REVISTA INVECOM
ISSN en línea: 2739-0063

# Inclusive teaching in primary education: A systematic review of practices, barriers, and outcomes

*Enseñanza inclusiva en educación primaria: una revisión sistemática de prácticas, barreras y resultados*

**Received:** 10/08/2026 - **Accepted:** 24/10/2026

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**How to cite this article:**
Gutiérrez Lévano, D. D. P., & Laura-De La Cruz, K. M. (2026). Inclusive teaching in primary education: A systematic review of practices, barriers, and outcomes. *Revista InveCom*, *6*(Núm. Especial 3), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23889010

## Abstract

Inclusive education goes far beyond placing students in the classroom; it involves building flexible, accessible environments that are responsive to each child's needs. With the aim of understanding how this vision is put into practice in primary education, this analysis examined teaching methodologies, factors associated with teacher performance, barriers to implementation, and the outcomes achieved by students. To this end, empirical studies published between January 2021 and September 2026 were reviewed in the Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and SciELO databases. The information was collected using a standardized form, organized through a thematic coding system, and the methodological quality of each study was assessed using criteria tailored to its design. Of the 20 studies analyzed, 12 adopted qualitative approaches, five employed quantitative methods, and three combined both perspectives. Among the most recurrent themes were differentiated instruction, mentioned in 16 studies; teacher professional excellence, in 14; and institutional support conditions, in 12. Likewise, student agency appeared in eight studies, while immediate learning outcomes were addressed in six. The findings indicate that the most consistent practices for promoting inclusive behaviors combine accessible resources, collaboration among teachers, and active student participation. However, their implementation faces obstacles such as a lack of adequate resources, staff shortages, and insufficient training. Therefore, a tiered approach is proposed to strengthen inclusive education, and longitudinal studies are recommended to link classroom practices with student engagement and academic achievement.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, primary education, educational practices.

## Resumen

La educación inclusiva va mucho más allá de ubicar a los estudiantes en el aula, implica construir entornos flexibles, accesibles y sensibles a las necesidades de cada niño. Con el propósito de comprender cómo se concreta esta visión en la educación primaria, este análisis examinó las metodologías de enseñanza, los factores asociados al desempeño docente, las barreras para la implementación y los resultados obtenidos por los estudiantes. Para ello, se revisaron investigaciones empíricas publicadas entre enero de 2021 y septiembre de 2026 en las bases

de datos Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC y SciELO. La información se recopiló mediante un formulario estandarizado, se organizó a través de un sistema de codificación temática y la calidad metodológica de cada estudio se valoró con criterios ajustados a su diseño. De los 20 estudios analizados, 12 adoptaron enfoques cualitativos, cinco emplearon métodos cuantitativos y tres combinaron ambas perspectivas. Entre los temas más recurrentes destacaron la instrucción diferenciada, mencionada en 16 investigaciones; la excelencia profesional docente, en 14; y las condiciones de apoyo institucional, en 12. Asimismo, la agencia estudiantil apareció en ocho estudios y los resultados inmediatos del aprendizaje, en seis. Los hallazgos indican que las prácticas más consistentes para promover conductas inclusivas combinan recursos accesibles, colaboración entre docentes y participación activa de los estudiantes. Sin embargo, su implementación enfrenta obstáculos como la falta de recursos adecuados, la escasez de personal y una formación insuficiente. Por ello, se propone un enfoque por niveles para fortalecer la educación inclusiva y se recomienda desarrollar estudios longitudinales que relacionen las prácticas de aula con la participación y el rendimiento académico.

**Palabras clave:** educación inclusiva, educación primaria, prácticas educativas.

## Introduction

Inclusive education has developed from a primarily placement-based concept of disability to a wider concern with the equal attendance, engagement, learning and belonging of all kids. This change is crucial in primary schools because early classroom practices shape both access to the curriculum and the social meaning of diversity. Simply placing a kid in a mainstream classroom does not ensure they can speak, interact with classmates, access the curriculum, or make progress in their education. The evaluation conceptualizes inclusion as both an organizational goal and pedagogical effort, rather than a quantitative measure of proximity.

The mismatch is seen in the documentation of several educational setups. Opoku-Nkoom and Ackah-Jnr (2023) revealed that the Ghanaian primary schools are inclusive in their approach toward admissions and acceptance but there is a shortfall in the provision of accessible facilities and curricular adaptation. Martínez et al. (2024) found similar findings during their trips to Mexican educational facilities whose commitments to diversity were not regularly represented in everyday instructional practices. It implies that the focus is not on whether institutions profess to include, but how such inclusion is enacted in the curriculum, evaluation, classroom interactions and allocation of resources.

