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Review

Barriers and Facilitators in the Placement Experiences of Disabled Pre-Service Teachers in Initial Teacher Education: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Background: Teaching is a profession that should be accessible to all individuals who can meet the professional standards required for practice. Yet the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers suggest that access to initial teacher education is not always equitable, particularly during placements. Objective: This scoping review synthesises the available evidence on disabled pre-service teachers' placement experiences and identifies the policy, practice, cultural, and individual factors that shape these experiences within initial teacher education. Eligibility Criteria: Sources were eligible for inclusion if they were published in English between 1992 and 2024 and focused on the placement experiences of disabled pre-service teachers. Sources of Evidence: Evidence was identified through five database searches and supplemented by citation searching and screening of reference lists. Charting Methods: Data were charted from included sources using a structured data extraction form and synthesised thematically to identify barriers and facilitators at policy, practice, cultural, and individual levels. Results: Seventy sources were included. Disabled pre-service teachers encountered complex and challenging barriers as well as positive and inclusive facilitators. Reported barriers included ableist assumptions about pre-service teachers' abilities, limited placement options, inadequate accommodations, and difficulties translating human rights policies into practice. Facilitators included knowledge of human rights legislation, inclusive institutional policies, supportive faculty, flexible accommodations, and active involvement of disabled pre-service teachers in decision-making. Conclusions: To truly embrace diversity in the teaching profession, inclusion must be embedded not only in policies and practices, but in the fabric of teacher education through its cultures, values, and relationships.

Keywords: equity; higher education; teacher training; reasonable accommodations; inclusion

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1. Introduction

Placement is a core component of initial teacher education (ITE) programs, equipping pre-service teachers with the skills required for professional practice. However, placement is frequently identified as one of the most significant barriers encountered by disabled pre-service teachers (Bellacicco, 2022; Leyser et al., 2011). Addressing these barriers is important

for both equity and inclusion. From an equity perspective, disabled pre-service teachers have a right to access ITE on an equal basis with others, as recognised in international human rights frameworks. From an inclusion perspective, disabled teachers can contribute to more diverse and inclusive educational environments and serve as important advocates for systemic change. Yet relatively little is known about how disabled pre-service teachers experience professional placements. Therefore, this scoping review examines the central role of placement in determining progression through ITE for disabled pre-service teachers.

Increasing the presence, participation and achievement of disabled pre-service teachers in ITE is an important component of advancing inclusion within both ITE and school settings (Bellacicco & Demo, 2019; Glazzard & Dale, 2012; OECD, 2023). While the enrolment of disabled people in higher education is increasing (Dollinger et al., 2024), greater access has not necessarily translated into equitable participation. In particular, placements remain a significant site of exclusion and challenge for disabled pre-service teachers. This is concerning because placement is a mandated and high-stakes component of teacher education, determining progression into and completion of the profession. The findings of this review indicate that the barriers encountered by disabled pre-service teachers during placement undermine the principles of equitable access, participation, and inclusion embedded within international human rights agreements and policy frameworks. Mitigating these barriers is particularly important given that disabled people constitute the world's largest minority group, representing approximately 16% of the global population (World Health Organization, 2023), although prevalence estimates vary considerably depending on how disability is defined and measured. Participation of disabled people also generates benefits extending beyond individuals to families, communities, and economies (Neca et al., 2022; World Health Organization, 2023). Furthermore, UNESCO (2024) predicts a global shortage of 44 million primary and secondary teachers by 2030. Supporting the successful participation of disabled pre-service teachers in ITE therefore represents not only a matter of equity and social justice but also a workforce imperative. Disabled teachers can contribute to addressing teacher shortages, enhance workforce diversity, and serve as important role models for students (Quezada et al., 2025). Increasing the presence, participation, and achievement of disabled pre-service teachers is likely to contribute to inclusion for all students (Ainscow, 2020). Yet despite these educational, social, and economic benefits, disabled pre-service teachers remain underrepresented and largely invisible within ITE, with their experiences largely absent from research, policy, and practice.

1.1. Human Rights Agreements

Lack of social justice, discrimination and inequity are significant problems for education providers and broader society, and several human rights agreements have been implemented to address these concerns. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) established inclusive education as an international priority, followed by other significant human rights agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD; United Nations, 2006), Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, 2015), and UNESCO's (2017) A Guide to Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education. Together, these frameworks promote equitable access, participation and inclusion in education and have informed disability rights legislation and policy internationally. Importantly, Article 24 of the CRPD recognises education at all levels as a fundamental right for disabled people and calls for the employment and training of teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille. Realising these commitments requires attention to the policy, practice and cultural barriers within ITE, particularly professional placements, that can constrain the participation and success of disabled pre-service teachers. Despite international commit-

ments to inclusion, disabled pre-service teachers continue to encounter systemic barriers and perceptions that they are unsuitable for the teaching profession (Strimel et al., 2023). Strengthening facilitators of inclusion is therefore essential to enabling disabled pre-service teachers to successfully complete ITE, enter the teaching workforce, and contribute to more inclusive education systems. This scoping review examines the available evidence, identifies gaps in the literature, and informs future research, policy and practice.

1.2. Rights, Inclusion and Identity-First Language

While terminology is not universally agreed upon (Botha et al., 2023), this review primarily uses identity-first language to position disability as a matter of rights and inclusion. Terms such as "disabled pre-service teacher" recognise disability as an integral aspect of identity and challenge deficit-based or medicalised perspectives. Although once considered offensive, identity-first language has been reclaimed by some members of the disability community to promote agency, choice, and solidarity (Grech et al., 2023). The language used by the included studies was retained when referring to authors' descriptions, study titles, or direct quotations. Where findings were paraphrased, the review's identity-first terminology was generally applied for consistency. However, person-first constructions are used selectively where they improve readability or grammatical flow (e.g., pre-service teacher with a traumatic brain injury). This approach acknowledges that terminology preferences vary within disability communities and that some authors and participants may prefer person-first language.

1.3. Conceptual Frameworks

Although scoping reviews are often descriptive, this review applies two conceptual frameworks, Booth and Ainscow's (2011) Index for Inclusion and Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of capital and habitus, to organise and interpret the literature. These frameworks are situated within a broader biopsychosocial understanding of disability, which provides the overarching perspective informing the review. Booth and Ainscow's (2011) framework facilitates an examination of the policy, practice, and cultural barriers and facilitators to inclusion during placement, while Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of capital and habitus are used to explore the individual traits of disabled pre-service teachers.

The first framework, the 'Index for Inclusion' by Booth and Ainscow (2011), is an internationally recognised tool that supports self-review and development in accordance with inclusive values. It analyses inclusion through three dimensions: policy based on inclusive principles; practice in which learning and resources reflect inclusive values; and culture that emphasises community building rather than attributing challenges to the inherent characteristics of disabled individuals. These three dimensions are interconnected as inclusive cultures guide and sustain inclusive policies, which in turn shape inclusive practices. Within these dimensions, inclusion is viewed as a continuous process of responding to diversity and making sustainable changes.

The second conceptual framework is Bourdieu's capital and habitus. Bourdieu (1984) describes various forms of capital, including cultural, social and symbolic capital, as resources that can be accumulated and transferred to gain an advantage, much like a monetary exchange. However, this exchange is context-dependent, as it must occur in a social field where it is valued; hence, not all forms of capital are traded equally. Cultural capital refers to knowledge, skills, understandings, and qualifications, while social capital refers to relationships, connections, and membership in a recognised and valued group (Saha, 2021). Symbolic capital, which is converted from cultural or social capital, refers to prestige, honour or recognition (Bourdieu, 1984). Capital serves as a resource that is deployed and converted by an individual's habitus. Habitus refers to a set of dispositions

or unconscious ways of thinking acquired through upbringing and the social environment (Tan & Liu, 2022).

To contextualise the use of these frameworks, this review is underpinned by the biopsychosocial model of disability. Defining disability is complex, with competing models, including the medical and social models, reflecting ongoing debates about what constitutes disability. The biopsychosocial model bridges these perspectives by providing a more holistic understanding of disability that encompasses biological, psychological, and social dimensions (Whelpley et al., 2023). Within this model, attention is directed towards both the removal of environmental barriers and the provision of reasonable accommodations tailored to the individual. It recognises that participation and success are shaped by the interaction between personal and contextual factors, and that experiences of disability may be either alleviated or intensified across different contexts (Dollinger et al., 2024). This scoping review adopts a biopsychosocial understanding of disability and recognises that disability should not restrict an individual's aspiration to enrol in ITE. At the same time, the review acknowledges that, as with the non-disabled population, there may be circumstances in which the inherent requirements of placement cannot be met, even with reasonable accommodations and support.

The research team's interpretation of the evidence was informed by the review's overarching biopsychosocial understanding of disability and by two conceptual frameworks that guided the analysis: the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) and Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). The Index for Inclusion was used as the primary analytic framework to guide data extraction and categorisation of barriers and facilitators across policy, practice, and cultural dimensions. Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of capital and habitus were subsequently used as an interpretive lens to examine how forms of capital shaped the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers within these contexts. Thus, the Index for Inclusion provided the organising framework for the synthesis, Bourdieu's interpretation of the reported experiences supported the synthesis, and the biopsychosocial model provided the broader conceptual orientation for the review.

1.4. State of Knowledge

The following section examines the historical and contextual factors that have shaped the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers during ITE placements, focusing on the structural, cultural, and individual barriers and facilitators that influence participation and success. It begins with widening participation policies in higher education and then explores inherent requirements.

