

CANVAS Meeting Minutes, 7.9.2021

Fri, July 9, 2021 | 11am Eastern Time

People in Attendance

- Alison Wessel (University of Delaware)
- Anita Rehberg (Harper College)
- Alex Davidson (University of North Texas)
- Amber Meyers (Tarrant County College)
- Amelia Anderson (Old Dominion University)
- Auston Stamm (Saint Mary's College CA)
- Brad Cox (Florida State University | College Autism Network)
- Brett Nachman (North Carolina State University | College Autism Network)
- Caroline Turner (Northwestern University)
- Dave Caudel (Frist Center for Autism and Innovation)
- Erin O'Toole (University of North Texas)
- Jennifer Williamson (University of Calgary)
- Jennifer Lann (Landmark College)
- Joe Hardenbrook (Carroll University)
- Katie McDermott
- Lee Williams (CAN)
- Liliana Valvano (Silberman School of Social Work at CUNY)
- Lindy Russell (SF College)
- Lin
- Lydia Evans (University of North Texas)
- Pam Ginn (University of Florida)
- Patrick Dwyer (UC-Davis)
- Sally Andersen (LINK OT)
- Sarah Vital (Saint Mary's College of California)
- Susan White (University of Alabama)

Meeting Plan

CANVAS Updates

- Join our CANVAS list-serv - Our primary means of connecting, sharing info
 1. Click [here to join](#)
 2. Send email to the list by emailing can-canvas@collegeautismnetwork.org
- College Autism Summit (Oct 26-29)
 1. [Keynote Speakers](#)
 2. [Call for Proposals Due August 1](#)
- **Share a Resource!** Are you conducting any research studies that you'd like the community to know about? Read an interesting article recently? Discovered a cool resource? This is your chance to briefly share that news with the CANVAS group! List your name and any relevant links below so others may access it at their convenience!

1. Brad mentioned a new study involving 10 U.K. college students: Goddard, H., & Cook, A. (2021). "I spent most of freshers in my room"—a qualitative study of the social experiences of university students on the autistic spectrum. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05125-2>
2. While not about college students specifically, this piece appealed to Brad because of its important focus on women and the costs/benefits of camouflaging autistic characteristics: Tubío-Fungueiríño, M., Cruz, S., Sampaio, A., Carracedo, A., & Fernández-Prieto, M. (2021). Social camouflaging in females with autism spectrum disorder: A systematic review. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 51(7), 2190-2199. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04695-x>
3. Amber shared details about conducting a new research study on students identifying as both autistic and engaged in dual credit. Amber is hoping to learn more about their experiences, as well as perspectives from instructors and peers.

Research Presentation

Presenter: Dr. Amelia Anderson (Assistant Professor of Library & Information Studies
Darden College of Education and Professional Studies; Old Dominion University)

Presentation: The Intersection of Libraries and Autism

Description: Libraries are a comfortable place for many, and this can be especially true for autistic patrons who may appreciate the library's organization, structure, clear policies, quiet spaces (and loud spaces!), and opportunities to "geek out" around specific interests. Many autistic adults have also found careers in librarianship, from shelving books to working in upper administration. This talk describes the many intersections of libraries and autism that Dr. Anderson has explored over nearly a decade of work.

Presentation Notes

- A colleague had indicated to her that her interest in autism and academic libraries could be an entire career. She realized there would be a lot to deconstruct on this front.
- Amelia did not want to go too deep into any specific studies so that she could cover multiple studies more broadly.
- She is happy to share specific articles with folks if they are not open access.
- Amelia came on this topic when there was a grant that came in regarding autism and libraries. Project PALS focused a lot on children, and she realized that not enough attention was being placed on college students. This sparked her dissertation work on college students. She would later develop a training manual for academic librarians in serving college students with autism. That endeavor entailed Project A+.
- Librarians would come up to her after giving sessions about this work, talking about their own identities as autistic.
- Becoming a librarian requires a graduate degree.
- Retaining academic librarians is very important.
- Amelia shared the iterative nature of describing autism, from person-first language in earlier pieces to more identity-first now.

