



Name: Suzanna Roman-Oliver

Rank: Assistant Professor

Department: Teacher Education

Award applying for:

(Check one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Teaching Award*
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Online Teaching Award*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in University Service*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Department/Program Excellence Award^
<input type="checkbox"/>	Irene Rose Community Service Award^
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laurie Hendrickson McMillian Faculty Award^

*college selection required before being forwarded to university

^university awards

College nominees' final applications received by Center for Teaching and Learning (ctl@gcsu.edu) by March 1.

Please insert the required documentation in the pages below for the award category you have noted above. Detailed information associated with each award is available online at the [Center for Teaching and Learning website](#).



Department of Teacher Education
Campus Box 70
Milledgeville, Georgia 31061
Phone 478-445-7368
Fax 478-445-6582

February 5, 2025

Dr. Jim Berger
Director,
Center for Teaching and Learning

Dear Dr. Berger,

I am delighted and honored to nominate my colleague, Dr. Suzanna Roman-Oliver, for the university's Outstanding Online Teaching award for 2025. Dr. Roman-Oliver is a passionate, reflective, and dedicated educator. In her tenure and promotion narrative, Dr. Roman-Oliver expresses her "desire to improve education for all students, regardless of their background or circumstances." Her practice is nothing short of a reflection of this conviction of hers, as she has made and is continuing to make significant contributions to the growth and success of the students in our program.

Dr. Roman-Oliver has worked with our online Secondary MAT Program for about six years. As more and more teacher preparation programs shift to online delivery, faculty in these programs have gained awareness of the importance of student-centered learning, collaboration, and community building in an online environment. Dr. Roman-Oliver has been taking advantage of a wide range of technology tools, including Flip Grid, Canva, Padlet, and Google Docs/Slides, to enhance the learning outcomes of her students. These tools have allowed her students to engage in rich discussions, video reflections, jigsaw presentations, peer evaluations and other strategies that are typically used in face-to-face or in-person programs. In addition, for her science pedagogy course and the field-based courses, Dr. Roman-Oliver conducts synchronous online sessions with her students regularly to ensure that students have opportunities to engage in group discussions using breakout rooms and hands-on activities enabled by the functions in Zoom or Teams.

For course enrichment, Dr. Roman-Oliver has invited multiple guest speakers to her online sessions. For example, during Summer 2021, she invited Dr. Brian Lawler, a professor at Kennesaw State University, to speak to her students about how to implement culturally relevant teaching in mathematics education. In Spring 2022, she invited Dr. Suzanne Peña, the president of the Florida Association for Bilingual Education, to discuss topics of teacher biases and students' funds of knowledge.

Dr. Roman-Oliver's teaching has received raving reviews from her students. For example, one of her students wrote: "Dr. Roman is the best! I loved how she made every lesson very interactive and interesting. She found ways for us to work together despite the pandemic which I think is very important considering we are education majors. I also really appreciated that she worked so hard for us to complete our field experience hours even though we weren't allowed to go inside the classroom this semester." Another student of hers wrote:

I thoroughly enjoyed this class. Of course, it was challenging, but that is to be expected of a course at the end of a degree program. Dr. Roman-Oliver's consistent and thorough communication regarding course requirements was appreciated and admired. She showed flexibility and responded to students' requests and concerns. She allowed us to influence the course through feedback and discussion ... I would recommend this course WITH Dr. Roman-Oliver to anyone! I'm grateful for her guidance."

Georgia College, the state's designated public liberal arts university, combines the educational experience expected at esteemed private liberal arts colleges with the affordability of public higher education.



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Dr. Roman-Oliver is a lifelong learner. Since she joined Georgia College (GC), she has participated in numerous professional development activities, including The Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) Summer Institute and GC's High Impact Practice (HIP) Summer Institute in 2022. She was selected as a Governor's Teaching Fellows during Spring 2023 and was one of the two faculty members selected that year. What's important to note is that Dr. Roman-Oliver has been able to apply what she had learned from these professional development opportunities into her teaching. For example, in Fall 2022, she implemented a Community-Based Engaging Learning (CbEL) project after participating in a similar community at the HIPs Summer Institute. Her students were given opportunities to design and implement STEM nights, community gardens and summer science programs in their field experiences. In Summer 2023, Dr. Roman-Oliver experimented with micro-communities in one of her courses. Teacher candidates in her classes were grouped based on area of expertise, geographic location and area of interest and were given rich opportunities to collaborate as an online community. Dr. Roman-Oliver is also very generous in sharing her experiences and practices with the rest of the faculty in the program. For example, I also tried some versions of micro-communities in my online courses based on suggestions from Dr. Roman-Oliver. These online communities have helped the students in our program connect educational methods and theories with field-based experiences.