1.4.1. Widening Participation Policies in Higher Education

Over the past two decades, widening participation policies have been implemented in more than 71 countries (Salmi, 2019) to address underrepresentation in higher education (Benson-Egglenton, 2022; Bowers-Brown et al., 2019). These policies aim to reflect the diversity of society within the student body by encouraging participation from disadvantaged groups. Following the global introduction of disability discrimination legislation and the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 1993), disability is now recognised as a key category within these policies (Salmi, 2019). A crucial component of widening participation policies is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), which aims to foster diverse representation in higher education and support individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds (Yanikoglu, 2025). More recently, international organisations have emphasised that equitable participation requires not only access to higher education but also the removal of structural barriers and the provision of appropriate supports. The OECD's equity and inclusion agenda highlights

the importance of attracting diverse candidates into ITE and providing adequate support to ensure their successful participation and retention within the teaching profession (OECD, 2023). The OECD further argues that a diverse teaching workforce contributes to more equitable and inclusive learning environments and benefits all students by broadening representation within the profession. Together, these initiatives reflect a shift from policies focused primarily on access towards creating educational systems that support the participation, success, and retention of underrepresented groups throughout their educational journeys and into professional careers.

1.4.2. Inherent Requirements

The increasing professionalisation and regulation of teaching over recent decades has led to the development of formal standards and requirements governing entry into the profession. Within this context, inherent requirements, also referred to as "fitness to practise", outline the essential, non-modifiable elements that students must meet to enter, progress, and graduate from ITE programs (Corcoran et al., 2022; Whitburn et al., 2024). While definitions vary across institutions and jurisdictions, inherent requirements in ITE commonly relate to communication, professional behaviour, safety, and the capacity to undertake key teaching activities, with or without reasonable accommodations. In ITE, inherent requirements support professional registration and placement standards. However, the interpretation of these requirements can restrict access for disabled pre-service teachers (Dollinger et al., 2023; Finch & Corrie, 2024; Whitburn et al., 2024). Inherent requirements are legally exempt from being classified as discriminatory under disability discrimination legislation if a student is unable to meet them (McNaught, 2013). However, there is no universal agreement on what these requirements should be (Tai et al., 2024), and regulatory authorities ultimately act as gatekeepers (Dollinger et al., 2024). While coursework in higher education can often be adapted, placement requirements are less flexible, and reasonable accommodations are more commonly implemented for children at school than for adult learners in professional training. This creates a 'wicked problem' (Rittell & Webber, 1973) for higher education providers, who must balance reasonable accommodations with professional standards and inherent requirements.

1.5. Previous Reviews on the Experiences of Disabled Pre-Service Teachers

This is the first review to specifically examine the barriers and facilitators shaping disabled pre-service teachers' experiences of professional placement within ITE. Previous reviews (Bellacicco & Demo, 2019; Ko et al., 2024; Neca et al., 2022; Strimel et al., 2023) have considered disabled pre-service teachers more broadly or focused on related issues such as professional competence, but none have systematically synthesised the literature on placement. Given the centrality of placement to ITE and professional accreditation, this review addresses a significant gap in the evidence base while providing the most current international synthesis of research in this area.

1.6. Research Questions

Against this background, this scoping review seeks to explore the following research question and sub-questions:

What is the nature and scope of research on disabled pre-service teachers and placement?

a. Where, when, and by whom has such research been published?
b. What methods and data sources have been utilised to report the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers on placement?
c. What policy, practice, cultural and individual barriers to placement in initial teacher education for disabled pre-service teachers have been identified in research?

d. What policy, practice, cultural and individual facilitators to placement in initial teacher education for disabled pre-service teachers have been identified in research?

2. Methodology

As this review sought to systematically map the literature on the placement experiences of disabled pre-service teachers, a scoping review methodology was selected (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Campbell et al., 2023). Scoping reviews are particularly suited to emerging areas of research where the evidence base has not previously been synthesised (Munn et al., 2018). This approach was appropriate because no previous review has focused specifically on placement within ITE, and the available literature spans multiple countries, research designs and disability groups. As the aim of this review is to map the scope of the research rather than assessing its quality, it does not require a quality assessment. Consistent with best-practice guidance for evidence synthesis, the review was undertaken using transparent, rigorous and explicit methods (Gough et al., 2012), following the PRISMA-ScR reporting guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). A review protocol was developed but not registered or made publicly available, as it was not part of the team's established review procedures at the time. Although registration and public availability of review protocols are now encouraged, the absence of a registered protocol should be considered when interpreting the review findings. Consistent with the objectives of this scoping review and established scoping review methodology, a critical appraisal of the included sources of evidence was not conducted (Peters et al., 2021). Therefore, this synthesis reports the literature without considering differences in study quality.

2.1. Reflexivity

The research team's interpretation of the evidence was informed by the review's overarching biopsychosocial understanding of disability, alongside the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) and Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), which provided complementary lenses for analysing the evidence. These frameworks shaped how barriers and facilitators were conceptualised and coded, thereby influencing the interpretation of the findings. In particular, the Index for Inclusion directed attention towards barriers and facilitators operating at policy, practice, and cultural levels, while Bourdieu's concepts supported consideration of how individual and institutional resources, dispositions, and forms of capital shaped placement experiences. Three members of the team are positioned in inclusive education and disability research, while the other two bring disciplinary perspectives from outside these fields. The lived experience of disability by the first and second authors also informed the interpretation of the findings. The definitions and applications of barriers and facilitators were discussed and refined through regular research team meetings, which provided opportunities to consider differing interpretations and resolve uncertainties in the coding process.

2.2. Search Strategy

To maximise retrieval, a keyword strategy was employed using terms derived from brainstorming and a preliminary literature search, utilising the Population, Concept, and Context framework (Peters et al., 2022). The search was structured around the core eligibility concepts:

- Population: Pre-service teachers
- Concept: Disability
- Context: Initial Teacher Education
- Context: Placement

The identification of barriers and facilitators could then occur during data extraction and synthesis, in which the included studies were examined for factors that hindered or facilitated the placement experiences of disabled pre-service teachers. Each keyword was checked against the ERIC thesaurus to identify relevant subject headings and narrower terms that were not already represented in the search strategy. The search strategy was developed and refined with assistance from a librarian, resulting in the final strategy presented in Table 1. The terms "inservice teacher*"and "in-service teacher*" were included within the pre-service teacher search concept to identify studies in which in-service teachers with disabilities retrospectively or reflexively reported their experiences as pre-service teachers, including experiences of professional placement. Inclusion of this term did not extend the eligibility criteria to experiences occurring during in-service teaching.

Table 1. Search string.

Concept	Search Terms
Pre-service teacher	"pre-service teacher*" OR "preservice teacher*" OR "student teacher*" OR "teacher candidate*" OR "trainee teacher*" OR "education student*" OR "inservice teacher*" OR "in-service teacher*" OR "education major"
AND	
Disability	disab* OR dyslex* OR autis* OR "learning difficult*" OR blind OR "visual impair*" OR deaf OR "hearing impair*" OR "hard-of-hearing" OR "physical impair*" OR "mental health" OR neurodive* OR "acquired brain injury" OR "chronic illness" OR "asperger syndrome" OR "language impair*" OR "deaf blind" OR "communication disorder*" OR "speech impair*" OR "physical disab*" OR "emotional disturb*" OR psychosis OR trauma OR seizures OR "attention deficit disorder" OR "behavio?r disorder*" OR "developmental disab*" OR "fetal alcohol syndrome" OR "head injury" OR "ADHD"
AND	
Initial Teacher Education	"Initial Teacher Education" OR "Preservice Teacher Education" OR "Teacher Education Programs" OR "Higher Education" OR Universit* OR College* OR Tertiary OR "Post-Secondary" OR "Post Secondary" OR "preservice teacher education" OR "schools of education"
AND	
Placement	Placement* OR Practicum* OR "Professional Experience" OR "Field Experience" OR "Student teaching" OR Internship OR "Teaching practice" OR "Clinical experience" OR "situated learning" OR "Internship program*"

The initial search was conducted in April 2023 within the Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC (via ProQuest) and A+ Education (via Informit) databases, as these are recognised as key sources for evidence synthesis (e.g., Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020). OpenAlex (Priem et al., 2022) was searched through EPPI-Reviewer (Thomas et al., 2023) in May 2023, followed by citation and bibliography searches of included studies. Subsequent searches of the databases were conducted at different dates to maintain currency of the evidence base (see Table 2). Grey literature was eligible for inclusion due to the relatively limited and fragmented nature of the literature on this topic and the potential for relevant evidence to be located within grey literature sources. It was identified through the database and supplementary searches; however, a separate, dedicated search of grey literature sources was not undertaken. To maximise the comprehensiveness of the review, additional studies were identified through screening the reference lists of included articles and through citation tracking. All studies identified through these methods were assessed against the review's inclusion criteria. The search strategy yielded 1772 items (see Figure 1).

Table 2. Database Table Listing.

Database	Initial Search	Subsequent Search
Scopus	15 April 2023	14 November 2023
Eric (via ProQuest)	15 April 2023	01 February 2024
Web of Science	16 April 2023	01 May 2024
A+ Education (via Informit)	16 April 2023	18 December 2024
Open Alex	1 May 2023	19 December 2024

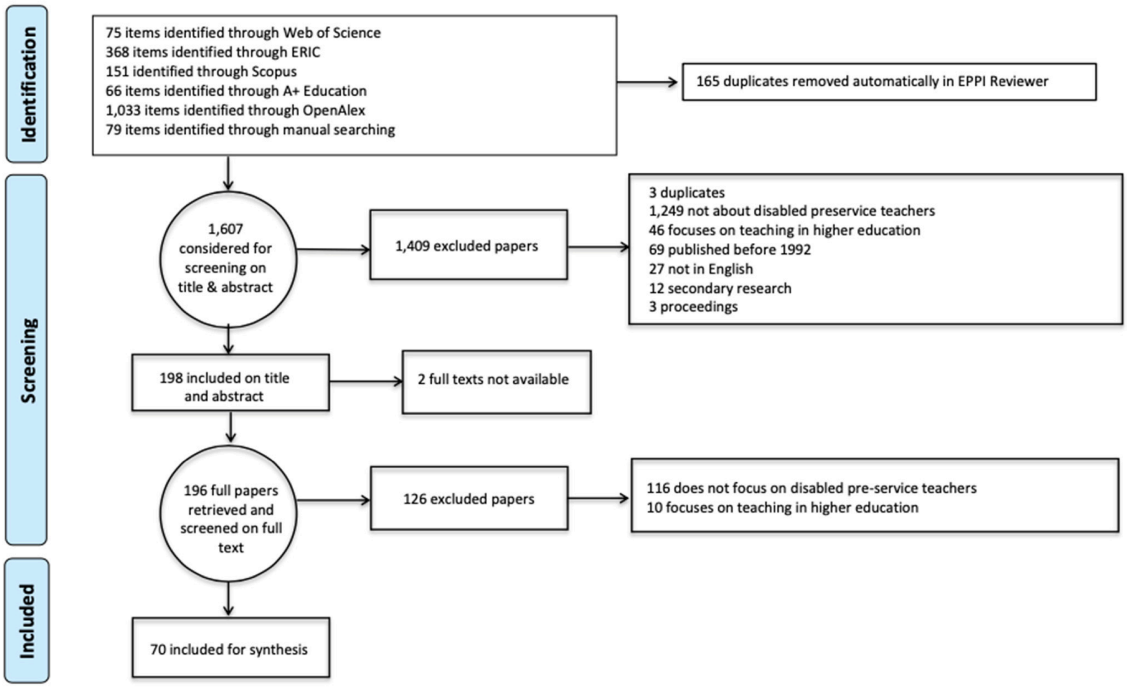


Figure 1. Scoping Review PRISMA diagram.

