



Disability
Student
Voice



DELYSE CLAYDEN
— ADVOCACY —

Facilitating Autistic Student voice in Reasonable adjustments

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ECU Internal Information



Acknowledgement of Country



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Autistic Student Voice in Reasonable Adjustments



Participants

14 children aged
between 5 and
12 years old.



The education experience of the participants varied from:

Education

- *Education Support Centres*
- *General schooling Classes*
- *Homeschooling*
- *Alternative Schooling Options*





Settings

The participants completed the 4 activities in different settings:

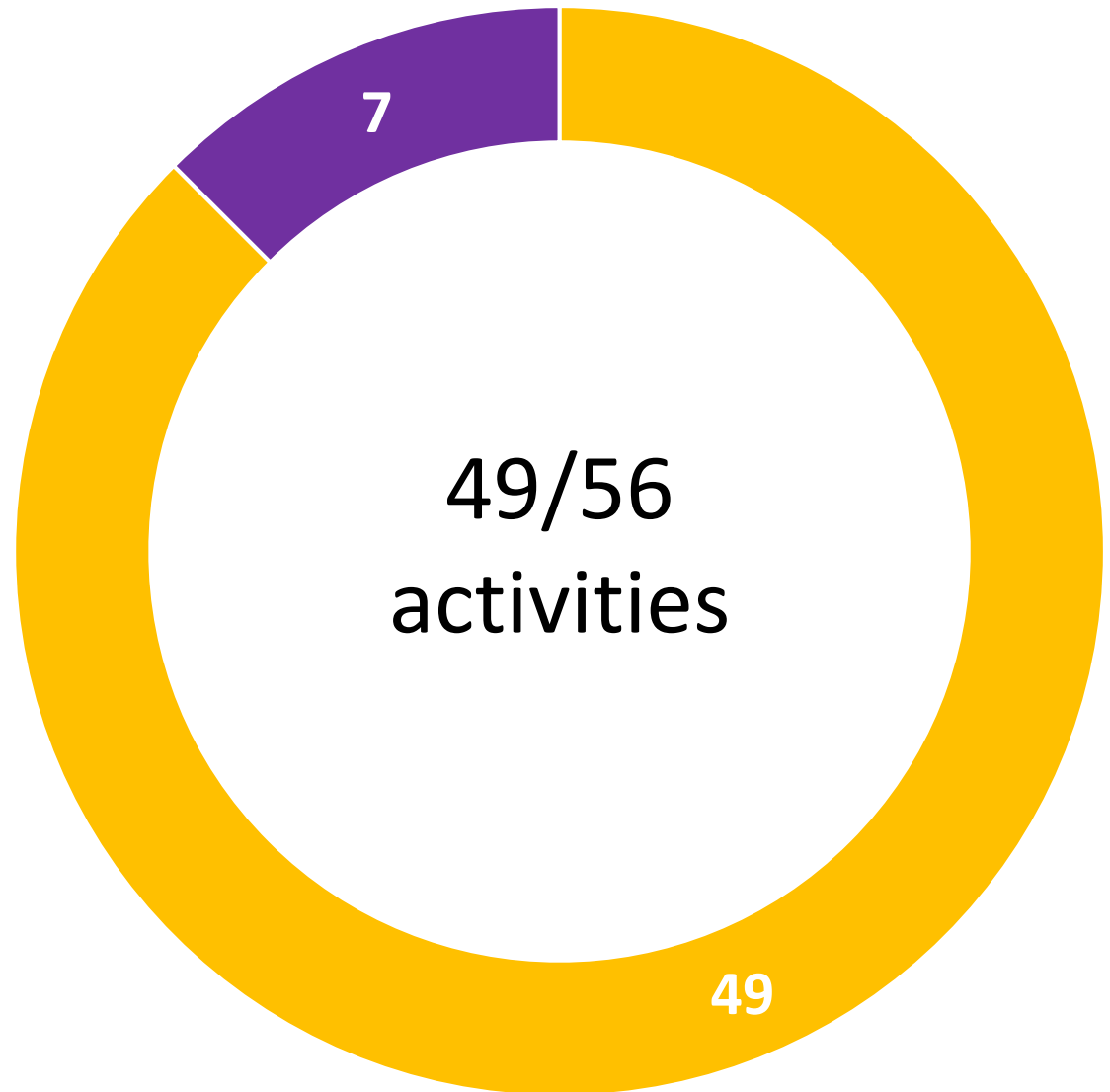
- in a group setting on campus
- with a sibling
- one on one with the facilitator