The classroom is a room at the institution. Görel and Hellmich (2022) interviewed 32 educational leaders and concluded the criteria for implementation include competent persons, material assets, infrastructure, and supporting attitudes. Legodi-Rakgalakane and Mokhampanyane (2022) showed that there is confusion regarding inclusive tactics and the difficulties of arranging different educational paths in South Africa. These findings suggest a problem at several levels: instructors are expected to distinguish yet the practicality of doing so is contingent upon schedules, collaborative structures, professional guidance, leadership and the physical accessibility of schools.

Teacher opinions matter but they are not the same as implementation Woodcock et al. (2022) found that primary teachers with varying levels of self-efficacy may hold comparable conceptual ideas of inclusive education but conduct diverse classroom practices. High-efficacy instructors more often highlighted access, student strengths and confidence. This study challenges the assumption that awareness raising alone will lead to inclusive teaching. Supported pedagogical repertoires, feedback and opportunities for improvement in practice.

Another conceptual shift is to view learners as agents in the construction of inclusion. Messiou et al. (2025) suggested the importance of listening to children, talking about what children say and acting on children's perceptions. Soldevila-Pérez et al. (2025) similarly linked engagement to changes in unequal power relations between adults and students. These experiences indicate that inclusive school development needs participatory approaches, but not only adult judgments regarding the needs of children.

There is also a variety of foreign evidence. Studies incorporate interviews, surveys, observation, teacher development interventions and administrative data and explore diverse demographics, national systems and outcomes. Some tests measure attitudes or self-reported actions, while others examine classroom interaction or learning outcomes. This synthesis must thus not mistake excellent attitudes with achievement outcomes or cross-sectional correlations with causal implications.

This is a comprehensive research of views and behaviors of inclusive teaching in elementary school. It brings out the most cited educational methods, teacher-related factors, institutional hindrances and enablers, and consequences on student involvement and learning.

## Methodology

To locate, evaluate and integrate empirical evidence for inclusive education in primary schools a complete evaluation was carried out in accordance with the standards outlined by PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021). The questions were searched using the following databases: Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC and SciELO, in October of 2026. The search was performed using the following terms: ("inclusive education" OR "inclusive pedagogy" OR "inclusive teaching") AND ("primary school" OR "elementary education") AND ("teacher practice" OR "classroom" OR "participation" OR "learning").

Wherever possible, controlled descriptors and database-specific terminology were employed. The study topics, eligibility criteria, extraction fields and analytic approach were pre-specified in the review methodology before full-text screening. The search period ranged from January 2021 to September 2026, and records in English, Spanish and Portuguese were eligible.

Studies were included in the review if they provided original qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method evidence relating to primary school pupils, classroom teachers, teaching assistants or school leadership, and that examined inclusive teaching practice, implementation conditions, participation or academic learning. Inclusion criteria were: a recognizable primary school environment, sufficient methodological detail and findings relevant to at least one research issue. We rejected studies that were exclusively on secondary or tertiary education, about preservice preparation only, theoretical commentary, and policy summaries and reviews that did not contain original data. Only results attributed to primary education independently were retrieved for mixed educational levels. Two reviewers separately inspected records, compared conclusions and settled conflicts by discussion; when consensus was not obtained, a third review was contacted.

The database searches yielded 386 entries (Scopus, n = 186; Web of Science, n = 105; ERIC, n = 64; SciELO, n = 31). We deleted 64 duplicates, and examined the titles and abstracts of 322 unique documents. 272 records were eliminated at this point and 50 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Thirty publications were rejected for inappropriate educational level (n = 9), review or conceptual design (n = 7), inadequate inclusion-related outcomes (n = 8) or no unique empirical results (n = 6). The final qualitative synthesis included 20 studies. Table 1 summarizes the selection procedure and Table 3 reports the key features of the selected studies.

A piloted data extraction grid was used to capture the author, year of publication, country, design, participants, inclusive instructional techniques, teacher related characteristics, resources, student engagement and learning outcomes. Two researchers separately classified reported data and then compared for consolidation of overlapping codes. An inductive–deductive thematic synthesis was undertaken followed by three stages: line-by-line coding, development of descriptive themes and higher-order analytical interpretation. Frequency summaries describe the number of included studies that covered a subject; categories were not mutually exclusive. Effect estimates could not be pooled due to heterogeneity in individuals, treatments and outcomes across trials, and synthesis was narrative. The methodological evaluation was conducted using design-specific criteria from the Joanna Briggs Institute critical appraisal framework (Aromataris et al., 2024).

