Faculty Excellence Award Application Form

Name: _____Cynthia J. Alby_____

Rank: _____Professor_____

Department: _____Teacher Education_____

Award applying for:
(Check one)

	Excellence in Teaching Award*
	Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award*
	Excellence in University Service*
X	Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award*
	Department/Program Excellence Award^
	Irene Rose Community Service Award^
	Laurie Hendrickson McMillian Faculty Award^

*college selection required before being forwarded to university
^university awards

College nominations are due by November 23, 2015 to the college Dean.

University nominations are due March 13, 2016 to the Director, Center for Faculty Development, Dr. Steve Jones

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 Academic Affairs Intranet Forms Page – section titled "Awards"

https://intranet.gcsu.edu/academic-affairs/policies-procedures-and-practices-manual-forms

It is requested that all application materials be inserted into one document, saved, and submitted electronically for consideration.

GEORGIA COLLEGE
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1889 - 2014

Dear Georgia College Awards Committee

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to nominate Dr. Cynthia Alby for the Georgia College Teaching and Learning Award. Dr. Alby has been my Mentor and colleague for the past five years that I have been teaching at Georgia College. Her contributions to teaching and learning extend to our Master of Arts in Teaching program, to the entire College of Education, the Georgia College community as well as programs around the state. I honestly don't know another person who is so dedicated to improving teaching and learning for her students, her own scholarship and that of others.

Dr. Alby has developed a clearly articulated teaching philosophy. Her teaching is never the usual fare of lecture that one finds in much of higher education. Dr. Alby takes very seriously her role as a model of effective teacher. Therefore, her students learn the material as well as the pedagogy by being engaged every minute in her class. In addition, her modules for outside class work are extremely effective in engaging students in their class preparation. She consistently asks for higher level thinking and reflective practice from her students as she models this for them as well. She has researched extensively on strategies for facilitating classroom discussions and has shared her research through her work with the Governor's Fellows Program and through state and national conferences. Dr. Alby shares her research every month with professors from around the state as an instructor in the Fellows program and has also shared her techniques through workshops at Georgia College. She is presenting this spring to a national conference on teaching in higher education and has been invited to participate in working with colleagues in other Teacher Education programs to develop examples of high leverage practices.

Dr. Alby has been actively engaged in the systematic examination of student learning for the past two years. She models how to most effectively demonstrate professional development in her reading, conference presentations and research in her classroom. Dr. Alby's research has also extended to the pedagogies of enactment and high leverage practices after she attended last year's AACTE Conference. As a result of her research, last year we changed the Secondary MAT program of study to include two new courses: Assessment in Content Areas and Instructional Strategies. Both courses are structured based on her research involving high leverage practices. We changed our lesson plans this year to facilitate those changes and we are continuing to develop these best practices through systematic videotaping sessions for our students on specific skills.

For the past two years, Dr. Alby has also participated in our pilot program for the new edTPA national assessment that will be required for all of our students in 2016. Dr. Alby created and shared with the College of Education faculty her lesson plans as well as strategies that she created to scaffold students' ability to complete the edTPA. She also shared her research at this year's AACTE Conference. In addition Dr. Alby is leading the charge to develop very specific guidelines for creating videotaping guidelines for our students to demonstrate their competency in a variety of high leverage practices. Furthermore, Dr. Alby has created and shared with the department members her numerous student centered activities on topics of diversity, differentiated instruction, classroom management, assessment, instructional strategies, classroom discourse as well as facilitation of classroom discussions. Her personal research has also extended to the systematic review of teacher candidate dispositions. She has developed and shared with the department this year her instrument for measuring teacher candidate growth on a variety of dispositions that are integral to teaching effectiveness. As a result, we now have a valuable measure of assessing our candidate's growth in our program. Finally, Dr. Alby continues to implement these best practices beyond her own classroom by teaching a class every year at Baldwin High School or in Early College. She engages in action research by bringing her students with her in the classroom to analyze best practices or using the teaching experience to help frame her own research. Dr. Alby is never complacent with the status quo; she is always striving for the most effective ways to improve teaching and learning.

Cynthia is the most caring, committed and dedicated person with whom I have ever worked. She is always there to do whatever is necessary to help the program, the College of Education, and Georgia College. Our program is very successful largely due to the way she has helped frame our focus. Our students as well as the Governor's Fellows consistently comment on how their focus on teaching is framed by her work. Her philosophy of being a true constructivist in every aspect of teaching has driven our program's entire focus; anyone who works with Dr. Alby quickly learns what it means to engage students in higher level thinking and develops vital strategies for implementing that type of teaching. I honestly cannot imagine a more qualified candidate for this award then Dr. Cynthia Alby.

Sincerely,

Dr Betta Borrelli

Dr. Betta Borrelli, Secondary MAT Program Coordinator

Betta.borrelli@gcsu.edu

Narrative of Research Questions

> "My career… is grounded in two fundamental assumptions: (a) that research and practice can and should live in productive synergy, with each enhancing the other, and (b) that research focused on teaching and learning in a particular discipline can, if carefully framed, yield insights that have implications across a broad spectrum of disciplines" (Schoenfeld, 2014). [1]

Education is so rarely done truly well. The sheer complexity of the endeavor is overwhelming especially when it comes to the education of students who are already behind the eight ball. So I have spent most of my career immersed in what could most accurately be described as "avid cross-discipline idea mongering." I study education, of course, but also sociology, psychology, neuroscience, and economics - anything that might yield some useful clues. Teaching is like a puzzle, and I am constantly gathering new pieces, experimenting and rearranging. But what does such research look like?

Most researchers conduct "scholarship of discovery." They focus in on something that they can control and study it. However, my passion is what I would call, "scholarship of teaching and learning through scholarship of integration and application" (Boyers, 1990). Someone has to study what happens when those who teach implement research, and specifically when they implement research related to different aspects of quality teaching simultaneously, as excellent teaching requires. How does one go about that? What does it look like? What would it mean to take what we know about quality education, make informed decisions about what to actually use, and then try to implement that combination of strategies? We expect those who teach to do this – to keep up with the research and juggle all kinds of variables at once, but we don't often discuss how difficult it is to do that or how this might be accomplished practically. My goal is to examine explicitly this complexity in order to help myself and others negotiate the intricate terrain of teaching.

So, broadly stated, my research questions are, "What would it look like to implement what is considered 'research-based best practice' in as many aspects of teaching as possible? How might an individual go about systematically developing his or her teaching practice over time, utilizing previous scholarship as a base while conducting SOTL studies to fill in the gaps and modify for one's specific student population? And how might a researcher use a combination of self-study and the scholarships of teaching, integration, and application to help *others* negotiate this complex and uncharted territory?"

In order to address such questions I engage in a systematic examination of teaching through the use of a variation on a methodology know as "design experiments." (Yes, I recognize that this is a truly terrible name for what has proven to be an eminently useful methodology.) This methodology has perhaps been most notably employed by the 2013 American Educational Research Association's "Distinguished Research Award" winner, Alan Schoenfeld. He describes design experiments in this way (italics are his):

a. "One has a 'local theory' about learning, which suggests some aspects of design.

