

Brendan Henrique  
Daisy Altamirano

### Reflective Essay: Group Project

For Professor Maryann Krikorian's course Research in Urban Education, we were tasked with developing a research proposal. We are submitting this proposal to the Hannon Library Undergraduate Research Award.

Our group wanted to explore the differing labor practices at charter schools and public schools through various lenses. This research area sits at the intersection of many disciplines ranging from education, labor, economics, and human resources. As such, we had to employ multiple search strategies to gain a complete picture of the literature.

Our primary strategy was inspired by the lesson our class received from a library liaison. She demonstrated that we could import the permissions afforded to us by the Hannon Library into Google Scholar's tools. We would often use the EBSCOhost feature to select the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) for education-specific studies. Hannon's permissions gave our group full PDFs of relevant journal articles. We also often needed sources from interdisciplinary journals that reflected our multilayered thesis topic. We would use Hannon's list of databases to access Sage Publications for research journal articles concerning labor, unionization, teacher retention, and attrition. Similarly, the library's access to Sage Methods was the foundational database to find texts that we used to construct our mixed-methods explanatory research design.

When we were developing our study, we needed to find related concepts to job satisfaction. Using the thesaurus feature, we could identify several topics related to teacher job satisfaction, such as burnout, career change, organizational climate, working conditions. This allowed us to access a broad slice of the literature, and specifically, we could then use ERIC's

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advanced search to find sources that included both working conditions 'AND' charter schools.

The EBSCOhost allowed our project to gain breadth and depth in our investigation of the current literature.

We were having difficulty finding an accepted measure of job satisfaction in ERIC and Sage databases. We thought to do a more general search through Onesearch+, which led us to Paul Spector's seminal work on job satisfaction scales. It seemed like it was available in print (which would've been prohibitive for our project as we're located in Northern California). The library also suggested using the inter-library loan request for Spector's 1985 study concerning creating a job satisfaction scale. With a tight timeline, we were unsure how to proceed when we decided to expand our database search and try ProQuest as it has a broader scope of sources, and there we were able to access the PDF of the study immediately.

We exclusively used peer-reviewed journal articles sourced from reputable databases and well-known journals. All of these articles had multiple citations, and we deemed them to be reliable and trustworthy. There were, however, a few non-journal articles that we cited. We needed to add local context to our study and choose two local sources, one of which is KQED which is a part of the Northern California Public Broadcasting system. KQED is a well-regarded news service. Their article includes multiple citations to government reports, school data, and financial reports about California charter schools. Similarly, the Richmond Confidential is an online news source created by UC Berkeley's Journalism School. Due to its institutional support from UC Berkeley and the Ford Foundation, as well as the article's citation of school board meeting notes, governmental and educational reports, and peer-reviewed studies, we determined that this source, and KQED, were both valid and credible.

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While researching the contentious issue of public and charter schools, the researchers needed to keep bias in mind as they collected sources. By focusing on peer-reviewed articles sourced from universities and managing various sources from meta-analyses to experimental designs, bias was controlled. The thesis balanced its positional bias since the researchers come from public school and charter school teaching backgrounds.

This capstone project afforded the group the learning experience of interdisciplinary research and depended on the library's resources to connect differing studies and disciplines. We gained insights on the litigation behind collective bargaining, the organizational differences between school types, and the attempts to understand and quantify teacher retention. The class with a liaison from the Hannon Library proved instrumental in our development as researchers and graduate students.