

Academic Affairs Excellence Awards

Application Form



Name: **Alexandra Berglund**

Rank: **Assistant Professor**

Department: Professional Learning and Innovation

Award applying for:

(Check one)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Teaching Award*
<input 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](#).



Excellence in Teaching Award
Nomination Portfolio

Alexandra Berglund

Assistant Professor, Reading, Language, and Literacy
Department of Professional Learning and Innovation
Georgia College & State University

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Phone: (478)445-1154

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To Members of the Review Committee for Excellence in Teaching

It is my great privilege to write this letter nominating Dr. Alexandra Berglund for the Georgia College & State University Excellence in Teaching Award (2025-2026). Dr. Berglund consistently demonstrates innovation and commitment to student success through effective teaching. Since joining the Reading, Literacy, and Language Faculty at Georgia College in 2022, Dr. Berglund has positively influenced literacy courses for all programs across the COE, and she has fully engaged in our collaborative process to refine courses to meet new state standards for teaching literacy within Educator Preparation Programs.

Preparation

Dr. Berglund invests significant time and energy preparing for each class session, content module, and semester course. For example, her lesson planning is clear and evident through visuals (i.e., Google Slides) provided during each class that provide an agenda with informational guide and instructional resources for each instructional session. Students are provided access to these visual presentations and course material in GaView, and this supports learners in becoming more independent as they process course concepts in class and beyond. In many ways, the slides and readings for Dr. Berglund's classes empower students and enrich their ability to apply course concepts within the field. Her regular updating of course material to stay current in literacy research and practice supports students as they prepare for careers as professional educators and provides an excellent model for this type of teaching professionalism.

Student Engagement

Some specific examples of Dr. Berglund's effectiveness come directly from my observations her Foundations of Reading, Literacy, and Language courses. Any time I have observed a class of Dr. Berglund's, I have been immediately aware of the positive learning environment she has created with her students. Dr. Berglund provides a theoretical and practical foundation for all course activities and interactions. Students work independently and collaboratively in groups to demonstrate course content. Additionally, Dr. Berglund engages students in teaching, reflecting, and providing peer feedback. I find her peer feedback process especially specific, meaningful, and organized. Students know what they are expected to communicate through feedback, and therefore the process and products are far more valuable. Dr. Berglund's instruction supports content knowledge while simultaneously developing feedback systems that students will be able to utilize in their own teaching in the future. I identify these practices as evidence of student engagement leading to success.

Additionally, Dr. Berglund's teaching skillfully and effectively supports teacher candidates in learning strategies for comprehension and word recognition. She clearly demonstrates the

“how” and “why” for each evidence-based literacy practice she introduces. It is clear that she thinks carefully about how to make course content relevant to students. For example, I found Dr. Berglund’s incorporation of popular culture, within 3-minute teaching experiences, to be an especially effective manner for teaching and learning about reading comprehension. Through this connection, teacher candidates make connections and identify explicit examples, key aspects of effective reading and literacy instruction.

Student Empowerment Through Reflection

Student empowerment is clear through the teaching of mini lessons. Students provide their own overview and model of an upcoming assignment they will implement in placement. This is a positive and proactive way to empower students to practice expectations, demonstrate course content, and reflect on opportunities for improvement. Students engage in reflecting and discussing each step. This is especially important in literacy courses for teacher candidates where students will be certified in specific grade bands within and across grades K-12. Dr. Berglund demonstrates key elements of instructional decisions that take into account developmental stages and appropriateness of instruction. Additionally, she regularly provides a range of formats for student reflections. These reflection opportunities support students through deepening their understandings of course content and fostering life-long learning.

As a veteran faculty member in Reading, Literacy, and Language, I am extremely proud and thankful for the opportunity to learn from and with Dr. Berglund, an indubitably exemplary teacher. Her positive relationships with students, tireless effective planning, effective engagement of students in learning, and empowerment of students through reflective practices that will last a lifetime are merely a brief rationale documenting the excellence and lasting impact of Dr. Berglund’s teaching. Her teaching inspires and engages students and faculty alike. Colleagues regularly seek to learn from and with Dr. Berglund, and she has recently accepted a Georgia College CTL Faculty Fellow role. It is clear that Dr. Alexandra Berglund dedicates significant time and energy to excellence in teaching, generating learning through innovation. The impact is clear through Dr. Berglund’s students’ and colleagues’ success. I nominate Dr. Alexandra Berglund for Georgia College’s Excellence in Teaching Award (2025-2026) with my highest recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Golson Bradley, Ph.D.

