

Full Spectrum Learning: Supporting Students with ASD in Higher Education

Gina L. Grogan, John R. McConnell III
Austin Peay State University
10/29/2015 – TASSR Conference 2015



The Topic

- Full Spectrum Learning is a new program at Austin Peay State University for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We will discuss the steps that were taken to develop this program and the practices and research involved.

The Problem

- Why is an autism initiative needed in the first place?
 - In 2014, an estimated 1 in 68 children were diagnosed with ASD. In 2000, that estimate was only 1 in 150.
 - As time passes, more students with ASD will be exiting the P-12 system, and many meet the requirements for higher education .

The Creation of Full Spectrum Learning

- Spring 2014
 - Idea “pitched” by interim provost and grants director
- Fall 2014
 - Focus group held to determine needs at APSU
- Spring 2015
 - Program planning begins
 - mentors chosen through application and interview process and a two day training was provided
- Summer 2015
 - Recruitment for program
 - Mentors name program Full Spectrum Learning (FSL)
- Fall 2015
 - Pilot program begins

Mission

- Full Spectrum Learning (FSL) is committed to helping students with Autism Spectrum Disorder embrace lifelong learning so that they can complete their college degree, transition into the workforce, and lead a successful life. By using a **student-driven, research-based, and results-oriented** method to drive decision-making, we strive to meet the academic, social, and independence needs of all participants. We see the potential in all of our students, and it is our ambition to increase **recruitment, retention, and engagement** as well as to nurture a culture of awareness and acceptance at APSU.

Mentors

- All participants are paired with a minimum of one peer mentor.
- Mentors have been trained on areas such as building rapport, goal setting, and ethics.
- Mentors have the option to participate in undergraduate research.
- Mentors chose the name for the program