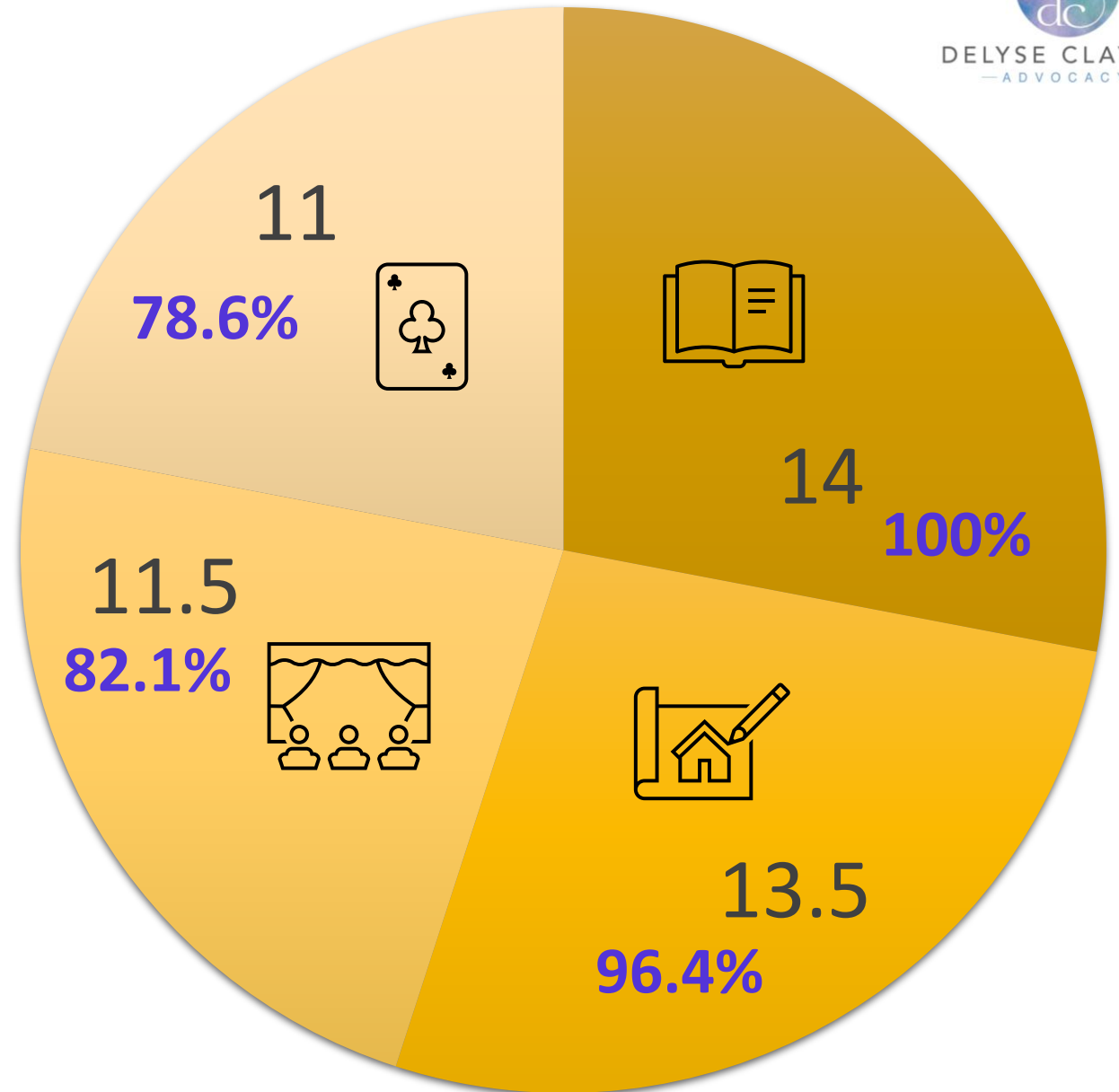
87.5%

Activity
Participation

Participants completed a
total of **49/56** opportunities.



Activity participation

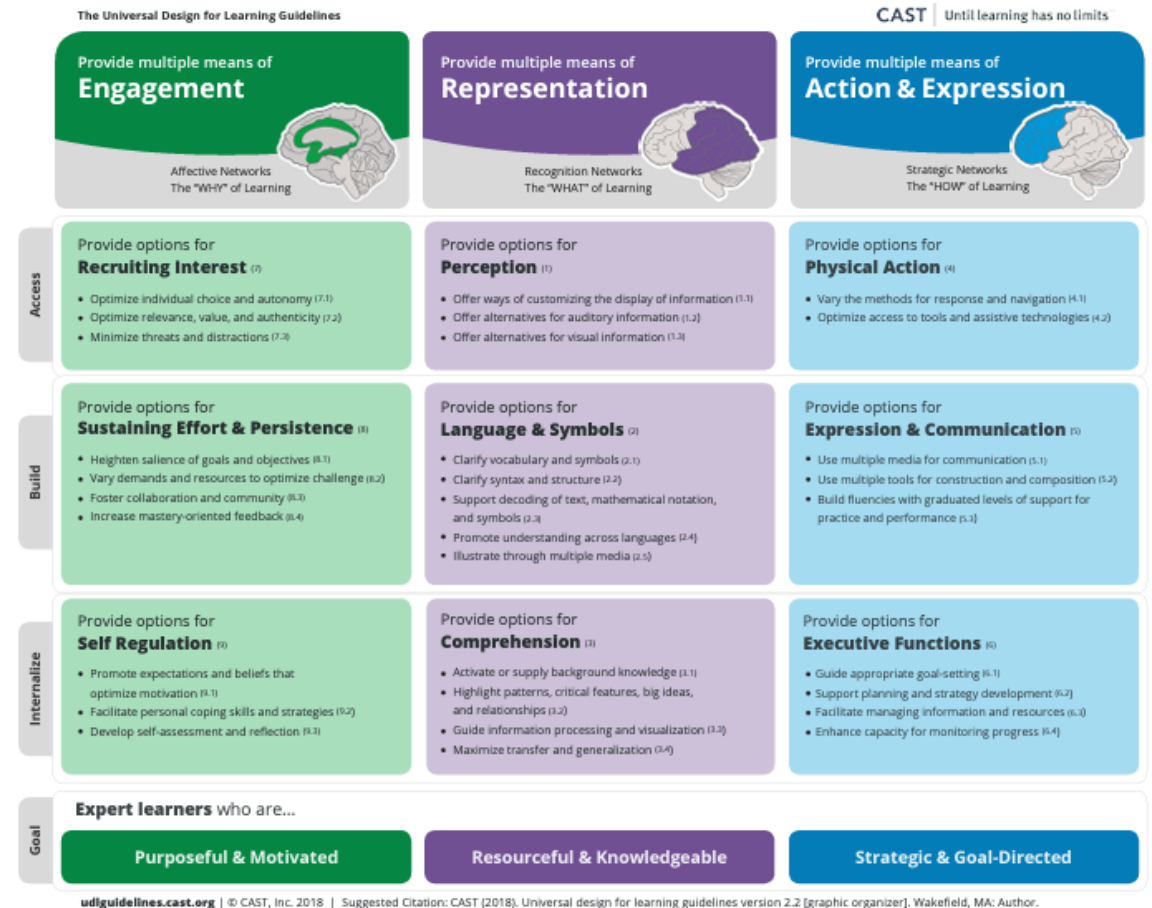


	Direct	Prompted	Mediated
Description	Pupils are asked directly for their views in talk or writing	A stimulus is used to 'prompt' pupils to express their views	Pupils express their views through art, photography or drama and then talk about what they wanted to communicate
Tools	▶ Questionnaires ▶ Conversations ▶ Discussions ▶ Interviews ▶ Posting views in boxes ▶ Logs	▶ Sentence completion ▶ Video replay of extracts from a lesson ▶ Photos of different contexts for learning ▶ Other material that invites comparison ▶ Data from completed questionnaires	▶ Drawings and paintings ▶ Photographs ▶ Making a video ▶ Posters ▶ Role-play

MacBeath et al., 2003.

