

Title: Book Manuscript for *Contested Curriculum: LGBTQ History Goes to School*

For my Spring 2021 sabbatical, I had initially proposed to complete the manuscript for my book, entitled *Contested Curriculum: LGBTQ History Goes to School*, which is under contract with the Q+Public Series at Rutgers University Press. COVID had other plans for the year leading up to my leave. Instead, I spent my sabbatical completing research for the book and writing the first two chapters, in addition to juggling the myriad care duties of raising two children in remote learning during a pandemic.

The landscape of history education has been transformed by California's passage of the FAIR (Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful) Education Act in 2011. Enacted in 2012, the law made California the first state in the nation to mandate inclusion of LGBT representation in K-12 U.S. history textbooks and curricula. *Contested Curriculum* will be the first book-length documentation and analysis of the history behind this groundbreaking law, the ways in which implementation has occurred in California, and the new directions other states have headed in its wake. Finally, it will share strategies and resources that educators, activists, students, scholars, and policymakers might use in other states. At once a history of a movement and an activist handbook, *Contested Curriculum* will be powerful, critical, and useful for the long struggle now underway.

Fortunately, much of the sabbatical research required for the book could be done remotely. I have to give credit to our amazing SSU library staff for their timely digital and mail delivery of many of the key primary and secondary sources I needed. I would not have been able to get as much done as I did without them. In addition, the San Francisco Public Library's Special Collections became open for on-site visits, one researcher at a time, in early Spring 2021. I was able to explore key archival materials through this process of limited access, which prolonged the time required to do the research but ultimately enabled its completion, fully masked, prior to vaccination.

The first chapter I completed was "Can LGBTQ History Save Democracy?" In this chapter, which also serves as the book's introduction, I argue that LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 history education does a lot of work simultaneously. If, as progressive educational leader and reformer John Dewey suggested a century ago, the "starting point of history" lives in our present and its "problems," then an essential function of history education is to equip students with a rich understanding of the past so they may build a just society today and tomorrow. For LGBTQ students, that history education enriches their identity, community, safety, and success. For all students, it facilitates a school climate of greater inclusivity and belonging across differences. For the emerging citizens of our society, polity, and nation, such a history education promotes civic engagement, tools for navigating a pluralistic democracy, and critical citizenship skills. I also contextualize the push for LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 history education in the century-long context of the so-called "History Wars," periodic U.S. culture wars over how history should be taught to kids and why.

The second chapter, “There Before FAIR: The Prehistory of LGBTQ History Education,” is nearly finished. In it, I explore how strands extending as far back as the 1920s laid the foundation for the FAIR Education Act. I detail how the struggle to bring LGBTQ-inclusive history to K-12 classrooms began in the 1970s and had a burst of unrealized promise and frustration in the late 1980s and early 1990s before finally being realized in the 21st century. I argue why a series of historical cofactors prevented more widespread implementation of LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 history education earlier, despite key accomplishments along the way. These early successes demonstrated the possibility and importance of teaching students inclusive history generally and LGBTQ history specifically in age-appropriate ways. The challenges reveal how many social, political, legal, and institutional obstacles confronted those advocating its inclusion.

I hope to have the full manuscript done sometime this academic year, post-sabbatical, but this pandemic has taught me to be humbler about deadlines than I was in pre-COVID times. I cannot pretend everything is business as usual, as proud as I am of my productivity on the sabbatical project during my leave.

The research and writing of this book contributes directly to several courses that I teach to Women's and Gender Studies majors, Queer Studies minors, and many other students enrolled in my General Education and elective courses. The work I completed over my Spring 2021 sabbatical is already enhancing my civics and contemporary politics section in WGS 255: Introduction to Queer Studies (GE D1), connects to a key element (and signature assignment) of WGS 305: LGBTQ U.S. History (GE D, American Institutions), and will augment theoretical concepts in WGS 455: Queer and Trans Theories and Lives. I will also invite some oral history candidates to speak in subsequent WGS 202: Queer Studies Lecture Series (GE C1).

Completion of the manuscript will, further, allow for me to expand the guest lecturing and workshops in which I already regularly engage across the campus, around the state, and around the country. All of this will expand recognition for Sonoma State University, the WGS department, and our Queer Studies minor, helping to foster greater campus diversity.

I am so grateful to have received the sabbatical for Spring 2021. It provided me the essential time I needed to refocus, clarify my project agenda, and see it through the vital phase of research completion and initial writing. It also came at a time when I, like doubtless most of the faculty, was deeply burnt out from the herculean task of retooling all coursework for online learning, all while co-teaching my children in their own remote learning and managing their care through this traumatic time. Prior to the sabbatical, I had become profoundly frustrated by my related stalled research agenda. Having time away from the pressures of multi-modal university teaching to jumpstart *Contested Curriculum* has given me the momentum to push the project toward the finish line—and to return to teaching with renewed energy and purpose.