Dr. Roman-Oliver has never forgotten to intentionally seek feedback from various sources. For example, she has invited colleagues from the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to observe her online sessions and provide feedback. She has made deliberate efforts to collect mid-term questionnaire data and use pre- and post-tests in her online courses to continuously improve her teaching from semester to semester.

Talking about Dr. Roman-Oliver's teaching, I cannot forget to mention her first academic book, *The Science I Know – Culturally Relevant Science Lessons from Secondary Classrooms*. This book fills in a gap that has frustrated teachers for quite some time and provides high-quality lesson plans not only aligned to national science standards but also integrating culturally relevant pedagogy. Her students were given a valuable opportunity to contribute lessons to her book and were very excited about this opportunity. In addition to co-authoring with her students, Dr. Roman-Oliver also mentored one of her art students to present at the Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA). Dr. Roman-Oliver has also successfully integrated her teaching with her own research endeavors and has conducted multiple presentations at national or state conferences on topics related to online teaching (e.g., led a Birds of a Feather section at the Eastern Education Research Association [EERA]).

I have no reservations to nominate Dr. Roman-Oliver for the Outstanding Online Teaching award. Her practices are exemplary and inspiring. Her dedication to student success and her passion as an educator are key to a rigorous and high-quality online teacher education model, which is highly needed and critical as more and more teacher education programs shift to online delivery today.

Rui Kang, Ph.D.,
Professor and Coordinator of Secondary MAT Program
College of Education, Georgia College & State University
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Georgia College, the state's designated public liberal arts university, combines the educational experience expected at esteemed private liberal arts colleges with the affordability of public higher education.

SUZANNA ROMAN-OLIVER

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7 Blossom Blvd. NW
Rome, GA, 30165

EDUCATION

- PhD** Georgia State University, Teaching and Learning May 2019
Dissertation: “Culturally Relevant Science: A Multiple Case-study on the Beliefs, Experiences and Practices of Pre-Service Teachers in Racially and Ethnically Diverse Classrooms.”
Committee: Renee’ Schwartz (chair), Patrick Enderle, Christine Thomas & Michael Dias
- MEd** Georgia State University, Science Education December 2010
Advisor: Ollie Manley
- BS** University of Puerto Rico, Biology June 2002
Graduated Magna Cum Laude
Minored in Secondary Science Education

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Provost’s Summer Research Fellow Award** 2024
Georgia College and State University
- Governor’s Teaching Fellow** 2023
Spring STEM Program, Athens, GA
- HERS Leadership Institute** 2022
Summer 2022 Institute: “Bold Leadership: Inclusive Transformation”
Denver, CO
- Inclusive Excellence Faculty Research Grant** 2021
Georgia College and State University, College of Education Diversity Committee
“Examining Anti-Racist and Social Justice Education through a Collaborative Book Club Experience”

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, GA August 2020 to Present
Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education

- Teach courses in the MAT Secondary Education program.
- Supervise teacher candidates during their field placement and student teaching.

