



California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0389
School of Education

March 9, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my privilege to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Carla Weber and recommend her for an English teaching position within your district. Over the course of the yearlong credential program at Cal Poly, I had the pleasure of working with Carla as both her advisor and professor in a student teaching seminar and methods course. Carla brings an energy and optimism to teaching that is inspiring to see. She truly cares about the success of her students and in creating opportunities for them. In addition, Carla excels in creating and implementing engaging, standard-focused lessons and integrating technology into her classroom.

Although I did not serve as Carla's university supervisor during her student teaching experience at Fesler Junior High School in Santa Maria, CA, I had the opportunity to observe her teaching a lesson on Chapter 8 of *A Wrinkle in Time*. The focus of this lesson was determining a central idea of Chapter 8 and use textual evidence to support the central idea that students identified.

One of the strengths of the lesson was the variety of learning tasks and the creativity of these learning tasks. Understanding her adolescent students, Carla made a conscious decision to include a variety of components to her lesson, consisting of 10-15 minute learning tasks. While the pacing of the lesson was appropriate and helpful for maintaining student engagement, the creativity to the learning tasks further engaged students. For example, in the lesson students took a reading quiz via Socrative.com. Teaching in a one-to-one classroom allowed students to individually complete a reading quiz on Socrative.com. Carla then transitioned to a vocabulary lesson, which included four words that students would come across in the reading for the day. Carla's innovative way to teach vocabulary was to include on Google Classroom four images, four vocabulary words, and four definitions. Students were given the task to match the vocabulary image to the vocabulary word, collaborating with a partner to complete the task. Carla's vocabulary instruction was sound because the vocabulary chosen was central to the text and helped to frontload the reading. In addition, the use of images (images that were pertinent to students' lives – e.g., an image of the Joker from the movie *Batman*) helped the students to understand the vocabulary on a deeper level. Carla continued the lesson with a clip from the movie of *A Wrinkle in Time* and the reading of Chapter 8 in class. Students were engaged, actively participating – asking and answering questions.

Another strength of the lesson was Carla's seamless use of technology. Using the teacher computer, Carla used Google Classroom, Socrative.com, showed a video clip, and used Kidblog. Carla did not stumble juggling the different computer applications. In addition, students used their Chromebooks throughout the lesson. Carla ensured that students were on task when using these laptops (circulating throughout the lesson). In addition, Carla gave directives to the class regarding when the laptops should be opened or closed to ensure that the laptops did not create a distraction but instead were a learning tool.

I would be remised if I did not also mention that there was a clear focus for the day's lesson. Although Carla creates a fun, engaging classroom, the focus is always on learning. Carla shared (both verbally and visually) a focus question for the day, which helped to guide students' viewing of the video clip and reading of Chapter 8. This focus question was grounded in a Common Core State Standard and all activities and formative assessments aligned with this focus. Students walked away having demonstrated learning in respect to this objective while having fun achieving this objective.

In addition to the aforementioned effective teaching skills, Carla excels at creating students who are thinkers, learners, and are self-sufficient. Carla promotes this with simple reminders like "If you see that your partner has not found the vocabulary activity, help him find it." Carla desires to prepare her students for high school and life outside of school, aiming to equip them with skills to be successful in any environment. Based on today's observation, it is apparent that Carla is achieving this goal.

Carla is a pleasure to know as an individual. Carla is enthusiastic, optimistic, intelligent, creative, compassionate, and devoted. Any teaching staff would be better because of the opportunity to collaborate with Carla. Her personality and dispositions will bring a refreshing tone to any faculty, and Carla will inspire others to be passionate about their students, their discipline, and their own growth as a teacher. If you have any questions about this exceptional teacher, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Megan Guise, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
English Education Coordinator
805-756-2134
[meguisse@calpoly.edu](mailto:meguise@calpoly.edu)