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[1] Please note that the resources referenced in this document can be viewed by going to www.livetext.com and entering the visitor passcode: 1ECE5CDA

b. One crafts a theory-based intervention (the 'local theory says that *this* intervention ought to work in the following ways, to enhance understanding in *these ways*.')
c. On the basis of implementing the intervention and carefully observing its impact, one (i) refines the local theory and (ii) refines the intervention" (Schoenfeld, 2014).

My version of design experiments follows this particular pattern:

1. **A new round of study is generally sparked by either a problem I am facing in my teaching or important new research.** A problem faced in my teaching: one year student discussions in my classes were unusually unproductive with one or two students dominating and others hardly contributing at all. That led me to a two-year study of the research on discussion. A study sparked by research: my very first foray into scholarship of teaching and learning was back in 1994 when significant research on the importance of teaching metacognitive strategies was being published. I wanted to be certain that my students had the opportunity to benefit from this research, so I began a study of how to productively teach metacognitive strategies.
2. **Once I have taken an interest in a topic for whatever reason, I delve into the published research.** I generally begin with studies in education and then branch out into related fields as well. For example, the literature in neuroscience is rich with information about metacognition. And recently when I was studying the concept of feedback, I found the literature in business management to be very helpful.
3. **Then comes the scholarship of application.** Only rarely does the published literature point me in a direction that is simple and clear. The vast majority of the time I use the research I have collected to design a unique implementation plan. This involves gathering ideas and data from a variety of the most credible studies to design a set of strategies and then tailoring those strategies to meet the specific needs of *my* student population.
4. **Next the scholarship of teaching and learning comes into play.** During this stage I collect data on the extent to which the new strategies are promoting learning, experiment extensively with variations on the theme, and then develop additional strategies to fill in the gaps. For example, when I was studying discussion, I discovered both broad theory and specific suggestions for improving class discussions. I experimented with implementing those methods but then also created other strategies of my own design. The data I collected showed a significant increase in equity of student engagement in discussions with fewer students dominating and all or nearly all of the students contributing. Through further experimentation I was able to determine that some of the strategies I had developed worked better in certain situations and others in other situations. But while the quality of student interaction had increased, the quality of the content of the discussions still wasn't where I wanted it to be. I couldn't find much research on this, and I suspected that the problem was that students were jumping into discussions "cold," without sufficient processing of possible ideas immediately beforehand. So I ended up designing a collection of "pre-discussion" strategies so that by the time students entered into the conversation, their brains had been primed, and they already had some ideas to get them started. Finally class discussions became what I hoped they would be.
5. **Then I move to initial dissemination of the results and further experimentation.** At this point my "N" is rather small, so I work on sharing what I have learned with others and encourage them to share the results of using the strategies with me. I have access to quite a few

individuals who can help me with this. Often my colleagues in the College of Education or in other colleges here at Georgia College are happy to help, and they often have similar student populations. But it is my good fortune to work with the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program (more on this later), which is a group of professors from a wide range of disciplines, levels, and types of institutions, and it is this group who has been able to give me particularly valuable feedback. The majority of strategies I develop can also be used at the high school level with a little modification, so the teachers I work with in my courses also test the strategies with their students. This initial dissemination allows me to refine my ideas and then experiment with those refined ideas with my own students.

6. **At that point I can begin to codify my ideas and disseminate them more broadly.** After 2-3 years of study, I generally feel ready to share my results more broadly. I often write a white paper, create a variety of resources I feel will be useful to other faculty, and devise a workshop or presentation based on my work. I frequently present my work to the faculty at Georgia College, to the Governor's Teaching Fellows, at invited workshops, at conferences, and of course, to the teachers I teach. My goal is to constantly refine and update the strategies I have developed. This is one of the reasons I prefer dissemination face-to-face as opposed to publication, because face-to-face presentations allow for an influx of new ideas that will continue to improve my work, and I can also directly support individuals who need further help thinking through how to modify ideas for their own particular situations.

I have repeated this process over and over, starting a new study every year or two while continuing to refine earlier work. Through the years I have used this process to study a variety of research questions, and I will present a sampling of those here:

- **Given all the known means of modifying instructional conditions in order to promote learning, which offer the greatest return on investment? According to the research which interventions produce the greatest effect sizes?** For this study I focused my attention on quality meta-analyses such as the work of Hattie (2009) and Marzano (2001). This was not scholarship of teaching and learning per se but has driven my decisions about what to study, and I have presented my findings in a variety of settings in order to help other faculty make informed decisions about where to focus their own SOTL classroom experiments.
- **In what ways does a field-based cohort program with a designated mentor for each cohort improve educational outcomes for future teachers?** One of the reasons I came to Georgia College was because its College of Education was well known for the design of its programs that were (and still are) the envy of many other COE's across the nation. I was hired to help fully integrate this model into the secondary education program and study the effects. Because, as a team, we were able to study the model across programs (early childhood, middle, and secondary) as well as across levels (undergraduate and graduate), I was able to publish a book on the subject with my colleagues, *Becoming a Mentor Leader in a Professional Community* (Kleine et al., 2003). Just recently, I was asked by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education to update our work on this model for their "Innovation Exchange," a national resource which, up to this point, has featured only 18 programs nationwide, nearly all of which are based at "Research I" institutions.
- **How can anticipatory sets best be utilized to promote student learning?** My research in this area focused on building on the published research in order to broaden the understanding of what an anticipatory set/warm-up could accomplish. Most of the research focused on one benefit or another (see, e.g., Hunter, 1988), but through research I conducted in my own

classroom, I determined that anticipatory sets could provide at least six different benefits. I then developed a white paper documenting a dozen modifiable strategies for anticipatory sets, many of my own design. I also created a workshop to introduce a method for helping faculty make informed choices based on the type of lesson they are introducing and the benefits they are hoping to achieve.