2.3. Selection Process

Following the automatic removal of 165 duplicates within the software, 1607 items remained to be screened based on title and abstract, applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 3). EPPI-Reviewer identified potential duplicates using automated similarity matching. Potential duplicates were grouped, with one record designated as the master reference within each group. Records with an exact similarity score of one were automatically excluded, while records with lower similarity scores were manually reviewed by the research team and excluded where they were confirmed as duplicates. Across seven OpenAlex searches, 1033 records were retrieved. Of these, 25 were identified as duplicates through EPPI-Reviewer's cumulative deduplication process, while 1008 were not identified as duplicates. The inclusion date was selected because most international disability discrimination legislation was enacted from 1990 onwards, for example, in the United States in 1990, Australia in 1992, and the United Kingdom in 1995.

Table 3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Published between 1992 and 2024	Published before 1992
Primary or conceptual research & grey literature	Evidence synthesis (e.g., systematic reviews), editorials
English language	Published in a language other than English
Experiences of disabled pre-service teachers in the placement component of an ITE degree	Focus on teaching in higher education, school student experiences, or in-service teachers

2.4. Screening Process

The research team consisted of five members, four of whom were responsible for screening the literature. To establish and monitor inter-rater reliability, three rounds of title and abstract screening were undertaken within EPPI Reviewer (100 items, 75 items, 50 items), with the third and final round resulting in substantial agreement among reviewers (Fleiss k = 0.69) (McHugh, 2012). After disagreements were reconciled through extensive discussion, the remaining items were screened at the title and abstract stage. All remaining items were then screened at the full-text stage by four reviewers; however, two items could not be obtained and were therefore excluded from the review. To ensure continued inter-rater reliability, it was decided that four reviewers would screen each item and then reconcile their decisions as a team. A second reviewer checked the coding of a random 10% sample of items across all coders to ensure coding consistency. This process resulted in the inclusion of 70 studies for data extraction and synthesis, which were subsequently inductively coded (see Figure 1).

2.5. Coding

A data extraction coding tool was developed within EPPI Reviewer, which included deductive codes for publication details (year, type, journal name, open access status), author information (number, discipline, countries, continents, type of collaboration), study characteristics (e.g., pre-service teacher disability, participant country, number of participants) and research focus and methodology (e.g., theoretical framework, study design). Parent codes were then established to enable inductive coding to be carried out iteratively throughout the data extraction process for key findings (e.g., accommodations), future research and policy recommendations as reported by the study authors, as well as the barriers and facilitators faced by disabled pre-service teachers using Booth and Ainscow's (2011) framework at the policy, practice, and cultural levels. Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of capital and habitus were used to explore the individual traits within disabled pre-service teachers that either facilitate or impede placement. An initial four studies were coded manually within EPPI Reviewer by four members of the review team to ensure a common understanding of the coding scheme, with the remaining studies then divided among the authors.

2.6. Synthesis

A narrative synthesis was undertaken of the extracted data (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). A tabulated overview of the results was developed in accordance with PRISMA-ScR guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018) and is provided in Appendix A and Supplementary Tables S1–S4. To further visualise the results of the review, interactive evidence and gap maps were created using the EPPI Mapper application version 2.4.5 (Digital Solution Foundry & EPPI Centre, 2023), as well as an openly accessible database of the included studies[1], created using EPPI Visualiser.

3. Findings

The findings of this scoping review are presented in three categories to provide a structured account of the evidence base. First, the general characteristics of the 70 studies are summarised to contextualise the scope and nature of the literature. Second, barriers and facilitators are examined at the policy, practice, and cultural levels, drawing on Booth and Ainscow's (2011) Index for Inclusion framework. Finally, barriers and facilitators related to the individual traits of disabled pre-service teachers are considered through Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital. The findings on barriers and facilitators are presented according to the identified parent themes and sub-themes. As individual studies

could address more than one sub-theme, studies may be represented across multiple sub-themes. Consequently, sub-theme totals do not necessarily equal the total reported for the corresponding parent theme.

Where, when, and by whom has such research been published, and about which types of disabilities?

Most publications were disseminated as journal articles (83%, n = 58), with the remaining items published as a thesis (n = 2), a book chapter (n = 6), a conference paper or report (n = 3), or a guide (n = 1). Half were published in education journals (50%, n = 35), with the next-largest group in disability-related journals (8%, n = 6). The top three represented journals were the International Journal of Inclusive Education (n = 5), American Annals of the Deaf (n = 3) and Teacher Education and Special Education (n = 3).

Across the five-year intervals, publication activity showed a gradual upward trend, with some fluctuations. Output was relatively strong in 1996–2000, with 13 publications, although a decline was evident in the intervening period, dropping to 6 publications in 2006–2010. Research activity increased steadily thereafter, reaching its highest level in the most recent period, 2021–2024, with 17 publications. Together, these trends indicate an overall expansion of scholarly engagement with the topic over time.

First authors were predominantly affiliated with institutions in North America (54%, n = 38) and Europe (27%, n = 19). A small proportion of publications (11%, n = 8) involved international collaborations, including partnerships between Israel and the United States (e.g., Leyser & Greenberger, 2008), the United States and the United Kingdom (e.g., Grenier et al., 2014), and a tri-country collaboration involving the United States, Namibia, and China (Martin et al., 1999). However, for Martin et al. (1999), the first author's regional affiliation (US) did not align with the study's geographic location (China). Where a geographic context was identifiable, the included works were most often conducted or situated in North America (47%, n = 33) and Europe (26%, n = 18), reflecting the broader geographic distribution of publications.

As some studies included pre-service teachers with more than one disability, disability categories were not mutually exclusive; consequently, the sum of disability-category counts exceeds the total number of included studies (n = 70). Each disability type reported in a study was counted separately. Percentages were calculated using the total number of included studies (n = 70) as the denominator and were rounded to the nearest whole number. Across the included sources, dyslexia was the most reported disability (n = 19; 27%), followed closely by hearing loss (n = 17; 24%) and blindness (n = 13; 19%). Physical disabilities appeared in 11 sources (16%), while mental health–related disabilities were identified in 9 (13%). Chronic illness was reported in six sources (9%), while ADHD was referred to in seven sources (10%). Less frequently reported categories included autism (n = 4; 6%) and brain injury (n = 2; 3%). Additionally, sixteen papers discussed disability without specifying a particular category (23%).

What methods and data sources have been used to explore the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers on placement?

Over 84% of the research in this scoping review is qualitative (n = 59), with fewer than 7% adopting quantitative approaches (n = 5) and mixed methods (n = 6). Case studies (n = 32) were the most used method. Other research designs were vignettes (n = 4), a mix of descriptive studies (n = 11), cross-sectional (n = 9), mixed qualitative methods (n = 4), theoretical/conceptual (n = 2) and critical conversation (n = 1).

Twenty-four sources primarily focused on the placement component of ITE; 28 examined a combination of coursework and placement; and seven sources examined placement within regulatory frameworks. There were six sources with a primary focus on inclusive culture or professional identity within placement, and two on recruitment and

placement. Three sources discussed a combination of coursework, placement, regulatory and/or recruitment.

What policy, practice, cultural and individual barriers and facilitators to placement in initial teacher education for disabled pre-service teachers have been identified in research?

This section draws on Booth and Ainscow's (2011) Index for Inclusion framework, as well as Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital, to identify the policy, practice, cultural, and individual barriers and facilitators that influence the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers in the placement component of ITE.

3.1. Policy Barriers and Facilitators

Twenty-three studies examined policy barriers that hinder positive outcomes for disabled pre-service teachers during placement. These barriers included exams as a prerequisite for placement (n = 4); legislation, standards, and accreditation requirements (n = 14); and the translation of these policies into practice (n = 14). Eight studies reported on policies that facilitated the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers in placement. The key themes regarding policy facilitation were legal requirements and key reforms (n = 7), as well as proactive planning (n = 2).

3.1.1. Policy Barrier: Exams as a Prerequisite for Placement

Four articles reported how literacy or numeracy skills were assessed through examination, with successful attainment required prior to progression to placement. While several universities require assessment as a prerequisite for placement, Hilton (2021) examined an Australian literacy and numeracy licensure exam that pre-service teachers must pass in their final year of ITE to graduate. Throughout the literature, concerns have been raised about the validity and implications of these prerequisite assessments. Lambert and Hilton (2024), Martin and Lytle (2000), and Wakefield (2007) argued that prerequisite exams do not necessarily reflect teacher quality and can exclude potentially excellent teachers from the future education workforce. Collectively, these studies suggest that high-stakes literacy and numeracy testing may function as gatekeeping mechanisms that constrain access to the profession rather than accurately measuring teaching competence.

