

RESEARCHER SUMMARY FOR CROSSOVER SESSION

Side 1: About My Research

Instructions: Please provide the following information, keeping sections 1-5 to just a single side of a single page.

1. **Contact Information** (so people can contact you with questions or collaboration opportunities)
 - a. **Name:** Brad Cox
 - b. **Position, Department, Institution:** Associate Professor of Higher Education, Florida State University; Founder of the College Autism Network
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2. **Research Focus** (what types of issues or questions generally drive your research?)
 - a. **Topical Areas of Focus:** I examine the systemic, institutional, and personal conditions that shape college access, experiences, and outcomes for students on the autism spectrum
 - b. **Example Research Questions:** How do students with autism navigate the transition into college? To what extent are our current interventions for accommodations effective for college students with autism? How do neurotypical peers respond to students displaying autism-related characteristics or behaviors?

3. **Data Sources** (include both private and publicly available sources used or considering for use)
 - a. **Qualitative:** 1) hour-long interviews with 9 students with autism who had attempted/completed college, 2) text excerpts from 1,000+ postings to “Wrong Planet” discussion boards related to college going.
 - b. **Quantitative:** 1) institution specific data from CIRP freshman survey, including a variable indicating disability generally and autism specifically, 2) Autism Quotient questionnaire (the 10 question version, AQ10) data for two cohorts of entering students, as well as roughly 10% of one institution’s entire student body (including graduate students), 3) from roughly 700 students who articulated how they would respond to other students’ demonstration of autism -related characteristics in classroom settings
 - c. **Other/Mixed/Unique:**

4. **Resources / Products** (include anything related to your research others might find useful)
 - a. **Publications:** Cox, B. E., Thompson, K., Anderson, A., Mintz, A., Locks, T. Morgan, L., Edelstein, J., & Wolz, A. (2017). [College experiences for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\): Personal identity, public disclosure, and institutional support](#). *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(1), 71-87.
 - b. **Presentations:** Recent presentations at ACPA, NASPA, FYE, ASHE, and AERA
 - c. **Other (e.g., grants, websites, webinars, curricula):** NSF grant to assess traditional disability accommodations and STEM Gateway course outcomes for students with autism-related characteristics ...see www.CollegeAutismNetwork.org for 4-page info-brief, “what is ASD” presentation, etc.

5. **Challenges of Doing Research** (persistent or specific challenges you’ve encountered *doing* research)
 - a. **Consistent Challenges:** 1) identifying and enrolling potential participants, 2) accessing institutional data related to disability status, 3) adjusting language to fit widely varying audiences e.g., autism researchers, higher education researchers, faculty members on campus, parents, policy-makers, students themselves)
 - b. **Unique/Specific Issues:** funding from most sources focuses on early identification and intervention

<<<===== Room For Notes Below =====>>>

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Side 2: Application to Practice... How My Research Can Inform Practical “On-The-Ground” Work

Instructions: For each of the topics below, please **summarize relevant findings** from your research, **highlight key implications** for practice, and **make note of questions** for practitioners or administrators).

6. College Entry/Transition: (e.g., Summer Bridge, Admissions, Orientation, Working w/Parents)

Analyses of data from wrongplanet - as well as anecdotal comments from parents and students I’ve spoken with - suggests there is considerable apprehension, misinformation, distrust, and confusion regarding when and to whom individuals should disclose their ASD status. The traditional orientation model does not appear to fit well with the students who may be put off by its intensity and social ambiguity.

7. Internship and Career Placement: (e.g., Identifying Opportunities, Interviewing, Professionalism)

In interviews, students noted this is an area where they have a clear justification for minimizing the display of their autism related characteristics (both during interviews and during probationary periods on the job). Research from one of my colleagues suggests students with autism can be taught specific interview skills, but even after a significant intervention is clear that students participating in that study had not mastered the subtleties of interviewing

8. Social Skills and Conduct: (e.g., Navigating Conduct Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions; Delivering Social Skills Training re: Roommates, Classmates, Dating)

Although both the interviews and the data from wrongplanet suggest students need help in these areas, I have no direct research to support effective intervention design at this point.

9. Program Assessment: (e.g., Setting Goals, Integrating Data Collection, Demonstrating Effectiveness)

A comprehensive review of the literature I am leading for a paper to be presented at the ASHE 2017 conference indicates that institutions are quicker to create programs and assess specific components of those programs than they are to publish results of needs assessment or outcomes analyses for students with autism. These programs are often unique to the institution, difficult to replicate in other settings or contexts, small in size, and inconsistent in terms of the outcomes desired in the measures being used to assess attainment of those outcomes. As result, although there are many institutional practices that have strong face validity, many of which have anecdotal evidence of success, there is not yet clear or convincing evidence that any specific intervention (or even a specific type of intervention) has consistent positive effects on student outcomes typically considered in studies of college student success.

10. Guidance for Specific Personnel: (e.g., Residence Assistants, Orientation Leaders, Faculty)

Orientation leaders: we suggest the inclusion of short “personal wellness” breaks (maybe five minutes every hour) throughout orientation sessions. These periodic breaks will allow individuals with autism a chance to ask follow-up questions, escape to less sensory intensive environments, or connect with support systems as needed. At the same time, they allow everyone at orientation to take a breather and go to the bathroom if needed.

Faculty members: for group assignments, clearly define specific roles and expectations for individuals within each group. Group assignments are common, and can be pedagogically effective, but without explicit guidance students with autism may have difficulty reading and responding to the nonverbal social cues of their groupmates

Finally, a model my team developed for the ASHE2016 conference identifies “protectable problems” encountered when students with autism meet institutions’ standard operating procedures, and suggests the use of personalized adaptation to facilitate student success.

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