**Table 1**

*Flow of study identification, eligibility assessment and inclusion*

| PRISMA stage | Number | Decision or reason |
|---|---|---|
| Records identified across four databases | 386 | Scopus 186; Web of Science 105; ERIC 64; SciELO 31 |
| Duplicate records removed | 64 | Reference matching and manual review |
| Unique records screened | 322 | Title and abstract examination |
| Records excluded at screening | 272 | Outside topic, design or educational level |
| Full-text reports assessed | 50 | Detailed eligibility assessment |
| Full-text reports excluded | 30 | Level 9; review 7; outcomes 8; no empirical data 6 |
| Studies included in synthesis | 20 | 12 qualitative; 5 quantitative; 3 mixed methods |

## Results

The 20-research included 15 national contexts, with Spain (n = 4) contributing the most, followed by the United Kingdom and South Africa (n = 2); the other papers were from 11 different nations. The most productive year was 2024 (n = 7), followed by 2022 (n = 6), 2025 (n = 4), 2023 (n = 2) and 2021 (n = 1). Twelve studies employed

qualitative designs, five used quantitative techniques and three used hybrid methodologies. The distribution is substantially right biased toward contextual understandings of inclusion with a smaller corpus of direct comparative research.

The range of participants and sources of evidence was impressive too. Opoku-Nkoom and Ackah-Jnr (2023) surveyed 74 headteachers, Görel and Hellmich (2022) interviewed 32 principals and Durán-Martínez et al. (2024) polled 300 primary-school teachers. Other research involved classroom observation, participatory inquiry and professional learning interventions. These differences needed outcome classification before synthesis. Differentiated teaching was documented in 16 studies throughout the corpus, teacher preparation or self-efficacy in 14, institutional factors in 12, child engagement was foregrounded in eight and explicit learning indicators in six. Frequencies were estimated among 20 studies considered allowing for overlapping coding.

**Table 2**

*Publication distribution by year in the included studies (n = 20)*

| Year | Studies | Frequency bar |
|---|---|---|
| 2021 | 1 | ■ |
| 2022 | 6 | ■■■■■■ |
| 2023 | 2 | ■■ |
| 2024 | 7 | ■■■■■■■ |
| 2025 | 4 | ■■■■ |

Publication counts summarize the studies included in this review, not the global output of the field. The concentration in 2024 and 2025 provided recent descriptions of classroom differentiation, institutional change and participation, while earlier studies contributed evidence on professional learning and structural barriers.

**Table 3**

*Study characteristics and central findings in the 20 included empirical articles*

| Study | Setting | Design / participants | Evidence relevant to inclusion |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vidal (2025) | Spain | Qualitative multiple cases; six teachers/four schools | Educators' stories highlight struggles with staffing, support in the classroom, and access. |
| Opoku-Nkoom & Ackah-Jnr (2023) | Ghana | Survey; 74 primary headteachers | Inclusivity culture and leadership set the stage for accessibility, but curriculum adaptation and infrastructure are still lacking. |
| Görel & Hellmich (2022) | Germany | Qualitative interviews; 32 principals | The need for staff, education, institutional facilities and positive attitudes was identified. |
| Soldevila-Pérez et al. (2025) | Spain | Two cases; primary-school case considered | The participation of students and the redistribution of power in educational practices enhance their inclusive and democratic nature. |
| Legodi-Rakgalakane & Mokhampanyane (2022) | South Africa | Interviews; 14 practitioners from five schools | Implementation is hindered by limited practical understanding and difficult to differentiate |
| Martínez et al. (2024) | Mexico | Classroom observation in two primary schools | Documented practice was a hindrance to inclusive dialog. |
| Sánchez et al. (2021) | Spain | Collaborative lesson study; three teachers | Collaborative planning and student voice resulted in self-reflection and a shift in teacher perspective. |
| Woodcock et al. (2022) | Australia | Qualitative responses from 41 primary teachers | High self-efficacy is associated with strengths-based, achievable approaches. |
| Salas & Rentería (2024) | Peru | Cross-sectional administrative data; schooling-level subgroup | No significant average peer effect on non-SEN performance; heterogeneity observed in subgroups. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revelian (2022) | Tanzania | Mixed-method field study; 76 respondents | Differentiation and teacher preparation are limited by resource constraints, and lack of training. |
| Beazidou (2023) | Greece | Structured observation in one primary school | Socio-pedagogical interaction and collaboration were underused. |
| Buitrago (2024) | Colombia | Narrative accounts; 17 primary teachers | Psychological and pedagogical factors varied by disability and context. |
| Achamrah (2022) | Morocco | Interviews; ten primary teachers | Teachers endorsed inclusion but expressed concerns about severe disability. |
| Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist (2024) | Sweden | Professional-development cases; five autistic pupils | Teacher reports improved after training; pupil and parent views changed less. |
| Hove & Phasha (2022) | South Africa | Qualitative primary-school study | Ability grouping persisted in tension with policy on inclusion. |
| Messiou et al. (2025) | United Kingdom | Mixed-method participatory action research; children aged 5–11 | Dialogic pupil voice linked reflection to concrete school actions. |
| Durán-Martínez et al. (2024) | Spain | Cross-sectional survey; 300 bilingual teachers | Materials and assessment practices reported more often than collaborative pedagogies. |
| Losberg & Zwozdiak-Myers (2024) | United Kingdom | Year-4 case study; teacher/assistant interviews | Whole-class opportunities, flexible support and capability-focused pedagogy emerged. |
| Ali et al. (2024) | Fiji | Survey/case-study report; 330 primary teachers | Positive dispositions coexisted with insufficient support and training needs. |
| Birot-Gautron et al. (2025) | France | Mixed-method questionnaire and narrative-dilemma analysis | Teamwork and ethical judgement were salient to multigrade inclusive practice. |

**Inclusive pedagogies, access and participation**

The most often reported practice was differentiated instruction (16/20; 80.0%). The main methods were adaptable materials, flexible grouping, various paths for displaying knowledge, multimodal explanations and adjustments to evaluation. Durán-Martínez et al. (2024) reported varied resources and assessment procedures in bilingual primary-school contexts, whereas Losberg and Zwozdiak-Myers (2024) connected inclusive pedagogy to whole-class opportunities and flexible adult help. Cross-study synthesis showed that discrete changes were less durable than comprehensive routines linking planning, teaching and feedback.

Classroom organization was a closely related topic. Losberg and Zwozdiak-Myers (2024) advocate for inclusive teaching that offers opportunity for all students, flexible adult assistance, and a focus on children's strengths rather than fixed labels of deficit. However, Hove and Phasha (2022) have proven that ability clustering can still occur even in circumstances where the stated policy is one of inclusivity. The results suggest a real concern that teachers are using grouping practices to control classrooms or differentiate education, while at the same time limit opportunities for demanding work or different peers. Inclusive pedagogy should consider the social framework of education as well as the substance of the training.

Student participation was anticipated, and also used in numerous research as a means for identifying and addressing impediments. In a joint research by Messiou et al. (2025) students were given the opportunity to express their views, discuss and take part in the reform of their school. Another manifestation of democratic engagement was the opposition to the uneven distribution of decision-making authority between adults and children (Soldevila-Pérez et al., 2025). The findings imply that student feedback can result in more relevant classroom improvements as the problems perceived by educators may not match the challenges faced by students. However, advances in participation should not be conflated with improvements in intellectual accomplishment.

**Teacher capacity, collaborative development and practice**

Teacher-related variables were found in 14 research (70.0%). More consistent inclusive practice was regularly linked to self-efficacy, practical pedagogical expertise and the ability to recognize classroom impediments. Woodcock et al. (2022) demonstrated how instructors who favor inclusion in principle may differ in their enactments. Seven studies in the coded synthesis examined collaborative planning or specialized consultation, while nine

examined formal or informal professional learning. In the absence of time, supplies and expertise, teachers' positive attitudes alone did not enough.

Professional learning seemed to be most promising when located in the everyday work of teachers. Sánchez et al. (2021) used collaborative lesson study to integrate the preparation, observation and reflection of lessons with the reevaluation of educators' perspectives on inclusion. Petersson-Bloom and Holmqvist (2024) found that teachers' attitudes changed due to professional development with autistic children, but students' and parents' attitudes changed to a lower degree. This divergence is a caveat against using teacher satisfaction or self-reported confidence alone as the measures of program efficacy. Training should be assessed through application in the classroom and, where possible, outcomes should be communicated directly by the students and their families.

**Institutional barriers and enabling conditions**

Twelve studies (60.0%) reported institutional facilitators and limitations. The barriers were inaccessible physical environment, poorly trained staff, high class sizes, limited resources for modifications and lack of time for team preparation. Effective leadership, active engagement with experts and families, flexible resource allocation, and inclusive educational settings made possible the alternative approach to implementation. Opoku-Nkoom and Ackah-Jnr (2023) recognized Ghana's inclusive culture and the importance of real issues, while Görel and Hellmich (2022) cited the infrastructure and management of schools as key requirements for implementation.

The relationship between the professional and institutional components is very important. Even the most prepared teacher may find it difficult to use flexible assessment practices when class numbers are enormous, there is a lack of professional assistance, or school facilities are inaccessible. Similarly, investments in infrastructure may have little educational payoff unless teachers are given the opportunity to work together to make modifications and evaluate their impact. Birot-Gautron et al., 2025) emphasize cooperation and professional judgment in complicated multigrade situations. The synthesis consequently supports a multilevel implementation model in which institutional support extends the variety of activities accessible to teachers and teachers adapt those conditions into classroom possibilities.

**Learning evidence and limitations of inference**

Evidence on outcomes was more focused on involvement than on accomplishment. Pupil voice, peer interaction or belonging was a prominent notion in eight research (40.0%) while six studies (30.0%) showed direct markers of academic learning. Participatory research reported increased ability to recognize classroom barriers and negotiate accessible procedures. In the analytic analysis of outcome reports, five of six research reported positive or neutral learning patterns while one study reported varied results across subgroups. The range of instruments and designs precluded estimation of a common intervention impact.

Interpretation of these findings was affected by quality concerns. those that used direct observation and many informants provided better evidence of enacted practice than those that relied exclusively on instructor impressions. The participation literature provided especially rich accounts of real classroom experience, but seldom referred to pre–post academic assessments. Thus, the findings confirm the practicality and educational importance of inclusive practices, although the extent of long-term academic impacts has yet to be determined.

**Table 4**

*Thematic synthesis of inclusive practice, implementation conditions and outcomes*

| Analytical theme | Studies, n/20 | Percent | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Differentiated teaching and assessment | 16 | 80.0% | Flexible materials, instructional routes and assessment |
| Teacher preparation and self-efficacy | 14 | 70.0% | Applied skills and confidence influence enactment |
| Institutional conditions and resources | 12 | 60.0% | Leadership, specialist staffing and accessibility |
| Student voice and participation | 8 | 40.0% | Learners identify obstacles and support decisions |
| Direct academic learning indicators | 6 | 30.0% | Outcome evidence remains less common |

**Table 5**
*Analytical framework for inclusive teaching and pupil outcomes*

| Institutional conditions | Teacher enactment | Pupil experiences and outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| Leadership, staffing, accessible facilities, planning time, family and specialist collaboration | Adaptive assessment and materials; whole-class opportunities; strengths-based support; collaborative lesson study | Access, voice, participation, belonging and academic progress |
| ENABLES OR CONSTRAINS → | ENACTS OPPORTUNITIES → | REQUIRES DIRECT MEASUREMENT |
| Feedback from pupils and families ← | Reflective review and teaching adaptation ← | Observed barriers and experiences ← |

## Discussion

The summary finds that inclusive education is contingent upon consistency between educational commitments, classroom practices and school level capabilities. One central pattern is the gap between the recognition of diversity as a principle and the extent to which education is adapted to enable meaningful access. This result is based on the contrast made by Woodcock et al. (2022) between teachers' inclusive views and their pedagogical choices. This is also consistent with observational data that officially inclusive schools may maintain classroom norms that limit participation (Martínez et al. 2024). Thus, any measure of inclusion based on student enrollment or institutional self-reporting would fail to capture important characteristics of teaching quality.

Second contribution is about the relation between professional development and organizational preparedness. Studies suggest that teacher self-efficacy is developed in environments that favor or limit experimentation. While collaborative lesson study gives possibilities to explore actual instructional decisions (Sánchez et al., 2021), sustained differentiation also needs planning time, physical access, specialized assistance, and school leadership (Görel & Hellmich, 2022). Thus, research points to integrated improvement measures, not separate seminars or compliance-driven actions.

The methodological and practical factor of include children's viewpoints is vital. Messiou et al. (2025) and Soldevila-Pérez et al. (2025) demonstrate how discourse with pupils might reveal participation barriers that are not easily obvious to adults. This is a challenge to assessment systems that are based only on the impressions of teachers or on administrative indications. At the same time, participation is a substantial outcome in its own right and should be considered alongside, not in lieu of, academic success. Future research would benefit from metrics that relate student reported experience to classroom observation and longitudinal success.

The research does not provide a simple binary assessment of inclusive education as being either beneficial or detrimental to the academic achievement of other learners. Salas and Rentería (2024) could not find either statistically significant average negative effect from peers in their analysis but did find variability that points to further inquiry. This might be in part due to the disparities in educational resources, teacher training and teaching methods. These are reasonable contentions but are not commonly accepted practices. Policy should depend on the situations that must be created for it to be implemented, not on generalizations that can be taken from one examination.

However, the evaluation was constrained in its capacity to establish direct comparisons. The investigation was powered with a number of ways. Interviews and narratives and interviews disclosed the professional inclinations and perceived problems. The results were indicative of obvious discrepancies. Collaborative inquiry demonstrated several approaches of transformation. Administrative statistics were a more precise probe of achievement. It would be better to think of their findings as cumulative, rather than both cumulative and interaction effects. Self-report of confidence and consistency of application does not allow causation to be established or the substitution of an actual evaluation of children's learning.

Some limits need to be taken into account in the analysis. The review included a range of educational environments, data collection methodologies and performance measures. Twelve of the twenty investigations were largely qualitative. This greatly limits the capacity to statistically aggregate data. Only six research provided completely persuasive evidence of learning. Nevertheless, five of the research had substantial methodological problems, while several of the investigations employed targeted samples. Publication and translation limitations may have prevented the inclusion of certain important research. The frequency with which a subject is talked about is not always an indicator of its usefulness. In contrast, search coherence, independent evaluation and systematic review contribute to the transparency of the synthesis. This discrepancy can be partly due to differences in

educational resources, teacher training and teaching styles. These are acceptable arguments, yet they are not universally accepted practices. I think policy should depend on the scenarios that must be produced for policy to be implemented, not generalizations that can be made from one investigation.

However, the extent to which the examination was able to make direct comparisons was limited. The probe was bolstered in a variety of ways. Interviews and narratives and interviews pointed to professional trends and perceived issues. The results were obviously divergent. Collaborative investigation revealed several modes of transformation. Administrative statistics provide a more refined investigation of performance. It would be better to think of their findings as cumulative, rather than both cumulative and interaction effects. Self-report of confidence and consistency of application does not allow causation to be established or the substitution of an actual evaluation of children's learning.

There are several boundaries that should be taken into account in the evaluation. Throughout the study, numerous educational contexts, data gathering techniques, and performance measures were considered. Twelve of the twenty questions were qualitative in character. Therefore, the ability to statistically integrate data is greatly reduced. Only 12 studies provided wholly compelling evidence of learning. However, five of the studies had major methodological flaws, and several of the studies used specific samples. The inclusion of key studies may have been hindered by limits arising from publishing and translation. Being a hot topic of debate is no assurance of value. The search for coherence, independent examination and detailed inspection lead to a better clarity of overall synthesis.

There are many practical consequences. Teachers need to use adaptive resources to practice engaging, strengths-based pedagogy, and educational institutions need to provide the infrastructure, staff training, and time for collaborative planning. Leadership teams are also needed to work with educators and families to analyze the barriers that lay in the way of implementation. The supervision process must incorporate student input on their sense of inclusiveness and welcome and the learning opportunities and avenues for success they see. For inclusive improvement, formal policy alone is not as crucial as the quality of execution. This is the nature of inclusive improvement.

## Conclusions

In elementary school inclusive teaching was most clearly defined by flexible instruction, accessible resources, responsive evaluation and chances for child engagement. The most frequent practice in the corpus was differentiation, available in 16 of the 20 studies, whose effectiveness depended on implementation consistency, not on individual adjustments in the classroom.

Teacher preparation, self-efficacy and collegial cooperation were identified as important implementation requirements Fourteen research looked at these elements, showing that professional learning should include lesson design, reflection in context, guided practice and monitoring of visible classroom improvement.

School-level factors greatly impacted the sustainability of inclusion. Twelve research reported constraints or enabling elements related to infrastructure, staffing, leadership and coordination. Consequently, educational policy must integrate instructional support with resource allocation and institutional accountability.

Pupil voice and assessments of learning are key goals. Eight research reported on student engagement and only six studies reported on direct academic markers. Future comparative and longitudinal studies should link adaptations, belonging and verifiable development, to separate short-term implementation from enduring educational benefit.

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**AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:** The authors declare that both actively participated in all stages of the research process and share full responsibility for the present manuscript. They also confirm that there are no conflicts of interest that could influence the results or conclusions presented.