- **How might the use of authentic assessments (including portfolios, multimedia projects, and performance tasks) increase students' motivation and critical thinking skills while providing the instructor with a more nuanced understanding of the student's learning?** Through this work I discovered that in my own classroom, authentic assessments directed students toward a focus on "learning goals" rather than "performance goals" a focus that is far more likely to result both in greater mastery of the subject (Dweck, 2006), as well as increased motivation (Pink, 2009). Based on this work I created a workshop for college faculty and a unit of study for middle and high school teachers.
- **What are viable alternatives to teacher-centered instruction? What types of student-centered strategies are most likely to engage the disengaged?** This is a question that was posed over and over by faculty with whom I work as well as the teachers I teach in graduate courses. I have long focused on student-centered strategies, but this persistent question forced me to consider which of my strategies were *superior to others* in terms of increasing student learning and engagement. Based on this work, I created a workshop for college faculty and an entire course for middle and high school teachers (EDFS 5213: Instructional Strategies).
- **What constitutes best practice in promoting quality classroom discussion?** Based on the work I have discussed above in some detail, I produced a white paper documenting seven modifiable strategies for preparing students for discussion, and six strategies for increasing both the quality of discussions as well as equity in participation. It also yielded a workshop for college faculty and a unit of study for middle and high school teachers.
- **Why might one argue that feedback is the very heart of learning? How can formative assessment and feedback best be utilized to promote student learning?** These are the questions I have been working on for the last two years. At some point I realized that it is nearly impossible to have any significant learning without some kind of feedback (Brookhart, 2008), and yet this is not a topic that is well understood by practitioners. I am in the process of making the case that quality of feedback correlates directly with quality of learning. I have gotten far enough now to produce a variety of resources for teachers, a workshop for faculty that introduces the concepts, and a unit of study for the course I teach in assessment. I will likely have enough data by fall 2015 to write a white paper and enough further study for an article for publication in summer 2016.
- **What is best practice in flipping the classroom?** Between 2012 and 2015 I "flipped" all the courses I teach. The research supporting this practice at the college level was simply too strong to ignore (e.g., Busbee, 2013). But when I spoke with others, I found that many were flipping their classes by simply videotaping their lectures and putting those online for students to watch on their own, a practice that is not ideal. So my first step was to study the use of a) different types of resources that could be used to create modules and b) various means of interacting with and digesting those resources. I experimented with four different types of module design and discovered that one of the four was substandard in promoting student learning while the other three promoted quality learning in some situations but not others. So my initial workshop design and white paper focused on how to choose resources and design modules based on one's student population and their learning needs. But during the course of teaching the workshops and getting feedback from those who were in the midst of flipping their classrooms,

I found that faculty were then facing another issue: if I move the teaching of foundational knowledge outside of the classroom, what do I now do *during* class? So I turned to the research from the 1990's and 2000's on the learning cycle (see, e.g., Ramsey, 1993) to design a cycle specifically designed to capitalize on students entering the classroom with the foundational knowledge fairly well set. I also looked at the pioneering work on flipping the classroom conducted by the physics community (see, e.g., Mazur, 2009). Through experimenting in my own classroom, I was able to tweak this work in order to create a cycle that could be modified to work under a broad range of circumstances. Then through experimentation with teaching the concept of flipping to faculty, I discovered that participants had difficulty implementing the ideas if they did not experience it themselves. So based on that experimentation, I now teach flipping the classroom to other faculty through a *series* of workshops that includes experiencing a flipped module and then examining both the design of modules and in-class experiences.

- **How can faculty best encourage their students to work diligently on, and think critically about, readings and other tasks assigned for homework?** This has been a perennial problem in education, and it has been the most requested of all my workshops for many years. But when I flipped my own courses and worked with others to flip theirs, the issue of quality homework completion became even more critical. My results indicated that encouraging students to engage deeply with work at home requires a multi-pronged, longitudinal approach rooted in attention to intrinsic motivation and persistence (subjects I had studied previously). So I developed a white paper consisting of eleven broad strategies and then developed a workshop to help faculty design an approach that would incorporate three or four strategies tailored to the needs of their student population.
- **What types of classroom practices are most likely to increase intrinsic motivation in students?** For this work I focused on Daniel Pink's synthesis (2009) of the research on human motivation (which focuses primarily on increasing intrinsic motivation in the workplace) and adapted his principles for use in the classroom. Based on this work I created a workshop for college faculty and a unit of study for middle and high school teachers.
- **Why might it be important to teach metacognitive and non-cognitive skills, and what are best practices in teaching such skills?** My very first work in SOTL was on the teaching of metacognitive skills in 1994, and my current work twenty years later is on the related concept of teaching non-cognitive skills. The research on why non-cognitive skills are critical to learning is already fairly rich (Duckworth, 2014; Tough, 2013), but little research has been conducted on how to develop such skills (with the exception of Dweck's work on growth mindset). I have developed a workshop for faculty and a unit of study for middle and high school teachers, but at this point I am merely sharing the published research. In fact, just today I worked with several of the Governor's Teaching Fellows brainstorming possible ideas for a methodology that I might implement this summer to study how to develop the non-cognitive skill of persistence with my own students.

My goal is to model for the faculty and teachers with whom I work that it is possible, over time, to develop a wide repertoire of research-based strategies tailored to one's own student population through a combination of the study of the highest quality literature, systematic experimentation via SOTL, collaboration, and a process of continuous refinement.

Impact of Teaching Techniques

Results and Impact on Student Learning

The field of teacher education suffers from a lack of high quality, national assessments which might allow a teacher educator like myself to compare her students to others. And indeed, what would such an assessment even look like? How does one capture quality teaching in numbers? Attempts at this are in the works, but I must admit that I often envy physics educators with their beautifully designed and normed national exams. Suffice it to say that measuring my own impact on my students' abilities to teach has been difficult, and this is a struggle all teacher educators face.

I have purposefully engaged in scholarship of teaching and learning and its associated data collection through what I consider "natural" means. By this I mean that I strive to study my teaching in the ways I expect the middle and high school teachers with whom I work to study theirs. Most teachers (and college professors for that matter) do not have the time to conduct large-scale studies and collect data above and beyond what they would "naturally" or "normally" collect in the course of daily teaching. Therefore I have also tried to keep my own studies small-scale and based on data I collect for other purposes anyway. This is in keeping with my long-term goal, to model how a teacher must juggle all kinds of variables at once and how this juggling might practically be accomplished. I collect data to provide feedback to my students, to improve myself as a teacher, to refine my local theories and interventions, and to generate both broad principles about best practice and practical, modifiable strategies that I can share with a larger audience. I do not collect data for the purpose of presenting or publishing that data. I am grateful that many SOTL researchers conduct narrow, carefully designed studies and collect and publish data from those studies. Such studies have been incredibly useful to my work, but that is not the nature of the type of "big picture" SOTL in which I engage. For this reason, as I attempt to explain the impact my work has had on the learning of my own students, I will not cite specific data but will instead try to a) give you a sense of the types of data I collect (and teach the future teachers with whom I work to collect) and b) provide you with broad evidence of overall impact.

In order to explain my impact and the evidence I have for that impact, I have chosen a handful of the studies I mentioned earlier to describe in detail as examples. I have chosen one fairly simple study, one more complex, and one that has been quite complicated.

What constitutes best practice in promoting quality classroom discussion? This question was simpler to study than many others. As long as I can remember, I have kept a seating chart in front of me during class discussions, and I jot down a check as each student contributes. I also have a simple rubric that allows me to rate the quality of student contributions. Because I already had these tools, it was not difficult to measure the impact of my interventions. From this work I developed seven pre-discussion strategies that drastically increased the quality of student contributions as measured by a standard rubric, and I developed six discussion strategies that increased participation in discussion to 100% or nearly so while minimizing the problem of students who tend to dominate.

