

CANVAS Meeting Minutes, 8-12-22

People in Attendance

- Amber Meyers (Tarrant County College)
- Amy Brown
- Bella Kofner (College of Staten Island)
- Brett Ranon Nachman (College Autism Network; University of Arkansas)
- David Top (Utah Valley University)
- Eric Endlich (Top College Consultants)
- Erin Reilly (Molloy University)
- Jastyn Wallace (Nisonger Center)
- June Shin (Seattle Central College)
- Katie McDermott
- Ken Gobbo (Landmark College)
- Lee Williams (College Autism Network)
- Summer West (Universität Kassel)
- Xueqin Qian (Bethel University; Sunrise Autism)

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
<https://groups.google.com/a/collegeautismnetwork.org/forum/#!forum/can-canvas/join> by emailing can-canvas@collegeautismnetwork.org
 3. [CAN Membership Details](#) We appreciate the support your membership provides to help us offer CANVAS and other opportunities.
 4. [College Autism Summit](#) details
 1. A schedule of programs will soon be available on the website.
 2. Major speakers have been announced, including Eric Garcia and the creator/cast of *As We See It*.
 5. Various CAN News
 1. We have launched our [Consultants Collective](#); these individuals can be hired to present talks for your organization.
 2. Soon our [Coalition of Campus Organizations for Autism](#) (COCOA) will kick off. This coalition brings together student organizations that are centered on neurodiversity advocacy.
- **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. <https://rsa.ed.gov/data/view-submission-rsa-2> This site has Vocational Rehab data, including the number and amount of vocational rehab funds and number of services being provided to students in colleges. You may

search by state. For example, there is a vast difference between the number of services for those pursuing post secondary education in Oregon (.8% of all services and 1.18% of all funds) vs. Montana (26% of all services and 19.91% of all funds) or Kentucky (17% of all services and 7.64% of all funds). This impacts the number of students who attempt college or successfully complete college and the services they may be provided. For example, in Kentucky, daily executive function coaching is available via a contract with vocational rehab for many students. Percentages may be calculated by dividing the total number of services to individuals by the number of services provided for post secondary education. It can also be an indicator to colleges that partnerships and/or advocacy needs to improve if we are to improve the number of students with disabilities going to college.

2. Search your state's Department of Education Data. I know of one charter school with 350 100% dual enrolled high school students. Not a single student was on an IEP.
3. From the CANVAS list-serv: Jess Monahan (University of Delaware) is seeking a neurodivergent statistician to support the development of a "new measure for autistic employees that examines their level of perceived inclusion in the workplace." Contact jlmon@udel.edu if you know of anyone who may be applicable and interested.
4. Summer asked about updates with the DSM
 1. Jastyn contributed to this in the chat: "In the upcoming text revision of the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR), the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is revised from the DSM-5 diagnosis. In addition to text changes throughout the disorder's description, which reflect updated literature and advances in knowledge, the most noticeable change is to the diagnostic criteria, specifically criterion. Rationale for Change Criterion A phrase "as manifested by the following" was revised to read "as manifested by all of the following" to improve the intent and clarity of the wording. The revision by the work group was consistent with the intent of the DSM-5 work group for autism spectrum disorder to maintain a high diagnostic threshold by requiring "all of the following" and not "any of the following" as could be mistakenly inferred from the previous wording of the criterion."
5. Amber mentioned that 100% dual enrolled students are considered full-time college students and don't have IEPs.

Research Presentation (25 mins + Q&A Time)

- Amber Meyers (Professor, Tarrant County College)
- Presentation Title: “People Matter: Recruiting Autistic High School Students into Dual Credit Classes”

Presentation Notes:

- Amber identifies as autistic and found it amazing as a college student to be able to take a public speaking course. Tarrant County College is the only college in the state to have an autism program, she said, and is aiming to support my students.
- Many people in her family identify as autistic.
- She taught high school English for nine years, and then served as a principal, later a faculty member for 11 years.
- She was teaching classes at a small high school and noticed that usually one or two students out of 20 identified as autistic. When she shifted to a much larger high school, she realized that there were no autistic students there year after year. She didn’t feel that was probable, prompting her to wonder about the inconsistencies of distribution. Her autistic children were scheduled to enter that larger high school, and she started to question the situation.
- Amber recognizes that many students may not choose to go to university because they may lose their primary support network (families). Hence she sees value in focusing on the community college.
- Dual credit offers unique benefits to the autism community. For one, studies show that one-third of high school students take dual-credit classes, and most colleges offer that. Dual credit bolsters college readiness, college enrollment, and degree completion. Perhaps most importantly, it helps their social capital, or hidden rules, especially useful for marginalized students.
- RQ: “How can secondary and post-secondary schools increase enrollment and support for autistic students in dual-credit programs?”
- To date, Amber has seen no direct research on autistic students in dual-credit courses. This is a qualitative case study; she engaged in purposeful and snowball sampling.
- What made the study difficult is that it’s hard to engage with high schools who are accepting of a researcher come in to explore autistic students’ experiences.
- As an autistic person, Amber is mindful about not seeking particular results.
- She has interviewed eight students so far, hoping there will be up to 12. Students are earning A or B in the courses they’re taking. Through interviewing them, she thought there would be value in interviewing other stakeholders. High school counselors are the ones helping the students enroll; hence she reached out to them. Amber has interviewed six counselors in North Texas so far.
- Amber is interested in the reasons behind why these students enrolled; that can identify any potential holes.
- Counselors believed students would be enrolling in courses during IEP meetings, since that’s when parents, administrators, counselors, and other individuals meet at least yearly to offer student guidance about useful education programs. Amber noted four areas of influence: IEP/504 team; secondary school leaders, and counselors, additional factors, and post-secondary personnel.

