



Preparing Future Teachers for Inclusive Practices and Disability: A Systematic Literature Review

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The aim of this study is to qualitatively synthesise the main research issues in this field. To this end, an exploratory review of 26 relevant articles from WoS, Scopus, and ERIC, covering all years up to 2024, was conducted. A descriptive table collected key data, such as author, date, place, objectives, methodology, sample characteristics, results, and main contributions. For data analysis, the qualitative software Nvivo 12 was used, categorising the results into three emerging thematic areas: conceptualisation and beliefs about inclusion and disability, deficiencies in academic preparation, and successful practices for inclusion in higher education. The results show the progress and challenges in inclusive education, revealing an evolution from exploring attitudes towards inclusion to assessing teacher preparation and curricular needs. Significant gaps in the academic training of prospective teachers are identified, along with specific recommended practices, such as service-learning and experiential training, for improving inclusion. It is concluded that understanding and improving the training of prospective teachers on inclusion and disability is crucial. The need for a systemic approach to curricula reform and research-based inclusive practices is highlighted. Finally, the findings offer actionable guidance for policymakers, programme designers, and educators, emphasising the integration of inclusive education at all levels of teacher training to foster a more equitable system for all students.

Keywords: teacher training, disability, curricula design, inclusive education, systematic review

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a key pillar of global education policy, seeking to ensure the equal participation of all learners, regardless of their individual

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characteristics (Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2021). This concept has established itself as a fundamental pillar in education policies worldwide (European Executive Agency for Education and Culture, 2022). In the contemporary educational context, inclusion and the appropriate treatment of disability have emerged as essential elements for the creation of equitable and effective learning environments. Scientific evidence supports the premise that effective implementation of inclusive education is an ongoing process that increases learning, fosters participation and improves the quality of life for all students, regardless of their educational needs (Hansen & Dawson, 2020).

Various studies (Bartz, 2020; Kang & Martin, 2018; Saloviita & Consegna, 2019) have shown that inclusion in regular educational settings promotes the social, emotional and academic development of all students, while also contributing to building more cohesive and equitable school communities. However, the challenge remains to adequately prepare future teachers in these areas to ensure that inclusion is effectively implemented in schools. In this sense, current trends in teacher education reflect a growing emphasis on preparing future teachers to manage diversity in the classroom (Bijlhout & Ade-Ojo, 2025). The acquisition of competences related to attention to diversity and the implementation of methodologies such as differentiated teaching and collaborative learning, which favour an inclusive approach in the classroom, are promoted (Forlin, 2021). However, despite these advances, significant challenges remain, such as the lack of practical experience in inclusive settings and the need to change attitudes towards disability (McLeskey et al., 2021). These barriers limit the effectiveness of training programmes and underline the importance of strengthening teacher preparation.

The need to improve teacher education is urgent, as although research shows that inclusion benefits the academic, social and emotional development of all students (Bartz, 2020), the training of future teachers remains inadequate in many contexts. This picture highlights the importance of making further progress in improving teacher education to achieve truly effective and equitable inclusive education for all students (Arapi & Lasserre, 2019).

1. Teacher training as a basis for educational inclusion: analysis and perspectives.

Future teachers are essential to the effective implementation of inclusive education (Schwab et al., 2024; Valle-Flórez et al., 2021). The academic and professional training of these teachers must include the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to address the diverse needs and abilities of students with disabilities (Rodríguez et al., 2020). Denisova et al. (2023) stresses that future teachers must acquire a deep understanding of the individualities of learners, considering their characteristics, implications, and relevant intervention strategies. To this end, it is essential that training programmes offer comprehensive education that combines theory and practice in a comprehensive approach (Myronova et al., 2021).

The ability of future teachers to design and implement curricular and methodological adaptations that respond to the diversity of learning styles is crucial (Hellmich et al., 2019). This task requires a sound knowledge of the fundamental pedagogical principles and resources available for inclusive teaching (Polo & Aparicio, 2023). Furthermore,

promoting an inclusive classroom environment is essential, which involves creating a learning environment that fosters active participation, mutual respect, and that values diversity (Stăiculescu et al., 2022). Teachers must be able to identify and address physical, social, and emotional barriers that may hinder inclusion, as well as foster collaboration and teamwork among all members of the school community (Wenham et al., 2019).

