Digital Technologies for Inclusive Collaborative Learning in Higher Education: A PRISMA Guided Systematic Review

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Abstract

Digital technologies play an increasingly prominent role in collaborative learning in higher education, yet their capacity to foster genuinely inclusive participation for students with disabilities remains inconsistent across contexts (Mejía Caguana et al., 2021; OECD, 2020). This qualitative systematic review synthesises empirical evidence on how digital tools are used to design inclusive collaborative learning experiences that support the participation and academic success of university students with disabilities. Following PRISMA 2020 guidance (Page et al., 2021), searches were conducted in Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection and ERIC for empirical studies published between 2010 and 2025 in English or Spanish, focusing on higher education, disability, digitally mediated collaboration, and accessibility or inclusion. Twenty nine studies met the inclusion criteria, spanning multiple countries, disciplines and institutional settings (Andrade Parra et al., 2020; Buitrago et al., 2022; Sánchez Díaz & Morgado, 2023). The findings show that virtual learning environments, videoconferencing platforms, co editing tools, social media and emerging technologies can enhance flexibility, interaction, sense of belonging and peer support when accessibility and inclusive pedagogy are explicitly embedded in design (Buitrago et al., 2022; Sánchez Díaz & Morgado, 2023). However, persistent accessibility barriers, limited staff training and uneven institutional support continue to constrain participation. The review highlights the need for universal design approaches, co creation with students and sustained professional development, supported by institutional strategies that link digital transformation with systemic inclusive practice (Andrade Parra et al., 2020; OECD, 2020).

Keywords

Higher education, Disability, Inclusive education, Digital technologies, Collaborative learning, Accessibility, Systematic review.