

## Project A+ Overview

Florida State University's School of Information conducted a research study, Project A+, in order to provide evidence-based strategies for libraries who serve those on the autism spectrum.

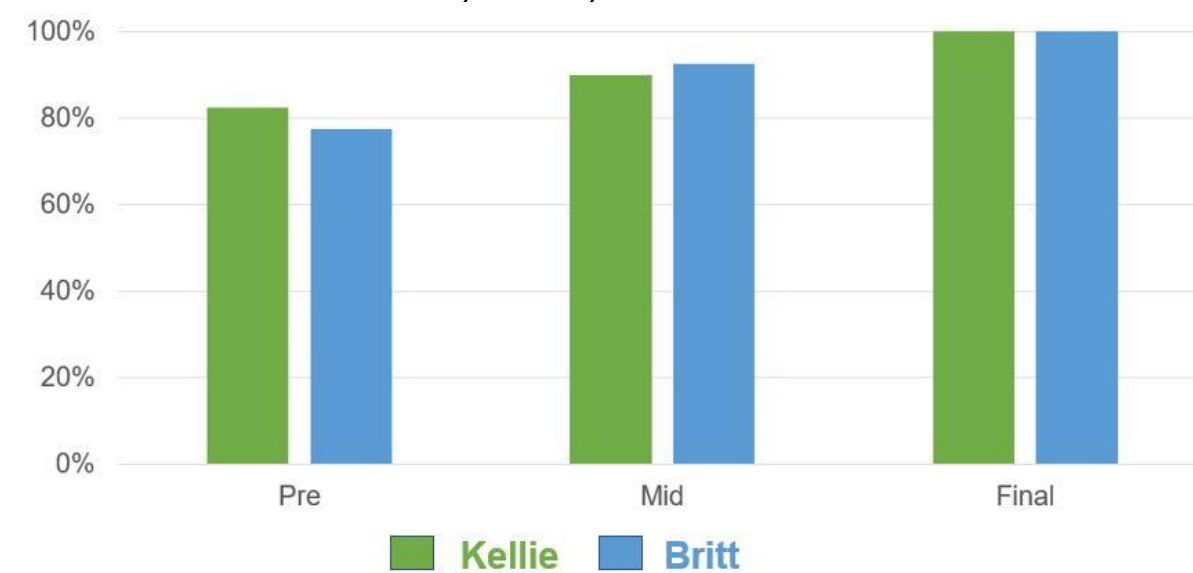
The project included:

- Training for serving students with ASD for academic librarians across multiple campuses
- Interviews with students with ASD on their experiences in the participating libraries
- Recommendations for academic libraries

## Project A+: Results

University of West Florida Librarians who participated in Project A+ committed to take an online training course created by Florida State University.

### Serving Users on the Autism Spectrum: Project PALS Online Training Librarians Pre-, Mid-, and Post Test Results



### Students with ASD & the Library

Students with ASD expressed that the library could be a great escape from busy campus life, a safe space to be social, but they could be confused by the (dis)organization of the library.



## Project A+ Recommendations for Libraries

### Provide Clear Signage

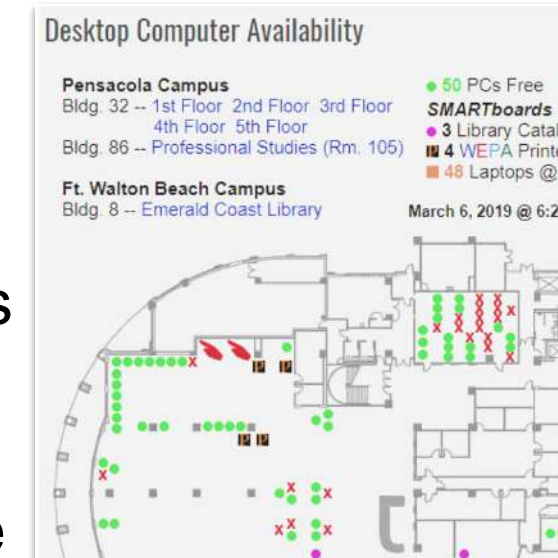
Conduct an inventory. Ensure library signage is clear and free of jargon.

