

# 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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MBA, Master of Business Administration, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1999  
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### **From Empathy to Social Empathy: A Journey in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workplace Graduate Certificate**

Date: May 23, 2022  
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Place: Remote

#### **Abstract**

This study aimed to explore and understand the impact of the Graduate Certificate in Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) on master's and doctoral students' social empathy development. The participants in this certificate engaged in several online activities that increased their knowledge of microaggressions, privilege, and unconscious bias while building their social empathy. This course provided various tools and skills to value diversity, look at the world from another's perspective, and start a dialogue to promote social change.

This case study involved 19 participants, and to answer our research questions, we used different data sources: a pre-course survey given at the beginning of the certificate; the Social Empathy Index administered at the beginning of unit two; discussion board postings that were part of the course assignments; and one-on-one Zoom interviews. We identified six overarching themes: 1) slow down; 2) be uncomfortable; 3) self-reflection; 4) perspective taking; 5) contextual understanding of systemic barriers; 6) behavioral intentions.

This research strongly suggests that participants' social empathy increased, which was indicated by the exceptional number of behavioral intentions due to the online transformative learning experiences in the DEI Graduate Certificate.

The researchers agree with the data outcomes in recommending that university leaders include social empathy development in their curriculums and professional development programs to promote positive social change.

#### **Defense of Dissertation Committee**

Keith Miller, Ph.D. Chairperson  
Theresa Coble, Ph.D.  
Marlo Goldstein Hode, Ph.D.  
Lisa Overholser, Ph.D.