How can anticipatory sets best be utilized to promote student learning? In *How People Learn,* Bransford et al. (1999) note that, "Students come to the classroom with preconceptions about how the world works. If their initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp the new concepts and information that are taught, or they may learn them for purposes of a test but revert to their preconceptions outside of the classroom." For years I

collected common preconceptions/misconceptions that students tended to possess, and more alarmingly, revert back to over time. Because I teach the same students over the course of a year and often keep up with them as they move into their careers, there were times when evidence of this reverting was painfully obvious. I would encourage you to search for common misconceptions in your own courses and then look for evidence of this reverting, as this phenomenon is remarkably common. In fact, some faculty have told me that their students show evidence of understanding in class only to revert to preconceptions on an assessment the very next day.

Eventually I created a 40 item pre-assessment to determine preconceptions prior to even beginning the program. I developed 5-6 items for each of the national teaching standards, focusing on misconceptions that were both widely held and particularly detrimental to quality teaching. I used a Likert scale, so it was possible for students to hold misconceptions (or accurate prior knowledge) to a greater or lesser degree. I then used the same assessment at the very end of the program. An average of 5 would signify a complete absence of misconceptions, and an average of 1 would signify deeply held misconceptions on every item. If I have done my job flawlessly, a student who started out at a 2.5 would end the year at a 5.0. Certainly at the beginning, gains were more modest as I focused interventions on changes in *content*. But when I utilized increasingly sophisticated anticipatory sets designed (among other purposes) to solicit preconceptions so that those could be engaged as the neuroscience research recommends, I began to see significant changes.

I began this work in 2006, and my numbers have increased steadily every year as I have continued to refine my interventions. The results have been statistically significant, and I have been well pleased with the outcomes. I developed 12 different types of anticipatory sets, and I created a workshop to help other college faculty in any discipline use my 12 templates to create anticipatory sets that will have the benefit I have described here along with five other benefits. I presented this work last May at the large national conference, *The Teaching Professor* (Maryellen Weimer's group, based on the weekly publication by the same name.) The conference coordinator told me that my proposal was the only one to receive an almost perfect score on the peer review.

How can faculty best encourage their students to work diligently and think critically about readings and other tasks assigned for homework? When I began flipping my classes, I quickly realized that it wasn't sufficient to ask students just to "read these journal articles and listen to this podcast." In order to ensure that students understood the foundational material, I had to develop methods that would both require students to interact substantially with the resources at home and also prove to me that they had reached a level of understanding sufficient to be able to apply what they learned during the class meeting. Because the at-home modules required a product, I had no trouble discerning the amount of effort students were putting in. Through the use of a simple rubric, I was able to compare the product of any individual student early in the program to work done by that same individual over time. I was also able to compare differences in product quality overall from cohort to cohort from year to year. And of course I could compare students' ability over time in terms of applying their learning productively in the face-to-face applications during class and in their student teaching placements. Other professors participate in my students' capstone presentations, and they have corroborated an increase in the quality of work in my students' portfolios.

At first the quality of the products was mostly acceptable but not sufficient. My students were not putting in the effort needed in order to hit the ground running when they came to class, nor were they consistently transferring their learning to their student teaching placements. These

students had learned to skate by through doing a bare minimum (and from what I have heard from professors in other situations, perhaps I should have been happy that I was consistently getting even that). If there were an easy solution, someone would have thought of it by now. Certainly the standard method of the "reading quiz" has never proven to be satisfactory (Weimer, 2002). So I turned to economic studies of motivation (e.g. Laffont & Martimort, 2002), sociological studies of group think (e.g. Rosenberg, 2011), psychological studies on persistence (e.g. Tough, 2013), and educational studies on reading comprehension in adults (e.g. Pressly et al., 1990).

What I discovered was not what anyone wanted to hear: yes, it is entirely possible to radically improve the quality and quantity of the work students complete at home, but not only must the at-home work be carefully designed to meet certain criteria, but the professor must be committed to dedicating at least 10 minutes per week in class to implementing a multi-pronged approached tailored to his or her students' needs. However, in my own experience I feel this extra effort has been absolutely worthwhile.

At the beginning of the program, on average students score around a 2.8 on my rubric, which is a 5-point scale. In those first weeks I have students complete a battery of inventories on mindset, persistence, study habits, and reading comprehension as well as writing "process reflections." Based on this data I turn to the list of possible strategies, which I created to share with other professors, and select a constellation of strategies to implement. Generally I can move students from an average of around 2.8 to an average of around 4.4 within 3 weeks. In truth, the trickier part is keeping them there. At first I was not diligent about keeping up with the plan I designed, and scores fell off, although never to their original lows. But each of the past three years I have increased my dedication to this research, and I have been able to see semester averages between 4.0 and 4.2. I have learned that the same constellation of approaches doesn't work for every group, and rarely does an initial constellation work without modification over time. I have also found that helping other professors develop plans of their own has been fascinating work because the needs of their students often differ substantially from my own.

Before I move on, I will touch briefly on the impact of some of my other studies. My move to portfolio assessment (via portfolios populated with authentic assessments such as performance tasks and artifacts from my students' teaching in middle and high schools) has been enormously successful. Through analysis of the language my students use in their reflections, I have seen a clear move from a focus on "performance goals" to a focus on "learning goals," a focus that has been shown to result in greater mastery of the subject and increased motivation (Dweck, 2006). And my recent attention to formative assessment and feedback is already producing unexpected gains. Because my program has long included formative assessment and feedback on the forms we use to record progress in student teaching, I have been able to see a marked increase in the quantity and quality of formative assessment and feedback my future teachers use with their own students.

Impact on K-12 Students

I am fortunate that my SOTL work can also have an impact on students in middle and high schools. First of all, I am able to model best practice for my own students, which increases the chances that they can and will use those practices with the hundreds of students they will, in turn, teach. And when schools see the quality of the practices our student teachers use, I am often invited by those schools to teach workshops on the results of my research to their faculty as well, which expands my ability to impact K-12 students. In addition, because I adhere to a "design experiment" method in which, "on the basis of implementing the intervention and carefully observing its impact, one (i) refines the local theory and (ii) refines the intervention" (Schoenfeld,

2014), I can continuously improve my classes in very practical ways that result in improved K-12 instruction by graduates of our program. The informal means I have used to keep up with graduates has born this out as has observing the practice of alumni who now serve as host teachers for current students. But while the quality of the teaching of our graduates is far above average, I still feel it can be much improved. The state is on the verge of beginning a program to collect data on teacher quality, and I feel confident that graduates of my courses will score above most other teachers (although much of their success will also be attributable to the overall quality of college-wide program design brought about by the efforts of an exceptional team of JHL COE faculty over time, and much will also be attributable to the quality of the total undergraduate experience my students receive at Georgia College).

