

UConn

Neurodivergence in STEM and the Arts

I assisted Liam McDermott and Professor Erin Scanlon over the summer with their research paper, “Investigating the ways neurodivergent STEM undergraduate students learn and perform – A Systematic Literature Review” along with another fellow student, Ery Biyikli. Our duties were

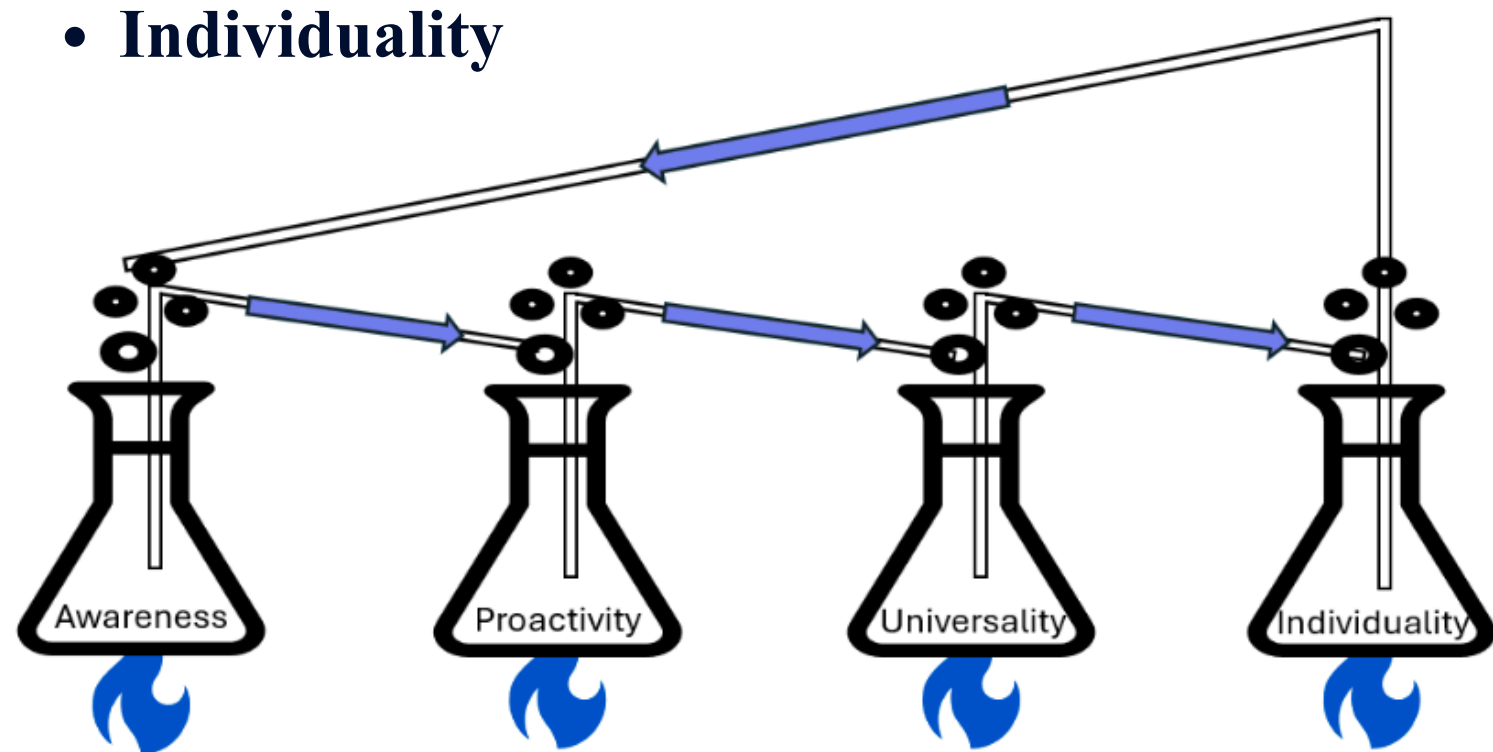
- Positionality statements
- Look at the results of student interviews.
- Research scholarly articles found by the team and find recommendations and/or resources that would best fit the needs of students.
- Learn coding- processing data to identify patterns

Neurodivergents in STEM

We interviewed neurodivergent physics undergraduates at the University of Connecticut with hopes to find beneficial ways to support them in their pursuits of higher education.

4 Key Themes of Recommendations

- **Awareness**
- **Proactivity**
- **Universality**
- **Individuality**



Neurodivergents in the Theatre

An additional project I am currently working on with Liam McDermott, “Analyzing Neurodivergent Representation in Theatre through Three Case-Studies” is a paper that discusses current representation of neurodivergent characters within theatre. These characters have either been canonically diagnosed by the playwright or have characteristics that neurodivergent audiences can relate to.

Three Cases

- **Ricky Potts (Ride the Cyclone)**
- **Orpheus (Hadestown)**
- **Chrisopher (The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night-Time)**

All of these representations demonstrate the variety of neurodivergent people. Variety defeats harmful stereotypes of neurodivergence. It is a spectrum in which no two people are the same.

Discoveries Within the Second Paper “Analyzing Neurodivergent Representation in Theatre through Two Case-Studies”

- Anatomy of good neurodivergent representation
- Avoid alienation
- Need authenticity
- Diversity model (characters have value).
- Give sources for neurodivergent representation
- Take on their perspective
- Investigate the mechanisms of how neurodivergent students learn in STEM classes and the non-normative ways that neurodivergent students do STEM (e.g., solve problems, do research, concept map).