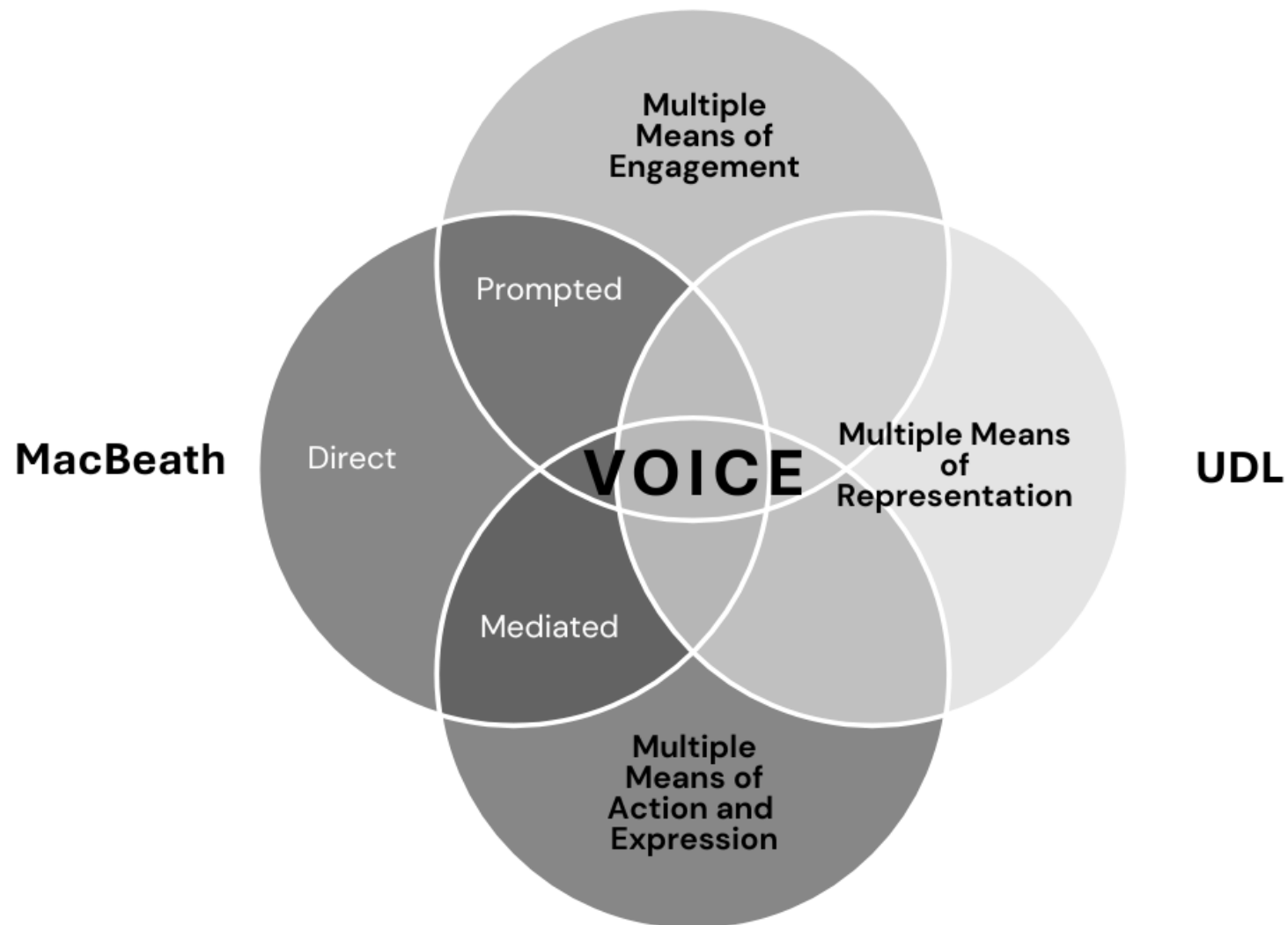
Delyse Clayden Advocacy featuring the VOLUME - Disability
Student Voice program
ECU Internal Information

Research basis



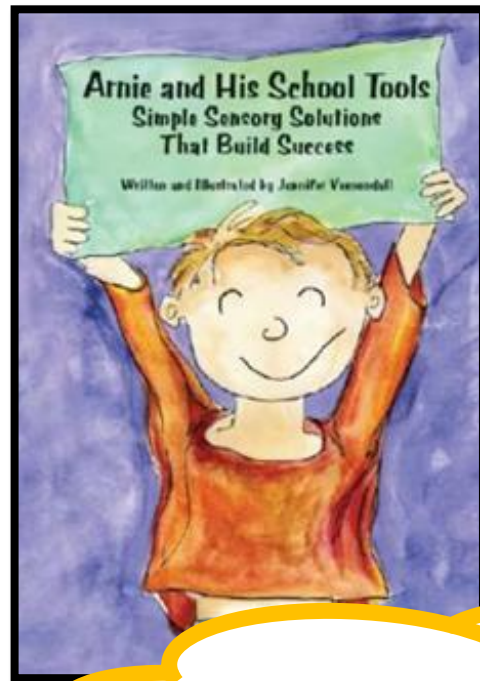
CAST, 2024.

