

CANVAS Meeting Minutes, 7-21-22

People in Attendance:

- Andrea Haas (University of Massachusetts, Boston)
- Ariana Riccio (Education Development Center)
- Bella Kofner (College of Staten Island)
- Beth Felsen (Spectrum Transition Coaching)
- Brett Ranon Nachman (College Autism Network)
- Christopher Esposito (University of Connecticut)
- David Top (Utah Valley University)
- Elinor Lim (University of Southampton/Portsmouth, UK)
- Hamida
- Hannah Melton (Marian University – Indianapolis)
- Heather M. Brown (University of Alberta)
- Jill Underhill (Marshall University)
- Jomarie Coloriano (Gateway Technical College, Wisconsin)
- Julie Humbel-Courtney (Ohio State University)
- June Shin (Seattle Central College, SAILS)
- Kathy Szechy (Wayne State University)
- Katie McDermott
- Ken Gobbo (Landmark College)
- Lauren Baczewski (UCLA)
- Lauren Lestremau Allen (SUNY Empire State College)
- Lee Williams (College Autism Network)
- Lindsay Hill (Michigan State University)
- Margot Stothers (University of Alberta)
- Sasha Zeedyk (California State University, Fullerton)
- TC Waisman (Autism Training Academy)
- Theo Bakker (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
- Tiana Okonkwo (Texas A&M University)
- Tom Beeson (Clemson University)

Meeting Plan

CANVAS Updates

- Join our CANVAS list-serv - Our primary means of connecting, sharing info
 - Click [here to join](#)
 - Send email to the list
<https://groups.google.com/a/collegeautismnetwork.org/forum/#!forum/can-canvas/join> by emailing can-canvas@collegeautismnetwork.org
 - [CAN Membership Details](#) We appreciate the support your membership provides to help us offer CANVAS and other opportunities.

- [College Autism Summit](#) details; we have secured Eric Garcia as the opening keynote, whereas the creator and cast of *As We See It* will serve as the closing keynote.
- **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!
 - Our article on '[Barriers to Inclusive Learning for Autistic Individuals](#)' in *Pediatrics Journal* (TC Waisman, Laura Alba, Shulamite Green)

Research Presentation

Presenter: Dr. Theo C. Bakker, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Presentation Title: Study Progression and Success of Autistic Students in Higher Education, A Longitudinal, Propensity Score-Weighted Population Study

Presentation Notes:

- Theo studies students with autism because he believes everyone should be included.
- A number of reasons contributed to him pursuing this line of research four years ago, including recognizing that few insights exist around autistic students in higher education. Many experiences that mark autistic students are not unique to them. Objective, comparative data is rare. He wanted to improve on existent shortcomings.
- The research question entailed: "what is unique about the study progression and success of autistic students in higher education compared to students with other disabilities and without disabilities."
- Four papers explored sub-questions, including background and enrollment, study progression, and graduation.
- His study entailed following 101 bachelor students with autism, around 2500 with other disabilities, and 25,000 without disabilities.
- When students enrolled, they illustrated if they had a disability or not.
- This dataset entailed seven cohorts from Vrije Universiteit from 2010-2016. Three years of data was used for each student.
- Theo's work explored students' background characteristics, types of college preparation, and progression and success (e.g., drop-out, degrees).
- As far as the findings, autistic students were unique from their peers in several ways. For their background and enrollment, they were often older (by one year), more often male (71.1%), and more often possessed non-formal education. They experienced greater comorbidity, primarily with ADHD and dyslexia. Autistic students had equally good grades in high school, were well prepared to transfer to the university, and more often engaged in STEM programmes.
- Theo used propensity score matching to engage in balancing differences, correcting for gender, age, highest prior education, high school math grade, and cohort.
- With autistic students, there were less credits earned during their third term in the first year. There were no significant differences for dropout, degree completion, or grades.

- The number of no-shows for autistic students during their second year is a harbinger of their success in their third year.
- No significant differences exist among participant groups related to IQ and academic capabilities.
- Theo built roughly 100 models to compare the three participant groups. The no information rate predicted that 42.9% of autistic students would complete a degree within three years; the accuracy of the best model was 64.3%.
- Autistic students in parallel programs tend to drop out more than their counterparts in Year 1.
- There are differences with autistic students regarding exam participation (more no-shows).
- Findings indicate that autistic students may tend to procrastinate more.
- Key predictors of success entailed the following: study choice (first year); long-term issues with study and participation in high school (second year); and long-term issues and intelligence, as well as high school educational fit (third year).
- Implications for research and practice entail the following. For one, encouraging disclosure is key. Additionally, supporting study choice enables students to feel more motivated. Supporting social and executive skills becomes more crucial in the second year, whereas supporting academic skills raises in salience in Year 3.