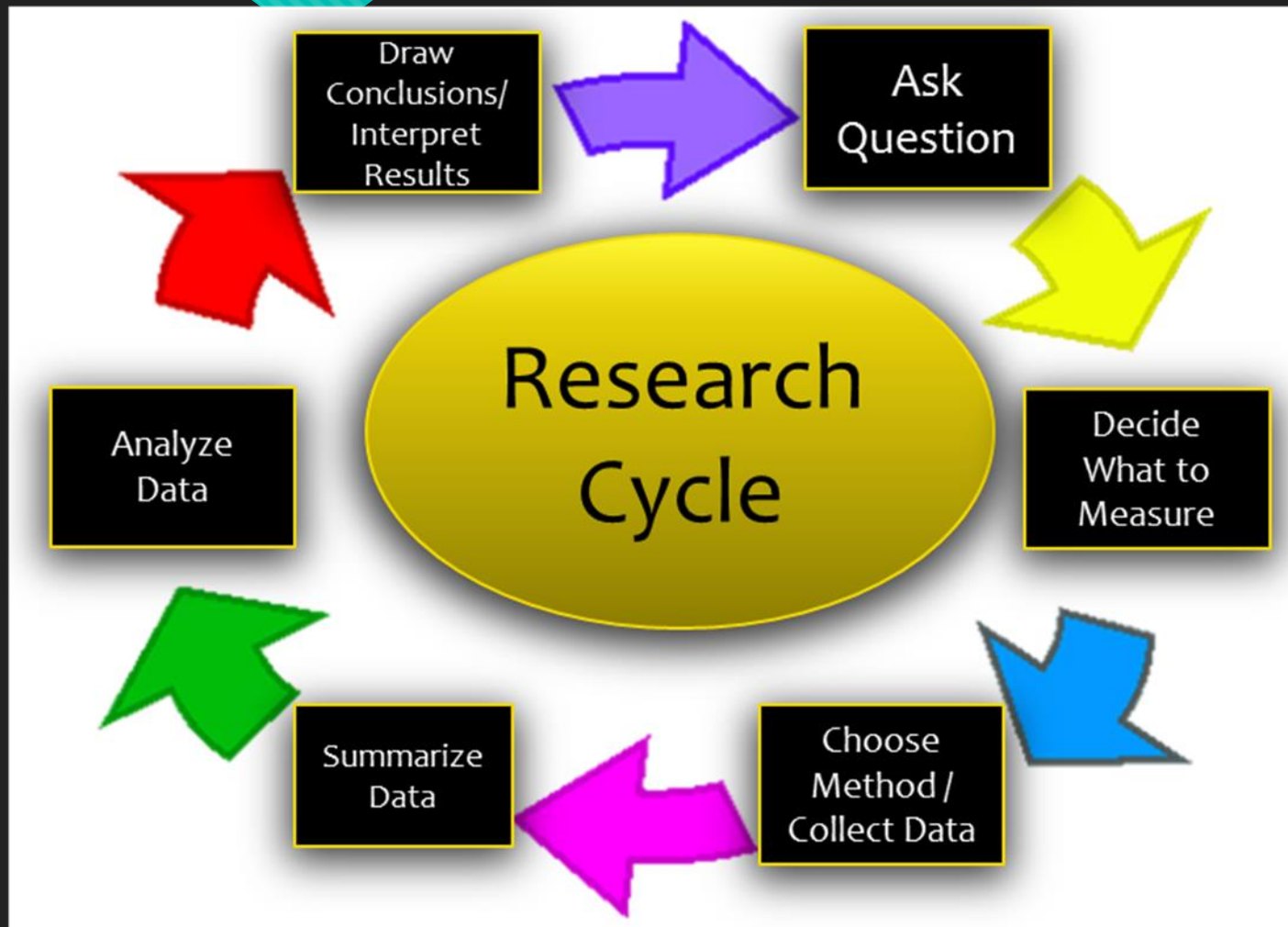
Tutors

- Tutors
 - All tutors work for the Academic Support Center on campus and have been through training on ASD.
 - Tutoring is offered one-on-one for any areas of need.

Participants

- Participants
 - Driving curriculum
 - Providing feedback on program components and needed components
 - Developing logo
 - Participants have the option to participate in undergraduate research

Program Evaluation and Improvement



- How do we know it's working?
- What can we do to improve the program?

Question

- Did the training that mentors and tutors receive help them feel more effective in working with students with ASD?