Despite the importance of this knowledge, trainee teachers face significant challenges when preparing to assist students with disabilities (Donath et al., 2023). University curricula often address inclusion in a superficial way, without providing the necessary tools to address the factual issues they will encounter in their educational practice (Costa & Modica, 2020). Moreover, teachers' inclusive competence depends not only on theoretical knowledge, but also on their ability to apply flexible and adaptive pedagogical strategies (Ioerger et al., 2019). In this regard, it is vital that training programmes focus on developing practical skills and transforming negative attitudes towards disability (Borosh et al., 2023).

2. Effective strategies in teacher education: keys to inclusive education'

Practical experiences in inclusive settings during initial teacher training are essential for prospective teachers to develop a deep and contextualised understanding of the needs of students with disabilities (Walker et al., 2018). These experiences build confidence and competence in implementing inclusive strategies, facilitating the transition from theory to practice. Inclusive education must be actively promoted to achieve equitable education for all students (Rogers & Johnson, 2018). Furthermore, university curricula must address this issue in a deeper and more meaningful way, and university faculty must be actively involved in teaching and promoting it to strive for a more inclusive and equitable education (López et al., 2021).

In contrast, research (Aldakhil, 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2023; Stolz, 2022) indicates that initial teacher training often lacks a robust and systematic approach to inclusion and disability, which creates a significant gap between inclusive education policies and classroom practice. The lack of precision regarding the competences and knowledge on inclusion acquired by prospective teachers in university education programmes makes it necessary to explore and analyse existing research on the subject.

3. Key elements of the study and their impact on teacher education: Contribution to the field of study.

Therefore, in this study, a systematic review of the scientific literature will be conducted with the aim of analysing the current situation of the knowledge, perceptions and skills acquired by trainee teachers in relation to assisting students with disabilities and educational inclusion. This analysis will make it possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teacher training programmes in this area, as well as areas for improvement that can be addressed to promote a more inclusive and equitable education (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022; Röhm et al., 2022). To this end, rigorous search and selection criteria have been applied through exclusion and inclusion criteria (Carballo et al., 2022; Paul et al., 2022; Van Mieghem et al., 2022). The present analysis addresses

various aspects related to teacher education, including the curricular content of the programs, the didactic methodologies employed, practical training in inclusive educational settings, as well as the perspectives and attitudes of future teachers towards inclusion and disability (Chanturia, 2023). The results of this study provide valuable information for designing and implementing effective teacher education strategies in the field of inclusion and disability, contributing to the strengthening of quality and equity in education for all students (Kolbina et al., 2023). From the studies reviewed, it is concluded that there is a growing concern about the preparation of future teachers in relation to serving students with disabilities and inclusive education. However, important research gaps are also identified that need to be addressed to improve teacher education programs in this area. Through a systematic review of the literature, this study seeks not only to consolidate and analyse the knowledge, perceptions and skills acquired by trainee teachers, but also to identify areas requiring priority attention and opportunities for improvement in teacher education programmes. This holistic approach provides a solid basis for designing interventions that promote inclusive education more effectively.

Finally, although previous research on teacher education on inclusion and disability exists, a systematic review is essential to integrate and synthesise the scattered information, identify trends, gaps and priorities, and assess the quality of the studies conducted (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022). This provides a comprehensive overview to support the design of more effective and contextualised strategies, ensuring that teacher education responds to the current demands of inclusive education and promotes educational equity and quality for all learners (McDaniel & Bloomfield, 2020).

METHOD

This study presents a systematic review of the scientific literature to synthesize research on teacher training for inclusion and disability. The review followed Codina's (2018) ReSiste-CHS framework, which ensures methodological rigor through four phases: (1) formulating the research question, (2) conducting a comprehensive search, (3) critically appraising the literature, and (4) synthesizing findings systematically (Grant & Booth, 2006).

Search Strategy and Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

The literature search was conducted across three major databases (WoS, Scopus, and ERIC) selected for their global scope and educational focus. To ensure comprehensiveness, grey literature was explored using Google Scholar. The search spanned all years up to 2024, employing the following keywords: *inclusive education*, *higher education*, *disability*, *university students*, and *teacher training*. These were combined into detailed search equations.

The studies were selected in two phases with inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1).