ALEXANDRA LAMPP BERGLUND, Ph.D.
GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY

I. ACADEMIC HISTORY

Education

- 2022 *Ph.D. Language and Literacy Education*, The University of Georgia
Concentration: Literacies and Children's Literature
- 2015 *M.A. Reading Education*, The University of Georgia
- 2013 *B.A. English Language and Literature*, The University of Georgia

II. ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2022 – Present Assistant Professor, Reading, Literacy, and Language
Department of Professional Learning and Innovation
Georgia College & State University

III. TEACHING

Undergraduate: EDRD 3221 – Foundations of Language Acquisition & Literacy Development, EDRD 3500 – Foundations of Language & Literacy for Special Educators, EDEX 3501 – Literacy Strategies, EDRD 3511 – Literacy Assess. & Instruct.: Dyslexia & Diverse Reading Profiles, EDRD 4500 – Literacy Assessment, Intervention, & Materials

Graduate (Online): EDRD 5200 – Foundations of Reading, Literacy, and Language, EDRD 5211 – Literacy for Special Education, EDRD 6150 – Literacy, Reading, & Writing in Content Fields, EDRD 6650 – Foundations of Language & Literacy for Special Populations, EDRD 6651 – Literacy, Dyslexia, and Language Difficulties and Structured Interventions, EDRD 6652 – Assessing, Identifying, and Supporting Students with Dyslexia and Other Language-Based Difficulties

IV. SELECTED RESEARCH

Berglund, A. L. (2023). Diverging ideologies of disability: An examination of literature on inclusive literacy. *Georgia Journal of Literacy*. 45(1), 1-15.

Berglund, A. L. (2021). "Just bring me some books to read:" Exploring parental literacy narratives within the dis/ability community. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 65(5), 389-397. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1218>

V. AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Berglund, A. L. (2026 – 2027). Center for Teaching and Learning Faculty Fellow, Georgia College & State University. Funded: \$1,500 (Annually).

Berglund, A. L. (Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025). Thank-A-Teacher @ GCSU, Center for Teaching and Learning, Georgia College & State University.

Berglund, A. L. (2023). Lilly Conference Fellowship, Center for Teaching and Learning, Georgia College & State University.

VI. SELECTED GRANTS RECEIVED

Berglund, A. L., & Crook, M. H. (2025). Empowering all learners: The science of reading and interactive read-alouds in special education classrooms. Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy Mini-Grant. Funded: \$2,815.00.

Bradley, L. G., & **Berglund, A. L.** (2023). Community-Based Engaged Learning Grant Award, Georgia College & State University. Funded: \$960.00.

Bradley, L. G., & **Berglund, A. L.** (2022-2023). Dyslexia Endorsement Service Provider Grant, Georgia Department of Education. Funded: \$106,928.00.

VII. SERVICE

Department – Strategic Plan: IMAGINE 2023 Lead (2025-2026), Vision and Mission Task Force (2024-2025)

College – CAEP/PSC Review Steering Committee (2025-Present), Purpose and Direction Committee (2024-Present), College Curriculum Committee (2023-Present)

University – Graduate Education Task Force (2026); Graduate Coordinator Committee (2025-Present); Academic Affairs Small Grants Program Committee (2023-Present), University Curriculum Committee (2022-Present), Liberal Arts Skills for the Professions and Individual Well-Being Task Force (2023)

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS (* indicates mentored student research)

Berglund, A. L., Bradley, L. G., Allen, J. K., Campese, T., Scullin, B. L., Griffin, R. A., Lindstrom, J. H., Lingo, A. S. (2025, July). *Aligning for impact: How Georgia's educator preparation programs address the science of reading.* Annual Governor's Summit on Early Language and Literacy, Milledgeville, GA.

***Berglund, A. L.,** Crook M. H., Bendall, H., et al. (2025, February). *Empowering all learners: The science of reading and interactive read-alouds in special education classrooms.* Empowering Educators Conference, Savannah, GA.

Berglund, A. L., & Bradley, L. G. (2024, April). *"I do. We do. You do.": Exploring gradual release of responsibility within and beyond the college classroom.* Workshop given at the USG Teaching & Learning Conference. Athens, GA.

*Bradley, L. G., **Berglund, A. L.,** McDonal, R., et al. (2023, July). *Community-based teacher education course supports early learners with evidence-based tutoring.* Annual Governor's Summit on Early Language and Literacy, Milledgeville, GA.

***Lampp Berglund, A.,** Bradley, L. G., Driskell, K. V., et al. (2023, December). *Inclusive interrogations: Interrupting literacy hierarchies by honoring the voices of striving readers.* Paper presentation at Literacy Research Association's Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

In *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century*, Alice Wong (2020) writes, “Community is magic. Community is power. Community is resistance.” (p. xix). In each of the courses I teach, I am inspired by the relentless work of disability activists, like Wong, and their call to create welcoming and accessible spaces for all. As I prepare for and reflect on each of my courses, I remember Wong’s words, as my students and I work together to achieve our personal and collective goals as a community of learners, each with our different needs coming together to grow in our pedagogical knowledge of reading, literacy, and language learning. Below, I use Wong’s words as a framework to illustrate my commitment to excellence in teaching.

