



The University of Georgia

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RE: Teaching observation for Divya S.

To Whom It May Concern:

I had the pleasure of observing a session of Ms. Divya S.'s course, *COMM 1500: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication*, where she served as an instructor of record, on February 24th, 2022. The topic of the day was *Nonverbal Communication*. In this letter, I will describe the session and give a sense of Divya's strengths as an instructor. As I will discuss below, Divya is a competent teacher in engaging students and successfully achieving learning outcomes.

Divya planned and structured her class very thoughtfully, utilizing various teaching techniques. She started the class by showing her students a video clip that described how miscommunication can emerge when people were only able to communicate through nonverbal cues. After the video, Divya encouraged her students to share if they noticed any nonverbal communication cues in the video. This is an effective way to quickly engage students with the content because many of their answers touched upon the unique characteristics of nonverbal communication, which were then outlined, summarized, and explained next by their instructor. When introducing the concept of "artifacts" as a type of nonverbal communication cues, Divya also provided the example of the "rich people trend" on TikTok, specifically the increasingly noticeable tendency where college students tried to show off their luxurious accessories on the social media platform to implicitly relay a sense of superiority. I noticed that many students were nodding, given that the examples and videos Divya provided were quite relatable and engaging.

I was also very impressed by her creativity in the use of technology to promote active learning in her instruction. At the end of the lecture, she used *Kahoot!*, a game-based learning platform to quiz students about the new concepts learned that day with multiple choice questions. But different from other more traditional educational technology platforms such as *Quizlet*, *Kahoot!* made the quizzes and questions much more fun and interesting, by incorporating a lot of game elements. After each question was answered, the correct answer was displayed as well as a

scoreboard of the highest point earners. At any time, instructor can track student progress and scores. I noticed that students were all very enthusiastic when participating in the quizzes/games. I consider this a very creative active learning strategy to get students engaged with the class topic, a great assessment tool to gauge if students were truly learning and retaining the new knowledge, and perhaps also a less obtrusive way to track student attendance at the same time. As a previous COMM1500 instructor myself, a challenge I see teaching this course is to get students engaged, because some content may seem like commonsensical or irrelevant. Therefore, creative ways to motivate engagement become crucially important. I appreciate Divya's efforts that went into preparing her classes enhanced by these fun and interactive technologies that bear great potential to enhance students' learning outcomes.

I also want to note that Divya's teaching style weaves well-articulated lecture with interesting jokes and meaningful anecdotal stories to sustain students' interest and attention. When one student was caught clearly not prepared well for answering a question and was appearing to be a bit shy to speak in class discussions, I was impressed how Divya used a humorous joke to help them overcome the fear. It is an artful way to both help the students step outside of their comfort zones and also not to make them feel embarrassed in front of the class. I think that also explains her students' respect for her and the collaborative atmosphere in her classroom. She also has nice inflection in her voice and comes across as being very excited and passionate about the class materials. It is a delight to see that she is very well-liked by her students.

In terms of improvements, my comments are minimal. It could be useful for Divya to further promote students' active thinking and reflection by not giving them the answers right away if there was some initial silence after a question was proposed. Silence in the classroom is only a problem if the instructor sees it as such. In my classroom, I would often wait until someone speaks up, or gently nudge them to voice their opinions. When students raise questions, especially the ones with apparent answers, or ask for examples, instead of providing an answer herself, Divya can try to guide the students through a discovery process to figure out the answer themselves – this would also benefit their peers by observing how to approach and analyze the problems. Or she could encourage other students who know the answers or who have a good example in mind to share. But this is only a minor consideration.

Overall, I am pleased to report that Ms. Divya S. is a competent teacher with a personable, calm, and confident manner in the classroom. I appreciate her thoughtfulness that went into preparing for the course. I was pleasantly amazed by the level of student engagement in her class.

Sincerely,



Jiaying Liu, Ph.D.



October 20, 2021

To whom it may concern,

This semester Divya S. taught two sections of COMM 1500, our basic Interpersonal Communication course. I observed Divya's teaching on October 8, 2021, when she gave a lesson on the topic of interpersonal communication styles.

Divya delivered this lesson in a professional, clear, and engaging manner. Her lecture was well-organized, and her slides were simple, polished and visually interesting. Divya knew the material well and she shared examples – ranging from humorous media examples to anecdotes from her own life – to illustrate the various interpersonal style concepts she was teaching. I think her use of media examples relevant to the students' age group was a highly effective way of helping them relate to the material.

Particularly impressive was that all 30 students in Divya's class were highly engaged. Her lecture was interactive and she knew each of the students' names and called on them by name to answer questions or share examples. She validated and encouraged their engagement with comments such as "good point" and "thank you for sharing." I have observed Divya using this approach when leading discussions among her peers in my graduate research methods class, as well. Her strategy has been a very effective way to engage otherwise-reticent students in discussion.

In all, Divya held a lively class, including playing jazz music as a backdrop during students' group work discussions and ending the class with an entertaining pop quiz. Keeping freshman students' attention in these required basic courses can be challenging, and Divya did an excellent job.

Areas for improvement: None identified

Feel free to contact me if I can answer additional questions about Divya's teaching.

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Graduate Teaching Instructor:

Course:

Faculty Observer/Teaching Supervisor:

Date of Observation:

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
Course Syllabus and Policies					
Organization of Class Period					
Usefulness of In-Class Assignments and Activities					
Clarity of Concepts/Material Presented by Instructor					
Quality of Instructor-Student Interaction					
Usefulness of Class Discussion					
Level of Student Engagement/Participation					
Overall Quality of In-Class Instruction					

Additional Comments, if necessary: