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**DEPARTAMENTO DE INGLÉS**

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To whom it may concern:

On **October 26, 2015** and **March 11, 2016**, I had the opportunity to observe Laura García de la Noceda Vázquez's **INGL 3201** and **INGL 3202 (English Composition and Reading I and II)** classes and found that both the content of Laura's lessons and the methods she employed to teach this content were quite satisfactory. For 3201, a course which addressed gender identities, Laura's lesson focused on a review of MLA formatting and brainstorming for an argumentative essay. For 3202, a course which addressed gender expression and sexual orientation, she set the stage for a comparison and contrast essay, having students engage in a think/pair/share activity in which they identified distinct elements of fiction in two short stories.

Particular Strengths of Laura's Teaching:

- Laura adopts various strategies in any given class to engage her students with content across a variety of modalities and to vary the flow of the lesson, as well as students' engagement. In the 3201 class I observed, for example, students had prepared posters to help them visualize and develop their argumentative essays.
- Laura is very receptive to students' feedback and incorporates it into future lessons. For example, based on feedback she received when she initially taught 3201, in 3202, she began to prepare more PowerPoint presentations to routinely provide students with a structured overview of aims and materials.
- Laura had students read directly from the text and hunt for evidence for plot and characterization. This is an ideal practice not only to ensure a more even participation in English of all students in the class – regardless of their ability levels in this language – but also to model standard academic practices that they will have to repeat throughout their academic trajectories and beyond.
- In 3202, Laura managed time in the classroom exceedingly well, providing specific timeframes for the various activities in order to ensure that she met her aims for the day and that students were on-task.

Recommendations/Areas for Improvement:

- Laura should routinely and explicitly map out the current day's aims for students, making connections to past classes by clarifying how prior lessons have led up to the present, and what will soon follow. She may alternatively request that students themselves make the connections between the current day's objectives and past lessons.
- Laura should write instructions for group activities on the board and review them prior to students' participation in order to ensure her instructions are not merely spoken and that students can refer back to them as needed.
- When she asks students questions, she needs to ensure they cannot respond with simple or superficial yes or no answers. Her questions should prompt deeper levels of analyses and interpretation. She might create a balance in terms of level of difficulty by drawing them in with easier questions, then pushing them to reflect and respond more profoundly with more challenging questions.

- Students should be encouraged to take notes frequently. These patterns are especially important for English language learners who are processing content in a language they may not necessarily speak or use frequently outside of his classroom.

Evolution of Teaching:

Overall, what I have seen evolve in Laura's teaching is her independent decision-making in terms of the content of the classes she teaches. While 3201 and 3202 follow a standardized curriculum, instructors are free to make certain changes autonomously and Laura has certainly done this, illustrating her willingness to break out of the mold and personalize her classes based on the needs and interests of her students. For instance, in both courses, students are required to complete speaking logs in the campus-based English Writing Center (EWC). These are 15-30 minute one on one conversations between a peer tutor and the student. Laura decided instead to conduct the speaking logs herself during her office hours. She opted for this route in order to get to know her students better and to obtain a heightened sense of their oral communication strengths and weaknesses in English. Based on her model, I gave this option to students this semester and found it highly useful for the above-stated reasons. Moreover, because the EWC is currently running on a limited budget and is short-staffed, this possibility will soon be included into the master syllabus of the class. I think it is important, therefore, to acknowledge that Laura, with another peer, piloted this project in her first 3201 classroom.

In conclusion, my colleagues and I are certainly satisfied with Laura's trajectory as an instructor of undergraduate students and her service to our Department. She has been an important addition to our teaching personnel in the past three semesters and we are confident that future collaboration with her will be mutually beneficial as she continues to hone her skills as an educator and provide invaluable instruction to our many undergraduate students. We certainly recommend her for future teaching opportunities in our institution and beyond.



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