Consultation Taxonomy



Research basis

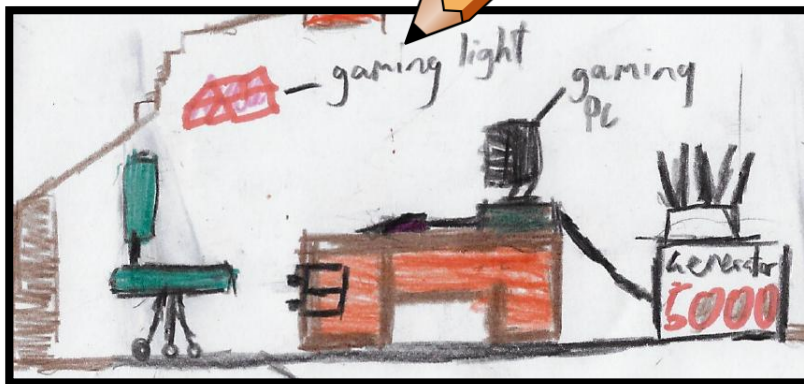
Book



Card
sorting



Drawing



THE ACTIVITIES

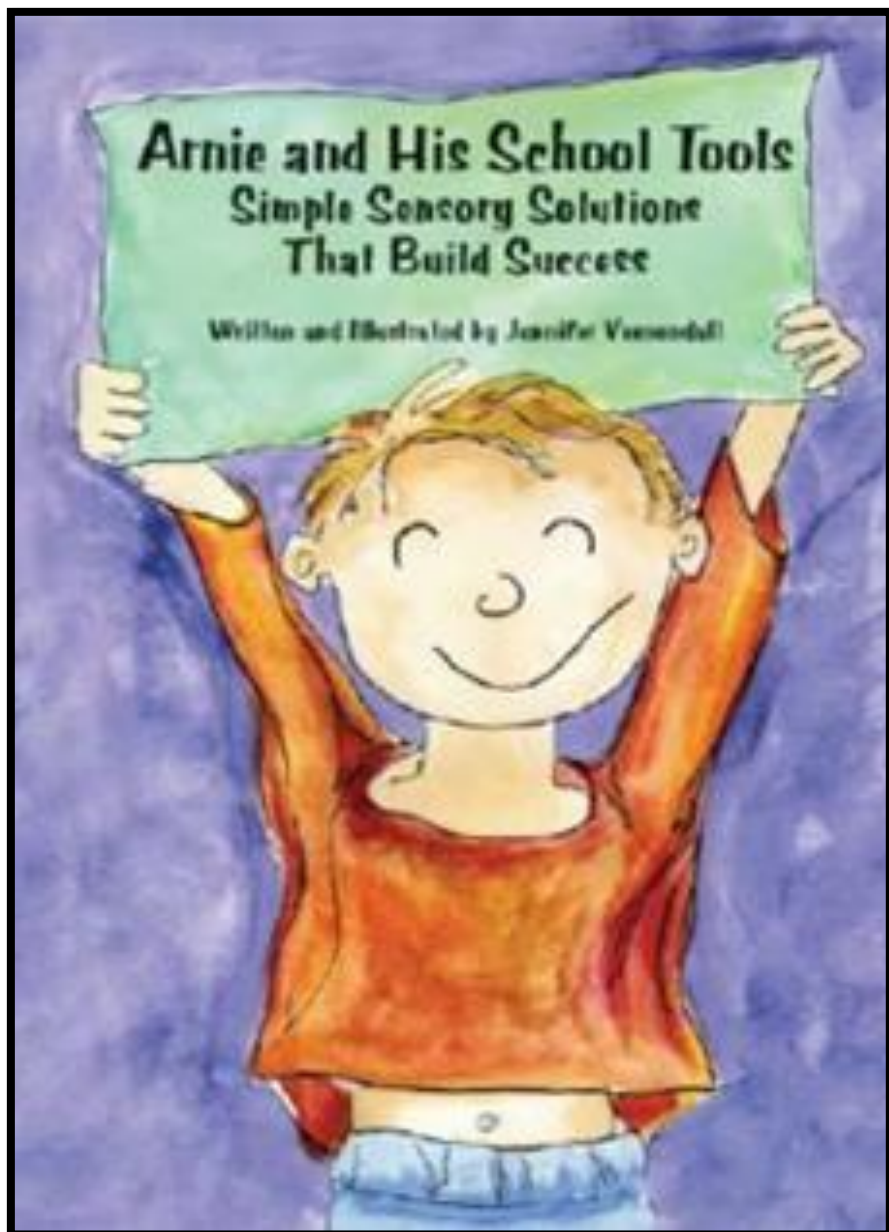
Role -
play



In their own words



Autistic Students Voice in Reasonable Adjustments



Book

**115 responses
overall**



Top



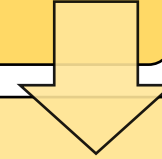
Assemblies

11



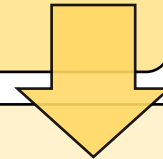
Wobble stools and cushions

10



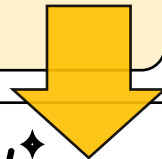
Weighted Blankets

8



Headphones – Music

8



Headphones – Noise cancelling

7



Books in practice



Autistic Students Voice in Reasonable Adjustments



Desks (10)



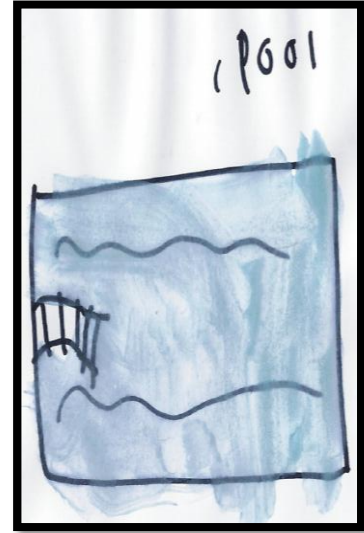
Teacher desk (9)



TV (6)



Slide (5)



Pool (5)

Drawing

117 responses overall

54 different responses



Drawing/Craft in practice



Autistic Students Voice in Reasonable Adjustments

Role Play



74 responses



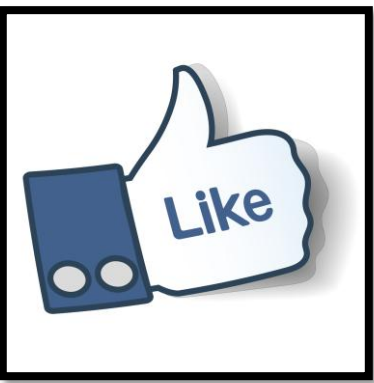
- Dressing the dolls was the most common action – it elicited discussion on wearing uniforms.
- Placing the miniature books on the shelves and in the cupboard was very popular!
- Having a mat area was popular too.