1. Initial Filtering: Inclusion criteria were applied using database filters to identify peer-reviewed studies in article or review format and categorized under *Social Science* (Scopus) or *Education, Educational Research* (WoS).
2. Manual Screening: Abstracts and full texts were reviewed to ensure relevance to

research questions and objectives.

Table 1
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

| Criteria | Inclusion | Exclusion |
|------------------|---|--|
| Focus | Studies addressing teacher training related to inclusion and/or disability. | Studies not explicitly focused on teacher training or inclusion-related topics. |
| Publication Type | Peer-reviewed articles or reviews. | Non-peer-reviewed studies (e.g., editorials, opinion pieces). |
| Keywords | Keywords including <i>inclusive education</i> , <i>disability</i> , <i>teacher training</i> , and <i>higher education</i> . | Studies without relevant keywords or unrelated to inclusive education and teacher preparation. |
| Research Field | Studies in <i>Social Science</i> or <i>Education</i> , <i>Educational Research</i> | Studies outside the scope of these fields or unrelated to the research objectives. |
| Relevance | Studies relevant to the research questions and objectives. | Studies lacking relevance to research objectives or theoretical-only studies without empirical data. |

The selection process yielded 26 articles, summarized in a flowchart (Figure 1).

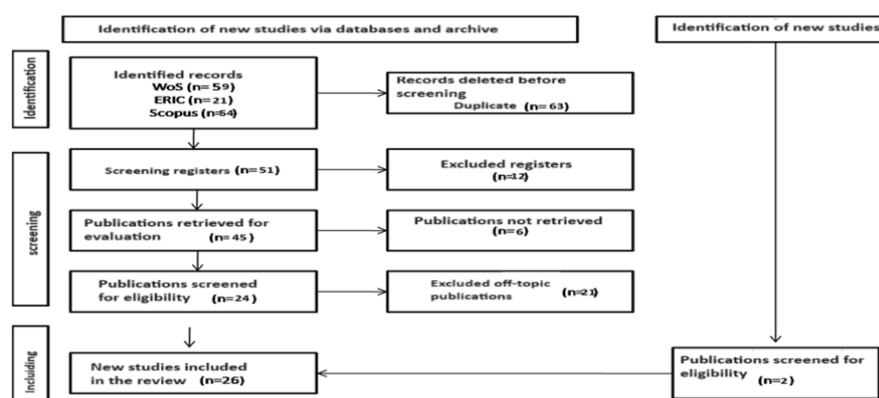


Figure 1
Flow chart of the included studies

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were organized using a descriptive table to capture key details for each study, including author, publication year, objectives, methods, sample characteristics, results, and contributions. This facilitated a structured analysis of the selected articles.

A thematic analysis was conducted using Nvivo 12 qualitative software. To ensure

reliability, a double-coding process was employed: two researchers independently coded a subset of studies, and discrepancies were resolved through consensus. This process enhanced consistency and credibility in the identification of themes.

Thematic Areas and Their Rationale

The analysis identified three thematic areas that reflect recurring patterns across the reviewed studies and align closely with the study's objectives:

1. **Conceptualization and Beliefs:** This theme explores prospective teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about inclusion and disability, including the influence of prior exposure to individuals with disabilities.
2. **Gaps in Academic Training:** This area highlights deficiencies in teacher education programs, such as insufficient practical training, limited integration of inclusive practices into curricula, and an overemphasis on theoretical approaches.
3. **Successful Practices:** This theme identifies effective strategies for fostering inclusion, including service-learning, experiential training, and leveraging digital tools to support inclusive education.

By synthesizing these themes, the study addresses critical challenges and opportunities in teacher training for inclusive education, providing a foundation for future research and program design.

FINDINGS

This section summarizes the results based on the research objectives, describing the context of the reviewed studies and the temporal evolution of scientific production in the selected databases. It also analyses emerging themes, highlighting key findings on inclusion and disability knowledge in future teachers across the 26 included articles.

Description of selected articles

1. Objectives and research questions

The reviewed studies address various objectives related to teacher preparation for inclusion. Many focus on how future teachers perceive inclusion and how training, context, and exposure shape their attitudes. Abellán & Sáenz-Gallego (2019), De la Rosa-Moreno (2016), and Barton-Arwood et al. (2016) emphasize the role of specific training and interactions with individuals with disabilities in fostering positive attitudes. Experiential methods, like project-based learning and direct engagement, are highlighted by Kang & Martin (2018) and Jiménez-Cortés (2010). Cultural and contextual influences are analyzed by Gigante & Gilmore (2018) and Llorent & Álamo (2016), while Shevtsiv et al. (2020) and Yashchuk et al. (2020) underline the importance of empathy, patience, and exposure to diversity. Studies also evaluate the effectiveness of training programs in developing inclusive competencies. Denisova et al. (2023) and Dos Santos Darub et al. (2020) stress inclusive university cultures, and Sánchez-Serrano et al. (2021), Medina-Sánchez (2021), and Lynch et al. (2016) advocate for balancing theoretical and practical components in curricula. McKee et al.

(2023) and Fernández-Batanero et al. (2022) highlight digital tools and reflective practices as essential, while Sharma et al. (2015) and Mayo (2022) focus on self-efficacy and confidence as outcomes of robust training. Effective strategies for supporting students with disabilities include direct interactions, as emphasized by Pérez-Castejón & Vigo (2022) and Kunz et al. (2021), and addressing gaps in preparation for specific needs, noted by Malak (2013) and Loiacono & Valenti (2010). Socio-emotional training is advocated by Rodríguez-Fuentes et al. (2021) and Núñez-Flores & Llorent (2022), while innovative methods like creating documentaries (Jiménez-Cortés, 2010) and incorporating community voices (Vega-Gonzales & Rivera, 2023) are recognized as impactful for embedding inclusive principles. These studies collectively emphasize the importance of practical experiences, balanced curricula, and socio-emotional development in preparing educators for inclusion.

2. Context, Study Designs and Growth of the Literature

The reviewed studies reflect a broad geographical distribution, with Spain contributing the most (10 studies), followed by the United States (3 studies). Additional representation includes Russia and Ukraine (2 studies each), and countries such as Brazil, Australia, Korea, Switzerland, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Peru (1 study each). Methodologically, the studies employ diverse approaches, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Surveys and measurement scales are frequently used to assess attitudes, beliefs, and competencies, as demonstrated by Abellán & Sáenz-Gallego (2019), Kang & Martin (2018), Gigante & Gilmore (2018), and McKee et al. (2023). Documentary analysis appears in Dos Santos et al. (2020), while Núñez-Flores & Llorent (2022) and others use questionnaires and interviews. Experimental and narrative review designs are seen in studies like Vega-Gonzales & Rivera (2023). These methodological variations highlight the complexity of studying inclusive education and the need for multiple strategies to address its challenges effectively.

The growth trajectory of this literature underscores an increasing focus on inclusive education, with key themes evolving over time (see Table 2). Research in the 2010s primarily explored prospective teachers' attitudes and perceptions and described experiences aimed at improving views towards teaching students with disabilities. Later, the focus shifted to evaluating teacher training, identifying curriculum needs, and analyzing preparation for in-service teachers. In the 2020s, new trends emerged, including developing teachers' socio-emotional and moral competencies and enhancing training strategies for inclusive settings. These shifts reflect a progressive understanding of the complexities of inclusive education and a growing commitment to preparing educators to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Recent studies such as Denisova et al. (2023), McKee et al. (2023), and Vega-Gonzales & Rivera (2023) exemplify this trend, moving beyond earlier contributions to refine inclusive practices. While older works like Malak (2013) and Loiacono & Valenti (2010) provided foundational insights, current research increasingly emphasizes practical, innovative approaches and the integration of socio-emotional dimensions into teacher training, ensuring its relevance for contemporary challenges in inclusive education.

Table 2

Literature growth trajectory

| | |
|------|--|
| 2010 | Jimenez-Cortes (2010), Loiacono & Valenti (2010) |
| 2011 | - |
| 2012 | - |
| 2013 | Malak (2013) |
| 2014 | - |
| 2015 | Sharma et al. (2015) |
| 2016 | Barton-Arwood et al. (2016), Llorent & Alamo (2016), De la Rosa-Moreno (2016), Lynch et al. (2016) |
| 2017 | - |
| 2018 | Gigante & Gilmore (2018), Kang & Martin (2018) |
| 2019 | Abellán & Sáenz-Gallego (2019) |
| 2020 | Dos Santos et al. (2020), Shevtsiv et al. (2020), Yashchuk et al. (2020) |
| 2021 | Kunz et al. (2021), Rodríguez-Fuentes et al. (2021), Sánchez-Serrano et al. (2021), Medina-Sánchez (2021) |
| 2022 | Fernandez-Batanero et al. (2022), Mayo (2022), Núñez-Flores & Llorent (2022), Pérez Castejón & Vigo (2022) |
| 2023 | Denisova et al. (2023), Goryunova (2023), McKee et al. (2023), Vega-Gonzales & Rivera (2023) |

Main topics

The findings from the analysis of the 26 selected articles are categorized into three main themes: conceptualization and attitudes of prospective teachers, shortcomings in teacher training, and successful practices for inclusion. These findings are presented below, synthesizing key contributions and their relevance to teacher preparation.

1. Conceptualization, Attitudes, and Beliefs of Prospective Teachers

The studies reveal that prospective teachers' understanding of inclusion and disability is often shaped by a deficit model, leading to resistance in implementing inclusive practices (Pérez-Castejón & Vigo, 2022). However, specific training programs, prior exposure to disability, and inclusive experiences play significant roles in overcoming these resistances (Medina-Sánchez, 2021; Vega-Gonzales & Rivera, 2023). Attitudes are critical as they influence teachers' behavior and emotional connections with students. Most studies indicate that prospective teachers generally have positive views on inclusion, especially those specializing in Early Childhood and Primary Education with a focus on Special Education (Mayo, 2022). Women and trainee teachers tend to show more favorable attitudes compared to men and practicing teachers, although the latter express greater concern for meeting inclusive requirements (Rodríguez-Fuentes et al., 2021).

Positive attitudes are linked to self-efficacy, empathy, and recognition of the enriching value of inclusion, as well as specific training in inclusive strategies (Kunz et al., 2021; Llorent & Álamo, 2016; Sharma et al., 2015). Conversely, negative attitudes stem from insufficient knowledge, lack of methodological training, professional insecurity, and limited resources (Malak, 2013; Mayo, 2022). The studies also emphasize the importance of socio-emotional competencies, such as patience, compassion, and

empathy, as essential for fostering inclusive practices (Shevtsiv et al., 2020; Vega-Gonzales & Rivera, 2023). Beliefs about inclusion, closely tied to attitudes, also play a fundamental role. Positive beliefs emerge when teachers acquire a deeper understanding of inclusion and develop the necessary skills to implement it (McKee et al., 2023). Overcoming the deficit model and better integrating theory with practice are critical challenges highlighted in the literature (Pérez-Castejón & Vigo, 2022).

2. Shortcomings in Teacher Training

Significant gaps in teacher training for inclusive education are evident in the studies reviewed. A recurring issue is the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application. University curricula often lack sufficient courses on inclusion and tend to adopt a theoretical approach, which fails to prepare prospective teachers for the realities of inclusive classrooms (Abellán & Sáenz-Gallego, 2019; Sánchez-Serrano et al., 2021). The practicum, often the first real exposure to inclusive education, is highlighted as a critical area where many prospective teachers feel overwhelmed and underprepared (Álvarez & Buenestado, 2015).

To address these gaps, several reform proposals are highlighted. First, restructuring practicum courses to include better planning, guided reflections, and simulations of real-world scenarios is recommended (Medina-Sánchez, 2021; McKee et al., 2023). Experiential methodologies, such as action research and case-based learning, are also effective (Mayo, 2022). Second, structural changes to teacher training curricula are needed to strengthen the focus on inclusion, including specialized training on diagnoses like autism and the use of assistive technologies (Loiacono & Valenti, 2010; Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022). Lastly, fostering an inclusive culture in universities, including staff readiness and competence, is identified as a key factor for improving training (Denisova et al., 2023).

3. Successful Practices for Inclusion

The reviewed articles highlight a range of successful practices for preparing future teachers for inclusive education. Experiential and cooperative methodologies, such as service-learning and field experiences, have proven effective in fostering attitudinal and conceptual shifts (Barton-Arwood et al., 2016; Kang & Martin, 2018). Service-learning projects, which combine practical engagement with reflection, have been shown to enhance prospective teachers' empathy and confidence when interacting with people with disabilities. For example, Barton-Arwood et al. (2016) note that direct engagement helps students develop a more positive outlook on teaching diverse learners and reinforces their professional dispositions.

Testimonies and talks from people with disabilities are another effective strategy for raising awareness. De la Rosa-Moreno (2016) emphasizes that experiential learning through first-person narratives provides students with meaningful insights into diversity and inclusion. Similarly, collaborative projects, such as creating documentaries, are highlighted as impactful. Jiménez-Cortés (2010) describes how students working in teams to produce a documentary on inclusion engage deeply with the subject,

integrating research, fieldwork, and reflection to foster a more empathetic understanding of diversity.

The use of digital tools is increasingly recognized as an essential component of inclusive education. Fernández-Batanero et al. (2022) advocate for training teachers in the use of assistive technologies and digital resources, noting that these tools not only support students with disabilities but also enhance teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy. Simulations of real-world scenarios also provide valuable preparation for inclusive teaching. McKee et al. (2023) stress the importance of such simulations in developing problem-solving skills, effective communication, and confidence in managing diverse classrooms. Overall, successful practices include active, innovative, and cooperative methodologies such as service-learning, experiential courses, first-person narratives, digital tools, and simulations. These approaches equip future teachers with the skills and attitudes needed to meet the demands of inclusive education.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to conduct a systematic review of the scientific literature to analyse the knowledge and skills acquired by trainee teachers in relation to caring for students with disabilities. Through the examination of twenty-six relevant articles, a comprehensive overview of the current state of training of future teachers in this field was obtained, revealing both the progress achieved and the persistent challenges in inclusive education. In recent decades, research in this field of education has evolved from a very specific focus on analysing teacher training for inclusive education to a more complex approach that includes the analysis of teacher attitudes and motivations, university curricula or successful educational practices in higher education (Miller et al., 2020; Hollman et al., 2021; McDaniel & Bloomfield, 2020). In this sense, the review offers a more structured view of this issue as it focuses on the analysis of this complexity in order to highlight possible gaps in existing knowledge and to provide suggestions for optimisation. This more updated perspective aims to respond to the demands made in some previous studies on teacher training in inclusion (Carvalho et al., 2024; Schuster & Kolleck, 2020; Smith et al, 2019; Velasco et al., 2024).

The studies analysed focus on assessing the perceptions and attitudes of prospective teachers towards inclusive education, analysing the effectiveness of training programmes in improving these attitudes and competences, and identifying curricular needs and appropriate pedagogical practices to support students with disabilities and special educational needs. Along with these aims, there has been a considerable increase in scientific production on inclusive education worldwide, with countries such as Spain, the United States, Ukraine, and Russia making notable contributions, reflecting a global interest in and commitment to inclusive education in various contexts. According to Gonzales et al. (2021), this is justified by highlighting the universality of the challenges to implementing successful inclusive practices. In addition, the results reveal a persistent tendency among prospective teachers to conceptualise inclusion and disability from a deficit perspective. This poses a threat to implementing inclusion in classrooms since, as pointed out by Radojlovic et al. (2022) and Rizzo et al. (2021), in the teaching practices developed from this approach, more attention is paid to the differences and

limitations than to the potential of students with disabilities. This way of understanding inclusion and disability, according to various authors (Gosain & Samanta, 2022; Onet & Marian, 2023; Wood & Happé, 2021), also has a negative impact on their predisposition to deal with attention to diversity during their university education. These circumstances underline the need to reform the training approaches of future teachers in order to promote a more inclusive vision that focuses on the potential and strengths of all students.

Along the same lines, the studies analysed emphasise the importance of strengthening the training of future teachers to move towards inclusive education by describing effective teaching practices. Thus, Barton-Arwood et al. (2016), Kunz et al. (2021) and Grimminger-Seidensticker & Seyda (2022) highlight field experiences and service-learning as key tools for changing resistant attitudes towards inclusive education and promote a deeper and more personal understanding of disability. De la Rosa-Moreno (2016); Jimenez-Cortes (2010), Koshy et al. (2021) and Rohmer et al. (2022), emphasise the positive impact of direct interaction with people with disabilities and the use of cooperative methodologies. Fernández-Batanero (2022) highlights the importance of training in the use of digital resources to support inclusion. In summary, the studies reviewed agree in underlining the urgent need for a curriculum reform that prominently integrates content related to inclusion and diversity in a meaningful way through real contexts and experiences. This same need for a more practical approach to the training of future teachers in inclusion has also been called for in the work of López et al. (2021) and Hazir & Harris, (2023) to improve the competences and skills needed to meet the challenges of inclusive education.