Doctoral Students Advised

Stephanie McMillan, Committee Chair, Since Fall, 2021

Austin Wilson, Committee Member, Since Spring, 2024

Grethel Pedroarena, Committee Chair, Since Spring, 2025

Courses taught from Fall 2021-Fall 2024 and Description:	Semesters Taught:	Number of Sections:
EDFS 5001 - Field Placement Seminar (<i>First field-based course in the program. Students complete video recordings and reflections of teaching.</i>)	Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024	4 sections (three subjects are combined into one section each semester)
EDFS 5203 - Learner Development (<i>Explores cognitive, emotional and social developmental theories related to secondary student.</i>)	Fall 2021, Summer 2023	2 sections (one each semester)
EDFS 5209 - Learner Differences (Science, Math, World Languages, Business & Art) (<i>Explores the impact of culture on teaching and learning.</i>)	Summer 2021 Summer 2022 Summer 2023 Fall 2023	(2) (1) (1) (1)
EDFS 5213 - Instructional Strategies (<i>Introduction to research-based and student-centered instruction for all subject areas.</i>)	Fall 2022 Fall 2023 Summer 2023	(2) (1) (1)
EDFS 5233 – Capstone (<i>Culminating program course where students complete a portfolio with evidence of their professional growth.</i>)	Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024	4 sections (one each semester)
EDFS 6466 - Student Teaching (Science, Art & World Languages) (<i>Second field-based course in the program. Students complete video recordings and a 10-Day unit plan.</i>)	Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024	4 sections (three subjects are combined into one section each semester)
EDFS 6507 - Secondary Science and/or Secondary Science/Math Pedagogy (<i>Exploration and application of research-based science practices.</i>)	Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024	4 sections (one each semester)

Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA

August 2016 to July 2020

Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Secondary and Middle Grades Education

- Taught foundation courses, middle and secondary grades' education courses and MAT courses in education.

- Supervised teacher candidates during their field placement and student teaching.
- Coordinated the field experience for the secondary science and math education programs (including the MAT).

Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

August 2014 to July 2016

Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Middle and Secondary Grades Education

- Assisted faculty in the department in preparing annotated bibliographies, collecting and analyzing data for research studies

Marietta High School, Marietta, GA

August 2007 to July 2015

Science Teacher

- Taught biology, physical sciences and environmental sciences to ESOL students

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Roman, S. (2024) "The Science I Know-Culturally Relevant Lessons from Secondary Science Classrooms".

Journal Papers in Review

Roman-Oliver, S. (2023). "Examining Social Justice Ideas in Science Teachers Through an Online Book Club," Submitted to: Journal of Science Teacher Education.

Conference Papers

Roman-Oliver, S. (2022). "Examining Social Justice Ideas in Science Teachers Through an Online Book Club," Proceedings of Georgia Education Research Conference, Oct. 14, 2022.

PRESENTATIONS

Paper Presentations

"Examining Social Justice Ideas in Science Teachers Through an Online Book Club: An Action-Research Study," GERA conference, October 2022.

Roundtable and Birds of a Feather Presentations

"Examining Social Justice Ideas in Science Teachers Through an Online Book Club: A Pilot Study," AERA conference, April 2022.

"MAT Online Programs-Challenges and Opportunities" EERA conference, February, 2024

Reflective Statement

I view my students as co-facilitators in the online learning environment. Therefore, I am intentional about creating opportunities for students to use their background knowledge and expertise to enhance the learning experiences for all. I have done this formally through student-led seminars, peer-feedback opportunities and micro-communities. Informally, I engage students in collaboration during class meetings (i.e. breakout groups) and asynchronously through group assignments and online discussions. Developing this sense of agency in my graduate students is an important goal and I continue to explore ways to do this more effectively.

Creating a sense of community in the online environment is the first step towards empowering students as co-facilitators. To this end, I prioritize making myself available to students throughout the week. While most of the courses have scheduled synchronous class meetings every few weeks, I hold office hours and frequent work sessions to assist students as needed. Whether it is to clarify instructions for assignments or discuss my feedback, these meetings give me an opportunity to get to know the students better, which allows me to continue building positive relationships. This is at the core of creating a robust online learning environment.

I am a lifelong learner and, as an educator, what I learn from my students each day is as valuable as what they learn in my courses. At the core, my teaching aligns with constructivist principles, as I believe students build new learning from previous experiences. Therefore, it is important to create activities and tasks that allow students to connect what they have learned from previous courses, or professional development experiences, to the new content. This is especially critical in the MAT online courses that I teach, as all students come from different professional backgrounds (i.e., science, math, art, world languages, business). I make it a priority at the start of the semester to identify students' preconceptions and ideas about the content we will cover. I use this to tailor the learning experiences and activities that students will engage in throughout the semester. I make sure to obtain feedback from students beyond the SRIS that helps me make revisions for future semesters as well. I do this through the use of mid-term surveys, informal conversations with students during class and peer-feedback from other faculty. This formative feedback allows me to make changes throughout the course, not just at the end.