Role Play in practice



Autistic Students Voice in Reasonable Adjustments



228 Likes



110 dislikes



96 Unsure



Card sort

434 responses



Card sort in practice



Autistic Students Voice in Reasonable Adjustments

So what?



DOES IT TELL US ANYTHING?

Autistic students can have Voice in their own reasonable adjustments

**740
responses**



So yes, They can have a say but...



WHAT DID THEY WANT US TO KNOW?

Our results



107 different
reasonable adjustments
were discussed over the
4 activities.

6 categories emerged.

Movement/Breaks was
the top category chosen.



Top category
31.5%

MOVEMENT/BREAKS ADJUSTMENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
|  MUSIC/
DANCING |  TRAMPOLINE |
|  COLD WATER |  CRAFTS/DRAWING
OR PAINTING |
|  BASKETBALL
COURT |  CONCERT AREA |
|  FREE FOOD
STALLS |  HEAVY WORK |
|  OVAL OR
WALK |  SQUEEZE
HANDS |
|  MOVEMENT
BREAKS |  XBOX/PS5/
GAMING |
|  TOYS OR
READ |  PRODIGY/MINE
CRAFT |
|  TAKE SHOES
OFF |  WATER PARK |
|  BALL PIT OR
PLAYGROUND |  COMFORT AREA |
|  TUNNEL OR
STRETCH |  FREETIME OR
ACTIVE TIME |
|  DOING A JOB |  SLIDE |
|  HUGS |  POOL/THERMAL |
|  DON'T GO
STRAIGHT
INTO
LEARNING |  BOUNCE A
BALL |



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Second
category
24.8%

SEATING/CLASSROOM/DESKS

- | | |
|---|---|
|  GYM BALL |  SAFE ROOM |
|  WEAPONS ROOM |  ART ROOM |
|  EA DESK |  TEACHER DESK |
|  WORK AREAS |  CAN'T SIT STILL |
|  SINGLE DESK |  STANDING |
|  COUCH/
ARMCHAIR |  FRIENDS |
|  GROUP WORK |  CHAIRS OR MAT |
|  TABLE/DESKS
- VARIOUS |  GROUP DESKS |
|  SEATING
OPTIONS |  BEANBAG OR
CUSHIONS |
|  WOBBLE
CUSHION |  POOL/THERMAL |
|  CHANGE IN
CLASS
NUMBERS |  ALTERNATIVE
TO CROSSED
LEGS |

