

TOLLAFIELD, KAREN ANDRUS, Ph.D., August 2016 TEACHING, LEARNING
AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

WRITING MATTERS: UNDERSTANDING THE WRITING PRACTICES OF FIVE
YOUNG ADULTS SELF-IDENTIFYING ON THE LGBTQ SPECTRUM (451 pp.)

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to further the understanding of how LGBTQ self-identified young adults perceive using writing and various forms of self-expression. Naturalistic inquiry case study was applied to explore the participants' experiences with writing/self-expression by addressing the following questions: (a) What are the experiences of LGBTQ self-identified young adults with writing/self-expression in and out of the K–12 classroom and beyond? (b) In what ways are a variety of modes and genres of writing used in the LGBTQ youth/young adult community? Specifically, this study focused on investigating these questions through the lens of Nel Noddings' Ethics of Care to determine whether these individuals utilized writing or other forms of expression as a self-care tool. Participants were five young adults between the ages of 18–25 who self-identified on the LGBTQ spectrum. Multiple data were collected: journal entries, poetry, essays, articles, photographs, drawings, and two 1-hour interviews with each participant.

Results revealed that LGBTQ students often experience a disruption in the carer-cared for relationship between teachers and students and may turn to writing and other multi-modal forms of self-expression on their own as a means of self-care. The implications for research and instruction highlight the use of choice and a multi-modal approach to writing/composing in schools would be beneficial to all students.