

**Dr Marisela Martinez Claros** was one of the first members to join UCANN. She is a Senior Lecturer at **Erasmus University College**, where she is coordinator of the Pre-Med major. Marisela teaches courses on Pathology and Pathogenesis as well as Clinical Reasoning Skills. She is also an expert on Problem-Based Learning and coaches new tutors and established colleagues within the UTQ programme at EUC on its intricacies. Marisela enjoys teaching the pre-med students - they are a unique bunch, even among the already special pool of UC students: highly motivated and self-guided.

Marisela studied Medicine at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and she obtained her PhD degree at Maastricht University. As a bachelor student in Mexico, she tutored first and second-year medical students. There is where she first got introduced to the Problem-Based Learning method. It further fueled Marisela's interests in education, so when EUC started in 2013 and was looking for tutors to teach in the Life Sciences department, she jumped on the opportunity.

For Marisela, to learn it is essential to have good leading examples. That is what makes PBL as a teaching method so attractive. Students are encouraged to make their learning their own, and in the process, they acquire theoretical knowledge, critical thinking and communication skills. We inspire students to be curious, and we also allow them to follow that curiosity. They have to determine what they know and do not know (yet) and what they thus still must learn. Of course, in some of the pre-med courses, reporting self-study results is fact-based (after all, we want to make sure that students know about different diseases). However, even then, the application of knowledge is what matters. The tutor's role consequently is that of a coach, a supporter, who is attuned to the students' needs, helps them pursue their goals, and has the flexibility to adapt their teaching to those needs and goals.

Dr Martinez Claros often gets asked what distinguishes a pre-med major at a University College, taught in a Liberal Arts & Science programme, from a regular medical studies programme? Students who are pursuing medical training at a LAS college have the opportunity to approach the medical field with a multidisciplinary perspective. The world is diverse, and people are different. We need to move outside our context and look at it from different points of view to become an all-round professional. It certainly helps with understanding how to interact with patients later on. Some of the skills that come naturally in a LAS classroom (e.g., asking probing questions, listening carefully and respectfully to other views, learning from each other, providing feedback) are particularly useful. In this respect, EUC alumni of the pre-med major receive accolades in their further training for excelling at these.

One of Marisela's challenges while working at a University College is finding your spot in the regular university landscape. Colleagues at research departments often question the focus on Liberal Arts & Sciences and maintain the need for specialization in one discipline. To combine biomedical research and an appointment primarily in education is complicated, perhaps more so than social sciences or humanities as it typically involves long hours in a Lab. For Marisela the choice for a career in education has been – like for so many of our colleagues - a conscious one. She loves the close contact with students and colleagues at a university college. As she says, we like what we do and teach because we think it is important and are passionate about helping students grow into engaged citizens, outspoken and respectful. By teaching our students to constantly ask questions, actively listen, receive and give feedback, learn different perspectives, and work together, a university college is an ideal place to start (pre-)medical education.