Dear Dr. Magill,

My name is Payton Davenport and I am a sophomore psychology major with a minor in women’s, gender, and sexuality studies. I am writing to appeal the final grade I received in my Spanish 211 course for the fall semester with Professor Nelson Sanchez. I currently have a 73.81% in the class (before the final exam has been posted) and after taking the final exam I believe my grade is going to drop tremendously. I believe there were situations that have contributed to my low grade, and many of them were outside of my control. I think if things would have been different, I would have received at least a B. I received an A in my Spanish 111 course last Spring, and as an honors student, I have continued to receive only A’s and B’s throughout my time at Longwood. My current grade in this course as you can see is very unlike me which is one of the reasons for my appeal.

As you know, this is Professor Sanchez’s first semester back at Longwood. Although I am very understanding that he needs time to adjust to Longwood and its students, I believe that he did not adjust to his students’ level of Spanish or consider teaching the material differently to benefit his students. Professor Sanchez promised his students a preassessment that would help him gauge his teaching; however, he never gave us this assessment which resulted in him giving out assignments, teaching, and speaking in Spanish at a level that was more advanced than I could comprehend. I was often time confused about the material and spent numerous hours trying to teach myself outside of class. Although I would try and teach myself outside of class, Sanchez would quiz and test us on material that we had not learned yet or material that was too difficult to understand. During class, we would communicate with Sanchez about our concerns, but he would cut us off and seemed to not care. This combined highly affected my quiz and test average. I received an 81% on my first test but my last two tests were a 61% and a 62%.

The textbook for this course was also not helpful when it came to trying to learn the material. This book was not organized well and presented information in a confusing way. The grammar was difficult to learn, so on my quizzes and tests, I felt unprepared and uncertain of many concepts. Professor Sanchez mentioned many times that he did not like this textbook, but he continued to use it for class. Most of our tests, quizzes, homework, and classwork came directly from the textbook or the textbooks partnered workbook. This played a large factor in my low quiz and test grades

Participation is expected in any language class. As per the syllabus, students “will lose points for speaking in English during class”. However, once he graded and posted our first participation scores our class was very confused. We asked Sanchez and he said he graded us on if we spoke in Spanish and our accuracy of Spanish. This I believe is not fair because we are expected to make mistakes. I received an 82% for my participation in September which I believe is not fair considering it was the beginning of the semester and he never told us that he would be grading us on our accuracy.

Our quizzes and tests often contained information we did not learn or go over in class. As I said above this highly affected my grades. All three of our tests included a listening and reading comprehension sections. These sections were worth a lot of points on the tests. I left these sections blank sometimes because I did not know what to put down. We had never practiced questions like these in class, so they came as a surprise on the tests. I also could not understand the passages to respond to the questions. The listening section was often difficult to hear or comprehend and on the third test I left this section almost completely blank because of it. We also did not receive the full class period to take our tests because we started the next chapter at the beginning of class. Sanchez was also very particular on how he graded our tests. He never expressed to us his expectations when it came to taking tests and quizzes. These issues combined affected my ability to perform well on each of the tests.

One of the things I believe affected my score in this class the most was our oral assignments. We had four major assignments towards the end of the semester. I received an 80% on the first one, a 78% on the second, an 84% on the third one, and a 68% on the last. We as a class were never presented rubrics for these assignments or feedback on these assignments. I feel as though I did the best work, I could do given the detail he provided for the assignments on canvas; however, I believe my grade did not reflect my level of work. I also never received feedback from these assignments. If I would have received feedback I feel as though I could have done better on each assignment which would have helped my grades. Because I did not receive a lot of detail for each assignment and I did not receive feedback, I believe my grades were lower than they should have been.

As mentioned before, Professor Sanchez had a difficult time adjusting to his students. This resulted in a lot of frustration in and out of the classroom. He often told us he did not understand why we did not understand his teaching. He told us one class period that he was “wasting his time” teaching us a grammar concept. In another class period, he stopped trying to go over an activity because we told him we did not understand but again he was confused by our lack of comprehension for the activity. These attitudes highly impacted my experience in this class. I felt defeated and unmotivated to learn. I believe his attitude in class impacted my grade more than it should have. Because he stopped reviewing material and did not adjust to our classroom’s preferred style of learning, I received much lower grades on assignments than I expected to.

I know I am not the only student who is concerned about their grade in this class. If you need any documentation, please let me know. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Payton Davenport