

February 5, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Without a doubt, Mary Dworak will be a tremendous addition to any educational setting! Throughout my 10 years of teaching at UNK, Mary is by far, one of the best teacher candidates I have ever encountered! I had the distinct pleasure of getting to know Mary when she was enrolled in my Reading in the Content Areas and Elementary Science Methods courses. I also directly supervised her field experiences during the fall of 2018. Mary's zest for life, positive energy, professionalism, dedication, and eagerness to learn made a memorable impression on instructors, peers, administrators, classroom teachers, and students alike.

On many occasions such as Fitness Day at UNK, administrators and teachers who hadn't actually met Mary yet, consistently picked her out of the crowd of 50 UNK pre-service teachers as being a teacher they would love to hire for their building. Mary engaging delivery style captivated her audience. This is likely because one of Mary's many talents is dancing and the performing arts. When Mary teaches, it is like watching a beautiful dance unfold. Mary eloquently brings the subject to life in a poetic and purposeful way. Her positive demeanor and passion for teaching comes shining through and her solid academic subject knowledge and innate ability to connect and apply theory with practice makes Mary stand out amongst her peers. Mary consistently and purposefully:

- used visuals and kinesthetic gestures to reinforce vocabulary and key concepts
- asked high-level questions and provided adequate wait time
- implemented cooperative learning strategies to keep all students engaged
- incorporated technology as a tool to enhance learning (Kahoot, interactive slides, Newsela)
- recognized and celebrated student effort/achievements
- used ongoing assessment to measure the intended objectives and inform instruction

Mary's daily work, lesson plans, and field experience preparation consistently reflected top quality effort. In particular, Mary tapped into two 5th graders' interests and developed and facilitated a 12-day inquiry-based science unit to determine which liquid (2% Milk, Water, Diet Dr. Pepper, and Regular Dr. Pepper) would transport through yarn with the least amount leakage and why. To engage her students and help them better understand the scientific concepts behind the investigation, Mary incorporated interdisciplinary and multi-modal instruction intended to address the needs and interests of diverse learners. For instance, Mary differentiated the reading portion of the lesson by adjusting the reading level of related articles that she found in *Newsela* (<https://newsela.com/>) so that both students could successfully read the material within their zone of proximal development.

Scholastic achievement and work experience are two additional assets. Mary Dworak has consistently been named to the Dean's list while remaining actively involved on campus. She has served as Vice President of Membership Development and Vice President of Academics for Alpha Omicron Pi. She has also been a member of Kappa Delta Pi (an honorary education society of which I am co-advisor) and the Order of Omega. Outside of UNK, Mary has gained experience working with school-age children while serving as an America Reads Tutor at Central and Bryant Elementary Schools for the past two years. For these reasons and many others, I highly recommend Mary Dworak! Mary will be a shining star in the classroom! Please feel free to contact me for additional information.

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