As I discuss within the next section, I utilize strategies that are student-centered, and I explicitly connect these with my students' teaching practice. I challenge students to consider ways in which these strategies can enhance their own students' learning and engage them in activities in which they demonstrate their own implementation of these. Staying up to date with best practices requires a continuous effort to pursue professional development opportunities that are teaching-focused, not just research-focused. Each year, I engage in workshops and professional development that align with my goals. I attend sessions offered by CTL, the Office of Inclusive Excellence and the University System of Georgia, as well as professional development offered by science or science education research and leadership organizations.

Artifact I provides a summary of the main teaching-focused PD experiences I have engaged since Spring of 2022. All these PD experiences contributed to a growing sense of community within and outside the college and university. Worth noting is my participation in the Governor's Teaching Fellows during Spring of 2023. I was honored to be one of the two faculty members selected that year. While in the program, I met STEM faculty from other universities in Georgia and discussed current issues related to teaching and student engagement. We worked in groups to develop a student-centered lesson ideal for science or science education courses (i.e., examining

sources of information). This experience strengthened my teaching repertoire through a focus on student-centered activities and collaborative projects. In addition to the experiences listed in the table, I have been a member of the Critical Friends' group since Fall of 2022. Being a part of this niche helps me sharpen problem-solving and critical thinking skills, as we meet to discuss projects or ideas brought by our peers and provide structured feedback following specific protocols. This feedback has made me reflect on ways I can improve my teaching.

One of the most compelling examples of my belief of students as co-facilitators is the publication of my first academic book, "The Science I Know" (**Artifact E**). Collaborating with former and current students to create a book featuring culturally relevant lesson plans for science classrooms is a highlight of my career as an educator. My students shared that participating in this process helped them refine their skills related to incorporating students' culture and funds of knowledge in science. This inspires me to continue seeking opportunities for students to showcase their innovative ideas and strategies in science education. Throughout my time at GC&SU, I have supported and provided guidance for students in preparation to present for local conferences as well (i.e. GAEA and GERA). This reflects my view of students as education scholars who contribute to the advancement of the field.

Connecting my teaching with my scholarship endeavors is an important part of my practice. To this end, I am currently planning a study and working on a research project to investigate the use of differentiation strategies in the science pedagogy course and the use of peer-feedback to enhance students' narratives for Teacher Work Samples (TWS) in the capstone course. Both projects will contribute to the current literature in these areas respectively, which is limited in some cases. The differentiation project stems from a need I have identified after teaching the science pedagogy course several times. Many of the students in the course have been engaged in professional development opportunities that focus on teaching strategies for science education as part of their conditional employment. This creates a challenge for science teacher educators. For some students, the content presented in their pedagogy course will be new and unfamiliar, but for others, they will have previous exposure to the topics due to their years of teaching. For those without any previous teaching experience, the readings may seem complex and confusing. The academic jargon may difficult their understanding of certain tasks as well. For those with teaching experience, the assignments may seem too easy or simple at times, or not academically challenging. Differentiation is a common topic in K-12 education. However, we do not often hear it used or applied in higher education. My goal with this project is to incorporate differentiation principles in this course to enhance the learning for all students, regardless of their previous exposure to the content. The second project/research study, which has already been approved by our IRB, will promote students' collaboration through the use of peer-feedback for sections of their (TWS). While this is my first semester implementing the strategy, I have already received positive feedback from students about the benefits of sharing their work and reflecting on the different perspectives of their classmates.

Other ways I have enhanced my online teaching include hosting guest speakers during synchronous class meetings, incentivizing students to attend workshops or speaking engagements presented by different university offices or the COE's DEI committee, crafting and following up on Professional Developing Plans (PDP) for students who are struggling and one-on-one meetings with field placement students and their partner teachers. While this is not a comprehensive discussion of all the ways my online teaching demonstrates excellence, I have highlighted some of my efforts to go beyond typical platforms to enhance the learning of all students.

