

The research presented for your consideration is our thesis submitted for the Research Project in Urban Education Requirement for the Master of Arts in Urban Education Degree. Our qualitative research study aims to examine the safety of LGBTQ+ educators and the necessary conditions to preserve the security of these individuals by proposing policy, district, and school recommendations. Our research focused on the voice of queer teachers to address the gap in LGBTQ+ affirming literature for educators compared to students—of utmost importance during a time marked by rising anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Conducting research in an emerging area of study proved challenging while gathering sources; however, we were able to creatively utilize LMU library resources in combination with outside resources to create a holistic view of our topic and frame our research.

While forming our project, library materials—and creative problem solving—were pertinent to conducting a project that addressed LGBTQ+ teacher safety while remaining rooted in queer teacher voices and foundational literature. Our decision to construct a qualitative study came as a result of modules, readings regarding qualitative versus quantitative research, and support and feedback from our professor, Dr. Jongyeon Ee. While contextualizing our research, we were tasked with providing a literature review of over 20 peer reviewed works analyzing past texts within our research area.

Our research necessitated that we become familiar with LGBTQ+-protective legislation, including a thorough understanding of the decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* (2020), the LGBTQ+ community's current safeguard against discrimination in the workplace. Before conducting our literature review, we utilized LMU's Nexis Uni, an education law database, to familiarize ourselves with legislation and litigation. Nexis Unit provided a hopeful point of departure towards a more profound understanding of the specifics of this foundational case, as

well as connections to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This educational law specific resource framed much of our background knowledge of the topic.

We found most of our sources through ERIC, LMU's education research database; ERIC allowed us to check for peer reviews and search exclusively within education. In our Research in Education course, we were guided by Elisa Slater Acosta, the Reference & Instruction Librarian for LMU SOE. She offered a crash course in library research, showcasing optimal usage practices of ERIC's search modalities. Through ERIC, sources can be located by search terms—including exact term search functionality—and SmartText searching where large chunks of text can be used for search results, an instrumental tool when locating specific texts by entering their abstracts into the database. ERIC also contains filters for Peer Reviewed texts, publication type, and other modifiers. Elisa Slater Accosta also provided vital guidance on using synonyms and creative thinking in order to optimize search result specificity. From this advice, we learned to use trial and error, keyword combinations, and synonyms to find sources. This keyword search also pushed us to reconsider the foundation of our research. Rather than focus on safety as a singular construct, we considered that LGBTQ+ teacher safety was shaped by politics, campus climate, and personal experience; rooting this realization in queer theory, the challenges of ERIC helped us conceive of our theoretical framework.

Additional information from outside sources was needed to help contextualize the research on LGBTQ+ professionals. For this we sought reports from the UCLA Williams Institute, GLSEN, and the Human Rights Campaign. For less familiar research institutions, it was essential to go back to civic online reasoning skills provided by EdX courses. The skills of click restraint and lateral reading allowed us to evaluate the institutions behind some LGBTQ+

reports found; finding that some were maintained by anti-LGBTQ+ groups, we chose not to use these in our project as we wanted non-biased sources.

During our project, the education and education law specific databases in the LMU library proved critical while informing our research and shaping the framework for our project as a whole. Combining the vast library resources with outside knowledge and sources allowed us to create a project that we are truly proud of; we believe that our findings and recommendations can be a starting point for more examination into this area, and we have the LMU library to thank for the foundational structure for our research and analysis.