



February 14, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Ms. Sara Kelm has asked me to write a letter in support of her teaching, and I am pleased to do so.

I observed her ENGL 10803 class on April 5, 2018 (TR 11:00-12:20 in Reed Hall 120). Prior to the observation, she sent me her syllabus and assignment materials relevant for this point in the semester. I found her course overview and focus cogently written, explaining the thematic element of the course on digital writing spaces and online communities.

When I arrived just prior to class, Sara had her materials prepared and projected on the screen, and students were engaged in light conversation. She opened with a cheery "what's making you happy today?" icebreaker, calling on all 18 students to share (examples included parents coming to campus, going home for the weekend, upcoming job interview). As students settled in, she transitioned into the various tasks and deliverables on the calendar, ranging from their written proposals to more abstract research ideas.

In our previous exchanges about the course, Sara noted that students were struggling to understand how to find and construct profiles of online communities. In the prior class meeting, she had worked with students on the genre and expectations she had for Rhetorical Analysis Blogs. During this class meeting, her agenda was to ensure students understood primary research, especially in the context of doing work focused on online communities. She had prepared in-class writing prompts, and students were quick to get to work, clearly accustomed to doing this type of generative work during class. From my vantage point in the room, I could see students actively engaged on their laptops (no students used the lab PCs in the room) and remarkably on task.

The discussion she led on primary research was quite productive, with several students offering insights about the nature of primary work. Sara then moved the conversation into "frames" for the research sites online (boundaries, platforms, and language), with prompts for students to make connections to their assigned reading from the Purdue OWL (on survey, observation, and interview approaches). Identifying "pitfalls" was a great approach, particularly in identifying ethical considerations and troubleshooting their own project ideas. Sara was highly engaged and brought a level of energy higher than the students arrived with, prompting for their continued comments about primary research, with special attention to observation and interpretation ("thick description").

I was particularly impressed with the comfort levels Sara ensured through her affirmation statements for all student contributions—and how she was able to make connections to conversations earlier in the semester. Beyond the short in-class writing time, the discussion occupied roughly 60 minutes of class, which I would have expected to flounder at some point, but surprisingly most students remained attentive and engaged throughout. The

class session ended in the same format as it began, with a round-the-room sharing session, but this time focused on their projects and what they aimed to do with them.

All in all, this was an exemplary session of what could—and should—be done for students in terms of scaffolded class meetings preparing students for a primary research project, not only for what's required to get the job done but also to do so ethically, mindful of preparation decisions, and considering the range of options and possibilities before them. From the student engagement I observed, and the overall atmosphere in her classroom, it was clear to me that Sara was doing exemplary work in her ENGL 10803 teaching.

In closing, I want to note that I have also written enthusiastic recommendations for Sara to attend the Humanities Without Walls Pre-Doctoral Career Diversity Summer Workshop as well as the TCU's Global Outlook (GO) Institute in 2019, for she has the precisely the kind of disposition and intellect that indicate continued excellence in her professional and pedagogical work. Ms. Sara Kelm has my highest recommendation, and I have complete confidence in her mindful and engaging teaching practices.

With kindest regards,



Brad E. Lucas
Associate Professor & Director of Graduate Studies