Innovative Teaching Artifacts

I have implemented several innovative strategies to engage online students. These have been guided by the goal of developing their skills towards promoting student-centered learning, equity and community involvement. For example, in the Learner Differences' course, I implemented subject-specific book-clubs focused on social justice. These were led by students during our class meetings (see **Artifact A**). This strategy became one of the most rewarding components of this course, as evidenced by the following quotes from students:

The book club has been so enjoyable! I think that reading a book with a small group of people with similar situations and then discussing it with them is so beneficial. We learn so much from each other; plus, the book choice is a great book. (Mid-Term Survey, Summer 2022)

The book club has probably impacted me the most. We get such real and applicable feedback from one another, and I think it is great that you visit the groups and add your thoughts too. (Mid-Term Survey, Summer 2022)

I have also incorporated High Impact Practices (HIP) in my teaching. In the Fall of 2022, I implemented a Community-Based Engaged Learning (CbEL) project stemming from my participation in the High Impact Practices' (HIPs) Summer Institute. My field placement students developed plans and led projects that included STEM nights, community gardens and summer science programs (**Artifact B**). Students gathered data through informal observations and surveys, which they created, to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives. Finally, they completed a reflection using the CbEL rubric. Projects like these help students develop problem-solving skills and foster collaboration. They also give parents and community members an opportunity to be engaged in their children's education.

The most important aspect of my teaching that portrays excellence is that I strive to model the student-centered practices that I expect to observe in my teacher candidates. To this end, students frequently work on collaborative projects using different technology tools such as Flip Grid, [Canva](#), [Padlet](#), [Google Docs/Slides](#), and other platforms (**Artifact C**). These tools are effective in engaging students in rich discussions, video reflections, jigsaw presentations and peer evaluations. Most importantly, these experiences give students an opportunity to facilitate the learning activities (i.e., students as co-facilitators). For some of the courses I teach, such as the science pedagogy course, I meet with students synchronously, engaging them in hands-on activities and group discussions using breakout rooms (**Artifact D**). I obtained positive peer-feedback through CTL for one of these meetings (**Artifact H**). Many of my teacher candidates have expressed that participating in these activities has given them the confidence to implement these strategies with their own students.

Evidence of Online Teaching Excellence

The following artifacts are evidence of excellence in my online teaching. These are either assignments, exemplars from students' work or qualitative feedback from students and peers.

Artifact A:

Content-Specific Book Clubs Guidelines for Meetings and Reflection

Instructions: During the next four weeks, you will be part of a book club that will focus on practices that are specific to your content area (i.e. science, math, world languages, art or business). You will meet with students within your same content area to discuss sections from your content-specific book. The meetings will be held during the class meeting times, within the last hour (Tuesdays between 6:45-7:45 pm).

Each week, between one to four students (depending on the size of the group) from each content area will be chosen to facilitate these meetings. If you would like to volunteer to be a facilitator, please let me know. (This will give you an opportunity to choose a more convenient Tuesday to lead the meeting.) If no one volunteers, I will choose the facilitators randomly. The role of the facilitator is to prepare a few questions in advance to engage classmates in a discussion of the most important topics within the chapter (s). Below is a list of suggested activities in preparation for the book club meetings:

a. Identify two key concepts from the reading (mark page numbers so you can reference these with others in class). Critically reflect on and analyze why these are important.

b. Identify one insightful "ah-ha" quotation from the reading – something that helped you clarify a concept or theory, something you felt was particularly profound or provided a different perspective than your own. Include page number(s) and the quotation. Critically reflect on and analyze why it important to you.

c. Write a few questions prompted by the reading: What do you still wonder about? What would you like to discuss with your classmates?

I expect that with even the smallest group of four students, if each student brings up at least one key concept, insight and question, between that and the follow up/comments/responses from the classmates, your meetings should cover the entire hour. With larger groups (of about 14-15 students, I suggest that the facilitators moderate the participation so that all students have an opportunity to share ideas.

*For the weekly reflections, you will respond to the following guiding questions (use 5-7 sentences for each question):

-What points discussed in this week's meeting were particularly impactful or relevant to you? Why?

-What are some questions that you still have as a result of the meeting? Discuss these.

-How did participating in this meeting influence your ideas about social justice?

