Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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Hiding in Heteronormative Sight:
Students’ Concealment of (Nonhetero)Sexual Identity in Public Schools

Date: April 6, 2021
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Place: Remote

Abstract
Increased legal protections and visibility in popular media of sexual minority persons can lead some to believe that sexual prejudice is a thing of the past (Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016). However, national statistics still show sexual minority youth at greater risks for self-harming thoughts and attempts than their heteronormative counterparts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, & National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2019); and indicate schools as particularly hostile environments for these youth as well (Kowsic, Greytak, Zongrone, Clark, & Truong, 2018). The current study looks to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on the experience of sexual minority persons who concealed their (nonhetero)sexual identity in their K-12 setting. Because this aspect of identity is not readily observable to those outside oneself the needs and struggles this population faces as they navigate heteronormative school institutions can seem invisible. This population holds a unique position to reflect upon the factors that prompted them to keep that aspect of themselves hidden and insight into what may be beneficial actions for schools to take to create a more inclusive climate, culture, and curriculum, for sexual minority students.

Keywords: sexual minority, heteronormitive, education, LGBTQ

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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