3.1.2. Policy Barrier: Legislation, Standards or Accreditation Requirements

Fourteen studies examined the intersection of disability human rights legislation with education program standards or accreditation requirements that define the essential functions of teaching and measures of teacher quality for pre-service teachers. Across these studies, a recurring tension emerged between legislative commitments to inclusion and the interpretation and implementation of professional standards within ITE. Whitburn et al. (2024) reported that while inherent requirements at an Australian university did not significantly affect most students, 56% of disabled pre-service teachers became acutely aware of these requirements once they commenced placement, suggesting that they may function as barriers to participation. Similarly, Sokal et al. (2017) found that although legislation provides a framework for the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers in higher education, reconciling these rights with professional standards during placement can be challenging. Wilson et al. (2018) likewise found that rigid interpretations of standards excluded disabled pre-service teachers. Consistent with these findings, Barwood et al. (2018), Bellacicco (2022), Bellacicco et al. (2022), O'Hara (2013), Oren and McLeod (2011), and Wertheim et al. (1998) reported that ambiguity in the interpretation of legislation and professional standards often resulted in negative outcomes for disabled pre-service teachers. Taken together, these studies indicate that barriers arise not necessarily from the legislation or standards themselves, but from uncertainty, inconsistency, and restrictive interpretations of their application in practice.

3.1.3. Policy Barrier: Translating Policy into Practice

Translating policy into practice was a theme identified in fourteen studies. Bargerhuff et al. (2012) examined the contradiction between a higher education provider's inclusive policy and the exclusion experienced by a pre-service teacher with a traumatic brain injury during placement. While reasonable accommodations were made for the pre-service teacher's physical disability, accommodations for their cognitive disability were perceived as less feasible. Gilbert (1998) and O'Hara (2013) similarly highlighted tensions between teaching standards and disability discrimination legislation, which contributed to the stigmatisation and failure of some pre-service teachers with dyslexia. Barwood et al. (2023) likewise found that inequities experienced by disabled pre-service teachers on placement necessitated changes to policy enactment to create a more socially just environment. Hanuscin and Green (2022) and Vickers-Hulse and Whitehouse (2024) reported that policy implementation was often tokenistic, resulting in disabled pre-service teachers bearing the ongoing burden of self-advocacy. Komesaroff (2005) identified practical barriers to policy enactment, including limited choice of placement settings, insufficient funding, restricted access to interpreters, and inadequate lead time to arrange support for a deaf pre-service teacher. Although Sokal et al. (2022) found that legislation and professional standards were generally clear and consistent, translating requirements relating to interpersonal skills into practice remained challenging. As a whole, these studies demonstrate that the primary challenge lies not in the absence of inclusive policies, but in their implementation. Institutional constraints, resource limitations, and ambiguous professional expectations frequently undermine inclusive intentions, often shifting responsibility for inclusion onto disabled pre-service teachers themselves.

3.1.4. Policy Facilitator: Legal Requirements or Key Reforms

Seven studies explored the legal requirements and policy reforms needed to ensure disabled pre-service teachers receive appropriate accommodations and equitable placement experiences. Sokal et al. (2017) found that familiarity with disability legislation enabled Directors of Student Teaching to confidently advocate for disabled pre-service teachers during placement. Similarly, Harrison and Lemke (2000) reported that clear policy expectations contributed to successful placement experiences by providing consistency, transparency, and established processes for remediation and disability accommodations. Akins et al. (2001), Bailes et al. (2010), O'Hara (2013), Sokal et al. (2022), and Whitburn et al. (2024) emphasised the importance of flexible interpretations of concepts such as essential teaching functions, inherent requirements, and competence standards. These studies argued that a focus on the intent of disability legislation, rather than rigid adherence to its literal interpretation, enabled greater creativity in meeting professional requirements and implementing accommodations. For example, Whitburn et al. (2024) advocated a shift from institutional control towards shared decision-making regarding essential teaching functions. As a group, these studies suggest that equitable placement experiences are facilitated by both a strong understanding of disability rights legislation and flexible, collaborative approaches to interpreting professional requirements. As well, policies can be enacted in ways that uphold both professional competence and the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers.

3.1.5. Policy Facilitator: Proactive Planning

This review included two articles that examined proactive planning approaches to support disabled pre-service teachers during placement. O'Hara (2013) described a university-wide admissions policy that provided guidance to disabled applicants during the initial interview, with support subsequently implemented throughout the program, including placement. In contrast, Bargerhuff et al. (2012) recommended an environmental screen-

ing approach in which a multidisciplinary team conducts an ecological assessment of the classroom and school environments prior to placement. This process includes a task analysis of the skills required during placement and informs collaborative discussions about problem-solving and reasonable accommodations. A key objective of the ecological assessment is to minimise disparities between the supports available within the university and those provided in the placement setting. Although these approaches differ in focus, both emphasise the importance of proactively identifying support needs and planning accommodations prior to placement.

3.2. Practice Barriers and Facilitators

In this scoping review, 31 papers examined various practice barriers: accommodations (n = 24), communication and feedback (n = 12), staff knowledge, attitudes, and skills (n = 9), and staff/mentor over-helping (n = 4). Thirty-four studies reported on practices that supported and promoted the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers during placements. The key themes identified from the review regarding practice facilitators were communication (n = 18), placement support (n = 19), and reflective practice (n = 6).

3.2.1. Practice Barrier: Accommodations

Twenty-four studies highlighted challenges in providing reasonable accommodations and support during placement, as well as concerns about the potential consequences of receiving them. A recurring issue was the inconsistent implementation of support across contexts. Csoli and Gallagher (2012) and Moser et al. (2016) reported that accommodations available within the university were not effectively transferred to placement settings, while Barwood et al. (2018, 2023) found that accommodations provided during placement were often restricted to particular contexts or timeframes. Several studies also identified uncertainty regarding what constitutes a reasonable accommodation. Gilbert (1998), Jack et al. (2024), Siuty and Beneke (2020), and Vickers-Hulse and Whitehouse (2024) reported a disconnect between staff and disabled pre-service teachers in their understandings of reasonable accommodations. Baldwin (2007) and Bellacicco et al. (2022, p. 7) noted that some lecturers and course directors expressed "ethical concerns" about the appropriateness of accommodations during placement. Beyond formal accommodations, practical barriers such as inaccessible or inefficient transport and lack of assistive technology further limited participation (Lima & Ivy, 2017; Parker & Draves, 2017; Riddell & Weedon, 2014). Moreover, Siuty and Meyer (2024) and Vickers-Hulse and Whitehouse (2024) found that placement experiences could exacerbate feelings of difference, alienation, and exclusion. Wilson et al. (2018) also reported concerns that accommodations received during placement could negatively affect future certification decisions. A consistent finding across these studies demonstrates that barriers arise not only from the absence of accommodations, but also from inconsistent implementation, contested understandings of reasonableness, and concerns that seeking support may carry professional risks. Such conditions may discourage disclosure and undermine the equitable participation of disabled pre-service teachers during placement.

3.2.2. Practice Barrier: Communication and Feedback

Twelve studies emphasised that communication and feedback issues can act as barriers to the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers. Effective communication among universities, placement sites, mentor teachers, and pre-service teachers was consistently identified as essential for ensuring that appropriate supports were implemented and that pre-service teachers were not placed in situations requiring excessive self-advocacy (Gilbert, 1998; Hanuscin & Green, 2022; Hilton, 2021; Moser et al., 2016). Conversely, inadequate communication between stakeholders was associated with increased anxiety, uncertainty,

and reduced access to support, with these challenges often arising from systemic rather than individual factors (Houdyshell et al., 2021; Moser et al., 2016).

Several studies highlighted tensions surrounding feedback practices. While some supervising teachers avoided difficult conversations and provided limited constructive feedback to be supportive (Sokal et al., 2022), others offered feedback that was perceived as overly judgemental or critical (Jacobs et al., 2021). These contrasting approaches suggest broader uncertainty regarding how to balance support and evaluation within inclusive placement contexts. Existing communication mechanisms were also questioned, with Bargerhuff et al. (2012) finding that stakeholder conferences could intensify rather than resolve concerns, and Vickers-Hulse and Whitehouse (2024) identifying instances of tokenistic inclusive communication practices. Communication barriers were particularly pronounced for deaf pre-service teachers who use sign language, underscoring how reliance on spoken communication can further marginalise some disabled pre-service teachers within placement environments.

3.2.3. Practice Barrier: Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills

Nine papers reported how inadequate staff knowledge, attitudes, or skills influence the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers. A recurring theme was that limited understandings of disability among staff often resulted in deficit-based interpretations of capability, rather than recognition of the full range of strengths and contributions of disabled pre-service teachers. Bargerhuff et al. (2012), for example, described how such assumptions led to disabled pre-service teachers being treated with "pity or benevolent disregard rather than the necessary rigour" (p. 194). Similarly, Jacobs et al. (2021) found that supervising teachers frequently drew on medical model perspectives of disability, reinforcing deficit-based expectations during placement.

Other studies highlighted that these limitations in knowledge and awareness translated into reduced capacity or willingness to provide appropriate support. Cuervo-Rodríguez and Castañeda-Trujillo (2021), Glazzard (2017), and Komesaroff (2005) reported that staff often lacked awareness of individual support needs and were reluctant to accommodate differences. Vickers-Hulse and Whitehouse (2024) further found that institutional commitments to inclusion were sometimes performative, with limited evidence of meaningful enactment in practice. In addition, Gilbert (1998) identified staff acting as informal gatekeepers to entry into the teaching profession, contributing to the underrepresentation of disabled pre-service teachers, while Houdyshell et al. (2021) emphasised that some barriers arising from communication styles, expectations, and limited support were often unintentional. As a whole, these findings indicate that staff-related barriers to inclusion operate across a continuum, ranging from explicit deficit-based assumptions to exclusionary practices, all of which can negatively affect disabled pre-service teachers' participation, progression, and sense of belonging in placement contexts.