I think an interesting way I have been able to impact K-12 students is by teaching my own future teachers the skills necessary to carry out their own scholarship of teaching and learning. Together with my students we have carried out studies such as taking a workshop approach to teaching composition, best practices for teaching new vocabulary in Spanish and French classrooms, and incorporating music and lyrics into English and history courses, to name a few. Together we have delivered 10 presentations at state conferences, and I am currently editing an eBook created by my students on varied topics in teaching and learning. On my own I have presented SOTL research to audiences of K-12 teachers at one national conference and 9 state conferences.

I am also able to have a more immediate impact on K-12 students because I regularly have opportunities to teach them myself, and in these cases I am able to implement the practices I have developed through my SOTL research. In the past few years I have taught a semester of World Literature at Baldwin High School while on professional leave, and another year I taught a semester of Latin at Early College. In addition, I make sure that every year I teach at least one course for one month in a local school. And when I am teaching, of course I implement what I know about authentic assessment, discussion, feedback, anticipatory sets, and the like.

Impact on Higher Education

I am particularly proud of the work I have done sharing the results of my SOTL research with faculty in higher education. From 2004-2006 I served as Co-Director for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Georgia College. That was a time of great excitement over Boyer's (1990) work on varieties of scholarship including SOTL, and because of these factors, I developed a strong interest in studying my practice more systematically and disseminating my results more broadly. I have now presented SOTL related topics to audiences in higher education at one national conference (and another coming up in May), one keynote address, two regional conferences, three state conferences, four invited workshops at universities across Georgia, and over 200 workshop sessions for the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program.

In 2001-2002 I was selected as a Governor's Teaching Fellow. The GTF program was founded 25 years ago by Governor Zell Miller and operates out of the Institute for Higher Education at UGA. Every public and private institute of higher education in the state may nominate its top two professors for consideration to be one of the twelve selected for the academic year symposium (three days per month for six months between September and April) or the intensive two-week summer institute in May. The purpose is to provide these top professors with an opportunity for professional renewal, interaction with colleagues from a wide variety of institutions and fields, and exposure to cutting edge faculty development and best practices in teaching and technology. After finishing the program, its director Marguerite Koepke, invited me to return to present some of the SOTL work I had done. And as I became more serious about my

SOTL research in the early 2000's, the Governor's Teaching Fellows program invited me more and more frequently to present, until by around 2006 I was teaching a continuous SOTL thread which makes up about a third of the program or about 12-15, 90-minute sessions for each of the two annual cohorts.

I have conducted dozens of one-time, "lunch and learn" style workshops over the years, and those can be valuable in that they may spark an interest in a faculty member to learn more, but I do not believe single workshops are of great value beyond this purpose. In my own experience, the faculty development opportunities that changed me dramatically have been a) my participation in the GTF program as a fellow, b) the two, year-long FDW workshops I've participated in and c) the Critical Friends Group, a group that has met monthly since 2008 and uses protocols to investigate one another's scholarship and teaching.

I deeply believe that the most impactful SOTL work is that which is shared through the development of close, long-term relationships in situations where the individuals I am working with trust the quality of my results, resources, and recommendations and know they can continue to reach out to me over time for continued support. The Governor's Teaching Fellows Program has offered me precisely this opportunity, and through it I have had the pleasure of impacting more than 300 faculty members in higher education.

I have had many avenues by which I can see evidence of my impact through this program. The academic year symposium participants return monthly and explicitly report on the strategies and theories they've used with their own students and the results of these changes, so I have that as a continuous feedback loop with which I can measure the impact of specific workshops. The program also maintains list-serves for every cohort, and many use these to report on their successes and to reach out for more support both during the program and after they have completed it. In addition, GTF regularly puts out calls for alumni to report on the progress of projects they are pursuing, and every two years we host a GTF conference at which alumni present the results of their own research and teaching to others. A remarkable number of alumni have become CETL directors or established CETL's on campuses that had none. Many have published peer-reviewed SOTL research or won teaching awards. I store all my presentation materials in a shared Dropbox, and it is not uncommon for Fellows to recreate my workshops with faculty on their own campuses. All this has proven to me that the Fellows use the results of my research not only to improve their own teaching but also to spread the strategies I promote and the resources I have created to other faculty on their respective campuses.

I have also had a few other long-term, relationship-driven opportunities to share the results of my research. I have served on steering committees for new faculty orientation on and off at Georgia College since I have been here, and on a few occasions I've been able to conduct series of workshops with new faculty. In the summer of 2012 I was invited to present three, daylong workshops for new faculty at Georgia Southern University that were spread out over a month, and for AY 15-16, Stetson University invited me to develop and teach a year long program with 2 programs each month in which I am sharing the results of my work and developing a cohort of teaching fellows (The "Brown Innovation Fellows").

When I was working with the last group of Governor's Teaching Fellows, they were willing to contribute to this document some specific examples of my impact on their work. I have chosen two representative responses to include here:

"First, when the GTF program started, I had just begun flipping my large group class sessions with first-year medical students using an 'active learning' approach. Your GTF presentations showed me the constellation of ways in which to make significant improvements in my classes. As a result, there will be 40 future physicians per year who will benefit indirectly

from your outstanding teaching efforts. Since each M.D. may treat between 5,000-25,000 patients during the course of their careers, you can see the significant ripple effect that you will have had. Second, your efforts are helping me create a newly approved Spring 2016 undergraduate course in 'Medical Histology' at the University of Georgia. This course will rely entirely on the 'active learning' approaches that you have championed. Up to 200 pre-medical, pre-dental, and pre-veterinary students will benefit indirectly each year from your efforts, making them better prepared for the rigors of their chosen professions.

Third, your efforts gave me the insight and confidence to apply for, and be awarded, a 2015 UGA Center for Teaching and Learning Fellowship in Innovative Teaching (GIT) to continue to support the creation of the UGA 'Medical Histology' course after the GTF program has ended in April, 2015." – *Dr. Gregg Nagle, Professor of Cellular Biology and Anatomy, Georgia Regents University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership*

"The impact of your GTF pedagogy sessions has been significant. In just his past year (2014-15) I have tried more new techniques to engage students than I had the previous 10 years at UWG (University of West Georgia). I think the results have been remarkable. My lecturing has been cut down in half, and students are participating in far greater numbers. I have plans this summer to complete a course redesign for my Fall 2015 upper-division course. It will reflect the cutting edge pedagogy that I have learned at GTF thanks to your sessions.

In fact, your influence has gone further. Because of my experience at GTF I have become a 'SoTL Investigator' at UWG this past year (2014-15). I meet monthly with colleagues from around the campus to discuss issues related to student engagement. This Spring, I also started a History Pedagogy Learning Community in my department where interested history faculty will come together a couple of times each semester to discuss articles and book chapters that I have suggested (and are based in part on readings you have shared at the GTF). In fact, our first meeting will take place next week on March 12.

I will also be presenting a paper at 2015 University System of Georgia Teaching and Learning Conference: Best Practices for Promoting Engaged Student Learning (the paper will discuss student engagement in online courses), and I have submitted another paper at UWG's 2015 Innovations in Pedagogy Conference that will take place in April (the paper is entitled 'Lessons from the GTF'!).