Community is magic. This form of magic is found and facilitated through human interaction and enacted through **collaboration, connection, and joy** in the classroom. Evidence of my ongoing quest to achieve excellence in teaching can be seen most notably in my **collaboration** with multiple stakeholders. During my time at Georgia College & State University, I have worked alongside students, faculty, and staff to, first, map the reading, literacy, and language curriculum offered across program areas. Then, we redesigned these courses based on the knowledge gained from the curriculum mapping process and Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) requirements, and, finally, we all led and cotaught these innovative courses. This expansive process helped to connect key reading, literacy, and language content across the three primary program areas reading, literacy, and language program area faculty serve, Elementary Education, Special Education, and Middle Grades Education, bridging our communities of expertise. Additionally, this endeavor helped me to really understand my unique role within the College of Education, as a faculty member that collaborates across our institutional unit to provide instruction to pre- and in-service educators across contexts. To continue learning and growing in my teaching, I have also sought multiple professional development opportunities to deepen my pedagogical knowledge and expand my communities of practice, while also serving as a supervisor and mentor to graduate students in the College’s Ed.D. program in Curriculum and Instruction.

Additionally, in each of my undergraduate class sessions, I attempt to create a sense of **connection** and **joy** by beginning each class with an interactive read-aloud. Inspired by the Classroom Book-a-Day movement led by Jillian Heise and Donalyn Miller, my practice of facilitating a shared read-aloud entails exploring a picturebook together as a class. Similar to “story time” in an elementary classroom, I read the text aloud and pose thoughtful comprehension and open-ended questions. The texts are selected and the questions are crafted in hopes to create meaningful connections to course content, foster joyful engagement, support students’ varied identities, develop empathy and awareness, and build community. Further, the read-aloud experiences serve as a model for the read-alouds students are expected to lead in their own classrooms, as future educators. Through thoughtful dialogue and purposeful reflection, my students and I work with one another to create a course community while also envisioning their futures as teacher leaders who will one day build the foundations of their own sustaining classroom communities.

Community is power. Power, in my courses, comes from **reflective praxis** and **multimodality**. In all of my courses, I work to create a three-pronged framework that reflects the importance of combining theory and practice into praxis followed by critical reflection (Arnold et al., 2012). First, I write and present a short lecture where my students and I explore literacy content and facilitate interactive hands-on activities to create a unique and balanced course design. Then, students are

assessed and asked to apply their literacy knowledge through planning and implementation in field-based assignments. Finally, both the students and I engage in critical reflection, as we think through our experiences as a community and how we can move forward. During this reflective process, students submit their thoughts, and I set time aside to determine ways to improve the course and my teaching methods to better serve my students and to also celebrate any successes. In this way, this iterative experience of **reflective praxis** not only fosters students' success, but it is a powerful professional development practice.

As a part of these reflections, I've broadened the scope of student submissions. Research has shown that pushing against traditional forms of assessment that value written text not only facilitates accessibility but also increases student motivation. I have seen evidence of this power in the courses I teach. By thinking and sharing across a variety of modes, including but not limited to creating artistic sketches, typing digital notes, determining song selections, and identifying a single emotion from Robert Plutchik's emotion wheel, students are not confined to pen and paper or a static document. With each mode, students' strengths and individuality are dually highlighted. Ultimately, students are excited to share their reflections with their peers and me, as we all learn from one another. Further, the **multimodality** of the reflections both challenges and supports teacher candidates by providing experiences with a wide array of meaning-making tools that they can then use in their own classrooms with students. They also begin to see regular reflection as a sustainable practice that they can complete routinely moving forward

Community is resistance. Building community within my courses also entails pushing against antiquated pedagogical practices by engaging in **community-based learning** and **gradually releasing responsibility**. Rebelling against serving as the "sage on the stage" (King, 2003), this resistance is particularly aligned with Georgia College & State University's liberal arts mission and its focus on collaborative engaged learning experiences both in and beyond the classroom. One of the key facets of the assignments in my courses is the application of content knowledge in the field. Teacher candidates complete assignments with their own P-12 students, creating a reciprocal relationship where both parties are deepening their learning. In this way, we are extending our community beyond the four walls of our classroom and into the local community. This generative relationship is mostly clearly highlighted in the two **community-based learning courses** I lead every academic year at local primary and elementary schools.

In these courses, teacher candidates are partnered one-on-one with local elementary students and design individualized interventions each week. Within the courses, I closely follow the **gradual release of responsibility** model of instruction, which involves sequencing learning activities to gradually shift responsibility from the instructor to the students and ultimately allows for practice of the newly acquired skills in authentic settings (McVee et al., 2019). Using this high-impact practice, I lead mini-lessons where I model literacy strategies before teacher candidates implement them with their own students. Then, we practice the strategies explored in the mini-lessons in small groups, and, finally, I am present throughout the on-site interventions to provide immediate feedback and guidance when needed. Through this process, work is scaffolded in meaningful ways, and students feel prepared and a part of a supportive learning community.

