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Recommendation for: Chris P. Holland

**From: Deborah L. Thompson, PhD
Associate Professor**

It is with pleasure that I write this recommendation for Chris P. Holland. I taught Chris in June and July 2013 in The College of New Jersey's Global Graduate Program in Palma de Mallorca Spain. The course, RDLG 579, is a graduate literacy course that focuses on reading and writing in the content subjects, e.g. biology, history or geometry. In every sense of the word, Chris was an exemplary student. His communication skills—oral and written, were outstanding. His active participation in class motivated his classmates to strive to achieve more. I always knew that when Chris asked a question, he had read closely and considered many possible and plausible answers. His asking questions meant he wanted to shape ideas he had formed based on multiple sources, including his classmates. Chris also began to improve and broaden his knowledge of how to judge high quality informational texts—one of the areas of expertise teachers must have to effectively implement the Common Core State Standards or their equivalents.

One of the best examples of the teaching gifts Chris possesses was his in-class demonstration of how to do close reading of a middle school math problem. His demonstration was lively, humorous, and very skillful. His classmates commented that had their math teachers been as effective in teaching certain math concepts as Chris had been, they would have known far more mathematics. Thinking back to my high school mathematics teachers, I had to agree.

From the beginning of the session to its conclusion, Chris exhibited other characteristics that showed he is and will continue to be an effective teacher, among them being:

- *Knowledgeable in many areas.* A good teacher must know many things, but he/she doesn't have all of the answers. He/she will also realize that being a life-long learner is the only way to stay knowledgeable in many areas.

- ***Personable and possessing of a great sense of humor.*** Two important characteristics for making connections with students and with colleagues.
- ***Creative and always open to new or different ways of teaching.*** No two students learn thing the same way.
- ***Flexible.*** A good teacher is willing to alter plans and directions when such a move will improve instruction or assist students in moving toward their goals.
- ***Motivational.*** Enthusiastic with standards and expectations for students and self.
- ***Thoughtful and open-minded.*** A teacher lacking in these two characteristics will not explore new areas learning, seek advice from peers or mentors, or have high expectations of him or herself or the students.

As you have probably determined by now, I think Chris is the type of teacher we want in our twenty-first century classrooms. I have no doubt Chris will continue to be an outstanding teacher. I give him my highest recommendation, and I urge you to look favorably on his application. Should you have additional questions, feel free to contact me at Thompson@tcnj.edu.