

January 26, 2015

Mr. Gabriel Mejía  
Director  
Spanish Conversation Partners  
Platica.org

Dear Mr. Mejía:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of the online Spanish Conversation Partners Program provided by Platica.org. My Intermediate and Advanced level Spanish students at the University of Notre Dame were very fortunate to participate in the program from the Fall of 2011 until my retirement in the Fall of 2014. Without any doubt the program helped my students to gain greater confidence and proficiency speaking the language while expanding their knowledge of many cultural issues pertaining to the Spanish-speaking world.

My students were very fortunate to work with either Marina Munizaga or Gabriel Mejía. Both of these mentors were excellent. They provided clear, constructive, prompt and useful feedback to each student after every Skype session. It was also very easy for me to work with both Marina and Gabriel throughout the semester as we decided upon the dates and the topics of each of the conversation sessions. Both Marina and Gabriel were very flexible and obliging if a student had to reschedule a session due to a conflict in his/her schedule. As a result, everything went smoothly with relatively few glitches due to rescheduling or technical issues that could not be easily resolved.

The Platica program most certainly fulfilled the ACTFL goals that I had outlined in my syllabus for the course. My students evaluated the program very positively at the end of each semester and encouraged me to continue seeking funding for the program from the College of Arts and Letters at the University of Notre Dame. They also wrote on their evaluations that they would have liked to have even more one-on-one sessions with Marina and Gabriel if that had been possible! Their interest in continuing with Spanish beyond the required courses was much greater thanks to the valuable input and encouragement which they received from their conversation partners.

I am so happy that my students had a chance to participate in the Platica program and hope that some of my colleagues at the University of Notre Dame and at other universities will continue to take advantage of this incredible opportunity to help their students to become more fluent in Spanish in a relaxed and non-threatening setting with two very caring and capable mentors.

Sincerely,  
Geraldine Ameriks  
Emerita Associate Teaching Professor  
Department of Romance Languages and Literatures  
University of Notre Dame