The communities that have been created in each of the courses I have led have made a lasting impact on my teaching. It is my hope my students remember the **magic, power, and resistance** in the communities we forged, as they go on to create classroom communities of their own.

Brief Summary of Innovative Teaching Practices

3-Minute Teach of Reading Comprehension Strategies

The 3-Minute Teach is an in-class assignment that asks students to design a condensed, yet comprehensive, lesson that is implemented in just three minutes. This exercise has taken many shapes in higher education, including the 3-Minute Thesis, 3-Minute Message, and 5-Minute Lesson Plan. In teacher education, the 3-Minute Teach makes us think deeply about what encompasses excellent teaching practices (engaging through active learning, fostering critical thinking, modeling and gradually releasing responsibility, etc.). This assignment also urges teacher candidates, or future educators, to think deeply about the essential information about a topic. The 3-Minute Teach is heavily inspired by Johann Hari's (2022) text *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention—And How to Think Deeply Again*. The practice of creating a 3-Minute Teach and observing peers present a 3-Minute teach helps teacher candidates explore the different directions our minds are being pulled at once and think deeply about their own future students' attention spans and how they are different than their own. Teacher candidates must determine strategies and approaches that can be used to engage and motivate their students. Additionally, it urges teacher candidates to analyze the ways environments influence a person's ability to focus and ask themselves, "How do our classroom environments and teaching practices influence students' abilities to focus?"

I begin by modeling a 3-Minute Teach and answer any questions the students may have about this new format of instruction. Then, to complete the 3-Minute Teach, small groups of 4-5 teacher candidates select a reading comprehension strategy, which we previously reviewed as a whole class together. Teacher candidates also choose a focus text that they will use to model their selected comprehension strategy. With these selections, teacher candidates collaboratively design a 3-Minute Teach that must include one to two presentation slides, and the slides should feature: a clear and concise definition of the strategy; ways to implement the strategy in a particular classroom context; and explicit modeling of the strategy. Teacher candidates are given 30 minutes to prepare before sharing their presentation with their peers. As their classmates are presenting, teacher candidates are asked to pay close attention and provide feedback to their peers once their 3-Minute Teach is complete, using a Peer Feedback Choice Board (Adapted from Tucker, 2023). Peer feedback further facilitates teacher candidates' critical exploration of successful and innovative teaching strategies. Example of a completed 3-Minute Teach and the Peer Feedback Choice Board is included below:

Peer Feedback Choice Board
Adapted from Tucker, 2023

Directions: Select ONE prompt from the peer feedback choice board to provide another group with specific, meaningful, and kind feedback. Share out verbally. Once you have shared, place a sticker on the square that you selected to indicate that the prompt has been used.

<p>Greatest Strength Identify the strongest aspect of the 3-Minute Teach. What specifically was strong? Why do you think this element was particularly powerful or well done? How did this element positively impact the overall quality of the 3-Minute Teach?</p>	<p>Tiny Tweaks Identify one aspect of the 3-Minute Teach that would benefit from a minor adjustment, modification, or tweak. What would you suggest the group rework or reimagine? How would reworking this element impact the overall quality of the 3-Minute Teach? Do you have any specific recommendations for improvement?</p>	<p>Celebrate Surprises As the group shared their 3-Minute Teach, what surprised you about their work? Was there an aspect of their 3-Minute Teach that was unexpected, original, out-of-the-box, engaging, or particularly thought-provoking? Describe why you liked this aspect of their 3-Minute Teach.</p>
<p>Hungry for More Identify a part of the 3-Minute Teach that needs further development. What would you have enjoyed knowing more about or having more information on? Where could more detail and development have strengthened this 3-Minute Teach? Can you identify the specific places in the 3-Minute Teach where the group should spend time digging deeper?</p>	<p>Mind Blown Identify something in this 3-Minute Teach that you love and had not considered as you completed your own 3-Minute Teach. Is there a great idea or approach that the group used to complete the 3-Minute Teach that you would like to incorporate into your work? Why did you like this element of the 3-Minute Teach? How can you incorporate this idea or approach into your revisions and other 3-Minute Teaches?</p>	<p>Clarifying Confusion As the group shared their 3-Minute Teach, was there anything unclear, confusing, or that left you wondering? Is there an aspect of this 3-Minute Teach that you would like more clarity on or more specifics about? Were any of the steps or statements unclear? Can you identify specific elements of the 3-Minute Teach that would benefit from clearer language and/or more explanation?</p>

Visualizing

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE
STORY AND PICTURED BY MARGARET WOOD

JUNGLE MUSIC
UPBEAT AND CREATIVE

Ways to implement - give students a picture before reading, play music/background sounds that aligns with the reading, possibly set the setting with a specific picture as your background while reading.

- Have video walkthroughs that change background, maybe burn a candle, or spray to help with certain settings such as a coffee shop or seasonal smells, have physical movement an example have your arms spread out and fly like a bat (danny go)

Definition
The ability to create mental images of a text in order to help us better understand the reading.

publicdomainvectors.org

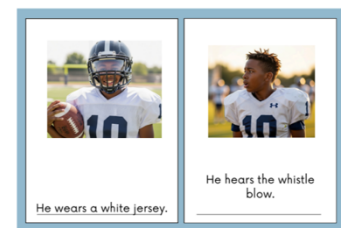
Creation of an Individualized Decodable Picturebook Using AI

This project is woven into both community-based engaged learning courses I lead: EDRD 3511: Literacy Assessment & Instruction and EDEX 3501: Literacy Strategies. The instruction in these two courses is structured into three distinct parts: the tutoring session, the reflection, and the mini-lesson. The tutoring session is grounded in the research-informed *Book Buddies: A Tutoring Framework for Struggling Readers* (Invernizzi et al., 2021). The framework promotes that individual literacy interventions feature all the following components: re-reading of a text to support fluency, engaging in a multi-sensory phonics-based activity to support decoding, reading a new text that features the same phonics skill in context, and applying that same phonics skills through a writing exercise. Each tutoring session follows this framework with fidelity and is immediately followed by reflection that asks teacher candidates to self-assess and look back critically at the tutoring session they just led. After completing the reflection, teacher candidates and I engage in a mini-lesson that explores methods that can then be applied next week in our next tutoring sessions.

For this assignment, teacher candidates are asked to use the GCSU-integrated and supported Artificial Intelligence (AI) software, Microsoft Copilot, to create a decodable picturebook that directly addresses their student's literacy needs and focuses on a specific phonics skill. The picturebook will then be used for the reading of a new text portion of one intervention they design for their student. Specifically, the AI helps teacher candidates to generate the text that will be featured in their picturebook. With that text, they then create a book using any software or application they would like to use (Book Creator, Canva, PowerPoint, Google Slides, etc.). The teacher candidates can also use AI to generate pictures to use in the picturebooks or they can insert Creative Commons images.

To begin the assignment, I lead a mini-lesson on how to craft a prompt that will generate the text needed. The elements needed for the prompt include: the teacher candidate's student's name, the student's focus phonics skill, and the student's personal interests. Once the phonics skill for intervention is identified, and using students' personal interests collected by a Reading Interest Inventory at the beginning of the semester, teacher candidates use AI to write a draft of the text. Then, they edit the text to ensure accuracy in grammar and inclusion of the select phonics skill. Finally, using the edited text, teacher candidates create their book ensuring it has the following properties: 8-10 pages of text, illustrations to go along with the text, and a cover page featuring their name, information on their use of Copilot, and a description of the phonics skill featured.

This assignment helps teacher candidates explore technology that can assist in creating individualized learning materials for their students. The completed decodable texts are an innovative tool to engage and motivate striving readers. Examples of the covers and select pages of completed texts are included below:



Lyndall Muschell, Ed.D.
Professor Emerita - Department of Teacher Education
Coordinator of Curriculum and Faculty Affairs
Georgia College & State University

February 10, 2026

Dear Members of the Review Committee for the Excellence in Teaching Award,

I am honored to write in support of Dr. Alexandra Berglund as part of her application process for the Excellence in Teaching Award. In addition to my work with Dr. Berglund as a colleague since she joined the faculty of the John H. Lounsbury College of Education, I had the unique opportunity and privilege of learning from her from the perspective of a graduate student. In spring 2024, I began work toward the completion of the three graduate level courses required for the Dyslexia Endorsement. Through the experiences associated with these courses which were completed over three semesters, I am confident in Dr. Berglund's strong dedication to student success, thoughtfulness in course design, and passion for her profession. Her commitment to **excellence in teaching** is highly commendable making her an exceptional candidate for receipt of this honor.

One of Dr. Berglund's most notable strengths is her unwavering focus on **supporting student success**. Throughout each of the three courses required for the Dyslexia Endorsement, she consistently went above and beyond to ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds or academic preparation, had the resources and encouragement they needed to succeed. Through the provision of quality feedback which was both constructive and personalized as well as her willingness and availability (both in-person and online) to provide support to students outside of class meetings, Dr. Berglund demonstrated a clear commitment to the academic and professional development of her students.