Finally, and in some ways most importantly, my experience at GTF, in large part thanks to your pedagogy sessions, has led to a new position at UWG's Center for Teaching and Learning. For the 2015-16 school year, I have been chosen as the UWG Center for Teaching and Learning Faculty Fellow, meaning that 2/3 of my time will be working at the CTL. I will help develop a new faculty orientation at UWG along with leading several SoTL workshops. So you see, your influence has had an incredible impact and I am moving in new directions thanks to your GTF pedagogy sessions!" - *Dr. Keith Pacholl, University of West Georgia*

Upon completing this narrative, it has become abundantly clear to me that this has been communal work shaped by hundreds of voices. I am grateful to those who gave me the chance to write this narrative in order to have the opportunity to fully appreciate that fact.

Condensed, SOTL Curriculum Vitae

National, Peer Reviewed Presentations

Alby, C. (May, 2015). *Warming the Brain*. The Teaching Professor National Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Borrelli, B., Roberts, H. Alby, C., and Wills, S. (February, 2015). *EdTPA: Have it your way.* American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Borrelli, B., Alby, C., and Peck, M. (November, 2012). *Hook, line, and sinker: Experiential exercises grab attention*. National Council for the Social Studies conference, Seattle, WA.

Alby, C. (1998). *African-American foreign language learners: Attitudes, perceptions, and motivations.* Presentation at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Chicago, IL.

Regional, Peer Reviewed Presentations

Vess, D. & Alby, C. (2006, March). *Podcasting: A revolution in faculty development.* Paper presented at the Southeast Regional Institute of Faculty Developers, Atlanta, GA.

Alby, C. (2002, February). *The case against teaching*. A presentation at the Lilly South Annual Conference, Athens, GA.

State, Peer Reviewed Presentations

Lewis, W. and Alby, C. (February, 2013). *Exploring writing workshop*. A presentation for Georgia Council of Teachers of English, Young Harris, GA.

Alby, C. (February, 2012). *Falling in love with reading and writing poetry.* A presentation for the Georgia Council of Teachers of English conference, Callaway Gardens, GA.

Alby, C. (February, 2011). *English Education: Putting it all together.* A presentation for the Georgia Council of Teachers of English conference, Callaway Gardens, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (March, 2010). *Teaching vocabulary to tactile and kinesthetic learners*. A presentation for the Foreign Language Association of Georgia, Augusta, GA.

Greer, C. and Alby, C. (February, 2010). *Multimedia projects: They're easier than you think.* A presentation for the Georgia Council of Teachers of English conference, Callaway Gardens, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (February, 2009). *Engaging the disengaged.* A presentation with MAT students for the Georgia Council of Teachers of English conference, Jekyll Island, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (April, 2009). *Preparing students to be successful in art courses*. A presentation with MAT students for the Georgia Art Educators Association conference, St. Simons, GA.

Alby, C. (2008, March). *Webquests made simple*. Presentation accepted to the Foreign Language Association of Georgia Conference, Augusta, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (February, 2008). *Uncommon texts.* A presentation with MAT students for the Georgia Council of Teachers of English conference, Callaway Gardens, GA.

Alby, C. (2007, October). *Webquests in the social science classroom*. Presentation for the Georgia Council for the Social Studies conference, Athens, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (2007, February). *Motivating Students to Read and Write.* A presentation with MAT students for the Georgia Council of Teachers of English, Jekyll Island, GA.

Alby, C. (2006, October). *Utilizing music in the social sciences*. Paper presented with MAT students at the meeting of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies, Athens, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (2006, February) *Incorporating music into the middle and secondary English classroom.* Paper presented with MAT students at the Georgia Council of Teachers of English, Athens, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (2006, March). *Techniques that motivate students to learn vocabulary.* Presentation with MAT students at the Foreign Language Association of Georgia, Jekyll Island, GA.

Alby, C. et al. (2005, October). *Discussions in the social science classroom.* Presentation with MAT students at the Georgia Council at the Social Studies, Athens, GA.

Alby, C. (2002, February). *Holding ourselves accountable: ePortfolios and teacher work sample methodology*. A Presentation at the Georgia Association of Teacher Educators, Macon, Ga.

Alby, C. (2000). *Improving assessment*. Workshop presented at the Georgia Conference on Teaching and Learning, Kennesaw, GA.

Invited Presentations

Alby, C. & Kleine, K. (May, 2014). *Wabash, Hattie, and Return on Investment*. Innovative Course-Building Group Summer Institute, Macon, GA.

Alby, C. (October, 2013). *Advocating for authentic reading.* An invited presentation for the 4th Annual Middle Level Summit. Milledgeville, GA

Alby, C. (April, 2013). *Improving specificity of detail in creative writing*. A presentation for the Poetic Notions Literacy and Community Engagement Conference, Milledgeville, GA.

Alby, C. (May, 2012). *Action strategies for literacy.* A presentation for Beyond Standards: Reimagining Our Literate Roots, Milledgeville, GA.

Invited Workshops and Keynotes

Alby, C. (AY15-16) I have been asked to create a teaching fellows program for Stetson University and conduct a year-long series of workshops, 2 per month, with this group of 12 fellows.

Alby, C. (February, 2014). *Engaging students with homework: Building intrinsic motivation to prepare for class.* An invited faculty development presentation for Southern Polytechnic State University. Marietta, GA.

Alby, C. (October, 2013). *Authentic assessment as part of the backwards design process*. An invited faculty development presentation for Young Harris College. Young Harris, GA.

Alby, C. (July, 2012) Presented a series of 3, six-hour workshops for new faculty at Georgia Southern University on course design and authentic assessment.

Alby, C. (August, 2009). *What can I do besides lecture?* Keynote address for the faculty of Brenau University, Gainesville, GA.

Alby, C. (August, 2009). *Encouraging students to read assigned texts.* A day-long workshop for the faculty of Brenau University, Gainesville, GA.

Alby, C. (March, 2009). *The role of prior knowledge in teaching and learning.* A workshop presented to the faculty of Brenau University, Gainesville, GA.

Alby, C. (March, 2009). *Tweaking classroom discussions to increase learning gains.* A workshop presented to the faculty of Brenau University, Gainesville, GA.

Governor's Teaching Fellows Workshops (Invited)

Note: I conduct approximately 15, 2-3 hour workshop presentations each year for the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program. Here I list only a subset of all workshop topics, and I list only the first time I presented on that topic and not subsequent presentations on that topic. I have also presented most of these topics at Georgia College through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning or New Faculty Orientation.

