



Washington State University

College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences

Kexin Jiang

Will defend their dissertation on

Date: April 21, 2026

Time: 2:30 P.M.

Pullman Campus – Cleveland Hall, Room 160A

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

Title:

EXAMINING TEACHING STRESS OF K-12 EDUCATION TEACHERS AND INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE COURSE INSTRUCTORS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF STRESS AND STRESS COPING

Chair: Chad Gotch

Abstract:

Teachers play a crucial role in education, but many of them today face challenges related to occupational stress. In the United States, teachers have reported nearly twice as much stress as other professions. While stress is an inherent and inevitable component of human experience, existing literature has documented its substantial effect on teachers' occupational experience and well-being. In such urgent conditions, it is essential to systematically investigate work stress across diverse educator populations, highlighting how they encounter and interpret stress, and how they can be supported to navigate stress experiences. This dissertation comprises two studies. The first study conducted a critical review on how job stress has been conceptualized and interpreted in teaching groups, followed by a comprehensive examination of lower secondary education teachers within a health impairment model. The study objective investigated the interrelationships among four model components to support a holistic view of stress as a multidimensional and dynamic concept that influences teacher well-being. The second study reviewed the documented teaching challenges faced by the international graduate teaching assistants, followed by a narrative examination of the cognitive appraisal of stress among assistants who teach undergraduate students as independent instructors. The study objective explored the role of cultural context brought by international course instructors in their perceptions of stress and stress management regarding classroom communication, informing future interventions and targeted resources. These objectives are guided by Lazarus and Folkman's stress and stress coping framework, which explicitly views stress as a subjective, interactive experience reflected in the stressful encounters individuals face and in how they respond to these stressors. The results of both studies offer a comprehensive, inclusive perspective on job-related stress across broad teaching populations, considering the unique stress experiences of different teaching groups and possible actions to offer genuine care for our teachers.