MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Jose Ortiz, Assistant Professor FSA
FROM: Dr. Janet Duncan, Professor FSA
RE: Class Peer Observation
DATE: 2/25/2022

It was my pleasure to observe Dr. Ortiz teach his class FSA 471 Foundations of Modern Education from 2:50-4:05 pm on February 24, 2022. This class is a required course for students in Adolescence Education majors and is typically taken during their senior year prior to student teaching. The class is full, with approximately 25 students, equally split between genders.

Dr. Ortiz began his class promptly at 2:50 and provided a detailed agenda on the overhead screen using Powerpoint. The agenda outlined his goals for the class and indicated the content to be covered as well as a preview for the next topic.

First Dr. Ortiz reviewed the previous lecture's main points as a connection to the topic for the day. Based on readings, the topic was elaborating on the Progressive movement in Education. The Powerpoint Dr. Ortiz shared with the class was well constructed, easy to read, without too much text and graphics. A brief YouTube video on the Montessori Method was embedded and viewed. Dr. Ortiz asked the class if anyone had attended a progressive classroom and one student raised his hand. Dr. Ortiz asked the student if he would share his thoughts on the video afterwards, and the student agreed with the portrayal of the Montessori class, providing details of his experience.

After the main points were presented Dr. Ortiz shifted the focus to Alfie Kohn's "bold statements" about progressive education (from readings). He asked the students to get up and move to the area in the classroom that represented their point of view, a technique also known as "voting with your feet". The students were able to show whether or not they agreed with or disagreed with Kohn's perspective. This activity created a lot of buzz in the room, with students discussing their positions in small groups. After a few minutes Dr. Ortiz asked the students to share their ideas in the large group. During the large group discussion, with students still aligned with their perspectives, Dr. Ortiz skillfully drew the students out, accepting comments and elaborated on their points when necessary. He waited patiently for responses and was thoughtful with his comments. Students appeared to be comfortable with the exchange. This activity went on for approximately half an hour.

Near the end of the class Dr. Ortiz asked the students to complete a "1 pager Task" in class, as a group, rather than prepare a one-page written response on their own as homework. He posed three questions on a slide and the students gave their answers, building on each other's points. This activity was an innovative assessment, and provided Dr. Ortiz with a snapshot of what the students learned about the Progressive movement.

Finally, to end the class, Dr. Ortiz summarized the main points and provided a forecast of the next topic including the upcoming readings and activities. The class ended at exactly 4:05 pm.

In summary, Dr. Ortiz's class was extremely organized from start to finish. His materials were clear and easy to follow. He activated prior knowledge, built on the main points from the readings, and engaged the students in a meaningful discussion. Dr. Ortiz facilitated a large group discussion with ease, and made the students feel comfortable with their level of participation. He was able to assess their understanding of key concepts. For someone who is relatively new as a teaching professor Dr. Ortiz demonstrated many effective skills and is already performing at a high level. It was such a pleasure to observe this class.