



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Diversity in the Classroom

Finnish Student Teachers' Perceptions Towards Teaching in an Inclusive
Environment

Department of Education
Master's Degree Programme in Education and Learning

Master's thesis

Author:
Anni Iivonen

11.07.2024

Turku

The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

Master's thesis

Subject: Education and Learning

Author: Anni Iivonen

Title: Diversity in the Classroom. Finnish Student Teachers' Perceptions Towards Teaching in an Inclusive Environment

Supervisor: Koen Veermans

Number of pages: 60 pages

Date: 11.07.2024

Abstract

This thesis examines Finnish student teachers' perceptions of inclusion by investigating their attitudes, concerns, and attributing tendencies. To get a vast understanding of the perceptions mixed method research was conducted. The quantitative part of the research was executed using the Sentiment, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Revised (SACIE-R) scale. The Method of Empathy Based Story (MEBS) was performed to provide the qualitative part of this research. The results show that student teachers' attitudes tend to be close to neutral or even negative towards inclusive education and they have many concerns about teaching in an inclusive environment. They were more negative about having (certain) students with special needs in their classrooms than towards the general idea of diverse students being in regular classes. The concerns were about their ability to provide a peaceful learning environment without conflicts where everyone would get the support they need and reach their learning goals. In addition, having enough resources and help from other educators caused concerns. Furthermore, when asked about improvements regarding inclusive education, the student teachers suggested mostly inclusive measures. However, few discords were found where inclusion was rejected and segregative measures were proposed. The results also showed that the student teachers have a self-serving bias when inclusive education is successful, meaning that when everything went well, it was seen to be the teacher's achievement rather than giving any credit to the students. These findings suggest that the student teachers' perceptions towards inclusion are close to negative even though the recommended measures were quite inclusive. Further research is needed to investigate what measures teachers use in their inclusive classrooms and if they support or contradict inclusion. In addition, it would be important to find out where the negative perceptions of student teachers stem from.

Keywords: inclusion, inclusive education, diversity, equality, equity, teacher training, student teachers, perceptions, attitudes, concerns, attribution

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1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the 1900 century, children's well-being has been looked at closely. Even though many improvements have been happening in recent decades, the statistic shows that one-third of the children are not doing well (Määttä & Rantala, 2016). There are multiple risk factors in a child's well-being for example not enough sleep, too much time spent alone, childhood poverty, parents' divorce, etc. Therefore, the need for child protection and psychiatric care has been increasing, and regarding education, restlessness and the need for special support have been rising in early education and primary schools (Määttä & Rantala, 2016). However, the increase in the number of students receiving special education is not all negative, since it also then means that the educational system can find better and earlier students who need more support and give them what they need more sufficiently (Ikonen & Virtanen, 2007).

Systematic teaching of diverse students, for example, students with disabilities, is a fairly new thing (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas, 2015). Before, the school was only for children who could adapt to its demands. Nowadays education is for everyone, and the idea is that it is not the children who should change rather the school should adapt to the needs of children. Before, children who were unfit for school were put away to special schools or they might have not gone to school at all. Now, all the learners are invited to the same place to learn and be educated, which creates a mixed-ability setting for the learners and the teachers.

Rinne, Kivirauma, and Lehtinen (2015) explain that it has never been straightforward to say who is "a normal student" and who or what characteristics fall into the deviant category. Furthermore, they note, that this line between normal and deviant is constantly transforming, which should mean that education should also be adapting to the changes. Because of school reforms and the fight against discrimination, schools and institutions must nowadays be equal and take in all the children with different backgrounds and starting points. Therefore, there is a need for research to figure out better ways to support all the children so that the socially, intellectually, emotionally, physically, or culturally deviant children can also be active participants in the community. Bringing children with disabilities or special needs to regular classes is an attempt to let go of the division of "us" and "them" or "normal" and "deviant". Every child is equally valuable and should be treated as such. Accepting diversity starts with different people living and learning together (Saloviita, 2008). When all the students are included, seen as equal members of the school community, and given the support they need we are talking about inclusive education.

Inclusive education can be implemented in different ways and the responsibility of it is often left for the teachers and other school faculty to execute. This obligation can bring some challenges and even critique towards inclusion. However, Inclusion is not a question of whether to do it or not, but rather how it is best implemented and which measures to take to overcome any possible obstacles (Loukomies & Laine, 2023). For example, teachers' positive attitude towards inclusive education seems to be one of the

strongest predictors of a successful inclusion reform (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma 2011). Therefore, the teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards inclusive education play a crucial role in implementing inclusion and the well-being and learning of all students.

So, what kind of attitudes do teachers have, especially in Finland, towards teaching in an inclusive education? Some studies suggest that typically teachers are not against the ideology of inclusion, but rather have concerns about implementing inclusive education in their classrooms (Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2011; Savolainen, Malinen, & Schwab 2020). Furthermore, in Finland, the studies have concluded that the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion have been somewhere near the neutral midpoint of the scale, which is lower than in many other Western countries (Saloviita, 2018). This might indicate that Finnish teachers are less accepting or have more concerns about teaching in an inclusive environment. However, attitudes are not innate, which means they are learned, and therefore can be influenced to be more positive (Navarro-Mateu, Franco-Ochoa, Valero-Moreno, & Prado-Gacó, 2020). Because of this and the evidence that shows teachers' attitudes to be rather stable traits, meaning changing them can take a lot of effort and time, it is crucial to focus on pre-service teachers' attitudes (Savolainen et al., 2020). In this present research, the aim is to find out, what is the attitude of student teachers towards inclusive education and what concerns they have about teaching in an inclusive learning environment. In other words, what perceptions do they have towards inclusion?

2 Finnish Basic Education

The National Core Curriculum and Basic Education Act (628/1998) and its amendments (642/2010) are the main documents that regulate primary education in Finland (Opetushallitus, 2014). They give the general guidelines for the teaching and learning. In addition, the counties, and schools have their own more specific Core Curriculums (Takala, Äikäs & Lakkala, 2020). According to the National Core Curriculum, the teaching promotes economic, social, regional, and gender equality (Opetushallitus, 2014).

Equality can mean various things and people can comprehend it differently. One way to understand equality is to look at it as non-discrimination. This is (or should be) a basic human right that belongs to everybody despite the person's gender, age, disability, etc. Takala et al. (2020) explain that when non-discrimination is understood as part of equality, it ties inclusion and equality together. Furthermore, they continue that even though the National Core Curriculum promotes equality, inclusion is only mentioned there once, leaving a lot of decisions to the schools and teachers to decide how, and where the support measures are executed and how inclusion is implemented. However, there are some measures and acts mentioned that can be considered to fall within inclusion, for example, it is said that teachers should use multiple teaching and evaluation methods, students' sense of being part of the community should be strengthened, and interactivity and commonality should be highlighted (Loukimies & Laine, 2023).

Takala et al. (2020) disclose that in 2010 there was a big reform of the National Core Curriculum when the model for support was changed from two-tier support to three-tier support. This meant that in addition to universal and special support in between came intensified support. All the support models are mentioned in the Basic Education Act and its amendments (Opetushallitus, 2014). However, once again these documents do not specify how the support is supposed to be given to the children. In addition, worth noting is that in the National Core Curriculum, there is very little or no mention of valuing difference or seeing it as a positive thing, even though being different is part of everybody's life hence being different is actually normal (Takala et al., 2020). As Prashnig (2000) concludes, when differences are valued, it can produce more creativity and even help us make better choices in our academic and personal lives. Hence allowing diversity to flourish can result in top performances.

2.1 The Three-Tiered Support System

Savolainen et al. (2020) explain how the attempt for better equity of education and the pursuit of an ideal Nordic "school for all" created the Finnish comprehensive school in the 1970s which combined the polarised school system that was before. However, as a result, the more heterogenic classrooms brought up new challenges that needed to be resolved. Therefore, they conclude that the rapidly increasing number of students with special needs led to new forms of special education strategies. One

was a reform of the Basic Education Act (2010) which generated a new special education support model. The change was from a two-tiered support to a three-tiered support system. The purpose was an early detection of support and emphasis on preventive measures. Based on the Act the first support to give is universal support which could be given to anyone at any time when needed. The second and new step is intensified support. This means that before a child receives special support, they receive intensified support first which is more than universal support but not quite as drastic as special support (Loukomies & Laine, 2023). This could mean reinforcing general support in mainstream education, teachers' cooperation, part-time special education, or adding support from student welfare services (Takala et al., 2020). So, the last option for support is special support. One of the important outcomes of the reform is that now all the teachers are responsible for all the students by trying to find more effective and flexible ways to implement support as early intervention since more intensive support is only implemented if the current level of support does not give the expected results (Loukomies & Laine, 2023; Naukkarinen, 2012; Savolainen et al., 2020).

Loukomies & Laine (2023) point out that according to Statistic Finland in 2020 21,3% of all the students received intensified or special support and that since 2011, when intensified support was created, every year there have been more and more students receiving it. However, the number of students receiving special support has been steady for a decade. Furthermore, they conclude that 34% of the students who receive special support, study completely in separate special education classes, another 34% juggle between special education classes and mainstream education, and only the remaining 32% receive their schooling mainly in mainstream education. What is interesting is, that by the year 2033, the estimate is that half of the students will need some form of support (Takala et al., 2020).

