

# Addressing Physical Space Needs of Neurodivergent Students

Mary Francis  
mary.francis@dsu.edu

<https://scholar.dsu.edu/kmlpapers/16/>



## Setting the Stage

- Dakota State University (2,173 FTE)
- Madison, SD
- Technology focus
- Increasing number of students seeking accommodations
- Campus training on serving neurodivergent students



## Setting the Stage

- Library wants to support students
- No discussions on physical space needs of students
- Library mostly open space
- Took data from the literature and students



# Space design

|                      | Mostafa (2014) | Truong (2018) | Tola, et al (2021) | Black, et al (2022) |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Acoustics            | X              | X             | X                  | X                   |
| Spatial sequencing   | X              | X             | X                  |                     |
| Escape               | X              |               |                    |                     |
| Compartmentalization | X              |               |                    | X                   |
| Transition spaces    | X              |               | X                  |                     |
| Sensory Zoning       | X              |               |                    |                     |
| Safety               | X              |               |                    |                     |
| Lighting             |                | X             |                    | X                   |
| Decluttering         |                | X             | X                  | X                   |
| Flexibility          |                | X             |                    | X                   |
| Predictability       |                |               | X                  |                     |



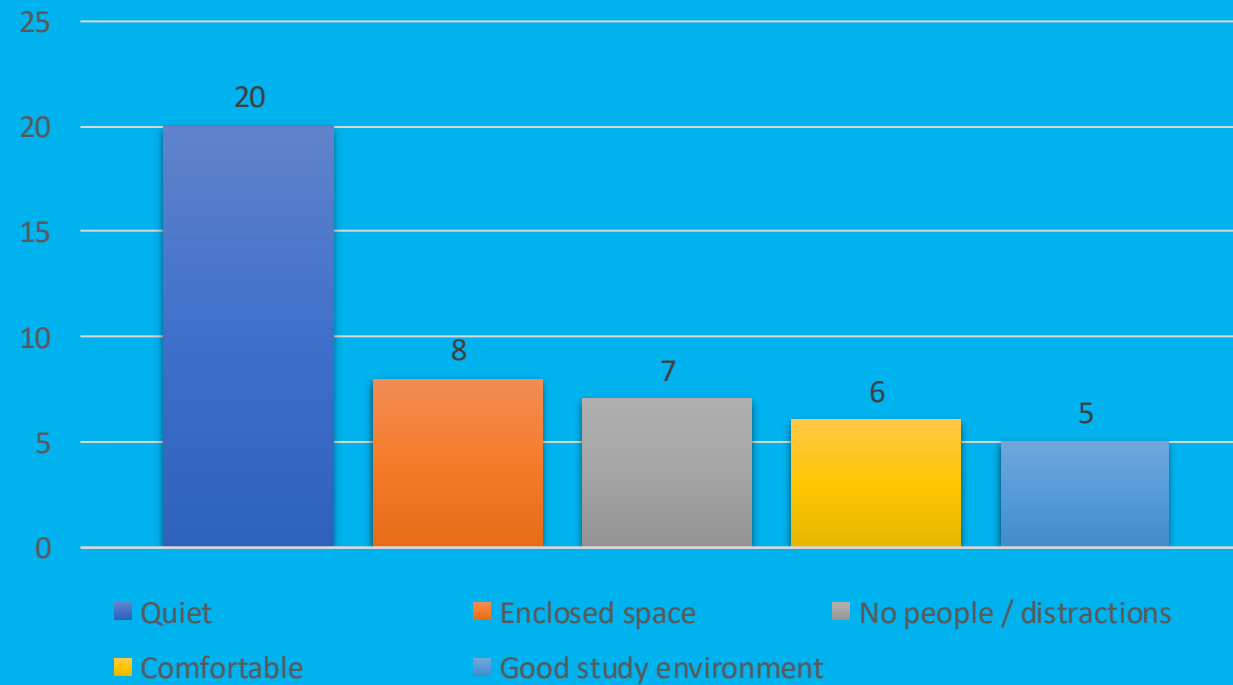
## Needs Survey

- Sent to 105 students – 35 completed
- Population of sample: students requesting accommodations
- 5 open ended questions



# Needs Survey

## Features of good study locations





## Study pods

- Quiet – sound dampening
- Enclosed space – booth
- No people/distractions – individual
- Comfortable – flexible sit / stand
- Good study environment – focus on task
- No distractions – clean design



