

*THE PENN STATE ABINGTON  
EDUCATION PROGRAM PRESENTS...*

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***Dr. Dennis Francis***  
***Stellenbosch University, South Africa***



Queer Activism in South African  
Education: Disrupting  
Cis(hetero)normativity in Schools

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September 14, 2021  
10:00am-11:00am, ET

Hosted by:  
Boni Wozolek, PhD

Join us via Zoom:  
<https://psu.zoom.us/j/98736908210>

### **About the Author:**

Dennis Francis (they/them/their) is a South African-based scholar and activist whose work engages with questions related to gender, sexualities and schooling. Dennis is a former Dean of Education and currently Professor of Sociology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Their research, located in the sociology of education, focuses on how educational structures, discourses and practices reproduce cisheteronormativity and social inequality in schools, and how these are also resisted and challenged. Their most recent books are *Troubling the Teaching and Learning of Gender and Sexuality Diversity in South African Education* (Queer Studies and Education – PalgraveMacmillan, 2017) and *Queer Social Movements and Outreach Work in Schools: A Global Perspective* (Queer Studies and Education – PalgraveMacmillan, 2020, with Jon I Kjaran & Jukka Lehtonen). Professor Francis's forthcoming book (December 2021), and the focus of this talk, is *Queer Activism in South African Education: Disrupting Cis(hetero)normativity in Schools*.

### **About the Book:**

Complicating conversations about gender, sexuality, and schooling, this talk will discuss how bodies are turned toward objects around them and how this directional shifting and sorting matters. Centering the voices of school administration, teachers, LGBTQI people, and straight school youth, Dr. Francis' work tracks how cisheteronormativity orientates bodies in specific ways, exploring what happens when straight lines are crossed. Further, this talk will highlight how cisheteronormativity operates as a mode of directionality, often rendering LGBTIQ learners as – (1) deviating from the straight line and, therefore, in need of discipline, (2) out of view or invisible and therefore positioned as out of place and not belonging and (3) turning away from objects that take them off the straight line; to reorientate inwards and internalize cisheteronormativity. By interrogating the way homophobic and transphobic cultures and ideologies are upheld and maintained in schools through structures of affect, and drawing on Ahmed's (2006) that focuses on emotion, this work will also attend to the many ways that cisheteronormativity works in and across bodies, discourses, and practices to maintain social hierarchies.