Third
category
20.7%

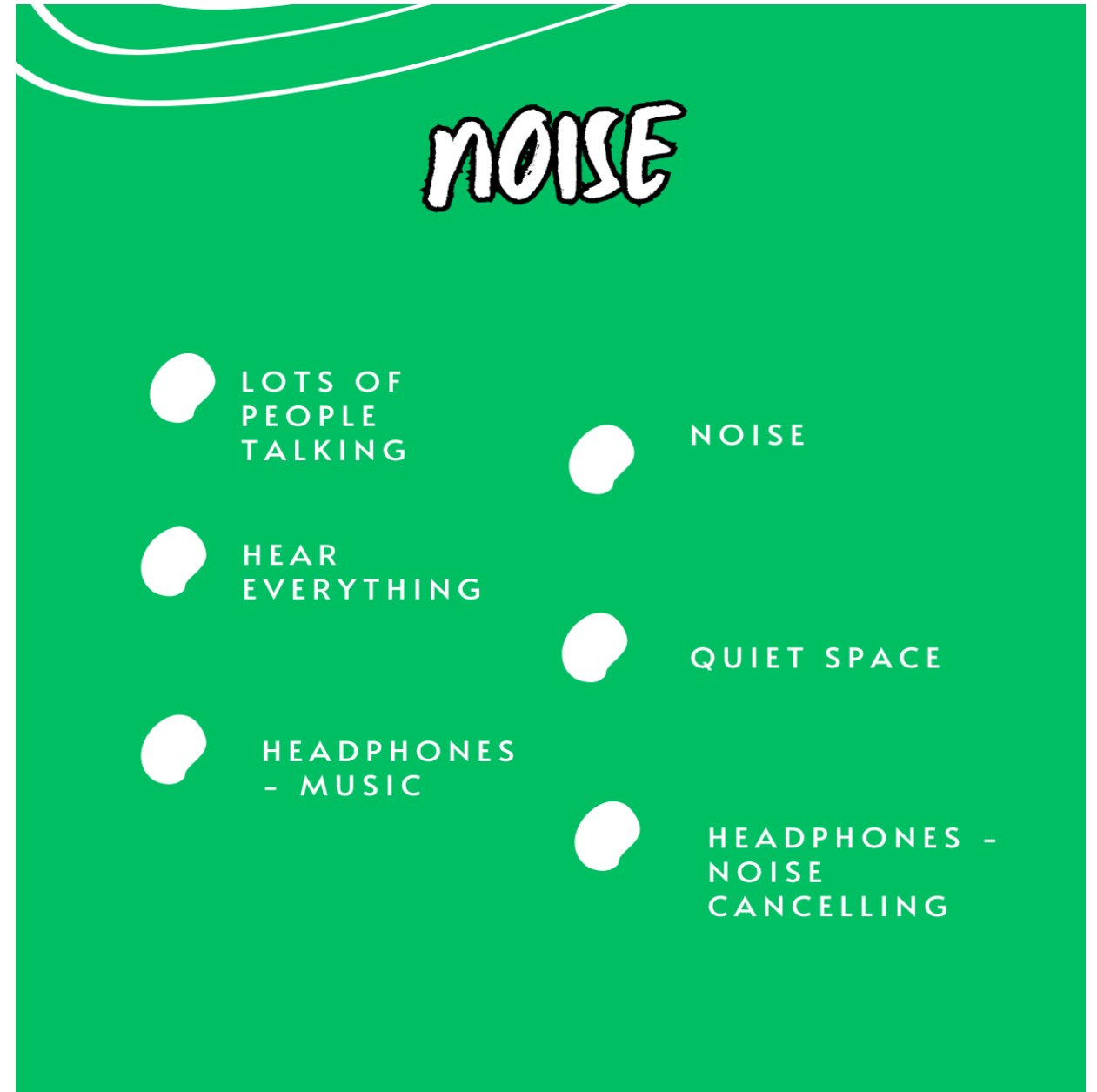
LEARNING/EQUIPMENT

- DECORATIONS / POSTERS
- NEED REMINDERS
- GREENERY OR STATUE
- BOOKS OR PUZZLES
- WINDOWS AND DOORS
- TISSUE BOXES/HAND SANITISER
- WIFI
- AAC
- CLOCK
- COMPUTER FOR TEACHER
- PENCIL POTS
- FIRST-THEN
- TIMETABLES
- ZOR OR HELP
- TV OR NETFLIX
- LEGO
- PHONES
- WHITEBOARDS - INDIVIDUAL OR ELECTRONIC
- WHOLECLASS MOVEMENT BREAKS
- EXTRA TIME
- STORY DOGS/PETS
- LAPTOP/ COMPUTER/ IPAD