These are the guidelines provided to students for the subject-specific book clubs. It was important to clearly delineate the expectations for their engagement and facilitation of these meetings. The book club meetings were facilitated by students at the end of each class within breakout groups. While I visited each content-specific group, students were responsible for facilitating the discussion and asking questions. This is evidence of promoting higher-order thinking skills in the online environment.

Artifact B:

The slides below are an example of a student's presentation for their CbEL projects. CbEL is a High-Impact Practice in higher education that engages students in community efforts. The goal is for students to "have direct community experiences" and "participate in mutually beneficial collaborations with community partners" (Community-Based Engaged Learning, 2025).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The students showcased their TSA State Projects to teachers and parents, using rubrics to elaborate on their rankings. This presentation offered them the opportunity to better understand and assess the feedback they received, which will be valuable as they prepare for the nationals in June. Typically, students present their projects in private rooms at the state level, making this the first time they could display their hard work to their teachers and parents.

CONNECTION TO THEORY

The event is connected to the educational concept of scaffolding, wherein students were provided with assistance and encouragement from parents, staff, and peers to refine their projects and enhance their readiness for the national competition.

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL

The event proved advantageous for the students as it provided them with the opportunity to showcase their projects to parents and teachers who hadn't yet had the chance to witness their hard work. Additionally, it gave them a platform to reflect on their mistakes and discuss ways to enhance their performance for the national competition.

PLANNING THE EVENT

COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING MEETINGS

- 1-2 hours with each other to go over how we wanted to execute the STEM night.
- 1-2 hours with the head of TSA to determine the students that would participate, which parents to contact, and what times worked best with her.

EVENT INVOLVEMENT

Approximately 2 to 3 hours:

- Communicate with the head of TSA about the expectations of the event.
- Discuss our plans and gain approval from administration.
- Develop invitations for parents and school staff.
- Gather materials needed to hold event.

DEVELOPMENT OF SURVEY

- Approximately 1 hour spent developing survey.
- Obtaining emails to those who attended the event and sending the emails out the following day.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

- Approximately 1 to 2 hours to analyze survey feedback and communicate feedback with project partner.

Artifact C:

The examples below illustrate some of the ways I integrate technology to foster student engagement and discussions within online class. These go beyond Georgia View and allow students to explore platforms that they can use with their own students. Flipgrid, for example, gave students an opportunity to record their responses to content-related prompts. Padlet increases students' participation as responses are anonymous.

Flipgrid:

The screenshot shows a Flipgrid discussion page. The title is "Week 2-Video Response". The discussion is initiated by Suzanna R. on 8/26/24. The topic is "As you read Jensen, chapter 9, make notes of past experiences as a teacher (or a student) in which safety, belonging or hopefulness impacted your relationship with a student. Share one story in a short video (4-5 minutes). Without disclosing the student or school's name, discuss how you became aware of the situation, how you responded to it and what was the outcome. After completing the reading, what is one thing you feel you could have done differently?". There are 11 responses shown at the bottom of the page.

Padlet:

The screenshot shows a Padlet discussion page. The title is "What are some examples of funds of knowledge you have observed in your students?". The discussion is initiated by Suzanna Roman on 12/15/2023. There are four responses shown, each with a video icon and a text description of a student's knowledge or experience.

Artifact D:

Below is an example of a hands-on activity in which students used different materials to test a hypothesis about a scientific phenomenon involving density and buoyancy. Even if students did not have all the materials, I demonstrated the procedure and used a video camera to show students the outcome. Students discussed the result versus their hypothesis and engaged in reflection about how to incorporate activities like these in their own classrooms. This demonstrates that the online environment is not a barrier to engage students in hands-on learning.

ENGAGE:
BOAT-IN-POOL

Boat-in-Pool Puzzler

Here we have a boat in a swimming pool. In the boat is an inquisitive experimenter. Also in the boat is a rock.

Our experimenter picks up the rock and tosses it into the pool. The rock sinks to the bottom. No water leaves the pool from the splash made by the rock.

Now for the question: Does the pool's water level rise, lower, or stay the same?

- The water level rises.
- The water level lowers.
- The water level stays the same.

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EXPLORE: GROUP-WORK

- Breakout Groups: Share your prediction and justifications with your group.
- Develop and justify a group prediction. A group member may hold a dissenting view but should understand the group's prediction.
- Use your materials to test your prediction.*

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EXPLAIN:
WHY DID THIS HAPPEN???

