

Investigating the education of preservice teachers for inclusive education: Meta-ethnography

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Changing attitudes and perceptions allied to the values of diversity and inclusive education is a recognised challenge in ITE (Initial Teacher Education). Using meta-ethnographic methods, this article aims to describe how preservice teachers' attitudes or perceptions towards inclusive education can be developed during ITE. The results show the importance of recognising the value of practical experiences, reflecting with others, and researching and transforming situations of inclusive education as essential activities for generating positive attitudes or perceptions towards inclusive education. As researchers, we have confidence in the studies conducted by other ethnographers and their value for clarifying and extending analytical generalisations across time and space. As teachers/researchers, we highlight the relevance of working as organic intellectuals acting in the interest of education and social justice.

Keywords: Diversity; Ethnography; Inclusive education; Preservice teacher's attitude; Teacher education

Introduction

Twenty-seven years ago, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994, 5) introduced the principle that 'schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and linguistic conditions'. More recently, in 2015, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2015), a global plan of action for the future, proposed an extension of the Salamanca declaration on inclusive education to include conceptions of social, cultural and economic barriers to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (UN 2015, 14). The extension incorporated a broadened concept of inclusive education associated with migration, mobility, language, ethnicity and intergenerational poverty. This was an acknowledgement that all learners are unique individuals, that diversities and differences are to be expected as an ordinary aspect of human

development, and that addressing diversity issues should be an imperative, not an alternative, for all teachers (Florian 2017). There was a paradigm shift to a fuller concept of inclusive education. It included introducing theoretically grounded legislative developments for inclusive practices and addressing teacher education based on the challenges teacher educators face (Bagley and Beach 2015; Menter and Flores 2021). Classroom teaching for social justice became a ‘common ground’ underpinning inclusive education (Sorkos and Hajisoteriou 2021).

Many European countries, including Spain, have followed the UN (2015) and begun to reform their ITE policy to support inclusive education in diverse classrooms (Florian and Camedda 2020). Some universities have provided content knowledge on difference and diversity by adding courses to existing programmes, or they have ‘infused’ specialist knowledge into existing courses. Other universities have reinforced the idea of theoretically compatible and contextualised content based on broader pedagogical and curriculum knowledge. In other cases, the interest in linking courses and field experiences within a conceptual framework has led to several initiatives providing explicit benefits in terms of developing positive attitudes and self-efficacy (Coates, Harris, and Waring 2020).

Some studies have shown that university teacher education does not always lead to significant changes in attitudes (Walton and Rusznyak 2020) or prepare preservice teachers for the education challenge (Acquah, Szelei, and Katz 2020; Coates, Harris, and Waring 2020; González-Gil, Martín-Pastor, and Orgaz 2017; Lancaster and Bain 2020; Robinson 2017). However, other studies have highlighted the major role ITE has played in helping preservice teachers develop social awareness processes (Bagley 2019; Vigo-Arazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019) and a positive attitude enabling them to address inclusive education (Ammah and Hodge 2005; Guðjónsdóttir and

Óskarsdóttir 2020; Kumar and Hamer 2013). In this context, programmes are providing important and promising insights for thinking about how course content can be aligned with the values of respect for diversity and human dignity to reinforce the possibility of connections between coursework and field experiences that potentially build cumulative knowledge for inclusive teaching in ITE (Bullock 2016; Flores 2017; Rouse 2010; Walton and Rusznyak 2020).

In this article we have made use of ethnographic research on changes in attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education in ITE. Ethnography involves minutely detailed and contextual micro-studies in institutional and other cultural contexts to produce more complete knowledge. We have conducted our ethnographic research in Spain (Vigo, Soriano, and Julve 2010; Vigo and Soriano 2014; Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). Florian and Camedda (2020), Guðjónsdóttir and Óskarsdóttir (2020) and Walton and Rusznyak (2020) have recently demonstrated similar research interest in other countries and have provided valuable individual studies. However, the analysis of several individual investigations can allow generalisation possibilities (Noblit and Hare 1988; Noblit 2019). This is what we have attempted in this article. Using meta-ethnographic methodological approach, this article aims to answer the following research question:

Which preservice teaching practices do the individual ethnographies identify as contributing to developing positive perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education among preservice teachers in ITE?

In this article, we will use qualitative and ethnographic studies to illustrate the ways in which ITE can help foster positive perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education in both specific instances and generally across a variety of cases. As shown

by critical ethnographic studies, individuals do not literally reproduce the culture of their previous generations, but rather improvise with existing cultural forms by moving them back and forth across boundaries to create new cultural forms (Jeffrey and Troman 2004; Willis and Trondman 2000). However, they do this under material conditions inherited from the past, over which they have little or no real control and that can weigh heavily on their ambitions and achievements (Bagley and Beach 2015; Giroux and McLaren 1986; Willis and Trondman 2000). Ultimately, our ambition is to contribute new generalised knowledge, and ethnography addresses these contextual features.

Theory and methodology

From the analytical perspective of critical theory, we understand university teacher education as a space where positive perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education can develop or, alternatively, can be undermined or opposed (Donche, Endedijk, and Van Daal 2015; Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman 2008; Vigo-Arazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). By exploring ethnographic research on university teacher education practices and how they can affect preservice teachers' perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education, we can identify which of the two unfold, how, and possibly why. Organic intellectualism plays a role here. Following Gramsci (1971), an organic intellectual works actively toward the liberation of governed workers and the whole society from the chains of the state hegemony as a public intellectual. Using meta-ethnography, our aim is to help improve current scientific understanding of training teachers in inclusive education.

Meta-ethnography enables us to combine the ethnographic knowledge generated in several individual research projects in a way that allows unique generalisation possibilities from minutely detailed and contextual micro-studies of densely described institutional contexts (Beach et al. 2014; Eisenhart 2018; Noblit and Hare 1988; Noblit

2019). As experienced ethnographic researchers ourselves, we know why (and when) we should trust ethnographic studies conducted by other ethnographers. In our experience we have seen how ethnographic research in the university teacher education classrooms has contributed to transform attitudes and preservice teachers' perceptions (i.e. Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). Following Beach et al. (2014) we have conducted our research considering the three phases of the process: selection, analysis and synthesis. The work performed is outlined below.

Selection process

The first step involved searching for studies related to preservice teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. According to Noblit and Hare (1988), the aim of this selection of studies is to cover a variety of parameters concerning data analysis, information collection, study period, countries and contexts. A literature search was conducted in the ScienceDirect, Ethnography and Education, ResearchGate and Scopus databases. The searches in these databases used descriptors such as: 'preservice teachers' education', 'attitude', 'perception', 'diversity', 'inclusion' 'inclusive education' and 'social justice'.

To downscale the meta-ethnography, given that the demographic profiles of nations and their schools have changed and diversified at an increasingly fast pace in the new globalisation era, especially in the last two decades, we concentrated on English- and Spanish-language papers published between 2000 and 2020. This means we accessed publications in the field in the two major international/global languages, alongside Arabic and, thereby, had access to an extremely broad array of international literature.

A total of 924 research papers were obtained in the initial search using the

extensive search criteria above. As this was an unmanageable amount, we decided to apply further selection criteria that are part of the methodological meta-ethnographic approach, by adding the terms ethnography/ic to the search string. The number of articles reduced significantly and in a second selection step we read the titles and abstracts to select: (i) unrepeated articles and (ii) studies whose main aim was to analyse perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education. In some cases, abstract and title scanning did not suffice and we had to read the full texts to glean the information. This procedure resulted in 29 articles.

In the third and last step of the selection process, both researchers reread and checked all 29 papers. After reading them in depth, in line with the aim of the meta-analysis, we considered the most significant and relevant ones. In this final step, and to make our work more systematic and effective, we established some references to arrive at the final selection. After discussing our findings with each other, this process led to a final selection that included 15 studies (see Table 1). These were studies with (i) ethnographic methods, (ii) a clearly described purpose, deep and detailed analysis and clear statement of findings and (iii) variation in terms of type of school, length, data collection methods, approach and interpretive perspective. Decisions related to the selection process were based on the consensus of two reviewers and continuous communication between them. Finally, it is important to highlight that not all the articles selected for the meta-ethnography used the term 'inclusive education' directly. Cross-cutting concepts from the field of inclusive education such as diversity, multiculturalism, equity or social justice were explicitly or implicitly used in them instead.

Table 1 below presents the selected cases in terms of the author(s), year and country of publication, topic, participants and study duration, information collection and

data analysis. It contains research papers published from 2000 to 2020 from different countries on preservice teachers in primary and secondary education.

[Table 1 near here].

The analysis process

The second phase involved reading, rereading and in-depth analysis of the selected studies with the intention of cross-translating the articles and generating a new level of interpretation (Noblit and Hare 1988). According to several authors (Atkinson and Coffey 2003; Noblit and Hare 1988; Strauss and Corbin 1998), the focus of work in this phase is based on grounded theory development (Charmaz 2006).

The first step of our analysis involved inductive initial coding. As a way of conceptualising the data, all the papers were repeatedly read and each segment of data was named. Examples of codes obtained were: modifying, failing training, redefining, experiencing diversity, discussing, connecting theory to practice, confronting, changing dispositions, researching, reflecting on experiences, deconstructing or reconstructing.

Secondly, the list of codes for each included study were explored, compared and related through axial coding. The most relevant and frequent initial codes were synthesised, integrated and organised through a combination of inductive and deductive thinking. Examples of the first subcategories obtained are included in Table 2. During this phase and through discussion between the researchers, the studies were related by making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences. Memo writing and notes related to the subcategories allowed us to find common and recurring concepts and identify six theoretical categories that are presented in Table 2.

The subcategories, categories and themes obtained in the process are also shown in Table 2. Each new step of the process was characterised by re-examining previous

data and involved going back and forth from one paper to another. This back-and-forth work was supplemented by continuous feedback between the two researchers and the use of visual representations to express relationships, patterns and connections between the subcategories and categories created from our individual interpretations.

[Table 2 near here].

Synthesis

The third phase, synthesis, involved an attempt to deepen the analysis and to avoid only producing a description of the practices performed with preservice teachers concerning inclusive education in their ITE. This led to a reconceptualisation and a more comprehensive and generalisable understanding of the role of university teacher education. Noblit and Hare (1988) described three forms of meta-ethnographic synthesis: reciprocal, refutational and line of argument. Reciprocal synthesis entails incorporating concepts from one study into others. Refutational synthesis compares a range of concepts from several studies that appear to contradict one another. Line of argument synthesis draws several aspects of the topic under study together in a new interpretation. Although reciprocal synthesis and line of argument are the basis of this work, collectively their aim is to juxtapose concepts/metaphors with each other when translating studies and trying to determine what the possible relationships between them and their results might be. Two important questions guiding the process concern whether there are common types of translations and whether some translations or concepts can incorporate those from other studies to generate a more encompassing over-arching synthesis and a line of argument narrative (the key intended outcome from meta-ethnography). The similarities, differences and often silences between the papers have contributed to creating a line of argument based on recognising, reflecting and

researching in ITE as essential activities for generating positive attitudes or perceptions towards inclusive education. As researchers, we hope this analysis will result in certain levels of generalisation about the object of study on how the ITE process of preservice teachers unfolds regardless of where it takes place.

Results

The meta-analysis of the 15 ethnographies included in Table 1 generated three main themes relating to essential activities in ITE for generating positive attitudes or perceptions towards inclusive education among preservice teachers. They form three independent themes with connections between them in several studies. These are specifically the following:

(1) Recognising the value of practical experiences. When successful, ITE fostering inclusive education takes the preservice teachers' personal experiences from their life and work placements in schools as a starting point. All the articles stress the importance of recognising the value of practical experience except one, but some place special emphasis on it, particularly Barnes (2006), Causey, Thomas, and Armento (2000), Coates, Harris, and Waring (2020), Mills and Ballantyne (2010), Mills (2012), Robinson (2017) and Saiz and Susinos (2018).

(2) Reflecting with others. Some articles, particularly Acquah and Commins (2013), Lambe and Bones (2006), Mills and Ballantyne (2010), Mills (2012) and Greenfield, Mackey, and Nelson (2016) directly, but by association through reciprocal synthesis also Robinson (2017), Saiz and Susinos (2018) and Vigo-Arazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet (2019) identify how interaction between teachers and preservice teachers in the university teacher education

classroom contributes to deconstructing and decolonising their previous beliefs through the connection between theory and practice.

(3) Researching and reconstructing to identify and to transform forces or resistance that shape attitudes. The social interaction and cognitive processes behind identity reconstruction are largely understudied. Several of the ethnographies aimed to explore these matters, specifically Vigo, Soriano, and Julve (2010), Robinson (2017), Saiz and Susinos (2018), and Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet (2019).

Recognising the value of practical experiences

Highlighting and examining personal experiences, work placements or real professional situations (internships) with preservice teachers in ITE helps to direct positive attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive teaching practices (Donche, Endedijk, and Van Daal 2015). Experiencing practical situations in ITE with pupils that have a range of abilities helps challenge expectations and develop confident attitudes that can change preservice teachers' perspectives based on discourses or deficit models towards ability discourses (Coates, Harris, and Waring 2020; Donche, Endedijk, and Van Daal 2015). These practical experiences are, therefore, highly significant events with a huge influence on changing or modifying the preservice teacher's perception or attitude to differences among pupils and how to think about and deal with them (Ritter et al. 2019).

Several articles highlight how considering personal experiences of preservice teachers in ITE promote a change in their attitudes. Mills and Ballantyne (2010) researching on attitudes towards diversity and commitments to social justice show evidence of greater openness towards diversity as a result of the use of preservice

teachers' personal experience. This research involved a comparative ethnography between two preservice teachers:

In Sydney, almost everyone I met was born overseas, with very different lives... I formed new perceptions of race, gender and class. /.../ I learnt much about the ethnic communities when I was nursing and formed my own generalisations away from media views and gained insights into community and cultural systems. (Mills and Ballantyne 2010, 451)

/.../ I have experienced firsthand how uncomfortable it is to feel out and not understand what is happening around you. I will take this experience with me into my classroom. (Mills and Ballantyne 2010, 452)

Experiencing diversity, whether personally or vicariously, emerged as one of the crucial factors for determining how preservice teachers' perceptions and attitudes changed. Several studies (e.g. Acquah and Commins 2013; Vigo, Soriano, and Julve 2010; Causey, Thomas, and Armento 2000; Greenfield, Mackey, and Nelson 2016; Kang and Hyatt 2010; Mills 2012; Mills and Ballantyne 2010) highlight how such experiences influence preservice teachers internship experiences in schools and their attitude towards inclusive education. One example appears in the study by Greenfield, Mackey, and Nelson (2016), rooted in the value of fieldwork experiences with pupils with learning disabilities. One preservice teacher wrote in her reflective journal about the benefits of her time in an inclusive classroom: 'more hands-on experience in a classroom to feel a lot more comfortable' (Greenfield, Mackey, and Nelson 2016, 340). From a cultural diversity perspective, in Causey, Thomas, and Armento (2000) it is also possible to see how internship in the school has a great impact on preservice teachers' attitudes. Another preservice teacher said:

“/.../ This has been a great experience for me, because I have lost some of my prejudice and become more aware of it also. /.../ This experience showed me the importance of

needing to know your various pupils and their cultures” (Causey, Thomas, and Armento 2000, 37).

In another case, Coates, Harris, and Waring (2020) identified the relevance of early primary school experiences, focusing on individual differences in learners and how teachers cater for these. The study highlights the value of direct experience in a classroom with pupils with special educational needs for preservice teachers. It is also recognised in the comments made in interviews. For instance:

I just think, no matter how much someone tells you something or shows you something, you wouldn't be able to do it unless you put it into practice...the best exposure is to teach someone with a disability. If you don't know the individual, you won't be able to apply it and see what works for them. (Coates, Harris, and Waring 2020, 15)

Preservice teachers' experiences of interactions with the school mentor are also highlighted as contributing to changing perceptions and attitudes. Examples can be found in Mills (2012) in her research on attitudes towards social justice. In an interview, one of the preservice teachers began to reflect both positively and negatively:

.../ In the first week (my supervising teachers on practicum) tried to condition me into their mentality. They would say 'Just don't worry about (the international pupils) /... / They've done the minimum English; they're never going to pass'. And they never did. .../ But none of the teachers had the attitude of trying to raise that standard .../. It was a real eye opener. (Mills 2012, 272).

Practical experiences are considered by ethnographies such as Barnes 2006; Causey, Tomas, and Armento 2020; Mills and Ballantyne 2010; Hemmings and Woodcock 2011; Mills 2012; Robinson 2017; Saiz and Susinos 2018; Coates, Harris, and Waring 2020). They considered practical experiences as a crucial moment for preservice teachers to change perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education. The

opportunity to consider ITE personal experiences, work placements or real professional situations and recognise diversity in the classrooms allows preservice teacher to reflect on their previous experiences and destabilise existing beliefs about teaching practices (Walton and Rusznyak 2020).

Reflecting with others

Greenfield, Mackey, and Nelson (2016) and Mills (2012) emphasise the need for and value of creating situations in the university teacher education classroom in which preservice teachers can reflect on their practical experiences. Confronting experiences and beliefs with others can help make them aware of differences between children and destabilise preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions based on a deficit model. Reflecting with others is also identified in the ethnographies as helping to change preservice teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education, as it encourages them to address other interpretation frameworks (Robinson 2017; Saiz and Susinos 2018) and can challenge them to rethink their beliefs (Robinson 2017). In the research by Coates, Harris, and Waring (2020) aimed at assessing the effectiveness of a special school experience, one preservice teacher highlights the importance of this joint reflection with other professionals in an interview.

.../ I can only say that I'm confident with how to include the students that I've taught through experience and through discussion with their class teachers and other members of staff and going forward I'll be able to apply that .../ (Coates, Harris, and Waring 2020, 12).

Discussing and exchanging reflections help preservice teachers to destabilise and deconstruct their perspectives and contribute to shaping new values more aligned with inclusive education (Barnes 2006). However, this will only happen if they are aware of and recognise the point of this process (Kang and Hyatt 2010; Saiz and

Susinos 2018; Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). The availability of analytical tools to help them think de- and reconstructively are an additional help. For example, one preservice teacher states:

.../ This process I've participated in has also made me realise two important things: firstly, how important it is to stop and think, and how enriching and positive it is to reflect with others /.../. (Saiz and Susinos 2018, 404).

Activities, such as discussion groups, reflections, essays or life stories, encourage an atmosphere in which a complex topic such as inclusive education can be addressed with preservice teachers playing an active role (Acquah and Commins 2013; Greenfield, Mackey, and Nelson 2016; Lambe and Bones 2006; Mills and Ballantyne 2010; Mills 2012; Robinson 2017; Saiz and Susinos 2018; Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). Some examples are shown in Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet (2019):

Analysing articles and explanations give us an opportunity to review our ideas and think ... This analysis makes you think about other ways of doing things and seeing new points of view through perspectives and practices that we did not know about (Informal conversation with a student at a seminar) (Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019, 97)

The excerpt highlights the importance of reflection for preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education (Burke and Whitty 2018; Lancaster and Bain 2020; Southcott and Crawford 2018). This not only links theory and practice as it is typically defined (Barnes 2006; Greenfield, Mackey, and Nelson 2016; Mills 2012; Robinson 2017), but actually integrates the kinds of theoretical activities that may have previously been excluded from a broad social base and restricted to elite narrow circles of action and knowledge, with work practices in ITE (Bagley and Beach 2015). Reflecting with others is a way of challenging colonial unilateral and

monological reflexivity as an epistemological practice (see e.g. Bhambra 2014; Mignolo 2007). It generates double reflexivity and involves collaborative dialogue. Western research traditions in ethnography have historically over-emphasised the researcher's monopoly of reflexivity and this has reduced the participating researched subjects to mere deliverers of data. Their experiences, reflections and narrations become empirical material (Vigo-Arrazola and Beach 2021; Beach and Vigo-Arrazola 2021). Nonetheless, the meta-ethnographic analysis shows that reconstructing preservice teachers' beliefs is an ongoing and unfinished process. In this regard, the reason and need to go beyond reflection towards critical action is underscored (Robinson 2017). Freire's perspective on bringing philosophy into contact with the reality of the lives of the majority comes to mind here, in this case by giving preservice teacher access to resources forming the basis of critical social transformation of inclusive education practices.

These previous main themes, *recognising the value of practical experiences* and *reflecting with others*, have shown how direct experience or work placements, as part of university teacher education, together with shared reflection, armed with theoretical concepts and academic knowledge, can affect changes in attitudes towards inclusive education in preservice teachers. Individual and collective reflective processes can result in a new modification process of meanings and reflection that is vital (Maisuria and Beach 2017; Mills 2012; Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019), when or if the aim is to develop positive perceptions and attitudes in preservice teachers towards inclusive education and social justice (Acquah, Szelei, and Katz 2020). University teacher education is a place where preservice teachers are given a space to reflect and begin an individual and collective analysis of their own beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about inclusive education while interacting with systematised knowledge to help them progress from conflict to social transformation (Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and

García-Goncet 2019). However, mere reflection does not change an attitude, let alone turn an attitude towards inclusive education into transformative action (Saiz and Susinos 2018; Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). Instead, the argument emerging from the present analysis and results is that the experience and reflection model needs some kind of critical input from an organic intellectual (Beach and Vigo-Arrazola 2021).

Researching and reconstructing to identify and transform

Attitudes towards inclusion are widely researched in inclusive education. They are impacted by a host of factors and several articles in the sample explore them directly (specifically Robinson 2017; Vigo, Soriano, and Julve 2010; Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). Each one recognises the importance of research and enquiry as critical components. They further note that the analysis must focus its attention on university teacher education and on how to address opportunities to contribute to changing negative and consolidating positive attitudes or perception linked to the principles of inclusive education and social justice.

The interactions between teachers, researchers and preservice teachers were generated around (i) the analysis of a practical situation taken from their practical experiences (preservice teachers); (ii) the identification of potentials that allowed all pupils to participate and learn; and (iii) the search and analysis of research studies on these potentials.

Today the preservice teachers, in a small group, based on their experiences and in interaction with scientific knowledge, are discussing and presenting ideas on how to develop an action plan that addresses diversity from an inclusive perspective. Ideas begin to emerge, while I intervene to advise, inviting them to reflect on the implications of their proposals. (Researcher field notes) (Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019, 97-98)

The discussions referred to here, contributed to extending practical experiences through plans that facilitated the participation and learning of all pupils in an inclusive school. Preservice teachers' role in this ethnographic research was based on action research as organic intellectuals. Reading other studies had an influence on how they saw inclusive education and their attitudes towards it.

/ .../ Searching, reading, analysing and seeing specific experiences have helped me to better understand what an inclusive school is/ ... / ... / I had an idea of what an inclusive school was, but we have gone deeper/ .../ We have come to understand that not only do we have to adapt the rules of the game so that everyone participates, we also have to change the game itself. (Informal conversation with a student in the classroom)

/.../ we have developed an open mind, which can be useful to face the challenges in our future career as teachers /.../ I am able to know and recognise the need to look for new ways towards inclusion (Document analysis. Curriculum proposal) (Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019, 98)

The interaction generated in this ethnographic study illustrates how perspectives and experiences are reconstructed and how meanings and interpretations that can transform attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education develop by using dialogue and creating spaces for reflection and rethinking attitudes. However, as there are few studies on this subject, more are needed.

Discussion

As inclusive education is a referent in educational policies and practices (UN 2015), we have used meta-ethnography in this article to outline new knowledge on practices in ITE that help preservice teachers develop positive perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education. The results highlight the need for destabilisation, deconstruction and reconstruction towards the ideological and cultural processes that continue to legitimise exclusion situations in our schools and society. The explanatory

themes emerging in the ITE context have thus led to new knowledge on how to develop positive attitudes towards inclusive education in ITE.

This article provides several examples from deep and detailed analyses of how ITE has helped to transform perceptions and attitudes of preservice teachers based on experiences in work-placement situations, individual and collective reflection, and research. These examples show how teachers in ITE can create spaces where preservice teachers can cross their ideological frontiers to clarify their own perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education and, therefore, how ITE can become a suitable scenario for creating new cultural forms and starting to construct a society in which there is more solidarity, fairness and equality (Walton and Rusznyak 2020). The meta-analysis of the ethnographic studies in our sample (i.e. the meta-ethnography) emphasise several conditions in ITE that must be fulfilled and integrated to develop positive perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education. These are:

1. Recognising the value of practical experiences.
2. Reflection with others and appropriate theoretical content.
3. Researching and transforming situations of inclusive education.

The first point on this list relates to the preservice teachers' interaction with practical experiences in ITE. It emphasises the importance of demystifying inclusive education to address cultural hegemonic processes based on their experience. From an ITE standpoint, it forces us to recognise that, in some cases, preservice teachers' experiences are structurally oppressed and are not conducive to recognising the needs of everyone in the classroom (Guðjónsdóttir and Óskarsdóttir 2020). As a result, ITE should contribute to generating spaces where preservice teachers can rethink their experiences in the field and interact with and become aware of these beliefs and their conditioning factors (Malott 2010). Interacting with these practical experiences helps us

recognise how relevant interaction is in spaces where preservice teachers can cross these ideological frontiers to clarify their own views.

The second point on the list (reflection with others) relates to interaction and shared critical reflection in ITE by providing inquisitive and empowering spaces in which preservice teachers can address and denaturalise forces related to attitudes towards inclusive education. It suggests how interactive analyses and dialogue in university teacher education can play a major role in adding to preservice teachers' understandings of inclusive education and in deconstructing and reconstructing their perceptions and attitudes. ITE can contribute to spreading awareness of beliefs and forces in culture and ideology that have formed the resistance preservice teachers must address, but it does not always do this.

The third point on the list addresses the need to set aside time to cultivate positive attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education. Based on the results, research and enquiry act as catalysts of preservice teachers' perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education (Robinson 2017; Saiz and Susinos 2018; (Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019; Walton and Rusznyak 2020). Through research, preservice teachers can form reflections focusing on reconstruction and not only on the deconstruction of perceptions on diversity and inclusive education. These things take time but the studies have shown how teacher educators can incorporate the research into university teacher education classrooms and contribute to changing preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education if they empower preservice teachers as fellow organic intellectuals who can formulate problems, discuss solutions, interpret findings, and discover ways of overcoming divisions in society (Vigo-Arrazola and Beach 2021) in the interests of education and social justice (Bagley and Beach 2015; Beach 2019).

There is a serious practical and ethical need for preservice teachers to be educated in and prepared for inclusive education (Florian and Camedda 2020), and although this does not always occur, we hope our research can help provide some impetus and basic guidelines on how it can be fostered. Recognising practical experiences and promoting interactions and reflection as a result of them does not suffice to contribute to transforming preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education based on the deficit model (Vigo-Arrazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet 2019). ITE for inclusive education requires changes in intellectual relationships incorporating research (Beach 2019; Bullock 2016; Flores 2017; Zeichner 2010).

We highlight three further implications of ITE action. The first relates to the active role played by preservice teachers. The second views preservice teachers as responsible subjects. The third involves promoting reflection and constructing spaces for promoting and engaging in social transformation.

Conclusions

In this meta-ethnographic study we have identified and analysed ethnographic research relating to preservice teaching practices for developing positive perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education among preservice teachers in ITE. Three main themes emerged: recognising the value of practical experiences; possibilities of reflection with others; and engaging with appropriate theoretical content and researching and transforming inclusive education situations. They emphasise that ITE can create spaces in which preservice teachers can cross ideological frontiers and clarify their perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education. Other ways of working are important to resolve the challenges and meet the needs of inclusive education along the expanded lines of UN (2015). Changing ITE represents one way, although it will take years until

the effects become noticeable.

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Table 1. Description of the selected cases

Ref.	Author (year) Country	Topic	Participants	Data collection	Method of analysis
[1]	Causey, Thomas, and Armento (2000) USA	Diversity issues in an ITE programme	24 (selection of two of the preservice teachers for deeper examination) 3 years	Autobiographical and post-experience essays, reflective journal and diversity plans Longitudinal study	Thematic analysis
[2]	Lambe and Bones (2006) Northern Ireland	The views of student teachers on the benefits and challenges of inclusive education	41 12 weeks	Survey, online discussions	Thematic analysis
[3]	Barnes (2006) USA	Description of ITE programme designed to prepare preservice teachers to instruct culturally and linguistically diverse pupils	24 6 weeks	Autobiographical poem and cultural artefact, cultural diversity awareness inventory, book discussion groups, project, and field experience	Thematic analysis