- Counselors were disheartened by some of the early findings. Students mentioned that no teachers or counselors encouraged them to enroll. Nor were these discussions unfolding in IEP/504 meetings. Some students noted that it was their families who oriented them to dual enrollment, whereas others said peers were influential; this shows how social capital is so significant. They want to have the same experiences as their neurotypical peers in this way.
- Driving factors for students in getting into dual-enrollment entailed the following. For one, trust is big. One student shared how a school psychologist who she built a rapport with held influence; another credited her sister. Meanwhile, some peers were helpful. Sadly, there were missed opportunities because of some counselors or other folks discouraging them due to potential stress.
- Upon sharing with counselors about autism/higher education statistics, they were surprised. Every counselor mentioned that all schools' mission statements emphasized preparing students for college and career, and yet this reality existed. None had data regarding autism and DC/AP classes. However, when Amber mentioned the idea of partnerships involving college partners coming in to talk about accommodations and other resources that could support students, all counselors were amazingly interested, she shared.
- Implications for researchers are several. For one, dual credit has primarily centered on urban and suburban children; focusing on rural would be useful. Similarly, it would be beneficial to know how autistic students are being served. Duplicating and expanding this work is necessary.
- Practitioners need to employ targeted recruitment efforts. Student participants in this study were fortunate to have people close to them who oriented them about dual credit. Consequently, college and high school partnerships must unfold. College disability office representation at IEP/504 meetings would support students' transitions. Considering early college is worth looking at, too.

Q&A:

- Q: Xueqin asked about programs to support parents.
 - A: What Amber proposes is a partnership that would elevate parents' perspectives. As a college professor, she receives emails from "high-needs" parents who want to know about their children, though the law prohibits her from doing so. She understands they may need guidance. Consequently, there must be work in making their children more independent; they often don't receive training on this.
- Q: Bella: "How is dual enrollment different from AP courses or College Now courses?"
 - A: Dual enrollment is taught by college-certified and paid teachers whereas AP requires students to pass a test to get the college credit.
- Q: Jastyn asked if dual-enrollment is the same as "college credit plus."
 - A: Dual enrollment is taught by someone with at least a master's degree in the subject, though sometimes it's taught with a high school teacher who is paid by the college, though stays in the high school. It varies depending on context.
- Q: Xueqin asked "What is the benefit of taking AP test?"
 - A: They have been around longer, for one, and often entail giving of more points.

- Q: Jastyn asked about transferring credit over; she asked how much college credit that would amount to.
 - A: It depends on the college.
- Q: Xueqin asked about when students are told they cannot take a class because of what “level” they are at. How can those students be better prepared, and do they require certain qualifications?
 - A: For college classes, they must take a college entrance test that measures basic reading, writing, and math skills. Yet those may prove difficult, because there are no modifications to those tests.
- Q: June: “What future research are you hoping to do or see completed based on your findings so far?? Also what kind of initiatives to increase dual enrollment for students with autism would you like to see based on this research?”
 - A: Amber seeks to ask people in her college to institute a program that would support low-support students entering academic-credit classes. This cohort style would allow for familiarity among students across classes. There would be common lunches, games, and faculty training.
- Q: Brett asked about how parents can be better supporters of their children when sometimes they overstep boundaries.
 - A: Amber said more parents need to be told to let go. Parents need other parents to turn to as they experience this transition, perhaps monthly.
- Q: Jastyn asked about topics that would be useful in covering with parents (in the context of autism programs)
 - A: Focusing on daily living skills that students need to master before heading off to college is essential. Additionally, handling emotional regulation is useful.

Upcoming CANVAS Meetings

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

- Kayden Stockwell (Ph.D. Student, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia)
- Presentation Title: “I just had to figure out what I was doing and hope I was correct”:
Autistic young adults navigate higher education
- Description: To understand the University of Virginia's campus climate towards autistic students, we conducted interviews with the intention of providing feedback to the university on where supports have been working and recommendations on how they could be improved. As we examined the responses, we noticed many students shared experiences of not knowing about resources or difficulties in accessing resources. Here, we'll discuss the patterns of barriers that occurred across institutional, social, and sensory domains.

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.