

Montana Vasquez-Grinnell

“We often get into discussions that originate with a science concept, but my students ask questions and make connections with their own observations and experiences. It is so important for them to ask questions about the world around them and to have the space to do so.”



Position:

Middle School Science Teacher; Program Director of STREAMS; Community Liaison for Middle School Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Community

Education:

- B.A. with a Caribbean Literature concentration, Hampshire College
- M.A.T. in Early Childhood and Childhood Education, Manhattanville College
- Ed.D. in Curriculum, Teaching, Leadership, and Learning, Northeastern University

Notable:

While gaining her doctorate degree, Montana's research focused on the persistence of women of color in STEM fields.

Hometown:
Manhattan, New York



The test of a good teacher is not how many questions he can ask his pupils that they will answer readily, but how many questions he inspires them to ask which he finds it hard to answer.

This quote by Alice Wellington Rollins particularly resonates with Montana. In her classroom, the spark that generates discussions always takes her middle schoolers to new territories. She continuously strives to create an atmosphere that encourages her young scientists to inquire about the world around them.

“I love creating a safe space where my students can explore the concepts or ideas that make them curious,” she says. “The best teaching days are when my students ask me tons of questions that are seemingly unconnected, but we are able to trace the thread back to our original starting point related to what we are learning about in class.”

At GSB, Montana has the wonderful opportunity to extend her classroom to the beautiful 208-acre campus, including Home Winds Farm. “The land affords teachers and students the opportunity to make real-world connections to our learning through hands-on activities. Being able to help develop the STREAMS program (Sustainability, Technology, Research, Engineering, Architecture, Math and Science) utilizing Home Winds was an exciting chance to creatively expand the idea of science for our students and develop a more interdisciplinary curriculum. I love being able to connect my love of science and the outdoors to the multitudes of stories, perspectives, and cultures here at Gill and beyond.”

Through Home Winds, Montana can explore birding, one of her interests since high school, when she completed a year-long study of red-tailed hawks and peregrine falcons. “I bring my birding into the classroom and use it to teach students observations skills, data collection, engineering design, as well as genetics, heredity, evolution, and natural selection. GSB has several ecosystems – streams, woods, fields, ponds – that allow students to see a multitude of animals in their habitats.”

With all that’s happening at GSB, Montana knows her students need breaks. “Sleep and play are the most important things for students. Giving them the space to rest and the time to just have fun is where the learning solidifies and where the creativity and innovation can grow.”