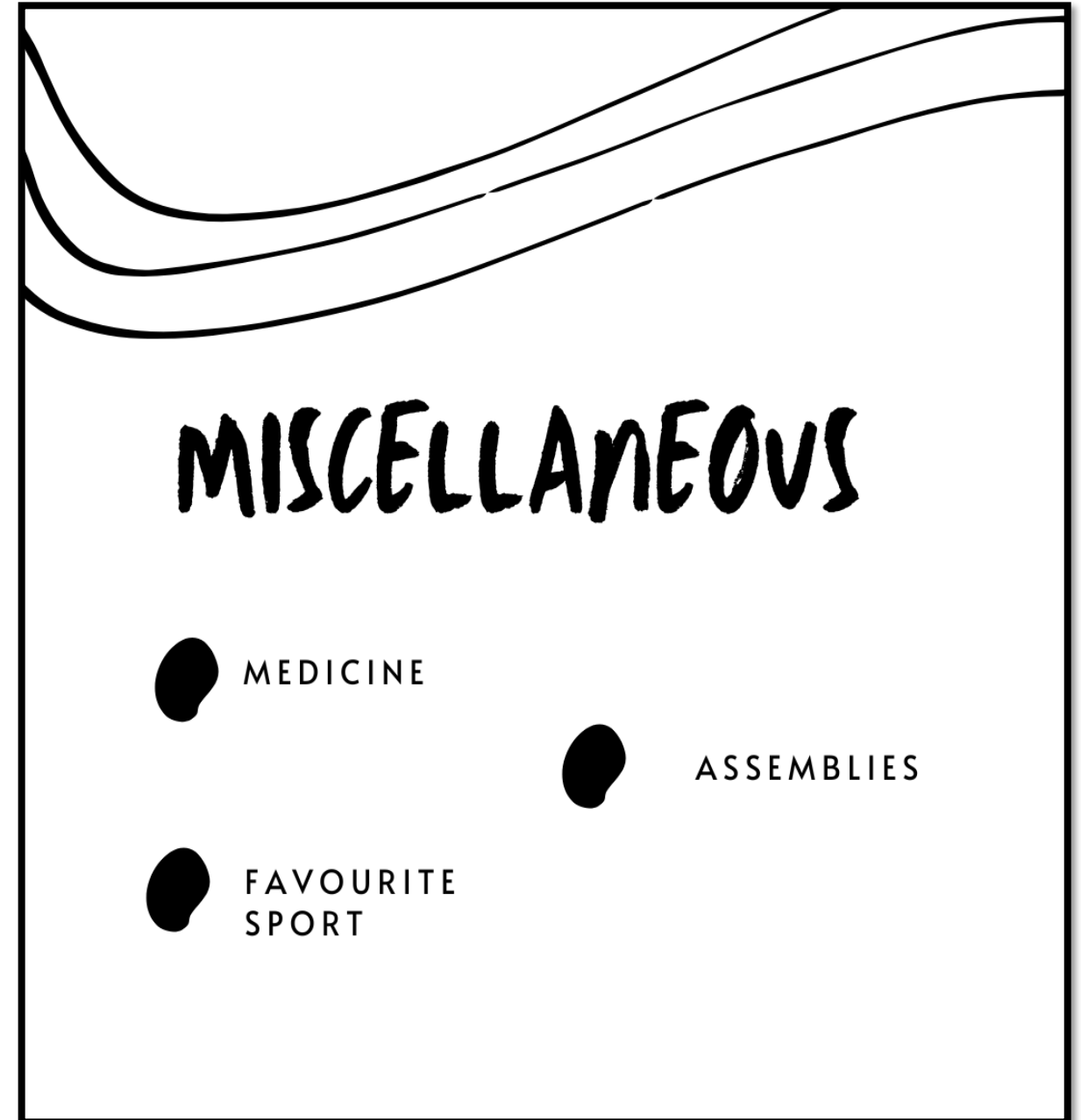
Fourth
category
13.1%



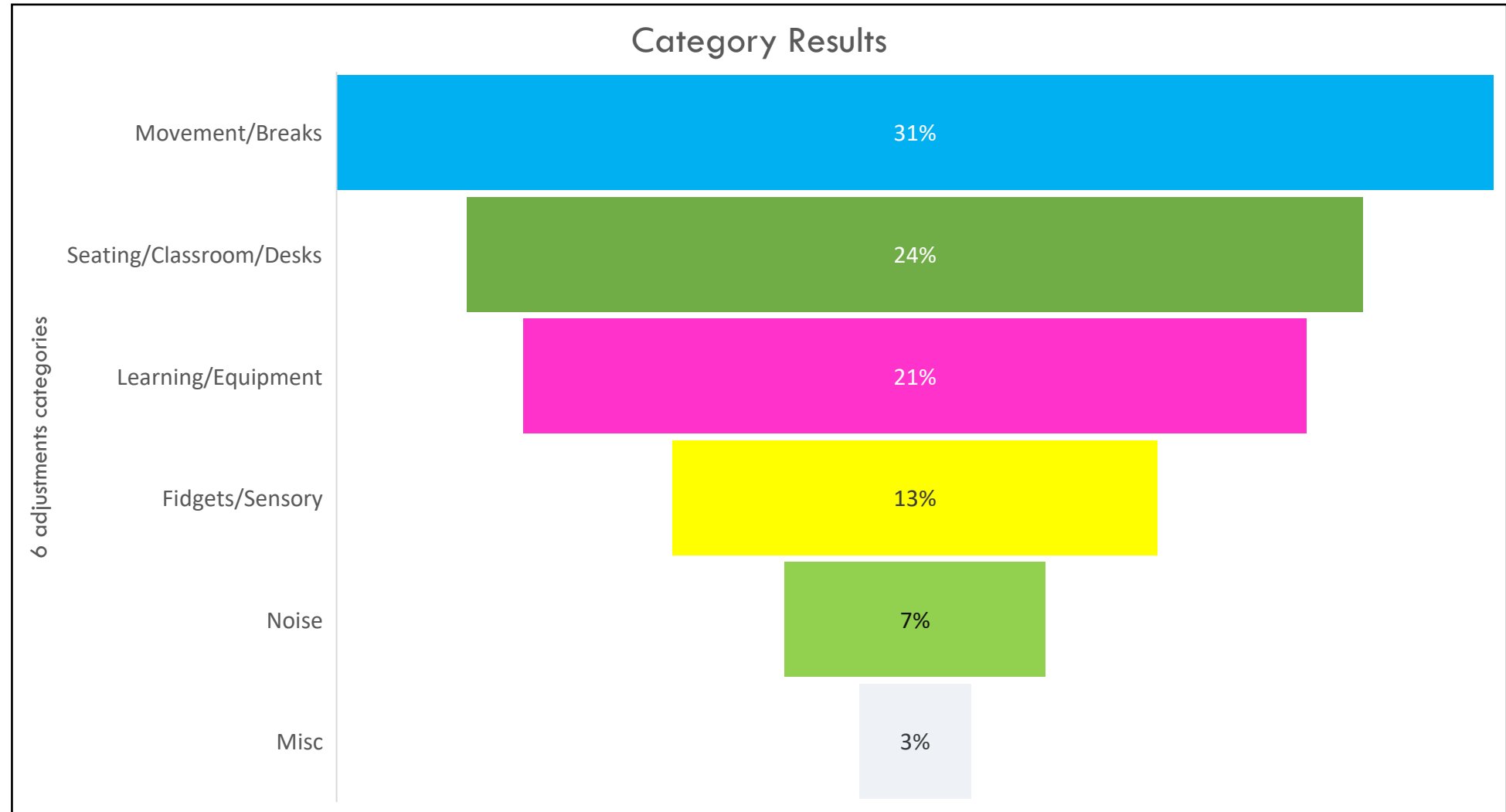
Fifth
category
6.9%



Sixth
category
2.7%



The results



In summary



Autistic Students Voice in Reasonable Adjustments

In summary

- Card sorting elicited the most responses (434) however it was the least participated in activity.
 - it was fast to complete and can be adapted with the options, however, is best done in small groups or individually.



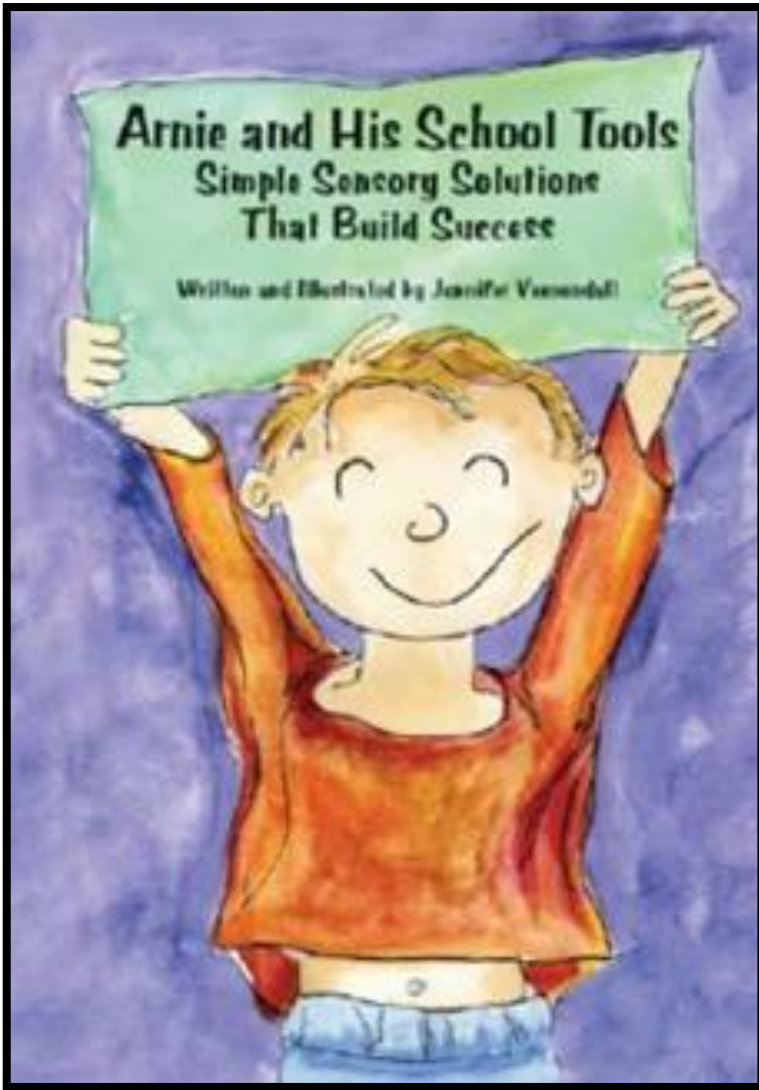
In summary



- Role – Play elicited the least number of responses (74) and required a more substantial amount of time to complete.