3.2.4. Practice Barrier: Staff/Mentor Over-Helping

Four papers examined the issue of over-helping by staff or mentors and its relationship to dependency and learned helplessness in disabled pre-service teachers. Across the literature, over-helping was identified as a potentially unintended consequence of well-intentioned inclusive practice. Bargerhuff et al. (2012) and Cook (2001) highlighted the detrimental effects of excessive assistance, suggesting that over-helping can undermine pre-service teacher autonomy and limit opportunities for independent professional development. Cook (2001) further noted that in some cases, staff provided intensive levels of support that also placed strain on their own wellbeing. From the pre-service teacher perspective, Knight and Wadsworth (1996) described how repeated over-helping could

contribute to passivity and dependence, particularly when support was provided without explicit request or negotiation. In contrast, Gilbert (1998) identified inconsistencies in support practices across placement contexts, with some pre-service teachers encouraged toward independence and autonomy, while others received substantial assistance. The convergence of these studies suggests that both over-helping and inconsistent approaches to support can hinder disabled pre-service teachers' development of independence, highlighting the need for balanced, responsive, and negotiated support practices during placement.

3.2.5. Practice Facilitator: Communication

Eighteen studies identified communication as a facilitator of inclusion during placement. Across these studies, effective communication was consistently reported in interactions among pre-service teachers, placement providers, supervising teachers, and university staff. A number of studies (Akins et al., 2001; Knight & Wadsworth, 1996; Lidor & Hutzler, 2019) emphasised the importance of early and proactive dialogue prior to placement, enabling the identification of support needs and the planning of reasonable accommodations. Other studies highlighted the role of ongoing, open communication during placement. For example, Glazzard and Dale (2012) described how a dyslexic pre-service teacher engaged in transparent discussions with colleagues and pupils about disability-related challenges, while Brulle (2006) and Martin and Lytle (2000) similarly found that open communication supported more inclusive placement experiences. Across Barwood et al. (2023), Hanuscin and Green (2022), and Smith (2000), positive communication practices were further associated with supportive mentoring relationships and effective role modelling. A recurring theme in these papers is that communication is a key enabler of inclusion, particularly when it is proactive, transparent, and sustained across higher education and placement contexts.

3.2.6. Practice Facilitator: Placement Support

Nineteen sources highlighted the importance of carefully selected and well-structured placement experiences that incorporate flexibility to accommodate individual needs, such as reduced hours or modified schedules. Across the literature, placement support was consistently framed as a shared and proactive responsibility, requiring collaboration between universities, placement schools, supervising teachers, and pre-service teachers rather than relying on individual initiative. Several studies emphasised structured institutional supports as key facilitators of successful placement experiences, including regular meetings, ongoing contact among stakeholders, targeted support sessions, and tuition tailored to specific learning needs (Harrison & Lemke, 1999; Montague, 2002; Morgan & Rooney, 1997). The provision of reasonable accommodations, such as assistive technologies and advance planning of placement tasks, was also identified as enabling more equitable participation (Leyser et al., 2011). In addition, the quality and configuration of supervision emerged as a significant factor shaping inclusion. Benefits were associated with experienced supervising teachers, disability-specific training, and broader school-based support networks that extend responsibility beyond a single mentor (Csoli & Gallagher, 2012; Ianes, 2022; Luetke-Stahlman, 1998). Peer-supported models, including dyad and triad placements, were also identified as reducing isolation and strengthening engagement during placement (Antilla-Garza, 2015). These findings demonstrate that effective placement support is not ad hoc or individualised in isolation, but depends on coordinated, systemic, and anticipatory practices that distribute responsibility across team members.

3.2.7. Practice Facilitator: Reflective Practice

Six sources described the role of reflective practice in supporting disabled pre-service teachers during placement, both as a pedagogical tool and as a mechanism for professional

learning and identity development. Across the literature, reflective practice was consistently used to enable pre-service teachers to draw on their lived experiences to inform teaching practice and engagement with pupils. For pre-service teachers with dyslexia, reflective processes were used to connect personal educational histories with pedagogical decision-making, particularly in supporting pupils experiencing similar literacy challenges (Cuervo-Rodríguez & Castañeda-Trujillo, 2021; Griffiths, 2012; Siuty & Beneke, 2020). For deaf pre-service teachers, reflective practice was similarly reported as a strategy for managing the demands of placement and leveraging lived experience to enhance access to sign language and classroom participation for pupils (Guteng et al., 2000; Martin et al., 1999). Structured reflective activities, including seminars, guided discussions, and journaling, were identified as key mechanisms supporting this process (Guteng et al., 2000). Beyond supporting individual practice, reflective processes were also found to shape understandings of disability within placement contexts. Hanuscin and Green (2022) reported that reflective practice can encourage supervising teachers to adopt more strengths-based perspectives on disability. The evidence indicates that reflective practice functions not only as a tool for pre-service teacher development, but also as a mechanism for reshaping professional understandings of disability within placement settings.

3.3. Cultural Barriers and Facilitators

Overall, 28 articles discussed cultural barriers negatively impacting the placement experience for disabled pre-service teachers. The main themes identified were ableism (n = 21) and disability disclosure (n = 15). Twenty-seven studies examined cultural facilitators that foster inclusive environments during placements for disabled pre-service teachers. The key themes in this group included relationship building (n = 17) and viewing disability as a strength (n = 8).

3.3.1. Cultural Barrier: Ableism

Of the 21 publications in this group, four (Lambert & Hilton, 2024; Moore et al., 2020; Siuty & Meyer, 2024; Subrayen & Dhunpath, 2019) explicitly used the terms 'ableism', 'ableist', or 'disablism' to describe behaviours or practices that hinder the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers during placement. These included "perpetuating deficit and ableist views" (Moore et al., 2020, p. 282) and marginalising disabled pre-service teachers through a "disablist gaze" (Subrayen & Dhunpath, 2019, p. 6). The remaining seventeen articles did not explicitly use the term but nevertheless described practices consistent with ableism across multiple dimensions of placement contexts. These included deficit-based attitudes and low expectations among school staff (Bellacicco, 2022; Hilton, 2021; Jack et al., 2024; Macleod & Cebula, 2009; Papalia-Berardi et al., 2002), persistent underestimation of disabled pre-service teachers despite evidence of competence (Csoli & Gallagher, 2012; O'Hara, 2013), and stigma and exclusion embedded within organisational cultures that resist or fail to accommodate difference (Cook, 2001; Harrison & Lemke, 2000; Decembrotto & Mangiatordi, 2022; Parker & Draves, 2018). Across these studies, ableism was also evident beyond institutional practices, extending into broader placement ecologies. Two studies highlighted ableist assumptions within parent communities, including concerns about the perceived capability of disabled pre-service teachers to teach effectively (Barwood et al., 2018; Kaya, 2014). In addition, several studies described how disabled pre-service teachers experienced pressure to conform to non-disabled norms of teacher identity (Bargerhuff et al., 2012; Riddell & Weedon, 2014; Subrayen & Dhunpath, 2019). Others identified dominant professional and societal expectations that implicitly positioned disability as incompatible with teaching roles (Glazzard, 2017; Wilson et al., 2018; Vickers-Hulse & Whitehouse, 2024). This literature consistently emphasises that ableism operates as a systemic and multi-level

phenomenon within placement contexts, enacted through attitudes, institutional practices, and cultural expectations that shape who is perceived as a "legitimate" pre-service teacher.

3.3.2. Cultural Barrier: Disability Disclosure

Fifteen publications explored the disclosure of disability status among pre-service teachers. Across the literature, disclosure was consistently identified as a complex and high-stakes process, closely linked to access to reasonable accommodations and appropriate placement supports. However, several studies (Hanuscin & Green, 2022; Jack et al., 2024; Pope et al., 2001) highlighted that fear of negative reactions from staff or placement schools often led to reluctance to disclose. Similarly, Jacobs et al. (2021) and Moore et al. (2020) reported that disabled pre-service teachers experienced anxiety about disclosure, while Cuervo-Rodríguez and Castañeda-Trujillo (2021) found that some pre-service teachers actively concealed their difficulties to avoid rejection or exclusion. Other studies emphasised that disclosure decisions were shaped by the nature and visibility of impairment. Macleod and Cebula (2009) noted that pre-service teachers with invisible disabilities were less likely to disclose, while O'Hara (2013) found that some pre-service teachers with dyslexia resisted being categorised as disabled and therefore chose not to disclose. Riddell and Weedon (2014) further highlighted that disclosure could compel pre-service teachers to negotiate or adopt a disability identity, or risk being positioned within a stigmatised identity category. In addition to these individual and identity-related factors, structural issues also shaped disclosure practices. Csoli and Gallagher (2012) identified the absence of a clear or formalised disclosure process, while Bargerhuff et al. (2012) and Gilbert (1998) noted that non-disclosure could create administrative and practical challenges in arranging appropriate support. These studies show that disclosure operates between access and risk, where the benefits of support are weighed against potential stigma, identity implications, and uncertain institutional responses.

3.3.3. Cultural Facilitator: Relationship Building in the Placement Context

Eighteen sources identified relationship building as a key cultural facilitator of inclusive placement environments, particularly the development of strong and positive relationships between mentor teachers and disabled pre-service teachers. Across the literature, positive relational dynamics were consistently associated with improved access to support, effective communication, and more responsive implementation of reasonable accommodations during placement. Several studies emphasised the importance of establishing relationships early in the placement process. Barwood et al. (2023), Cuervo-Rodríguez and Castañeda-Trujillo (2021), Decembrotto and Mangiatordi (2022), Harrison and Lemke (1999), and Subrayen and Suknunan (2019) described how supportive interpersonal relationships contributed to more inclusive placement experiences. In particular, Akins et al. (2001) found that pre-placement visits enabled disabled pre-service teachers to build rapport with school staff, laying the foundation for sustained support and collaboration with supervising teachers. Other studies highlighted the functional role of established relationships in enabling inclusion. Csoli and Gallagher (2012), Macleod and Cebula (2009), and Parker and Draves (2017) reported that strong stakeholder connections facilitated the practical implementation of reasonable accommodations during placement. In addition, Moser et al. (2016), Subrayen and Dhunpath (2019), and Vickers-Hulse and Whitehouse (2024) emphasised the importance of broader relational networks, including mentoring systems and Communities of Practice, in supporting disabled pre-service teachers through shared communication and collaborative problem-solving. Digital and informal forms of relationship-building were also noted, with Hanuscin and Green (2022) describing how teamwork and peer support were facilitated through online platforms such as Facebook

groups. This pattern indicates that relationship-building serves as a foundational mechanism for inclusion in placement contexts, shaping the extent to which communication, support, and reasonable accommodations are effectively implemented.

3.3.4. Cultural Facilitator: Disability as a Strength

Eight sources reported that disability can be perceived as a strength, contributing to more positive placement experiences for disabled pre-service teachers. Across the literature, disability was framed not only as compatible with teaching, but also as a potential source of professional insight and pedagogical capability. Several studies emphasised how disabled pre-service teachers themselves draw on their lived experiences to develop inclusive professional identities. Macleod and Cebula (2009) and Moore et al. (2020) described how pre-service teachers viewed their disabilities as assets that informed their emerging identities as educators committed to inclusion and change. Similarly, Gilbert (1998), O'Hara (2013), Parker and Draves (2018), and Decembrotto and Mangiatordi (2022) highlighted how disabled pre-service teachers demonstrated strengths that could be mobilised within teaching practice and viewed as valuable for their future professional roles. In addition, Siuty and Beneke (2020) positioned disabled pre-service teachers as possessing multiple assets that can be drawn upon within initial teacher education, while Bellacicco and Demo (2022) argued that disability may contribute to the development of a more reflective and enriched professional self. A notable commonality among these sources is that disability can function as a source of professional strength and identity development within ITE, challenging deficit assumptions and reframing disability as a potential resource within teaching practice.

3.4. Individual Barriers and Facilitators

To conceptualise individual personal traits, Bourdieu's notions of habitus and capital were utilised, as they possess rich explanatory power in understanding how inequalities operate. In total, eleven articles explored individual barriers to placement. The first category consisted of negatively perceived dispositions (n = 6), and the second category involved the failure to acknowledge limitations (n = 8). Twenty-six articles examined individual facilitators. Pre-service teacher agency and advocacy (n = 23) and experiences and insights (n = 9) were the two categories.

3.4.1. Individual Barrier: Negatively Perceived Dispositions

Six sources discussed barriers to inclusion arising from individual dispositions, conceptualised as habitus, which refers to patterns of perception and behaviour that shape pre-service teachers' responses to placement contexts. Across the literature, these dispositions were shown to influence engagement, confidence, and interaction within placement environments. A number of studies identified relatively minor issues, including reluctance to interact with the class (Gilbert, 1998), reduced confidence and limited self-advocacy (Keane et al., 2018), and feelings of inferiority or disadvantage that affected participation (Cuervo-Rodríguez & Castañeda-Trujillo, 2021). Wertheim et al. (1998) further noted that some pre-service teachers inadvertently generalised from their own disability experience, which could lead to misinterpretations of the needs of pupils with different disabilities. In contrast, two studies described more acute difficulties in professional conduct and emotional regulation during placement. Cook (2001, p. 425) reported instances of conflictual interaction in which a pre-service teacher was described as "dictating", while Houdyshell et al. (2021, p. 13) described a pre-service teacher's significant emotional dysregulation during placement as "melting down and losing control".

3.4.2. Individual Barrier: Not Recognising Own Support Needs

Eight publications highlighted challenges that arose when pre-service teachers did not fully recognise, acknowledge, or address disability-related support needs and their implications for placement. Cuervo-Rodríguez and Castañeda-Trujillo (2021), Gilbert (1998), and Wilson et al. (2018) reported that some pre-service teachers were reluctant to accept assistance, which could jeopardise the success of their placements. Glazzard (2017) found that some pre-service teachers were quick to criticise others while showing limited engagement with their own professional development. Similarly, Moser et al. (2016) observed that some pre-service teachers lacked awareness of the expectations associated with the transition from student to professional during placement. Several studies also identified situations in which limited recognition of support needs contributed to difficulties during placement. Bargerhuff et al. (2012) reported that a pre-service teacher's cognitive disability affected the accuracy of information provided to others, while Cook (2001) further highlighted the potential consequences for pre-service teachers and other stakeholders, including concerns about classroom safety, when support needs and professional challenges were not adequately recognised or addressed.

3.4.3. Individual Facilitator: Pre-Service Teacher Agency and Advocacy

Agency and self-advocacy were identified as important forms of cultural capital that enabled disabled pre-service teachers to navigate placement successfully. Across the 23 publications addressing this theme, agency was expressed through proactive preparation, self-advocacy, adaptation of teaching practices, and the strategic use of personal and technological resources. A recurring finding was that disabled pre-service teachers often engaged in extensive preparation before placement. This included adapting resources, observing and adopting supervising teachers' routines, and anticipating challenges by identifying and practising key vocabulary and instructional strategies (Hanuscin & Green, 2022). Such preparation enabled pre-service teachers to navigate placement expectations more effectively. Self-advocacy was also a prominent facilitator. Nine studies described pre-service teachers actively seeking and negotiating supports, including sourcing their own placements (Williams-Smith et al., 2003), communicating accommodation needs to supervising teachers and university staff (Wertheim et al., 1998), securing assistance from teaching assistants (Parker & Draves, 2017), and arranging their own transport (Papalia-Berardi et al., 2002). Several studies further highlighted the importance of educating others about disability-related support needs, including the use of assistive technologies (e.g., Lima & Ivy, 2017). Other studies demonstrated how pre-service teachers exercised agency by adapting teaching environments and drawing on their lived experiences to enhance participation. This included modifying classroom layouts to better meet individual needs (Bailes et al., 2010; Bellacicco & Demo, 2022), being open with students about disability (Bailes et al., 2010; Barwood et al., 2018; Grenier et al., 2014), and developing alternative strategies to meet teaching demands. Examples included using support from others for reading tasks (Csoli & Gallagher, 2012), teaching sign language to the class (Barwood et al., 2023), and modelling the use of spellcheckers and dictionaries as legitimate literacy supports (Riddick, 2003). Together, these studies suggest that successful placement experiences often depended on disabled pre-service teachers drawing on substantial personal agency to anticipate barriers, secure support, and adapt learning environments. While these strategies facilitated participation and success, the findings also indicate that responsibility for inclusion was frequently placed on disabled pre-service teachers themselves rather than being shared across placement stakeholders.

3.4.4. Individual Facilitator: Dispositions and Previous Experiences

Dispositions such as resilience, empathy, persistence, and open-mindedness were evident across nine publications. These studies suggested that disabled pre-service teachers frequently drew on their lived experiences to inform inclusive teaching practices and develop strong connections with learners. Several studies highlighted how personal experiences of disability fostered empathy and informed pedagogical decision-making. For example, Cuervo-Rodríguez and Castañeda-Trujillo (2021) described how pre-service teachers with dyslexia demonstrated a strong understanding of the needs of children with similar literacy difficulties. Likewise, Riddick (2003) reported that pre-service teachers were able to identify and model effective learning strategies for students, while Morgan and Burn (2000) found that pre-service teachers drew on strategies they had found helpful themselves, such as colour-coded resources and explicit spelling supports.

Other studies illustrated how disabled pre-service teachers applied creativity and problem-solving to promote inclusion. Bailes et al. (2010) described how deaf pre-service teachers carefully reflected on and adapted planned accommodations by building on students' interests, responding to individual learning preferences, and incorporating visual materials. Similarly, Csoli and Gallagher (2012), Duquette (2000), Hanuscin and Green (2022), and Moore et al. (2020) reported that pre-service teachers were motivated to teach differently because of their own educational experiences. For example, one pre-service teacher in Hanuscin and Green's (2022) study consistently questioned existing practices and actively promoted inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. Collectively, these studies highlight how disabled pre-service teachers often draw on lived experiences of disability to develop empathetic, reflective, and inclusive approaches to teaching, positioning disability as a potential source of pedagogical insight and professional strength.

4. Discussion Overview

This review synthesised literature on disabled pre-service teachers' professional placement experiences and organised the evidence into three areas. It summarised the characteristics of 70 studies, identified policy, practice and cultural barriers and facilitators using the Index for Inclusion, and examined individual factors through Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital. The following discussion draws on these findings to interpret their implications and outline directions for future research and practice.

4.1. Discussion

This scoping review synthesised the existing literature on disabled pre-service teachers and their experiences during professional placement. The findings highlight both the emergent nature of scholarship in this area and the persistent structural inequalities embedded within ITE systems internationally.

Research is heavily concentrated in a small cluster of Western countries, primarily the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, raising important questions about whose narratives are amplified and whose remain marginalised. This geographic concentration also limits the transferability of the findings across different educational and cultural contexts. The limited representation of research from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific may reflect differences in research capacity, publication practices, access to international databases, or the availability of scholarship focused specifically on disabled pre-service teachers. However, it may also indicate that barriers identified in predominantly Western contexts do not fully capture the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers in other educational systems. Differences in teacher education structures, disability legislation, institutional resources, placement arrangements, and cultural understandings of disability may shape both the nature of placement barriers and the support available to students.

As Ainscow et al. (2019) argue, systems of inclusion are shaped by national histories, policy drivers, and institutional norms; the distribution of research in this field may therefore reflect broader global inequities in knowledge production. Notably absent from the literature are countries recognised for inclusive schooling, such as the Nordic nations (Taneja-Johansson & Powell, 2024) and New Zealand (Mitchell, 2016), suggesting a potential disconnect between inclusive policy commitments for children and inclusive practices for those entering the teaching profession. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted in light of the geographic concentration of the evidence base rather than assumed to be universally applicable.

The growth of literature during the period 1996 to 2000 coincided with the international influence of the 1994 Salamanca Statement, the rise in disability rights perspectives and the implementation of national policy reforms such as widening participation policies and inherent requirements. The decline in publications between 2006 and 2010 should be interpreted cautiously. While it may indicate fluctuations in research activity, the reasons for this pattern cannot be determined from the present review. Although the increasing research activity from 2021 to 2024 reflects growing awareness of disability rights, ITE itself remains underexamined, mainly with respect to how systems include or exclude disabled pre-service teachers.

Methodologically, existing research relies heavily on qualitative approaches, often single-case or small-scale interview studies. While these approaches offer rich insights, they limit the ability to generalise findings and hinder the development of a robust evidence base for policy change. Few studies clearly articulated the disability model underpinning their work, resulting in ambiguous theoretical framings. This emphasises that conceptual clarity is essential for meaningful inclusion; future research must employ stronger theoretical grounding and greater methodological diversity, including mixed methods and longitudinal designs to track outcomes such as retention, graduation, and employment.

Most studies stem from the discipline of education, providing valuable pedagogical insights but lacking sustained engagement with the critical traditions of disability studies, intersectionality, and sociology. Slee et al. (2018) emphasise that inclusion cannot be understood solely through pedagogical accommodations but must be examined as a socio-political project shaped by power, discourse, and institutional culture. Bourdieu's conception of capital illuminates the unequal distribution of resources within ITE: cultural capital, such as familiarity with normative communication styles and the tacit expectations of school placements, often privileges non-disabled ways of being. Similarly, social capital, such as peer networks, mentoring, and role models, remains inconsistently available to disabled pre-service teachers, particularly within cultures that discourage disclosure. Slee et al. (2018) emphasise that reclaiming disability and recognising disablement requires attention to these systemic and cultural dynamics.

The literature also reveals an uneven representation of disabilities. Certain groups, such as d/Deaf pre-service teachers and those with dyslexia, are overrepresented, while others, such as those with autism, are underrepresented, and intellectual disabilities are largely absent. This suggests the presence of institutional and cultural logics that determine which disabled identities are perceived as legitimate or "manageable" within teacher education. Disabilities associated with differences in communication, independence, behaviour, or conventional conceptions of professional competence may encounter greater institutional barriers where ITE structures and practices remain aligned with normative expectations. Such patterns point to implicit hierarchies within ITE, whereby some forms of difference may align more readily with existing structures and expectations, while others remain more institutionally marginalised (Slee et al., 2019).

Overall, the themes discussed are present throughout all the time periods examined, showing a consistent interest in topics such as accommodations, feedback and communication. Notably, themes associated with ableism and the recognition of disability as a source of strength were also evident, both implicitly and explicitly, across the entire period reviewed. Although these concepts have gained greater prominence within contemporary disability scholarship, their presence in earlier studies suggests a longstanding concern with challenging deficit-based understandings of disability and recognising the contributions disabled pre-service teachers can bring to the teaching profession.

A notable finding of this review was the concentration of barriers within the practice domain, which may help explain why disabled pre-service teachers report highly variable placement experiences. Frequently reported barriers included limited accommodations, over-helping, and inconsistent support practices, all occurring at the level of day-to-day interactions and professional decision-making. These findings suggest that inclusion often depends on the knowledge, attitudes, and decisions of individual supervisors, mentors, and placement coordinators rather than on consistent institutional systems. Importantly, these practices are shaped by institutional culture, as the shared values, beliefs, expectations, and knowledge surrounding disability influence how staff understand inclusion and enact reasonable accommodations. Institutional culture also shapes how concepts such as essential teaching functions, inherent requirements, and competence standards are interpreted. When these concepts are understood as flexible and achievable through diverse ways of demonstrating competence, they can support reasonable accommodations without compromising professional standards. Conversely, rigid or deficit-oriented interpretations may reinforce exclusion by positioning disability as incompatible with teaching competence. In contrast, facilitators were distributed across policy, practice, culture, and individual domains, indicating that successful inclusion requires coordinated action across all levels of the ITE environment.

Barriers to inclusion cannot be understood solely as gaps in policy or the availability of individual accommodations. Rather, they may reflect deeper tensions between formal commitments to inclusion and the institutional practices, professional expectations, and power relations that shape decisions about competence and participation. In this context, professional competence may be constructed around normative expectations of how teachers should communicate, behave, or perform, potentially positioning disability as a deficit rather than recognising the legitimacy of diverse ways of teaching (Best et al., 2018). The persistence of such patterns despite disability legislation therefore points to a potential gap between formal rights and their enactment within ITE and placement contexts.

These findings can be understood through Ainscow and Booth's Index for Inclusion. By emphasising the interdependence of policy, culture, and practice, the Index highlights that inclusive policies alone are insufficient unless they are supported by inclusive cultures and enacted through inclusive practices. Applying the Index encourages institutions to examine the cultural assumptions, pedagogical practices, and assessment systems that may reinforce ableist conceptions of competence and teacher identity (Negrea & Gartland, 2025).

Some studies suggest that the individual dispositions of disabled pre-service teachers influence how they navigate placement, while others indicate that successful placement experiences depend on pre-service teachers' recognition and communication of their support needs. However, these individual-level factors cannot be understood in isolation from the social, cultural and institutional contexts in which they are formed and expressed. The reluctance of many pre-service teachers to disclose disabilities further illustrates how deficit-based understandings of disability continue to shape ITE. Disclosure frequently involved the risk of stigma, reduced opportunities, and increased scrutiny, suggesting that disability is often treated as a problem to be managed rather than a valued aspect of

human diversity. The difficulty of safe disclosure indicates that belonging remains unevenly realised and structurally constrained in many placement contexts.

Across the literature, barriers such as inaccessible placement settings, rigid assessment criteria, limited staff knowledge, and fragmented support systems point to a broader implementation problem. Although mentors, inclusive policies, and adaptive placements could substantially improve placement experiences, these supports were often described as isolated examples of good practice rather than features of a consistently inclusive system (Ainscow et al., 2019).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings indicate an urgent need for policy and practice reform. Governments, accrediting bodies, and universities must embed inclusion within the core structures of ITE, including placement processes through the consistent implementation of widening participation frameworks and critical review of policies such as inherent requirements. Three areas for action are particularly evident from the findings.

First, ITE providers and accrediting bodies should critically review placement eligibility requirements, including literacy and numeracy examinations and other inherent requirements, to ensure they are directly related to the essential competencies for teaching and do not unnecessarily exclude pre-service teachers. Where requirements are considered essential, providers should clearly distinguish between the competency itself and the specific method of assessment, in a manner consistent with obligations under disability and human rights legislation. This would help shift the focus from assumptions about disability and professional capability towards an assessment of whether individual pre-service teachers can meet the relevant professional standards with appropriate and reasonable adjustments.

Second, universities and placement providers should adopt proactive pre-placement planning processes to identify potential environmental, communication, and accessibility barriers before a pre-service teacher commences placement. Rather than relying primarily on pre-service teachers to disclose needs and request adjustments only when difficulties arise, placement planning should include early consultation with the pre-service teacher, consideration of the physical and learning environments, identification of required adjustments, and a clear allocation of responsibility for implementing them. Such proactive planning aligns with findings that supportive and flexible placement arrangements can facilitate participation and reduce the need for reactive responses when barriers emerge.

Third, ITE providers should strengthen disability-inclusive capability among faculty, placement staff, supervising teachers, and school leaders through sustained professional learning and inclusive pedagogical approaches, including Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2024). This should be accompanied by relational structures that enable disabled pre-service teachers to participate meaningfully in decisions about their placement experiences. Consistent with Ainscow's and Slee's work, these approaches require a shift from individualised, reactive accommodation towards proactive, systemic transformation centred on equity, participation, and belonging. Embedding inclusion within institutional cultures and relationships has the potential to improve teaching quality and, more broadly, learning environments by promoting more responsive, flexible, and inclusive educational practices.

For researchers, the findings highlight the need to foreground disabled voices and challenge ableist assumptions that shape teacher education. Co-produced and participatory approaches (Jack et al., 2024) offer meaningful ways to reframe research agendas and shift power towards those with lived experience. Future research should also examine how policy, practice, and culture shape the environments in which pre-service teachers develop, rather than locating barriers primarily in individual attributes, consistent with

human rights frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

4.2. Implications for Future Research

Future research should address major gaps in the evidence base by examining the experiences of pre-service teachers with intellectual and neurodevelopmental disabilities, as well as the intersection of disability with race, gender, and class. Comparative international research is also needed to explore how cultural, institutional, and policy contexts shape inclusion in ITE and how institutional policies are translated, or not translated, into practice. Further research should examine where structural breakdowns occur, why ableism persists despite decades of disability legislation, and how contradictions between inclusive policy and professional standards may contribute to exclusion. Greater attention is also needed to power relations within placement settings and to how constructions of 'professional competence' may operate as exclusionary mechanisms. Finally, longitudinal research is needed to examine the longer-term career trajectories of disabled teachers and whether experiences of exclusion during ITE shape their transition into and progression within the teaching profession.

Limitations

Although this scoping review was conducted rigorously and reported transparently, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. Five major academic databases were searched, supplemented by citation searching. However, handsearching discipline-specific journals (e.g., Disability & Society) may have identified additional relevant studies, particularly scholarship drawing on disability studies approaches that may not have been captured through the database search strategy. Furthermore, only English-language publications were included, potentially excluding research capturing the experiences of disabled pre-service teachers in non-English-speaking contexts (Bedenlier et al., 2025; Stern & Kleijnen, 2020). The geographic concentration of the evidence base in a small number of Western, high-income countries limits the transferability of the findings to other educational and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the inclusion of only English-language publications may have introduced language bias and excluded research from non-English-speaking contexts.

Also, the evidence base contained relatively little grey literature. Although guides, theses, and conference papers/reports were eligible for inclusion, only six of the 70 included sources were identified from these publication types, and grey literature was not systematically searched as a separate source of evidence. Consequently, relevant unpublished or less formally disseminated evidence relating to the placement experiences of disabled pre-service teachers may not have been identified. The included literature also varied in peer-review status, methodological rigour, and reporting detail. As no formal critical appraisal or hierarchy of evidence was applied, differences in the strength and credibility of individual sources could not be systematically assessed. The findings should therefore be interpreted as reflecting the evidence accessible through the search strategy rather than the full range or relative strength of potentially available evidence. Additionally, this study was not prospectively registered, and analyses should be exploratory rather than confirmatory.