Survey
One

Training

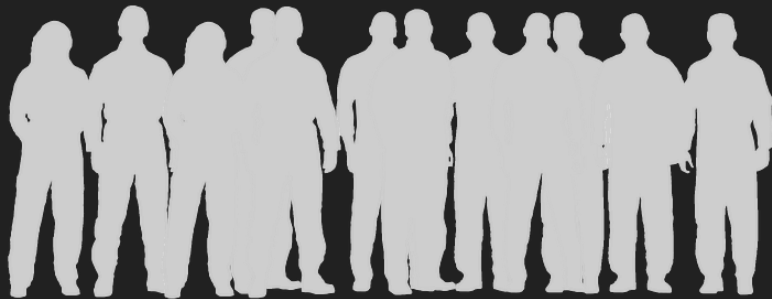
Survey
Two

Training

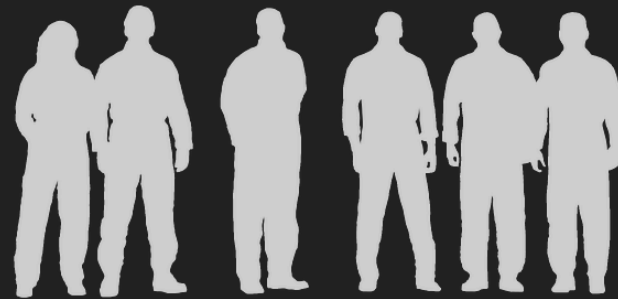
Survey
Three



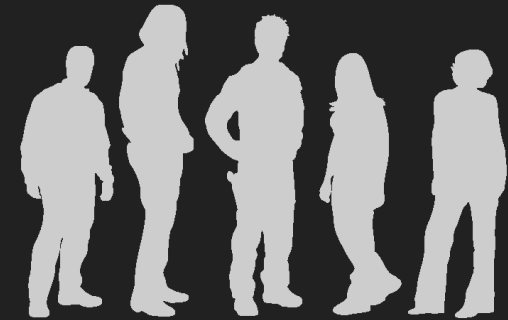
Sample



- 20 mentors and tutors interviewed



- 17 completed initial training



- 14 completed pre and post surveys

Survey

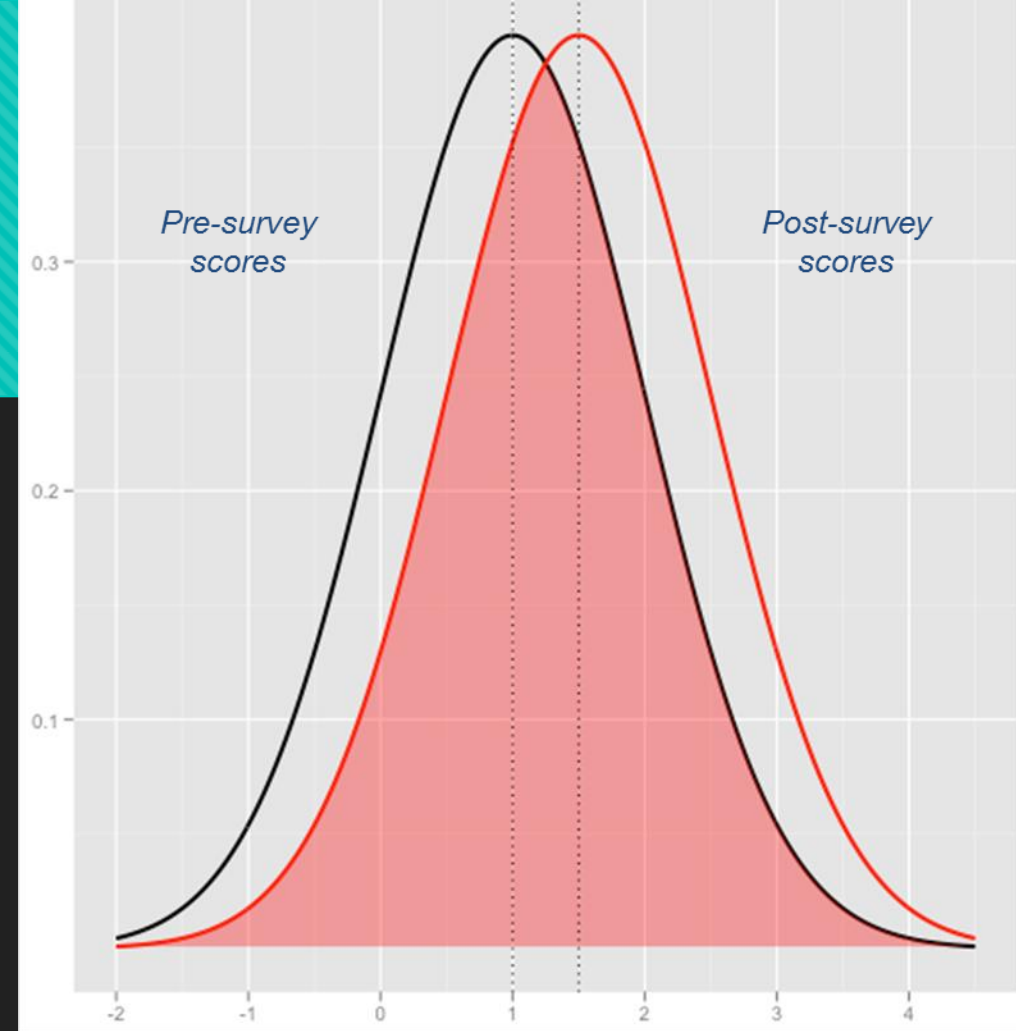
- We used an instrument adapted from the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale (Park, Dimitrov, Das, & Gichuru, 2014).

Mentor and Tutor Self-Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP)

	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree			
				SD	D	DS	SA	A	SA
1	I can provide a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., modified tests, performance-based assessment, etc.) for students with autism.		1	2	3	4	5	6	
2	I am able to provide an alternate explanation or example when students with autism are confused.		1	2	3	4	5	6	

Data Analysis

- A paired-samples t -test was conducted to compare pre and **postsurvey** self-efficacy scores.
- A statistically significant difference in the scores for presurvey ($M = 4.70, SD = .67$) and **postsurvey** ($M = 5.09, SD = .42$) conditions was found; $t(13) = -2.45, p = .029$.



Visualization* of Effect Size (Cohen's $d_z = .66$)
Medium Effect

*not to scale

Results



- These results suggested that the training did have an impact on mentoring and tutoring self-efficacy. Specifically, our results indicated that training elevated the self-efficacy of mentors and tutors in working with students with ASD.

Next Steps

- Effective Coaching Study (using direct measures of effectiveness)
- Empathy Study
- Others?

Effective Coaching Study

- There may be a difference between self-efficacy and the actual effectiveness of mentors and tutors.
- We will make direct measurements of effectiveness and investigate differences, if any, between the two constructs.
- By also examining the individualized goals and progress of mentees, we hope to improve the mentoring experience.

Empathy Study

- It is also important that students and faculty have empathy with those who are different from them.
- Using the La Monica Empathy profile by Rigolosi, this study seeks to inform program decisions on how to expand the empathy of those who work with individuals with ASD and advance the working relationships for all involved.

Questions/Comments

Gina Grogan

grogang@apsu.edu



John McConnell

mcconnellj@apsu.edu

THANKS
FOR
COMING!

AP Austin Peay
State University

THE CHRONICLE
2014 GREAT
COLLEGES
TO WORK FOR®