Current Signage:	Can be Replaced with...
Circulation	Checkouts and Returns
Book Drop	Return Books Here
Reference	Research Help



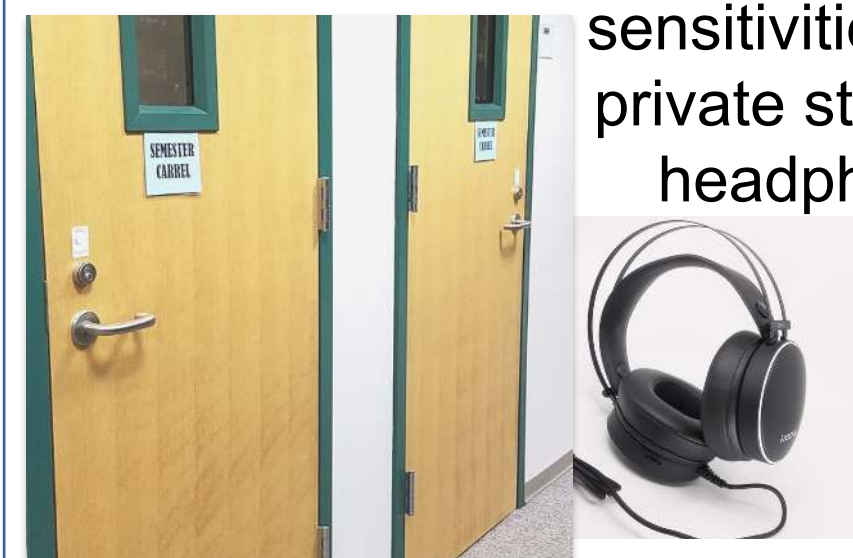
### Facilitate Preparation

Help students know what to expect when coming to the library with computer availability maps on the website or sending out a library instruction outline in advance



### Designate Quiet Spaces

Provide spaces and services that assist students who have sensitivities to sound like private study carrels and headphone check-out.



### Supply Tools to Self-Soothe

Stim or fidget tools, and Fit Desks, help lessen sensory overload for students



### Key Takeaways

**Visual:** use clear signage/maps, create visual boundaries, use subdued lighting

**Auditory:** provide quiet spaces and designate with signage, check out headphones

**Emotional:** allow preparation of what to expect by updating the website, providing course outlines, and allowing students into the library during “off-times.”

### Project A+ @ UWF Library

**What we're doing right:** Designated quiet spaces, FitDesks, headphone checkout, helpful website with hours and computer availability map

**What we could improve:** less jargon on signage, provide workshop outline beforehand, softer lighting

**What we've done since:** Partnered with SAR on their ASD Early Arrival Program; given a training workshop to library staff.

## ASD Early Arrival Program @ UWF

The two-day Early Arrival Program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) offers the opportunity for incoming freshman and transfer students to be acclimated to campus life prior to the first day of fall classes.

This program was developed through collaborating and forming partnerships on campus for student success.



Title IX Session



UWF Recreation

### UWF Program Presenters

Housing and Independent Living  
Student Involvement  
Academic Success  
Healthy Habits  
Sleep and Hygiene

University Police  
UWF Libraries  
Career Development  
Rules and Compliance  
Title IX

Student Accessibility Resources and Center for Behavior Analysis partnered together to offer the Early Arrival program for students on the Autism Spectrum, offering skills to help them succeed in the transition to university life, navigate the campus, and meet new friends. 2019 will be the 3rd year for the program. (web: [uwf.edu/sar](http://uwf.edu/sar))

## UWF Next Steps

- Create small team of library staff to work through the Project A+ Manual and make recommendations
- Continuously improve campus programs and ASD awareness
- Continue to strengthen campus partnerships



## Contact

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## References

1. Everhart, N., Woods, J. & Anderson, A. (2018). *Project A+: Serving students with autism spectrum disorder in the academic library*. Retrieved from [http://purl.flib.org/fsu/fd/FSU\\_libsubv1\\_scholarship\\_submission\\_1524754052\\_db70ce00](http://purl.flib.org/fsu/fd/FSU_libsubv1_scholarship_submission_1524754052_db70ce00)
2. University of West Florida ASD Early Arrival Program. (2019). Retrieved from <https://uwf.edu/academic-engagement/departments/student-accessibility-resources/argos-for-autism/asd-early-arrival-program/>