Q&A:

- TC: “What is the general attitude towards autistic individuals (in the community and in higher ed) in the Netherlands?”
 - Answer: The community is generally very supportive. Until more recently, though, the general belief was that it was very hard for autistic people to pursue graduate education.
- Heather: “What is a parallel program”
 - It serves as a second major. Some combinations of majors are easier for students to pursue (e.g., both in STEM fields).
- TC: “are there exam accommodations available to autistic students or are the no-shows for exams that don't offer accommodations?”
 - Additional time and quiet rooms are existent. In the Netherlands, they can ask for postponement with completing their programmes.
- Elinor: Are there exam accommodations available to autistic students or are the no-shows for exams that don't offer accommodations?
 - Many students ask for accommodations, though it's not always sure if they're granted.
 - The majority of students in the study did not ask for accommodations.
- Lauren: “Great presentation! You mentioned that the autistic students in your sample have formal diagnoses. can you say more about this? did all the students have registered/disclosed diagnoses from a clinician that they shared with their university?”
 - Students had to upload documents with a formal diagnoses, including clinician names. These were checked on a nationwide registry.

- Katie: “Could you speak about transition supports offered to students entering college?”
 - The Netherlands doesn’t quite have an IEP equivalent. However, what seems to be effective are the open college days where they can visit the college and communicate with support offices. There will hopefully be a support group with fellow students.
- Theo said the study will hopefully be able to follow students’ pathways into their fourth and fifth years.
- Brett asked about the lack of differences in findings among participant groups for certain criteria.
 - Because of the Netherlands being a small, flat country, it is easy for students to access university all over. Consequently, many autistic students still live at home and have more support structures. There’s not as many differences in university cost across higher education institutions. Students have much access to funding.
- Theo asked about opportunities for longitudinal work.
 - Sasha mentioned that there is still the hope the NLTS-3 will debut sooner than later here in the United States.

Upcoming CANVAS Meetings

Fri, August 12, 2022, 1 p.m. ET

- Dr. Amber Meyers (Professor, Tarrant County College)
- Presentation Title: People Matter: Recruiting Autistic High School Students into Dual Credit Classes
- Presentation Description: Disparities exist regarding representation by autistic students in dual credit classes (classes granting both high school and college credit). Success in these classes can lead to higher college enrollment and graduation rates. Discussions with autistic high school students who successfully completed a dual credit class reveal key figures influencing students’ decisions to enroll. Partnerships between colleges and school districts ought to, but often do not, reflect parity when recruiting and enrolling autistic students. This presentation seeks to identify key factors in the recruitment and enrollment decision process as well as factors for student support during the courses.

Fri, September 9, 2022, 1 p.m. ET

- Kayden Stockwell (Ph.D. Student, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia)
- Presentation Title: Understanding the Experiences of Autistic Undergraduates at the University of Virginia
- Description: Using a mixed-methods approach, we are interested in understanding what it’s like to be an autistic undergraduate at UVA. The experiences students share with us will be used to provide feedback to the university on where support has been working and recommendations on how it could be improved.

Wed, October 5, 2022, 4 p.m. ET

- Brian Irvine (Doctoral Researcher in Specialist (Autism) Mentoring, University of Birmingham)
- Presentation Title: Framing and Reframing: Specialist (Autism) Mentoring in UK HEIs
- Description: Universities in the UK have seen a remarkable increase in the number of autistic students. These students receive funded Specialist (Autism) Mentoring to “remove barriers to learning”. Questions posed by mentees as autistic hypothesisers inspired diaries kept by 28 mentors, of whom 8 themselves were autistic. A process of framing and reframing emerged as a key pillar of mentoring autistic students akin to the frame alignment of social movements. Through the nurturing of advocacy autistic students are not simply inducted into university culture, they are equipped to change it.

Fri, November 11, 2022, 3 p.m. ET

- Aylin Ulker, OTD, OTR/L & Tom Beeson, EdS (Clemson University)
- Presentation Title: Sensory Inclusion in Higher Education: Neurodiverse and Neurotypical Experiences and Perspectives
- Presentation Description: This study was conducted as part of an occupational therapy student’s capstone project at Clemson University to address the missing gap of sensory inclusion in higher education. Sensory processing differences are a common characteristic of Autism Spectrum Disorder and can negatively impact autistic students’ college experience. A focus group was held among 6 neurodiverse students enrolled in the Spectrum Program, and a campus-wide survey was sent to neurodiverse and neurotypical students, faculty, and staff. Results indicate that sensory inclusive designs and support have the potential to benefit neurodiverse students and the greater campus population as a whole.