In addition to providing strong student support, Dr. Berglund excelled in the **organization of course content**. Each of the three courses was well-structured, with clear objectives and logical sequencing that helped students build their knowledge in a coherent manner. Students could easily follow the flow of the material within the learning management system (D2L). This was supported by Dr. Berglund's ensuring that all course materials, from syllabi to guidelines for assignments, were easily accessible and effectively communicated. Dr. Berglund also brought significant value to **synchronous class meetings**. These sessions were an integral part of her teaching strategy, providing students with the opportunity to engage in real-time discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with peers. She used these meetings effectively to clarify concepts, address misunderstandings, discuss the impact of important legislative decisions, and provide direct guidance on assignments, all of which enhanced students' understanding and supported their progress throughout the courses.

Additionally, the **assignments** that Dr. Berglund designed for the three courses were thoughtfully crafted and sequenced to deepen students' understanding of significant concepts and relevant strategies. These assignments encouraged students to apply, analyze, and synthesize the

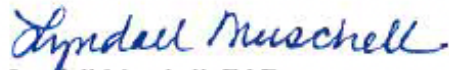
course content, fostering critical thinking and promoting deeper learning. Dr. Berglund ensured that each assignment was purposefully aligned with course objectives and provided students with authentic opportunities to demonstrate and strengthen their grasp of the subject matter.

Finally, an area in which Dr. Berglund excels is in **providing prompt and meaningful feedback**. Her grading and feedback practices were timely, specific, and constructive, helping students understand both their strengths and areas for improvement. The feedback was not only aimed at evaluating student performance but also served as a valuable learning tool that provided guidance for students in their ongoing academic and professional development.

I am confident in Dr. Berglund's commitment to and passion for **excellence in teaching**. Her genuine care for supporting the success of all students, her expertise in both the organization and implementation of online courses, and her ability to build communities of learning within a virtual setting make her an invaluable asset to the College of Education and to the university as a whole.

Thank you for considering this letter in support of Dr. Berglund's application for the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,



Lyndall Muschell, Ed.D.
Professor Emerita, College of Education
lyndall.muschell@gcsu.edu

February 13, 2026

To whom it may concern,

My name is Aubrey Gerber, and I am an undergraduate student in the Special Education Cohort at Georgia College & State University. I am writing this letter on behalf of Alexandra Berglund who has been nominated for the Teaching Excellence Award. During my time in the cohort, I have taken a variety of classes but the ones that I will cherish and remember the most are the ones that were taught by Dr. Berglund.

I met Dr. Berglund during my junior year when I first entered the cohort and was taking her Foundations of Literacy class. As a beginning educator, there is a lot to learn, and you may ask yourself why some things are important and relevant. I never once questioned why in her class. Dr. Berglund is very intentional and passionate in the way that she teaches. Everything that I have learned and practiced in her class can be directly viewed and implemented in the variety of classrooms in which I have student taught in. She designs her lessons and activities in a way that is engaging and enjoyable for her students while also ensuring that they are understanding, directly practicing, and implementing the information. I enjoy going to her classes because they are very structured, purposeful, deliberate, and interactive. She begins the class with an agenda which lays out exactly what we will be doing and why. Then, she introduces new content while ensuring that we get time to directly practice it with our peers. As beginning educators, this is so helpful as we get to receive direct feedback from each other and her. She pushes us to work together and collaborate which is an essential skill that we will use in our future careers as teachers.

One of the most memorable and impactful experiences that I have had in in the cohort has been in Dr. Berglund's class. In Fall 2025, we had the opportunity to tutor and work one-on-one with a student at a local school in Milledgeville on their literacy skills. Dr. Berglund taught us the importance of assessment and how to directly assess students on their strengths, areas for improvement, and needs in spelling, reading, and writing. Taking the data from the assessments, we had the opportunity to express our creativity in designing lesson plans, activities, and decodable short stories for them each week. If we ever needed assistance, guidance, or ideas, she was always excited and there to help us grow. In the past, I have struggled to be creative, but Dr. Berglund provided us with many resources and ideas to utilize throughout the process. I looked forward to this class every week because of how special it was for myself and my student. Since we worked with our students weekly, we got to spend a lot of time together. Dr. Berglund showed us the importance of getting to truly know your students and developing a meaningful relationship with them.

One of my first times teaching at the front of a classroom was when I completed my interactive read-aloud assignment for Dr. Berglund's class. For this assignment, we got to pick a story to read out loud to our students that connected to a standard that they were learning. I decided to read, *The Giving Tree*, because it connected to theme. At the time, I was in an 8th grade inclusion classroom, and I was unsure on how I was going to read a story to a bunch of teenagers and encourage them to listen and participate. I went to Dr. Berglund for guidance, and she reassured me that every student, regardless of age, can benefit from getting a story read out loud to them.

She explained the importance of incorporating interactive read-alouds throughout all grades and all subjects. I will always remember this because I never thought about reading a story to my students when teaching a subject like math or science. However, I soon learned that you could incorporate reading into almost everything.