[4]	Kang and Hyatt (2010) USA	The use of multicultural narratives to develop understanding of multicultural and diversity issues	22 One semester	Multicultural narratives and reflection papers	Thematic analysis according to a scoring rubric
[5]	Mills and Ballantyne (2010) Australia	Critical factors to develop multicultural awareness and sensitivity in ITE	48 13 weeks	Autoethnography (Television guides, restaurant menus and CD covers)	Content analysis
[6]	Hemmings and Woodcock (2011) Australia	Preservice teachers' views on inclusion during a course and practicum	101 15 weeks	Survey (open-ended questions)	Content analysis
[7]	Mills (2012) Australia	Changes over time in attitudes towards social justice: tensions between the habitus of preservice teachers and schooling practices	16 (selection of two of the preservice teachers for deeper examination) 3 years	Semi-structured interview Longitudinal study.	Thematic analysis
[8]	Vigo, Soriano, and Julve (2010)	Preparing preservice teachers to pay attention to diversity using an action research process	247 2 academic years	Focus group	Content analysis

[9]	Acquah and Commins (2013) Finland	Preservice teachers' knowledge of multiculturalism and diversity before and after taking a multicultural education course	38 16 weeks	Survey, focus group, journals and reflections Pre-test and post-test, final evaluations	Combined quantitative and qualitative analysis Thematic analysis
[10]	Greenfield, Mackey and Nelson (2016) USA	The effectiveness of course experiences including fieldwork with pupils with learning disabilities	15 14 weeks	Focus group and journals Survey	Combined quantitative and qualitative analysis: consensual qualitative research analysis (CQR): (1) comprehensive process analysis; (2) grounded theory analysis; (3) McCracken's (1988) interview approach
[11]	Robinson (2017) England	Practices underpinning effective inclusive teacher education for special educational needs (SEN) in ordinary schools through an inclusive action research project	10 22 months	Non-participant observation, online and paper reflection papers, structured and semi-structured interview, review of documents produced by preservice teachers, researcher journal	Content analysis, constant comparative method

[12]	Saiz and Susinos (2018) Spain	The process of practical reflective training to transit to a more inclusive and critical approach	5 (selection of one of the preservice teachers for deeper examination) 16 weeks	Semi-structured interview and group seminars	Thematic coding
[13]	Vigo-Arazola, Dieste, and García-Goncet (2019)	Critical ethnographic investigation to identify basic actions for training future teachers to respond to diversity	300 3 years	Life stories, participant observation and document analysis	Constant comparative method
[14]	Acquah, Szelei, and Katz (2020) Finland	Using culturally responsive modelling as a strategy to shape preservice teachers' learning experiences in a multicultural education course	83 12 weeks	Reflective journal during the academic year	Constant comparative method
[15]	Coates, Harris, and Waring (2020) England	The effectiveness of a special school experience for preservice teachers	13 6 months	Interview	Inductive thematic analysis

Table 2. Subcategories, categories and themes obtained from the analysis.

Research question: Which preservice teaching practices do the individual ethnographies identify as contributing to developing positive perceptions or attitudes towards inclusive education among preservice teachers?		
First subcategories obtained across studies	Final categories	Themes
Reflecting about personal experiences Obtaining new insights about yourself Focusing, knowing and dealing with your own attitudes and beliefs Experiencing exclusion by yourself	(1) Examining and questioning your own personal experience as a starting point	(1) Recognising the value of personal/practical experiences
Facing diversity: recognising not having skills, knowledge and experience Feeling not confident and anxious Having contact with real experiences Reinforcing or restructuring stereotypes and prejudices	(2) Eye-opening practical experience courses	
Reflection and critical thinking to deconstruct beliefs Historically and socially constructed beliefs Being aware of cultural forces Being reflexive to achieve transformation	(3) Critical reflecting to deconstruct	(2) Reflecting and discussing diversity issues with others
Modifying and redefining inclusive education through discussion Facing dilemmas: critical dialogues Reflecting with and confronting others Discussing scientific knowledge Collaborative struggle against cultural and ideological forces	(4) Confronting resistance: collective reflection and discussion that destabilises thought	

<p>Theory out of touch with reality</p> <p>Fragmenting and failing inclusive education programmes</p> <p>Not being able to connect theory and practice</p>	<p>(5) Mismatch between theory and practice</p>	<p>(3) Researching and reconstructing to identify and transform</p>
<p>Restructuring and connecting theory to practice through research</p> <p>Having time for critical research</p> <p>Research-oriented enquiry in field experiences</p> <p>Putting your new understanding into action</p>	<p>(6) Looking for transformative action: reconstructing through research</p>	

