

THEY HAD 5 APPLES:
WHAT'S PREVENTING US FROM INTEGRATING QUEER THEORY INTO
CLASSROOMS

By
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Abstract

How can we help queer students maximize their learning in math classrooms? Previously, researchers have proposed utilizing different aspects of queer theory: adding queer representation into curricula (i.e., "Jason's dads bought him a \$28 pair of skis"), queering social norms (such as a school allowing male students to wear dresses), queering math as a field (by breaking down the assumptions that we make about math), and asking students to solve social justice issues using math (such as using data to see if queer students at their school are bullied more than other students and, if so, coming up with an action plan about how to stop it). All of these methods fail to consider one critical factor: the classroom environment in which teachers and schools will implement them. An approach that may be successful in one environment may not be successful in a different environment. In this thesis, I will discuss why the classroom environment is a crucial consideration in our endeavor to promote queer students' achievement.

Statement of Purpose

Throughout my undergraduate career in the Secondary Mathematics Education Program (SMEP) at the University of Arizona, I have learned about many of the equity issues that students face in math classrooms. Students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and female students are often given fewer opportunities to learn than their white, high-income, male counterparts. Another student population facing unequal access to education that was not covered as extensively in SMEP is LGBTQ+ students. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community myself, I decided to investigate different ways to involve LGBTQ+ students—particularly trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students—in the math classroom and close that opportunity gap.

I am demonstrating my research as a presentation with the purpose of having the viewer reflect on their responsibility to support LGBTQ+ students. There are many opportunities throughout the presentation where I ask the viewer to pause the video and reflect on a question. This is to emphasize to the viewer that they are not a bystander—they cannot choose to disengage from supporting LGBTQ+ students. I presented this material at a conference in February 2021 to an audience of my fellow math educators, but my research is valuable to anyone interested in assisting LGBTQ+ students. By the end of the presentation, I expect my audience to have learned about all of the different ways they can support LGBTQ+ students and use them in their classrooms or communities.

They Had 5 Apples: What's Preventing Us from Integrating Queer Theory into Classrooms

Link to recording: <https://youtu.be/fNMTbCGsVI0>

Link to slide deck (sources in speaker's notes):

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wKFe73K->

[nnIprGK0AJLcx5zsw0f6M9OmGkSBQnPtww/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wKFe73K-nnIprGK0AJLcx5zsw0f6M9OmGkSBQnPtww/edit?usp=sharing)