- When the rock is in the boat, it displaces its total weight. If it weighs ten pounds, for example, then it's making the boat ten pounds heavier.
- When the rock is sitting at the bottom of the pool, on the other hand, it displaces its volume. Objects sink when they weigh more than the water it displaces.
- The rock displaces more water when it's in the boat than when it's in the water, and so the pool's water level is lower when the rock is in the water.

Interesting Fact! This is the question that the physicists J. Robert Oppenheimer and George Gamow answered incorrectly.

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WHAT ABOUT ELABORATE AND EVALUATE?

Can you think of a follow-up activity?

How is evaluation taking place before, during and after the activity? Can you think of other ways of evaluating the concepts explored within the activity? How is this an example of modeling?

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Artifact E: Book Publication

<https://styluspub.presswarehouse.com/browse/book/9781975506087/The-Science-I-Know>

Last year, I published my first book “The Science I Know - Culturally Relevant Science Lessons from Secondary Classrooms”. The book’s central feature are 13 culturally relevant science lesson plans, written by former and current students. This reflects how I capitalize on students’ expertise to further the learning goals in each of my classes.

Artifact F: Qualitative SRIS Comments

Below is a summary of some of the qualitative feedback I have received from my students in the last few years:

“This was one of the most engaging courses I have taken, and I made friends even though it was online. The organization and timeliness of the class, feedback and grading was extremely beneficial to my success in class.”

“This course has challenged me mentally and academically more than any other course in the program. It is stressful to put your entire academic career into one work sample to prove you are fit to be a teacher, Dr. Roman-Oliver has been such a wonderful resource through the entire process and has offered so much guidance during this semester.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed this class. Of course, it was challenging, but that is to be expected of a course at the end of a degree program. Dr. Roman-Oliver's consistent and thorough communication regarding course requirements was appreciated and admired. She showed flexibility and responded to students' requests and concerns. She allowed us to influence the course through feedback and discussion. Rearranging the order of the TWS submissions was helpful. I would recommend this course WITH Dr. Roman-Oliver to anyone! I'm grateful for her guidance.”

“Dr. Roman-Oliver is an excellent professor. She is very understanding of our circumstances and understands that we are all full-time educators. The feedback she provided throughout the semester was very thorough and challenged me to grow. I feel lucky to have had a professor like Dr. Roman-Oliver during this important section of my educational career.”

Artifact G: Examples of Thank-A-Teacher Submissions

2023:

- Dear Dr. Roman-Oliver, I cannot thank you enough for your unwavering dedication and willingness to help me through some of the most challenging times in my academic journey. Your encouragement and mentorship helped me persevere through the difficulties I encountered during my studies. Your feedback on my research and writing helped me improve my skills and gave me confidence in my abilities. I am grateful for the time you took to answer my questions and provide me with thoughtful advice, which was always spot-on. Your willingness to go above

and beyond your role as a professor, to listen and understand my concerns, and to offer practical solutions was truly appreciated. Your guidance and support were instrumental in helping me achieve my academic goals, and I am indebted to you for that. Thank you again for all that you have done for me. I will always remember your kindness and the impact you had on my life. (Aubri'an Body)

- Dear Dr. Roman-Oliver, I could not graduate from this program without saying thank you. You truly are an excellent teacher. You are kind, pleasant, and understanding. You express genuine interest in your students. You are encouraging and honest about areas we need improvement in. You are quick to answer questions and never seem annoyed to receive an email. I love that you have a great balance between challenging us to grow and improve while acknowledging the growth you've already seen. It is evident to me that you are a life-long learner yourself, and that is very impactful. You are always looking for ways to learn and keep improving. Who you are as a person (not only a teacher) inspires me to continue learning myself. (Melissa Volante)

- Dear Dr. Roman-Oliver, I have been in your class for two semesters now. I genuinely see how much you care about us as students, but also about our students as well. Your assignments never feel like "busy work". It is work that challenges us to rise to the occasion for our students and benefits us in the end. There have been many times that my anxiety has gotten the best of me; however, you always respond to my emails with a heartfelt response that provides so much clarity and then I do not feel bad for asking questions. Your feedback is always thoughtful and truly helps me grow as a teacher. I just want you to know that your heart for teaching and for science shines bright! Thank you for all that you pour into your classes! (Katie Butt)