Not only is Dr. Berglund a great professor, but she is also a very thoughtful and genuine person. She truly cares about her students and this shows through her actions such as celebrating each student's birthday. She is very dedicated to her career, and her students' well-being. I look up to her as a professor and hope to one day become an impactful teacher to someone as she has been to me! She is truly deserving of the Teaching Excellence Award.

Sincerely,

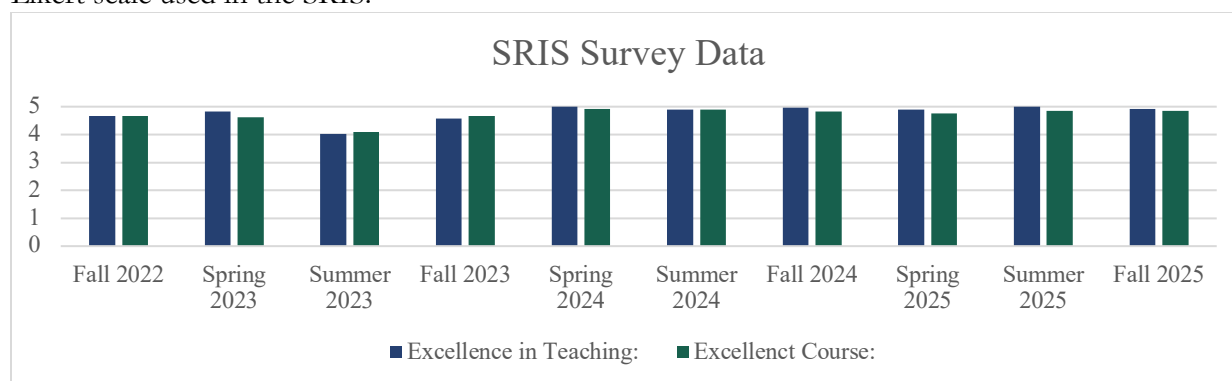
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aubrey Gerber".

Aubrey Gerber

Evidence of Teaching Excellence

SRIS Quantitative Data

In terms of both quantitative and qualitative data, one way student success can be measured is through Student Rating of Instruction Surveys (SRIS). Presented at the close of each semester, SRIS present instructors illuminating information on student success provided by students themselves. In many ways, this first-hand information facilitates opportunities for faculty reflection on the course community that was fostered through and alongside effective instruction. The figure below visually represents my semester average across all courses taught in both the “Excellence in Teaching” and “Excellent Course” categories for all 10 semesters I have been at GCSU, following the 5-point Likert scale used in the SRIS.



Select SRIS Qualitative Data

Alongside the quantitative data depicted in the figure above, I have also selected excerpts of the qualitative data that specifically highlight my dedication to student success. These excerpts are featured in the table below. Together, the qualitative and quantitative data provide a comprehensive view of my commitment to excellence in teaching informed by student-centered measures.