## Acknowledgements

Funding for this project came from the ALA Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Libraries Grant



# Purchased pod





# Single pods





# Double pod





# Adjustable desk heights





# Dimmable lights





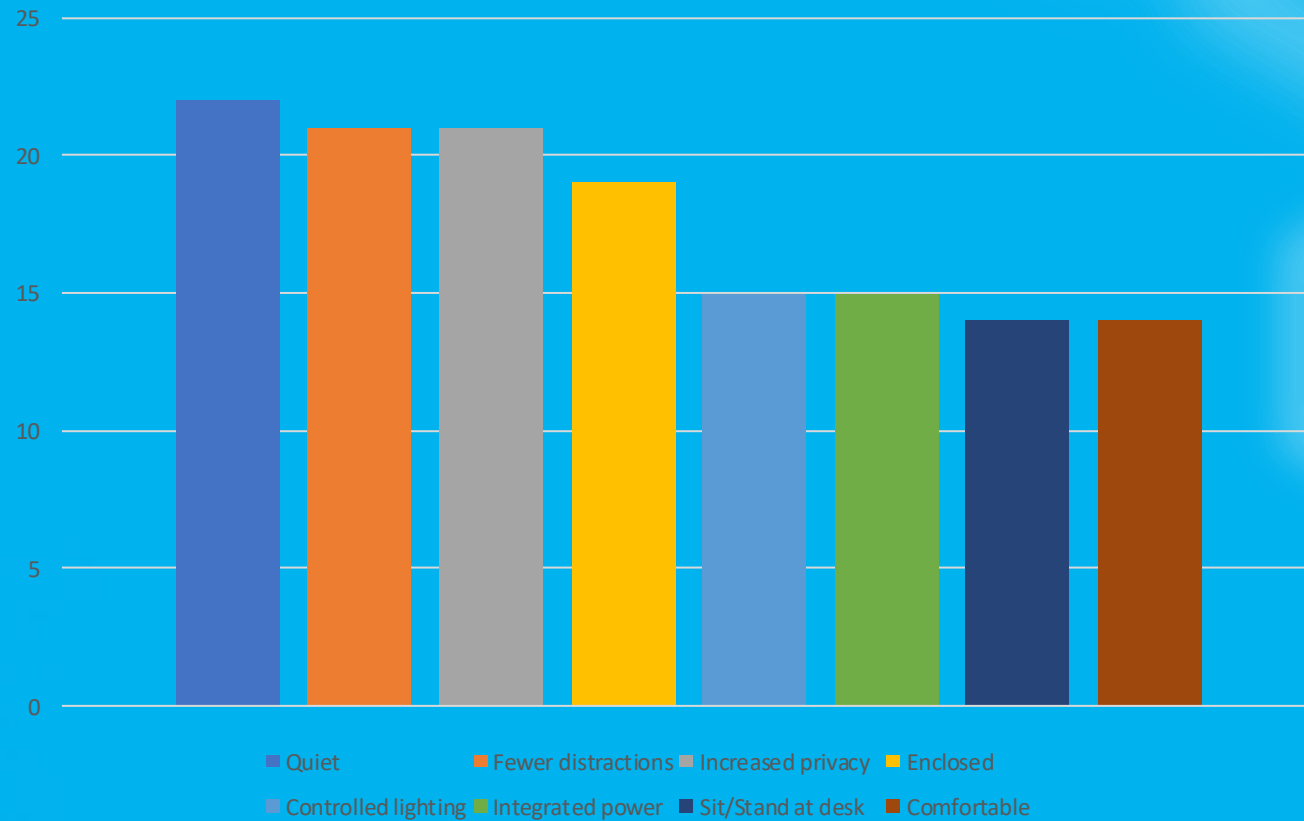
# Tactile stickers





# Pod Feedback

## Features liked by students





## Connections through research – needs – usage

- Acoustics – Quiet - Quiet
- Escape – Enclosed space – Privacy
- Declutter – No distractions – Fewer distractions



## Concerns / Wishlist

- Only 3 pods
- Limited chair options
- Small space for some individuals



## Moving forward

- Study rooms in library renovation
  - Lighting, sound, flexible furniture
- Quiet and dim lighting spaces
- Low or enclosed seating options