- Dear Dr. Roman-Oliver, I would just like to say "Thank you!" for all that you have helped me accomplish during my time at GCSU. When I first entered the teaching profession, I felt quite lost but after completing my MAT courses with your guidance, I feel like I have been a sponge absorbing all the information possible. Your patience and understanding, the way you present material in a realistic and easy-to-understand format, along with your personal insight and experiences have been such an encouragement throughout this journey. Going back to college was one of the best decisions I ever made. Thank you so much! (Alison Cox)

2024:

- As an unconventional graduate student, I initially had reservations about completing my program. Over the course of two years, numerous fears weighed me down. However, I decided to take a leap of faith, and I am incredibly glad that I did. Every aspect of my journey, from meeting with my advisor to interacting with my professors, has felt like a divine blessing. One individual who has had a significant impact on my growth, even unknowingly, is Dr. Oliver. Her attention to detail and precise feedback have helped me develop tremendously in a short amount of time. Additionally, she is understanding and encourages me to strive for my goals. I would like to express my gratitude to her for her patience and dedication throughout this semester. (Zari Wadley)

- Dear Dr. S. Roman-Oliver, I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your guidance and support throughout the MAT program. Your dedication to teaching and your

passion for the subject matter were truly an inspiration to me. Your willingness to go above and beyond to ensure my success did not go unnoticed. You always made me believe I could rise to the occasion. You challenged me to think critically, pushed me to reach my full potential, and instilled in me a love for learning that will last a lifetime. As I reflect on my time in this program and in your classes, I am filled with appreciation for the knowledge and skills you have transmitted to me. Your mentorship and advisement have had a huge impact on my academic journey, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to learn from you. Thank you for your unwavering support, encouragement, and guidance. Your dedication to your students is truly commendable, and I feel blessed to have had you as my instructor. I will carry the lessons I've learned from you with me as I embark on the next chapter of my professional journey. I commit to imitating your dedication and ideals in regards to my students. I hope that I can be as instrumental in their lives as you have been in mine. With sincere gratitude and appreciation, Tara W. Connor.

Artifact H: Feedback from Faculty Peers through CTL

Spring 2022

“You set a safe, cordial, and caring environment. Questions you posed to students got them thinking, and students responded well when you took a Socratic approach to a pedagogical issue. Your use of small-group discussion (breakout rooms) was generally successful, as it got more students engaged. You have facility with the technology component of online teaching. You make successful use of explanations, examples, and metaphorical descriptions in your teaching. The pace of your class seemed excellent.”

David Johnson, Professor of Music

Fall 2024

“Instructor used a human plot on a white board as an activity. Students seemed to enjoy the activity! Instructor summarized the activity and discussed how students can use a quadrant in their own classes. Instructor continued the lecture with a question-answer-feedback format. Instructor appreciated the student participation and was encouraging. After each topic instructor made sure to summarize the discussion and point out the key findings.”

“Students used the activity What? When? Why? Who? To contribute to the class discussion for standard 5 [i.e., Assessment]. Groups on Zoom were used for the activity. Groups connected back to discuss the individual group brainstorming. Instructor gave feedback on the shared ideas. The classroom time was well managed for the day with several student activities and ample time given for student feedback and reflections.”

Watshala Medawala, Professor of Chemistry

Artifact I:

Semester:	Organization:	Topic or Speaker:	Notes:
Spring 2022	CTL	Small Steps	
Spring 2022	CTL	Study Abroad	
Summer 2022	CTL	HIPs Summer Institute	Virtual
Spring 2023	National Science Teaching Association	National Conference	In-Person 3-day conference
Spring 2023	COPLAC (Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)	Chat GPT-Teaching and Learning in the Age of AI	Virtual 1-hour PD
Spring 2023	GoReact	Rethinking Assessment in the Age of AI	Virtual 1-hour PD
Summer 2023	Governor's Teaching Fellowship, Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education	STEM Spring Program	In-Person 5-days
Spring 2024	MAT Program Retreat	Funded by the Academic Affairs Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program	In-Person 3-days