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Learning disabilities and technology: A cross-case analysis

This paper discusses a cross-case analysis of two case studies completed with students with learning disabilities (LD) and a grade four/five teacher. The studies sought to explore the students' experiences with technology in the classroom. Data collection methods included observations, semi-structured interviews with all participants, and photo documentation of technology use during literacy instruction. The cross-case analysis found that technology did not necessarily meet the nuanced literacy learning needs of the students. Certain applications did not provide sufficient support and technical issues with the devices often impacted their efficacy. Technology did not help students align learning criteria to their projects as it was observed that the technology became more of a distraction than an aide, especially when multiple modes (e.g., visuals, sounds, movies, etc.) were involved. More importantly, the social dynamics of the classes greatly affected the students' engagement with the devices. A limited number of devices in the classroom required students to negotiate sharing and cooperation. However, for students with LD, this negotiation became a barrier to accessing the devices.