

Digital Tools and Inclusive Assessment for Students with Special Needs: A Qualitative Study with Pre-University Education Teachers in Albania

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Abstract

This study explores teachers' perceptions, experiences, challenges, and professional needs regarding the use of technology in the inclusive assessment of students with special needs in primary and lower secondary education. As technology becomes central to educational practice, understanding its role in assessing students with special educational needs is essential for fostering inclusive teaching. A qualitative approach was employed, involving interviews and six focus groups with 28 teachers. Data was collected through moderate discussions and analyzed using thematic analysis, following a systematic process of coding and theme development.

Five main themes emerged: (1) positive attitudes toward digital integration, (2) technology as a tool for differentiation and adaptation, (3) its impact on student engagement and confidence, (4) infrastructural and institutional barriers, and (5) the need for ongoing professional development. Findings show that technology is viewed as a valuable tool that enhances flexibility, personalization, and inclusion in assessment. However, its effective implementation is limited by insufficient equipment, weak infrastructure, unstable internet access, and inadequate training. Primary teachers emphasize technology's visual and motivational benefits, while lower secondary teachers focus on functionality and progress monitoring.

The study underscores the need for clearer institutional policies, greater investment in infrastructure, and sustained professional development to support inclusive digital assessment practices.

Keywords: Inclusive Assessment; Educational Technology; Students with Disabilities; Professional Development; Primary and Lower Secondary Education.