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# The University of Georgia

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To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to recommend Ms. Paternain for a teaching position at your institution. Ms. Paternain is a graduate student in the TESOL and World Language Education Program at the University of Georgia and has taken several courses with me. Maria endlessly surprises me with innovative thinking about language education, superior intellectual quality, insightful pedagogy, and an overall demeanor which exudes confidence and humility, grace and care.

Maria demonstrates many positive qualities that characterize excellence in dealing with language learners. She is hardworking, well prepared and poised. In the first course she took with me, Teaching Literature in Spanish for the K-12 Foreign Language Classroom, Maria's projects were well-designed and presented. She is creative and bright, and her work reflected these qualities. She developed a thematic unit that included the reading of a big book that she created by herself. The lesson plans that Maria constructed for this course, which introduced the animals in the Spanish foreign language classroom, demonstrated her thoughtful consideration of appropriate resources, methods, and teaching techniques that included songs, poetry, and a theater representation.

In the other course she took with me, Bilingualism and Bilingual Education, Maria created a successful lesson plan to teach important characters in Georgia history through the use of a board game developed in Spanish, which she personally designed. She implemented the board game as the main activity of a language center in a second grade social studies classroom. The management techniques that Maria employed helped to keep the students engaged and on task but also with the liberty to talk to one another and be interactive. For the final project of this course, Maria interviewed a bilingual speaker to explore the different contexts that have affected the bilingual change and development. In her write-up, Maria included key concepts related to bilingualism that demonstrated her expertise in the field of second language acquisition and bilingual education. Cultural awareness, language barriers, and benefits of bilingualism were a significant part of this final project, and they were supported by the inclusion of specific and appropriate examples from the interview.

As the program chair of the TESOL and World Language Education graduate program at the University of Georgia, I attended her portfolio and research project defense. In the presentation of her research project, "Perceptions of Graduate Students in a TESOL and Foreign Language Education Master's Program Towards their Native and Non-native Language Teachers", Maria demonstrated an excellent understanding of qualitative research methods and abilities, as well as exceptional communication skills in English.

I have tried, unsuccessfully, to convince Ms. Paternain to remain a student in our doctoral program because I think so highly of her work and abilities. I also wished to hire Ms. Paternain to help me care and educate my own children. Due to transportation issues this was not possible. In sum, I feel so confident in her abilities that I would hire her to care for my own children.

Maria will be a highly capable teacher and an excellent role model. She definitely has the potential to be an instructional leader. Any institution would benefit from having her as an employee. I am happy to provide a reference for her.

Sincerely,

Dr. Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor