

Chapter 6

Review of Research of Future Teachers' Attitudes Towards Diversity and Social Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to present the results of a review of specialist publications that address the attitudes of future teachers towards attention to diversity and social inclusion. The bibliometric search enabled the authors to analyze student teachers' interest in, and attitudes towards, inclusion as a way to improve the inclusion process. A descriptive study was carried out to explore and organize the scientific production in educational research on trainee teachers' attitudes to inclusion, and to know the covariance that has occurred in the last 10 years. The data were extracted from the Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and Dialnet databases. The formula used in the bibliometric search process was (title, abstract, and key words): attitudes OR beliefs* AND inclusive education AND teaching students, which yielded 68 registers for analysis. The results show that future teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were generally positive. The research suggests a relation between attitude towards inclusion and self-sufficiency on the basis of prior training in inclusive educational proposals.*

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INTRODUCTION

Education around the world is based on the accepted principle of inclusion, in which all students are able to learn together in the same shared classroom. This concept differs from ideas based exclusively on the education of students with disabilities in normal classrooms; inclusion encompasses a broader definition, a global movement with a focus on social justice and equity that aims to overcome the barriers that hinder learning and participation (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Inclusion does not mean opening doors, but a welcome that provides educational settings in which all students can learn. Inclusion is not just aimed at people with disabilities, it is a challenge that extends to elements of the institutions and their relations.

Policies that foment inclusion have been developed over the past 30 years, and a key element in their success are the opinions of teachers. It is argued that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are crucial for guaranteeing the successful development of inclusive practices, as it is likely that teachers' acceptance of the policy of inclusion affects their commitment to applying it in practice (Norwich, 2002). However, findings on changes in attitude in student teachers are mixed (Kunz et al., 2021). Numerous factors influence attitudes and beliefs regarding inclusion, and with this in mind, the conclusions drawn from this line of research provide important practical implications for the authorities charged with promoting inclusion. In this process, the faculties responsible for training future teachers have an important part to play in shaping their students' and teachers' attitudes towards achieving an inclusive educational system.

The initial stages of teacher training are where change and transformation begins, the starting point for a complex process that drives professional development (Serrano & Pontes, 2017). In the framework of inclusive education, the training received by the trainee teacher is one of the most important factors that enables inclusion. Many researchers confirm this as a vital factor for the successful implementation of inclusive learning (Varcoe & Boyle, 2014; Ahsan & Sharma, 2018).

This training sets out the theoretical bases and procedures for diversity encourages the development of positive attitudes based on feelings of empowerment in young teachers to deliver inclusion (Beacham & Rouse, 2012; Concklin, 2012; Hernández-Amorós et al., 2018). These attitudes can have a positive impact on behavior and drive inclusive practices (Azjen, 2015).

Of course, the study of attitudes such as a predisposition to action has been analyzed in many different disciplines that have contributed elements of understanding of the attitude construct. The formation of attitudes is a process that is learned and influenced by factors of context that include contact with students with a range of needs, educational backgrounds and self-sufficiencies (Ahsan et al., 2012; Lassig, 2009). So, attitudes are generated by particular factors within a socio-cultural environment.

The formation of the attitudes and beliefs of future teachers is relatively static and difficult to change if they go unchallenged over a long period of time (Woodcock, 2011). The initial stages of teacher training is a context in which the beliefs that inform attitudes can be purposely affected (Varcoe & Boyle, 2014). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) presented three main variables that influence teachers' attitudes: variables that relate to the children, to the teachers and to their own environment.

According to Llorent and Alamo (2016) and Palacios et al., (2014), attitudes can be understood in relation to three components: cognitive, associated to a person's beliefs; affective, related to personal feelings and emotions; behavioral, linked to actions or types of response. Phillip (2007) defined attitudes as the individual's way of thinking, feeling or acting, and as such, constitute a learning that takes place throughout life (Novo et al., 2011), and which occur as a consequence of experiences and coexistence with others. Attitudes can be detected, analyzed and modified (Montero et al., 2015).

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