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The Use of Digital Technologies as a Pedagogical Tool for Students with Visual Impairments

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This study presents as a problem-question whether the use of the audiobook will provide the visually impaired person with the condition to adhere, take ownership, make individual and collective use of new technologies, these human creations which represent the possibility of an increasingly growing mastery of information never imagined and its new ways of use. Within this context, the research has the following objectives: to analyze the importance of the audiobook as a pedagogical tool, as mediator of reading classes for students with visual impairment; to analyze whether digital technologies can be used to support the teaching and learning process. Regarding to the approach of the problem, the research has a qualitative focus. For data collection, interviews and online questionnaires sent by WhatsApp were used. The research population and sample comprised 13 (thirteen) subjects. To carry out the interviews, several technological resources were used: Google Meet; WhatsApp and cell phone (phone call). Due to the pandemic – Covid 19 and the inevitable social isolation, digital technology was the best option for conducting the research. The interviews were transcribed using the *Transcriber for Whatsapp* and *Call Recorder* applications. The study reveals that digital technologies can and should be used to support the process of teaching and learning to students with visual impairments. That the audiobook represents another reading alternative, a complement, a support, with its own attractions, benefiting people with or without disabilities. As from the social representations extracted from the research subjects' speeches, it was possible to see that assistive technologies need to go together with the Braille system, called as a literacy technology, a method which allows the visually impaired to read and write without intermediation, in other words, the person has direct contact with the text.

Keyword: assistive technology; social networks; visual impairment.

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