A further limitation concerns the coding process. Following the initial calibration of four studies, the remaining studies were coded by single reviewers. Although coding categories were discussed and refined through regular research team meetings and a sample was subsequently audited, single-coder extraction may have introduced interpretive variation in the application of the coding framework. This may also have implications for the accuracy and consistency of the specific counts reported in the findings.

Future reviews should therefore consider including studies published in other languages and seeking evidence from a broader range of geographic contexts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of disabled pre-service teachers' experiences across diverse educational and cultural contexts. Where qualitative or interpretive coding frameworks are applied, future reviews should also consider incorporating duplicate coding or independent auditing of a sample of studies to strengthen the transparency and credibility of the synthesis.

5. Conclusions

This scoping review demonstrates that creating a more inclusive teaching profession requires coordinated action across policy, institutional and research contexts. Governments and accrediting bodies have a key role in strengthening accountability for the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers within ITE, including through clearer standards and monitoring of implementation. Higher education must move beyond individual accommodations towards institutional approaches that address the cultures, structures and practices that shape disabled pre-service teachers' experiences. Researchers should strengthen the evidence base by investigating underrepresented disability groups and diverse geographic and cultural contexts, while examining how policy and practice can better support sustainable inclusion.

Together, these priorities position the inclusion of disabled pre-service teachers not simply as an obligation of ITE providers, but as a shared responsibility across the education system. Ensuring that disabled people can enter, participate in and progress through teacher education is essential to building a more diverse teaching profession and, ultimately, more inclusive education systems.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/educsci16091536/s1, Table S1: Policy Barriers and Facilitators, Table S2: Practice Barriers and Facilitators, Table S3: Cultural Barriers and Facilitators, Table S4: Individual Barriers and Facilitators.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviation is used in this manuscript:

ITE	Initial Teacher Education

Appendix A. List of Studies Included in the Corpus (*n* = 70)

Author, Year	Open Access	First Author Country	Participant Country/ Article Context	PST Disability	Participants	Method	Design
(Akins et al., 2001)		US	US	N/S	N/A	Quali	Mixed Quali
(Antilla-Garza, 2015)		US	N/A	N/S	N/A	Quali	Case Study
(Bailes et al., 2010)		US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf	6	Quali	Vignettes
(Baldwin, 2007)	-	US	US	Learning disability	60	Quanti	Case Study
(Bargerhuff et al., 2012)	-	US	US	Brain injury, Learning disability, Physical disability	3	Quali	Case Study
(Barwood et al., 2018)	-	Australia	Australia	Hearing loss/Deaf	1	Quali	Case Study
(Barwood et al., 2023)		Australia	Australia	Hearing loss/Deaf	1	Quali	Mixed Quali
(Bellacicco, 2022)		Italy	Italy	N/S	N/S	Mixed	Cross sectional
(Bellacicco et al., 2022)		Italy	Italy	N/S	N/S	Mixed	Case Study
(Bellacicco & Demo, 2022)		Italy	N/A	N/S	N/A	Quali	Literature Review
(Brulle, 2006)	-	US	N/A	Learning disability, other	N/A	Quali	Vignettes
(Cook, 2001)	-	Canada	Canada	Low vision/Blindness	1	Quali	Case Study
(Csoli & Gallagher, 2012)		Canada	Canada	Learning disability	5	Quali	Case Study
(Cuervo-Rodríguez & Castañeda-Trujillo, 2021)		Colombia	Colombia	Dyslexia	2	Quali	Case Study
(Decembrotto & Mangiatordi, 2022)		Italy	Italy	Multiple [1]	16	Quali	Descriptive
(Duquette, 2000)	-	Canada	Canada	Learning disability, Low vision/Blindness, Physical disability	4	Quali	Mixed Quali
(Gilbert, 1998)	-	US	US	Learning disability	1	Quali	Case Study

(Glazzard & Dale, 2012)	-	UK	UK	Dyslexia	2	Quali	Vignettes
(Glazzard, 2017)		UK	UK	Dyslexia	12	Quali	Case Study
(Grenier et al., 2014)	-	US	US	Physical disability	26	Quali	Case Study
(Griffiths, 2012)	-	UK	UK	Dyslexia	16	Quali	Case Study
(Guteng et al., 2000)	-	US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf	5	Quali	Mixed Quali
(Hanuscin & Green, 2022)	-	US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf	2	Quali	Narrative Inquiry
(Harrison & Lemke, 1999)		US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf, Mental health, Physical disability	4	Quali	Vignettes
(Harrison & Lemke, 2000)		US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf, Learning disability, Physical disability	2	Quali	Case Study
(Hilton, 2021)		Australia	Australia	Multiple [2]	230	Mixed	Cross sectional
(Houdyshell et al., 2021)		US	US	Mental health	17	Quali	Instrumental Group Case Study
(Ianes, 2022)		Italy	Italy	N/S	N/S	Quali	Descriptive
(Jack et al., 2024)	-	Scotland	Scotland	ADHD, Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia	9	Quali	Case Study
(Jacobs et al., 2021)	-	UK	UK	Dyslexia	7	Quali	Case Study
(Kaya, 2014)		Turkey	Turkey	Low vision/Blindness	26	Quali	Case Study
(Keane & Heinz, 2015)		Ireland	Ireland	Multiple [3]	200+	Quanti	Cross-sectional
(Keane et al., 2018)		Ireland	Ireland	Multiple [4]	4695	Quanti	Cross-sectional
(Knight & Wadsworth, 1996)	-	US	N/A	N/S	N/A	Quali	Theoretical/Conceptual
(Komesaroff, 2005)	-	Australia	Australia	Hearing loss/deaf	2	Quali	Case Study
(Lambert & Hilton, 2024)		Australia	Australia	Multiple [5]	4	Quali	Narrative Portrait
(Leyser & Greenberger, 2008)		Israel	Israel	N/S	188	Quanti	Cross-sectional
(Leyser et al., 2011)		Israel	Israel	N/S	304	Quanti	Cross-sectional

(Lidor & Hutzler, 2019)		Israel	Israel	Multiple [6]	N/A	Quali	Theoretical/Conceptual
(Lima & Ivy, 2017)		US	US	Low vision/blindness	1	Quali	Case Study
(Luetke-Stahlman, 1998)		US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf	N/A	Quali	N/A
(Macleod & Cebula, 2009)		UK	UK	Multiple [7]	115	Mixed	Cross-sectional
(Martin et al., 1999)	-	US	China	Hearing loss/Deaf	2	Quali	Case Study
(Martin & Lytle, 2000)	-	US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf	N/A	Quali	Literature Review
(Montague, 2002)		US	US	N/S	27	Mixed	Cross-sectional
(Moore et al., 2020)	-	US	US	Multiple [8]	6	Quali	Descriptive
(Morgan & Rooney, 1997)	-	UK	UK	Dyslexia	6	Quali	Case Study
(Morgan & Burn, 2000)	-	UK	UK	Dyslexia	3	Quali	Case Study
(Moser et al., 2016)	-	US	US	ADHD, Mental health	1	Quali	Case Study
(O'Hara, 2013)		UK	UK	Dyslexia	13	Mixed	Case Study
(Oren & McLeod, 2011)		US	US	Low vision/Blindness	1	Quali	Case Study
(Papalia-Berardi et al., 2002)	-	US	US	N/S	N/A	Quali	Literature Review
(Parker & Draves, 2017)		US	US	Low vision/Blindness	6	Quali	Case Study
(Parker & Draves, 2018)		US	US	Low vision/Blindness	N/A	Quali	Descriptive
(Pope et al., 2001)	-	US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf	3	Quali	Literature Review
(Riddell & Weedon, 2014)	-	UK	UK	Dyslexia	1	Quali	Case Study
(Riddick, 2003)	-	UK	UK	Dyslexia	13	Quali	N/A
(Siuty & Beneke, 2020)		US	US	Multiple [9]	25	Quali	Critical Conversation/ Journey Mapping
(Siuty & Meyer, 2024)	-	US	US	Multiple [10]	4	Quali	Critical Action Research
(Smith, 2000)		Canada	Canada	Low vision/Blindness	1	Quali	Case Study

(Sokal et al., 2017)		Canada	Canada	N/S	10	Quali	Descriptive
(Sokal et al., 2022)		Canada	Canada	N/S	N/A	Quali	Literature Review
(Subrayen & Dhunpath, 2019)		South Africa	South Africa	Low vision/Blindness	2	Quali	Case Study
(Subrayen & Suknunan, 2019)		South Africa	South Africa	Low vision/Blindness, Physical disability	5	Quali	Descriptive
(Vickers-Hulse & Whitehouse, 2024)		UK	UK	Autism	2	Quali	Case Study
(Wakefield, 2007)		US	US	ADHD, Dyslexia, Learning disability	1	Quali	Descriptive
(Wertheim et al., 1998)		US	N/A	Dyslexia, Learning disability	N/A	Quali	Case Study
(Whitburn et al., 2024)		Australia	Australia	N/S	118	Quali	Cross sectional
(Williams-Smith et al., 2003)	-	US	US	Hearing loss/Deaf	2	Quali	Case Study
(Wilson et al., 2018)	-	Canada	Canada	N/S	14	Quali	Case Study

[1] Chronic illness, learning disability, physical disability and sensory impairment.; [2] Learning disability, dyscalculia, dyslexia and mental health; [3] Chronic illness, learning disability, emotional and physical disability; [4] Hearing loss/Deaf, learning disability, low vision/blindness, mental health, physical disability and chronic illness; [5] ADHD, auto immune, dyscalculia, dyslexia and dysgraphia; [6] Brain injury, low vision/blindness, physical disability and speech; [7] Chronic illness, dyslexia, hearing loss/Deaf, learning disability, low vision/blindness, mental health, physical, other disability not declared; [8] ADHD, dyslexia, hearing loss/Deaf, learning disability and mental health; [9] ADHD, autism, chronic illness, dyslexia, hearing loss/Deaf, learning disability, mental health and OCD; [10] ADHD, autism, chronic illness, dyslexia, emotional and mental health.

Note

[1] https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/eppi-vis/Review/Index/599 (accessed on 2 August 2026).

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