Semester	Qualitative Data
Fall 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr. Berglund has created this class in a way that it is very interactive. She prepared us for going into placement with this class which has made learning the literacy strategies very effective. Dr. Berglund provides us with many examples and provides us with resources to be successful in the classroom.</i> • <i>Dr. Berglund had a really big job this year. She had to come to a new school, work with new co-workers, teach new material, and even teach old material. She could not have done a better job. I really appreciate the time and effort that she put into our classes. She challenged us in ways that have not been done before, but she supported us along the ways. Because of Dr. Berglund, I have a better understanding on how to teach reading and how to support my students. She is an excellent teacher, and highly respected.</i>
Spring 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This has been my FAVORITE course out of the entire MAT program. I truly feel like I have gained so much information, been able to apply to my students, and have seen progress!</i> • <i>Dr. Berglund did a great job teaching this course by providing resources and materials that were very beneficial for learning, therefore, I will be able to apply this new knowledge in my career as a special education teacher.</i>
Summer 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A very helpful course in showing me how to promote literacy in my students. The techniques taught in the course can easily be applied in real class settings.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I was not sure what to expect when coming into this course. I loved all of the resources that I had not known about that tied ELA and Math together. I have shared resources that I found in this class with other teachers in my school already.</i>
Fall 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thank you for being amazing! I am more confident in my literacy skills and how I could give interventions and connecting with my students.</i> • <i>This was one of the most helpful classes I feel I've taken so far that will prepare me for my career. Thank you for your energy, relatability, and effort you put into planning our classes and activities. I feel like I will take everything, especially the digital toolkit, into the field.</i>
Spring 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr. Berglund is an amazing instructor and really takes our interests into consideration when teaching us. I have been able to apply the skills I have learned in Dr. Berglund's class to my teaching and developing literacy plans. I have really enjoyed my time in this class.</i> • <i>I feel very lucky to have had Dr. Berglund as my literacy professor for two years. She truly knows what she is talking about and is able to explain everything in a way that is easy to grasp. I was (almost completely) clueless about literacy and what made up literacy before taking her classes and now I feel extremely well-informed and capable of teaching my students how to read, write, and spell. Dr. Berglund is personable and easy to get along with and I truly appreciate how much respect she treats us with both inside and outside of class.</i>
Summer 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This course provided some valuable strategies that I could use as a teacher. I appreciate the feedback on the assignments and I loved the Book Club Component of this course.</i> • <i>I really enjoyed the class. It's one of those I can really say I'm going to use what I learned as soon as possible. Thank you for everything!!</i>
Fall 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr. Berglund is an excellent professor who challenged and supported us throughout the semester. The assignments in this class are valuable to developing skills as an educator. I personally saw an improvement in my teaching abilities after taking this course. She cared about us as students and as people.</i> • <i>This course was probably my favorite course this semester due to the real-world application within the course. Dr. Berglund did a great job preparing us each week to work with our students, and then we had the opportunity to apply that knowledge in a real-world environment. This course was one of the most helpful of my courses this semester as it applied directly to my field of study.</i>
Spring 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr. Berglund is a wonderful resource. Her assignments are engaging and thought provoking. The group meetings she led were opportunities to grow as teachers. She is available for questions or concerns and is very encouraging. I would definitely sign up for another course with her as a teacher.</i> • <i>Dr. Berglund is a top tier professor and is deeply knowledgeable in her field of education making this a wonderful learning experience for all of her students. She truly cares and makes efforts daily to work with and support us throughout the course and in our job capacity as a special education teacher. I think this class provided me with a very hands-on experience in teaching students with diverse reading profiles. I think Dr. Berglund was a great teacher who was always there to help in times of need.</i>
Summer 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr. Berglund is an exceptional educator—extremely knowledgeable, kind, and always willing to go the extra mile to support her students. Her understanding nature and consistent availability make a real difference in the learning experience. It is truly a privilege to learn from someone who not only teaches with excellence but also cares deeply about her students.</i> • <i>Dr. Berglund is a wonderful professor. She is supportive and understanding. The lessons are organized and detailed, with information always easy to find and accessible. I learned a great deal in this class, and I look forward to taking another class with Dr. Berglund.</i>

Fall 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You are truly one of the best professors in this program. You are kind, structured, organized, and hold us to high expectations. I have learned so much from you about teaching reading and I get to implement those skills every day in placement. I wish I could take this class over and over again. Thank you for all that you do and the support you have given us to be successful both in this class and in the real world.</i> • <i>This has been my favorite course in college thus far. Dr. Berglund is an excellent teacher! I love how well she engages our class. It doesn't feel like a lecture because we get up and do and learn hands on. Everything is so intentional and well planned and nothing feels like busy work. I have learned so much through this course.</i>
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Thank-A-Teacher @ GCSU Nominations

The Thank-A-Teacher @ GCSU nomination program is a way for students to share key insights into their learning experiences and outcomes at the close of the semester and to award faculty for their efforts to ensure student success. As with the SRIS results, these nominations facilitate the creation of the space and time to reflect and, ultimately, grow in my teaching and to celebrate. I have received a Thank-A-Teacher nomination for each of the following semesters: Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025, and Fall 2025.

Mentored Student Research

Another illustration of excellence in teaching is the collaborative research that I have engaged in alongside students, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Through this work, students showcase their ability to apply the content we have explored together in class, contribute original knowledge for the public good, and serve as leaders in the field at the regional, state, and international levels. Through the intensive research design, preparation, and presentations, I am fostering the students' scholarly growth, and we engage in professional development together, highlighting the importance of lifelong learning.

Graduate

Berglund, A. L., Bradley, L. G., Driskell, K. V., et al. (2023, December). *Inclusive interrogations: Interrupting literacy hierarchies by honoring the voices of striving readers*. Paper presentation at Literacy Research Association's Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Bradley, L. G., Berglund, A. L., Driskell, K. V., et al. (2023, March). *What Do Struggling Readers Think?* Research Day, Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville, GA.

Undergraduate

Berglund, A. L., Crook M. H., Bendall, H., et al. (2025, February). *Empowering all learners: The science of reading and interactive read-alouds in special education classrooms*. Empowering Educators Conference, Savannah, GA.

Bradley, L. G., Berglund, A. L., McDonald, R., et al. (2023, July). *Community-based teacher education course supports early learners with evidence-based tutoring*. Annual Governor's Summit on Early Language and Literacy, Milledgeville, GA.

Bradley, L. G., Berglund, A. L., McDonald, R., et al. (2023, March). *Learning to teach reading effectively: Community-Based Course Supports Early Learners*. Research Day, Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville, GA.