Alby, C. (November, 2015). *Critical Thinking: What is it and how do we assess it?*

Alby, C. (October, 2014). *Formative assessment and feedback*

Alby, C. (March, 2014). *Significant effect sizes in meta-analyses relating to academic achievement.*

Alby, C. (March, 2013). *Motivating the adult learner.*

Alby, C. (February, 2013). *Developing non-cognitive skills in the college classroom.*

Alby, C. (February, 2012). *Engaging students with homework: Building intrinsic motivation to prepare for class*

Alby, C. (March, 2011). *Applying the research in brain-based teaching.*

Alby, C. (November, 2009). *The dilemma protocol.*

Alby, C. (October, 2009). *Performance tasks for authentic assessment.*

Alby, C. (March, 2007). *Two birds with one stone: Classroom assessment techniques and SOTL.*

Alby, C. (November, 2006). *Review of review.*

Alby, C. (November, 2005). *Backwards design in higher education.*

Alby, C. (2004, October). *Teaching with your mouth shut.*

Alby, C. (April, 2004). *Improving discussion.*

Alby, C. (2003, March). *A private universe: Promoting critical thinking.*

Alby, C. (2003, February). *The use of pocket computing technology in the classroom*.

Publications

In Editing: C. Alby, Ed. (2015), *Mastering the Art of Teaching.* Cupertino, CA: Apple, Inc.

Alby, C. (2007). *Best practices. A documentary film on Georgia College Early College*. Milledgeville, GA: Georgia College and State University.

Kleine, K., Hern, L., Mizelle, N., Russell, D., Alby, C. & Hunnicutt, V. (2003). *Becoming a mentor leader in a professional community*. Scarecrow Education: Lanham, Maryland.

Alby, C. (2000). Creative assessment. *Reaching through Teaching,* 13.2:17-19.

Alby, C. (2000). Getting creative about critical thinking. *Faculty Development Newsletter,* 1,1:3.

Alby, C. (1999). Multiple intelligences in the Latin classroom. *The Georgia Classicist,* Spring.

Alby, C. (1994). Thinking how to learn. *The Georgia Classicist.* May, 8-9.

The University of Georgia

Institute of Higher Education

Marguerite Koepke, Director
Governor's Teaching Fellows Program
Institute of Higher Education
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30605

RE: Dr. Cynthia Alby, Nominee for Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award

This letter is in support of Cynthia Alby, a nominee for the *Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award*. I can think of no one more qualified for consideration or deserving of this award. Cynthia epitomizes the goals and objectives championed by the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement. She has spent the past 12 years sharing her expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm for this subject with literally hundreds of college teachers and administrators from across the state of Georgia through the Governor's Teaching Fellows (GTF) Program.

Since my affiliation with Dr. Alby has been largely through the GTF Program, I'd like to share just a few words about this program with you. The program established by Governor Zell Miller has been in existence since 1994 and was established to elevate the importance of instruction and assist faculty efforts to advance teaching excellence in higher education. The selection process is competitive. Participation is honorific. To date this program has served over 500 faculty members from over 60 disciplines from over 45 institutions statewide. To be nominated by one's institution is an honor, and to be selected to participate makes these individuals the brightest, best, most passionate, and committed faculty members in the state. I've had the honor of directing of this program since 2000.

I first met Cynthia during her fellowship year in 2001-2002. Then a more junior faculty member, Cynthia shared her passion for teaching with her cohort. During the time between sessions she explored various applications and techniques with her classes, reporting back with new nuggets of information from her own classroom explorations and inquiries. In the years that followed, she continued to inquire, explore and grow, returning to the GTF Program to share her new and always expanding repertoire of research, knowledge, and hands-on teaching and learning experiences from within her own classroom. For the past decade Cynthia has been our main instructor and expert teacher covering the program's pedagogical strand. Her work with fellows has been transformational! Teaching teachers better classroom practices is not always an easy job. Cynthia's ability to promote open minds and an explorative nature is one of the keys to her amazing success. I have witnessed her ability to motivate even the most rigid thinkers to explore new and innovative avenues of instruction.

I'd like to think that her ability to motivate and promote change amongst this highly qualified group of professors is due in large measure to her expertise and the vast amount of research she provides as a basis for the methods and techniques she presents. It is evident that her classroom innovations and methods are based on a clear progression and method of exploration and inquiry. From my personal observations, I would summarize it as follows:

1. **Ideas**. Formulating the initial "idea" or "concept". First, based on problems/opportunities revealed in the everyday classroom she establishes clear goals and lines of inquiry. One topic that comes to mind is her work in how to address the issues and learning challenges related to "prior knowledge" – the tightly held ideas and misconceptions students may have about a particular subject area, idea, or concept.
2. **Research.** She then follows the idea with a thorough investigation (research, and literature review) studying related theories and information. Her "prior knowledge" investigations have continued for many years now, and she constantly maintains up-to-date status on the ongoing research in this area.
3. **Design.** From ideas and research Cynthia designs innovative classroom activities ranging from pre-testing, projects, assignments, and classroom activities designed to engage, meet educational goals and objectives, and promote active learning.
4. **Implementation** (trials with her own students). Using a variety of methods and prompts, she implements innovative activities with her students.
5. **Evaluation.** She then records and documents how the activities are working with her own students. She is reflective noting how the activities are or are not improving student outcomes and meeting classroom goals.
6. **Sharing Results.** She then shares results with others. GTF being one important venue for this sharing. Much of what is shared motivates others to explore more innovative approaches to teaching moving away from stayed, stale methods.

The process is cyclical, improving and refining the stages with each repetition.

While this is a very brief overview of what I have observed as Dr. Alby's investigatory process, I believe that it serves to demonstrate a clear and consistent method of inquiry, testing, and refinement. What she has to share with other teachers clearly opens doors and alters lives in all the best possible ways. And while her academic position at Georgia College is that of teaching future teachers, her interactions with the Governor's Teaching Fellows takes her work into another very important realm – that of higher education across Georgia. Since Fellows come to this program from all corners of the state it is not an exaggeration to say that Dr. Alby's work has positively impacted several hundred faculty members and in turn countless numbers of their students. What a great way to improve the quality of education! And what a wonderful and dynamic way to make one's teaching "public"!

It is also important to note that Dr. Alby also encourages fellows to share their work with others; at their home institutions, through writing articles for SoTL publications, making presentations at conferences, and engaging in collaborations with colleagues. Fellows have participated in all of these venues and have met with successes they might not have experienced if not for their GTF experience and encouragement of Dr. Alby.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my complete support of Dr. Alby's nomination. Cynthia has been an inspiration to me both as a college professor and as the director of a program dedicated to best teaching practices and SoTL. And, I know that there are countless numbers of alumni fellows that also feel as I do. It is evident through their feedback that she is one of the most gifted instructors to have ever worked with this program. Through GTF and other avenues Dr. Alby promises to continue advancing SoTL in higher education throughout Georgia and beyond. I know that she is an asset to Georgia College and I can say with much assurance that we at the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program and University of Georgia greatly value our affiliation.

