



Washington State University

College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences

Kyrin Gregory

Will defend their dissertation on

Date: April 22, 2026

Time: Noon

Zoom: Link by request ceshs.gradstudies@wsu.edu

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

Title:

TEACHERS' INCLUSION SUPPORT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: A CASE STUDY

Chair: Yun-Ju Hsiao

Abstract:

This qualitative case study investigated inclusion teachers' perceptions of their support of the social needs of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their classroom culture practices to support social learning. There is a limitation of scholarly research outlining practices for middle school inclusion teachers to support students with ASD and their varied social needs. This study looked at teachers' perceptions of recognizing behaviors due to autistic features tied to social needs. This case study found that teachers recognize that their students need specialized support, are compassionate and willing, but struggled aligning observations with an accurate assessment of the displayed features and aligning teaching strategies to support social growth. Using a variety of diverse teaching strategies, teachers were found to be well-tooled at creating opportunities for shared learning as well as purposely creating safe space for students to be themselves. When social skill struggles get in the way of learning for students with ASD, teachers may benefit from increased skills in recognizing behaviors tied to social skills as well as their knowledge of social strategies that promote learning. However, when teachers have limited time, resources, or building support, they may struggle building bridges for students with ASD to access opportunities for genuine social growth.