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# Digital objects as mediators of new experiences for students with disabilities

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## Abstract

This research aims to underline the manner in which digital technologies take part to school activities of student with disabilities. Its main focus is about the test of a specific note-taking digital device within the regular school environment in France. It underlines the different types of valuation or evaluation made by the various participants and their direct influence on further action. Additionally, the research implies that students with disabilities are an acting part of the devices design.

An ethnographical fieldwork, through participant observation and interviews with 40 children and young students with disabilities, was used in order to better understand how technology relates to disability. Doing research with children and young people asked the researcher some methodological innovation, but the data were mainly organised through the analysis of categories and categorizations that could appear inside discourses and in action. Moreover, an analysis of valuation and evaluation practices (Lamont, 2012) was made.

The major findings of this research highlighted a multiple level of evaluation. Firstly, the professionals of education and care imagined the adequacy between the device and the students' needs. They chose to recommend it towards their students or, on the contrary, to disapprove it. Secondly, students also participated to this process, from expressing directly their vision about the device to partially or completely integrating it to their study and even leisure actions. Finally, the research allowed seeing accessibility of digital technologies as a special form of affordance (Gibson, 1977). It also made a direct connection between ethics of care (Tronto, 1993), identity and digital objects as mediators of new experiences.

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