-Roleplay promoted unique conversations that were not discussed during other activities. It requires one or two players at a time, unless presented on a larger scale.

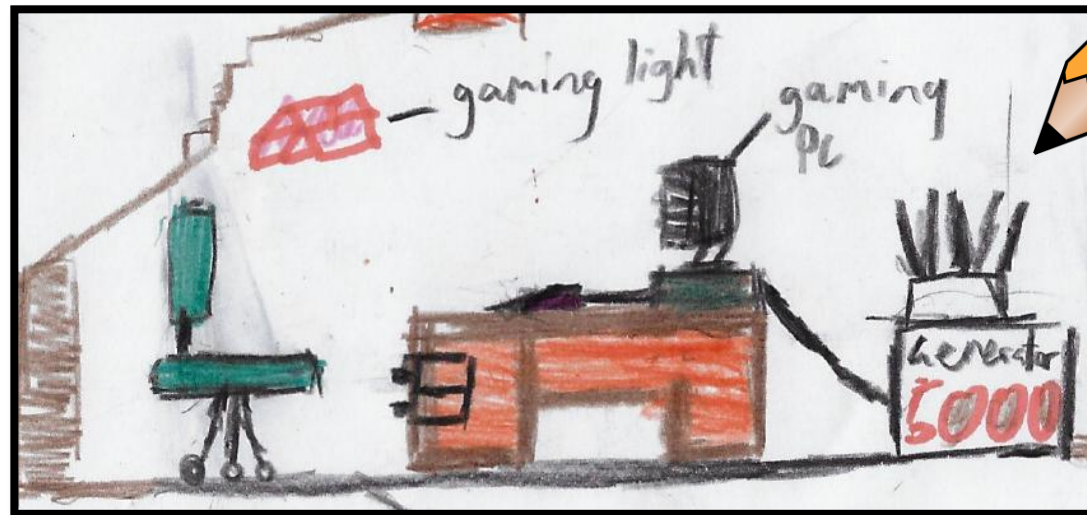
In summary



- The book was the most participated in activity and elicited 115 responses which is an average of approximately 8 responses per participant.
 - it is possible to share as a whole class, one on one or in small groups and has the most flexibility in presentation.

In summary

- The drawing activity was popular and elicited 117 responses.
 - having options in how they create the classroom, such as painting and drawing assisted in the personalisation of the task. This task required more time to complete however, and could be done as a whole class, small group or one on one.



In reflection



Autistic Students Voice in Reasonable Adjustments



The VOLUME program

<https://www.volume-disabilityadvocacy.au/>



The V in VOLUME

VOICE

This concept began through my work as an education advocate. The first thing I usually ask parents and schools is: *Have you asked the child what will work for them?*

It is shocking how often the answer is no. But student voice goes beyond simply asking an opinion - voice needs to be used to implement change. It needs to be actioned, not just heard. And voice is more than only verbal communication. Time for us to recognise verbal and non-verbal communication

VOLUME
Disability Student Voice

The O in VOLUME

Opportunity

Opportunity refers to the continued chance to have a say in their education, not just through the VOLUME program initial activities. We want to be the start of your journey into student voice, but to also help you develop ongoing consultation opportunities throughout the school year and school community.

How do students give classroom or lesson feedback? How do they comment on school policies and events? How do they help plan for the future of the school? These are long term systems that we need.

VOLUME
Disability Student Voice

The L in VOLUME

LEARNING

Learning is the constant addition of new ideas, with the growth of students and teachers together. Learning does not occur simply within the classroom, and the VOLUME program hopes to develop the advocacy skills of schools, parents and students, going beyond voicing just school needs, but learning to self-advocate in all aspects of life. Learning is essential in this program, as it aims to empower young people to ask for what they want and need.

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The U in VOLUME

UNDERSTANDING

Understanding perspectives and celebrating diversity forms the heart of the VOLUME program. Through deep understanding, we cultivate empathy, compassion, and genuine appreciation for our differences. Whether students are connecting with classmates, teachers are recognising student needs, or schools are embracing families, understanding transforms relationships. We help decode what students are truly communicating and guide you in creating meaningful, responsive inclusive environments that honour every voice.

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Disability Student Voice

The M in VOLUME

MOVEMENT

Movement and breaks was the top adjustment asked for during the research, so it HAD to be include it in our name! Recognising that learning does not have to have every student sitting stagnant or immobile, movement is a natural state for children, and can enhance their learning and engagement. Physical movement activates multiple brain areas simultaneously, improving cognitive function, memory, and attention. Embracing movement creates inclusive environments that honor children's needs.

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The E in VOLUME

EDUCATION

While student education outcomes drive VOLUME's immediate goals, true impact requires community-wide transformation. This program empowers students, educators, parents, and professionals to champion student voice throughout their networks. We envision student voice becoming standard operating practice across schools, classrooms, and communities. Through ripple effects of education and advocacy, we create sustainable cultural shifts that prioritize listening to and learning from every student's unique perspective and wisdom.

VOLUME
Disability Student Voice

Now let us tell the
world!

We hope you take
this information
and use it as a
conversation
starter with your
little people.



References

CAST, (2024). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines V3*. <https://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Clayden, D., Lemon, N., Main, S., (2026). Facilitating autistic student voice in reasonable adjustments.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2026.102423>

MacBeath, J., Demetriou, H., Rudduck, J., and Myers, K. (2003). *Consulting Pupils: A toolkit for Teachers*. Pearson Publishing. ISBN: 1857498461, 9781857498462