Sincerely,
Marguerite L. Koepke

Dr. Jessica Swain
Principal

Dr. Jeremy Dockery-AP
Curriculum/Gifted

Dr. Verlinda Samuels-AP
Testing

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Rebecca Norton-AP
Freshman Academy

Teresa Phillips
BCCA Director

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with pleasure that I write this letter of reference for Dr. Cynthia Alby.

I first met Dr. Alby when I entered the MAT program at Georgia College in fall 2005. During the program, Dr. Alby served as a constant source of optimism and instruction as MAT participants put into practice what we learned from her. Her guidance and support over the course of the year helped prepare us for full-time teaching positions the next fall.

I was fortunate to begin teaching at Baldwin High School after graduating from the MAT and have worked there for the last nine years. While at BHS Dr. Alby has continued to be a presence as I progress as a professional by leading professional development sessions and even teaching in my class for part of a semester. Finally, Dr. Alby has been instrumental in encouraging me to pursue a doctoral program at Georgia Southern, whether offering a sympathetic ear or helpful suggestions.

All of this is to say that Dr. Alby is passionate about education and educating. She has tirelessly taught years of MAT students, ensuring that public education is supplied with a number of positive, fresh teachers to educate the youth of tomorrow. Instead of simply holding class, though, Dr. Alby uses her influence and knowledge to instruct students in creative and student-centered techniques, enabling all of us to impact our students in positive ways. She has helped all us understand the transformative power of education, including its ability to change the very lives of school children.

Beyond the MAT, though, Dr. Alby has remained active with area education by sharing her experience through professional development sessions. Personally speaking, teaching can wear on the spirit of anyone. It's one thing to listen to professional development, especially with the weight of other duties. But Dr. Alby exudes such a calming, positive demeanor that it's impossible to not believe the effectiveness of her techniques. During the MAT program, students are filled with the hope of making a difference. Unfortunately, the real world demands of teaching often temper that hopefulness. Having Dr. Alby reinforce her earlier ideas provides a refreshing dose of positive energy.

This positive energy was very evident to me a few years ago when Dr. Alby taught my World Literature class. At the time, she was working on fine-tuning narrative writing teaching techniques, and she needed a real world environment to try them out. Over the course of a month, I got to witness first hand that that everything Dr. Alby had taught us in grad school was indeed possible. To put it simply, it was like attending a master class. Far too often we convince ourselves that Dr. Alby's techniques are too idealistic and not practical to the real classroom. It was refreshing to see that they do work and renewed my energy and love of teaching.

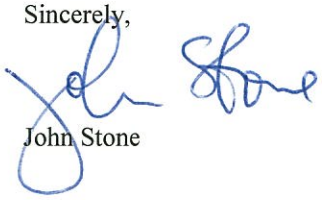
My love of teaching has been concentrated in the meaning of education in today's society. When I was looking at doctoral programs, I was leaning towards Valdosta State; however, after talking with Dr. Alby, I ultimately decided on the Curriculum Studies program at Georgia Southern. Throughout the process, Dr. Alby offered encouragement, which continued into actually taking classes. She supports my continued learning and has been able to help with research on a possible dissertation topic.

To put it simply, I am where I am because of Cynthia Alby. I can't imagine where my life would be without her constant support and encouragement. You would expect most mentoring to end when you leave a class or graduate, but here it is nine years later, and I know I could call her and expect assistance. Of course I would like to say that I'm special, but experience has taught me that Dr. Alby treats all students the same. I've had former classmates tell me they've had the same experience that I've had.

Dr. Alby's dedication to the field of education is immense, whether it's educating pre-service teachers or providing continued guidance to her graduates. Georgia College is fortunate to have an instructor like Dr. Alby, someone who promotes learning on every level by working at Early College to working with area schools to improve teaching.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 229-848-0850 or john.stone@baldwin.k12.ga.us.

Sincerely,



John Stone

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Steve Jones, Director, Center for Faculty Development
Selection Committee for the University Scholarship of Teaching Award

FROM: Dr. Joe Peters, Dean of Education Joseph Peters

SUBJECT: Support for Dr. Cynthia Alby

I am honored to be able to support Dr. Cynthia Alby for the University Scholarship of Teaching Award. Dr. Alby's work integrates four areas including (1) the "Scholarship of Discovery," as she methodically researches her own teaching; (2) the "Scholarship of Teaching" as she uses best practices and innovative methodologies in her own courses while teaching future teachers; (3) the "Scholarship of Application" through her service to the local schools where she tests out her newly-formed concepts and findings; and (4) the "Scholarship of Integration" as she collaborates with colleagues in areas such as brain research to explore integrated ideas (Boyer, 1990, pp. 17-18, 21, & 23). Hers is a very powerful form of scholarship as the four areas "dynamically interact forming an independent whole" (p. 25). It is no surprise that she is a past Governor's Teaching Fellow and ongoing presenter of timely, creative, and substantive Governor's Teaching Fellow workshops as well as an invited contributor to the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education's Innovative Exchange, and national and state conference presenter.

It is evident in Dr. Alby's application materials that she is well versed in the current literature such as flipped classrooms (Busbee, 2013) and other ways students and teachers are successful (i.e. Schoenfeld, 2014; Tough, 2013), as well as important works such as Marzano's *Classroom instruction that works* (2001) and Hattie's *Visible learning* meta-analysis (2009). What sets Dr. Alby apart from many others is that as she looks for ways to research and apply these concepts and principles in her own scholarship of teaching. She is always studying what works in the Georgia College context and what can be broadly shared outside of the College of Education community, while grounding her ideas in established research. Her years of research focus are now evident in culminating works such as her current edited publication titled "Mastering the Art of Teaching."

The depth Dr. Alby goes into while exploring a topic especially impresses me as an educational research course instructor. As an example, for her flipped classroom research, she did not just try out one model and check the results in terms of student achievement, as you might expect. She comprehensively studied multiple ways to provide the content to students to see which ones were effective, as well as the overall effectiveness of the flipped classroom in general. This method of thoroughly exploring a teaching practice validates her research and enhances the reliability that her results are applicable to the population at large.

A point that Dr. Alby makes in her narrative is that the field lacks high quality national assessments. For a number of reasons this is difficult, but through the rigorous application of the scholarship of teaching with her own students, and careful documentation of her findings, Dr. Alby can begin to make inferences that can be tested out by others and verified.

With her steady focus on the scholarship of teaching, I suspect that Dr. Alby will inspire others to look at their own teaching in new ways. This has a big impact on teaching for her university colleagues and her future K-12 teachers. As I was reviewing her materials I began to think about what possibilities there were for combining some of the areas that she already explored; such as what if you took student-centered strategies and combined them with the flipped classroom model and had groups of students developing the video, or could you link up intrinsic motivation to assessment and look for authentic and effective self-assessments that would better demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills. For me, her work is interesting and really exemplifies the scholarship of teaching as defined by the awards announcement.

In conclusion, I fully support Dr. Alby's application for the Scholarship of Teaching Award based on her well-documented application materials. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have a question or need further support. I look forward to hearing of Dr. Alby's award.