- Amelia discussed one of her pieces published in *College and Research Libraries*. Amelia pulled in content from WrongPlanet to account for autistic perspectives; she felt like this approach would be less intrusive, as well as allow to glean insights from what has already been printed online. People talked about academic libraries across 98 discussion threads. Among the main findings: students wrote about the sensory environment, study rooms (finding these to be viable quiet escapes), and even finding the spaces to be barriers if the settings don't meet expectations. There is sometimes an unclear idea of what the library should be from a noise standpoint. Students enjoyed browsing content based on special interests. Libraries were helpful in supporting interactions; students used their knowledge to initiate conversations. There were grey areas in how and when students used library spaces to start or avoid engagement with peers.
- Project A+ is a grant Amelia worked on during her graduate school years; this free PDF manual is geared for academic librarians, and draws on insights from the *College and Research Libraries* piece. She realized that many librarians were unfamiliar with how to engage with members of the autism community.
- Next, Amelia discussed a piece on academic libraries and autism support programs, published in *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. She wanted to find examples of good partnerships between academic libraries and programs serving autistic students. This endeavor started with a journal search and Google search, and identified 45 universities that had autism-related programs. She gauged what their rapport were with academic libraries. Multiple individuals said they had no relationships with libraries. This study helped inspire a number of conversations and forging relationships. Amelia identified four institutions that not only had an autism program on campus, but also actively involved libraries in meaningful ways. She picked their brains on what collaborations entailed. Most importantly, collaborations supported students' needs. Librarians realized the value of offering tailored services for autistic students, and that physical spaces may not be enough.
- Finally, Amelia shared details regarding a new piece published in *Library and Information Science Research*. She has become an informal career coach to librarians through this process. Amelia has investigated daily workforce experiences of autistic librarians. Through employing inclusive methods (e.g., choices during the interview process), Amelia aimed to honor librarians' needs, as well as their wording. She engaged in drafts to participants. The first paper is a behind-the-scenes look at the factors. Meanwhile, a forthcoming piece in *International Journal of Information, Diversity, and Inclusion* entail the results. Findings center on librarians' contextual nature of disclosure, their desire to help patrons, how many found their way into this profession because of exposure to libraries during their earlier years, and often finding like-minded individuals in this fulfilling, meaningful work. Many autistic librarians felt they were very unique.

Q&A

Brad: “Question for Amelia... Could you talk more about the pragmatics of using data submitted in such diverse ways? Did you find it easier to analyze one type of data? Did you sorta convert everything to a common base (e.g., making transcripts from interviews so they were the same type of data as the emails/texts with participants)?”

Answer: Most participants chose audio and video. Even though she had a whole menu of options, participants selected one of two types, including that Zoom choice and Word documents. Purposive sample factored into that study. Within Zoom, Amelia was able to incorporate follow-up questions, though that wasn't as conducive in Word.

Pam: "Can you recommend college majors that could lead to eligibility for a graduate degree in library studies?"

Answer: Graduate programs welcome anyone. Even if individuals' backgrounds vary, it may make them more marketable due to having subject expertise.

Brett: "What are some takeaways from your guide for academic librarians?"

Answer: Building collaborations is so important, because librarians are often left out of conversations and want to be considered.

Amelia mentioned thinking about what's next with this line of research. She hopes to amplify neurodivergent voices, and is also hoping that autistic individuals play more prominent roles in this type of work.

Relevant Articles:

Anderson, A.M. (2021). Exploring the workforce experiences of autistic librarians through accessible and participatory approaches. *Library and Information Science Research*, 43(2).<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2021.101088>

Layden, S., Anderson, A., & Hayden, K.(2021). Are librarians prepared to serve students with autism spectrum disorder? A content analysis of graduate programs. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088357621989254>

Anderson, A. (2020). Academic libraries and autism support programs: From mutual awareness to collaboration. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000620918628>

Anderson, A., & Phillips, A. (2019). "Getting basic information isn't actually as helpful as the nuanced advice we can give each other": Teens with autism on digital citizenship education. *Journal of Research on Libraries & Young Adults*, (10)3. <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/jrlya/2019/11/getting-basic-information-isnt-as-helpful-as-the-nuanced-advice-we-can-give-each-other-teens-with-autism-on-digital-citizenship-education/>

Anderson, A. (2018). Autism and the academic library: A study of online communication. *College and Research Libraries*, 79(5), 645-658.
<https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.5.645>

Upcoming CANVAS Meetings

- Friday, August 13 at 2 p.m. ET – **Dr. Jane McLeod** (**Associate Executive Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, and Provost Professor of Sociology; Indiana University**) – *College and Beyond for Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum*
- Friday, September 17 at 2 p.m. ET – **Dr. TC Waisman** (**Doctor of Innovation at Autism Training Academy**)
- Friday, October 15 at 11 a.m. ET – **Dr. Hyejung Kim** (**Binghamton University**)
- Friday, November 19 at 1 p.m. ET – **Dr. Mary Baker-Ericzén** (**San Diego State University**)