The development of a Practicum or Internship, as reflected in the results, stands out as a critical moment in the training of future teachers, as they are confronted with a real context for the first time. In fact, Ainscow (2020) points out that working in real-life situations provides students with opportunities to interact, assess their knowledge and improve their confidence. These ideas are consistent with research by McCoy & McNaughton (2021), which reveals that prospective teachers who receive more in-depth training on inclusion issues, and who have direct experiences with students with disabilities, tend to develop more positive attitudes towards inclusion. However, the review carried out shows the need to create a space for reflection in which to analyse whether the current training that future teachers receive promotes favourable attitudes towards inclusive educational projects or, on the contrary, generates mistrust as it reveals shortcomings and insecurities.

In relation to these attitudes, it should be noted that our results show that there is a greater sensitivity to inclusion among women than among men, and a more favourable attitude and feelings among trainee teachers than among practising teachers. This approach is consistent with the findings of Agran & Hughes (2012), who indicate that women tend to show greater emotional sensitivity to the individual needs of students, and Skrtic (2015) who highlight women's better communicative predisposition to listen, understand and seek effective solutions. Women's increased sensitivity to disability in the educational context should be addressed from different perspectives to provide valuable insights into the importance of empathy and understanding in inclusive

teaching. In addition, in order to improve the predisposition of future teachers towards inclusion, two fundamental aspects are highlighted, the perception of efficacy and empathy. Marcone & Caputo (2023) refute that those who are confident in their ability to instruct students with disabilities and who show elevated levels of empathy are more inclined to adopt inclusive practices within their classrooms.

Finally, the results reflect a better predisposition towards inclusion of trainee teachers compared to those in active service. This fact has already been highlighted by Pijl & Meijer (2011), indicating that trainee teachers have more up-to-date training, a more open mind and greater social commitment. In contrast, in-service teachers, as Marlina et al. (2023) and Efendi et al. (2023), point out, perceive among other needs, the shortage of time and resources and the pressure to meet academic standards. In order to improve this situation, we believe that the resistance that hinders inclusive practices must be overcome, and to this end, it is essential to provide support and ongoing training options for in-service teachers to ensure an inclusive culture in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes with the emerging importance of inclusive education as it is experiencing global growth and evolution, reflected in the commitment and interest in diversity in education in many countries and contexts. It highlights the crucial importance of understanding and improving the training of future teachers in this area, identifying in detail the challenges and opportunities in developing inclusive educational practices. Over time, research has shifted from exploring prospective teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities to include the evaluation of teacher education, curriculum needs in initial education and in-service teacher education. This shift in focus indicates considerable progress in understanding the challenges associated with inclusive education, as well as an ongoing commitment to improving teacher education to address the diverse needs of students in inclusive educational settings. The most relevant knowledge provided by this review focuses on the identification of critical areas for improvement in the training of future teachers. Among these areas, the conceptualisation of inclusion and disability, attitudes, beliefs, the use of technological resources and teaching innovation stand out. Improving the conceptualisation of inclusion and disability is fundamental, as the starting point is a deficient model. This fact substantially affects training during the university stage. To counteract this, it is essential to raise awareness, sensitise and train university teaching staff, especially those who teach in areas of knowledge linked to education, so that students have an inclusive reference point during their training. It is also necessary to integrate training experiences that include direct interactions with people with disabilities, thus promoting a more inclusive and empathetic understanding. On the other hand, positive attitudes towards inclusion vary according to gender and academic specialisation, which highlights the need to promote socioemotional attitudes and competences from the beginning of teacher training. In terms of beliefs, future teachers are mostly favourably disposed towards inclusion and disability, although their conceptualisation centred on the deficit model tends to condition them negatively. To overcome this limitation, a more realistic and participatory approach to disability and inclusion in university programmes is recommended. Furthermore, it highlights the

importance of integrating educational technologies and digital tools into teacher training to support the effective inclusion of all students and especially those with special needs. Project-based learning, involving the use of technology, can help prospective teachers develop a practical and applicable understanding of how to support inclusion in the classroom. Implementing service-learning programmes and creating opportunities for prospective teachers to interact and collaborate directly with people with disabilities, through meetings, roundtables, workshops or visits to inclusive settings, are essential to enrich their understanding of and commitment to inclusion. These training experiences provide a more concrete insight into the needs and challenges of people with disabilities.

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