When looking at the reasons for any form of support given in education, it can be seen that they are diverse. Määttä & Rantala (2016) for example explain that the statistics from 2008 display that in full-time special needs education, there were children who had severe or mild developmental disorders, brain disorders, physical challenges, emotional disturbances or social maladjustments, autism, developmental language disorder, visual or hearing impairment, or other reasons. In addition, part-time special education was given to children who had speech disorders, dyslexia, mathematical or foreign language learning disability, maladjustments or emotional disturbances, or other forms of learning disabilities. They also concluded that the main reason for giving a child full-time or part-time special education was that it would benefit the child more than being in a mainstream class.

Even though the schools have the power to decide a lot about how they execute these supports, Takala et al. (2020) explain that there are some regulations for example the number of students needing special support in one classroom. Meaning that if in the mainstream class, there is one student with special needs the class size can be a maximum of 20 students. Furthermore, if the classes are only for students with special needs, the class size can vary from 6-10 depending on the disabilities and special needs of the children. However, they mention, that there is a loophole in the regulations because it says the class sizes can be exceeded if it can be justified by the students' needs or teaching methods and does not put

the students' objects of learning in danger. So, basically, there can be multiple children with special needs in the classroom and in addition, the teacher must be adequate to give universal support to all the students as needed. For the teachers to sufficiently be able to use the three-tier support system inclusive education must be included in universities' teacher training curriculums and their school culture (Naukkarinen, 2012).

2.2 Teacher Training and Inclusive Education

In Finland, the primary school includes grade levels one to nine, which contains children approximately aged 7-15 years old. The first six grades are mainly taught by a classroom teacher and the grades 7-9 by a subject teacher. Both, classroom, and subject teachers, are required to have a master's degree. In addition, there is also a master's degree program for special education teachers which according to Saloviita (2020) has made the teacher training institutes reluctant to bring special educational content to the training of classroom or subject teachers. He says because of this most of the teachers are only shortly introduced to this field and therefore, there is a clear need for student teachers to gain more knowledge and understanding of different learners.

To become a classroom or subject teacher you must have a master's degree of 300 study points which are the same as credits within the European Credit Transfer System, ECTS. The studies include mandatory teaching practices and at least some mandatory studies that include teachings about special education or about teaching in mixed-ability settings. For example, according to Takala et al. (2020) in the school year 2019-2020, every student teacher's training involved at least 5 credits worth of themes affiliated with inclusive education. In addition to the mandatory courses, there are several optional courses or minor studies of special education. But if the student teacher chooses other optional studies, they could only study 5 credits (out of the 300) related to inclusive education or teaching in a mixed-ability setting.

According to the TALIS 2018 research done by OECD, even though on average 62% of the teachers (n=160 000) had received instructions in their teacher training to teach in mixed-ability settings, only 44% of the teachers felt ready and prepared after graduation; and in Finland, 73% of the teachers had received training to teach in mixed-ability settings but only 35% felt they had the acquirements to teach diverse classes (Takala et al., 2020). These numbers suggest that future teachers do not receive the quantity or quality of knowledge and practice to teach in current circumstances since, as said, the number of children with special needs is increasing.

This lack of confidence and knowledge can have a huge impact on the way pre-service teachers feel towards inclusive education for example, it can cause negative prejudice, especially against students with severe intellectual disabilities or behavioural problems (Saloviita,2020). Similarly, Forlin and Chambers (2011) concluded in their study that the more confidence pre-service teachers had about their

ability to teach in an inclusive environment and the more knowledge of inclusive legislation they had the more positive they felt towards students with disabilities, and they had less concerns about inclusion. Therefore, it is no surprise that typically special education teachers feel the most comfortable and positive toward inclusive education hence the knowledge and experience they have received (Saloviita, 2020). However, the knowledge and experience do not necessarily ease the stress the teachers relate to having students with special needs in their classes since in some cases, they can even predict higher levels of stress (Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

According to Savolainen et al. (2020), one current problem in teacher education is that issues about inclusive education are strongly linked only to special education courses and, as said, to the special education teacher programs rather than including them in every student teacher's studies. All pre-service teachers should practice inclusive pedagogy in a safe and supportive environment to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to increase their efficacy. They also conclude that having a strong efficacy belief and a positive attitude towards inclusive education can significantly increase the possibilities for pre-service teachers to work in the future successfully in an inclusive environment. Therefore, WHO's (2011, p. 222) report states that the principles of inclusion should be integrated into teacher training and not just by knowledge and skills but the focus should also be on the values and attitudes supporting inclusion. To promote this inclusive education in teacher training, what is needed is coherence in the curriculum, deep knowledge, and cooperativeness (Naukkarinen, 2012).

2.3 Educational Policy and the Purpose of School

One of the schools' purposes is to grade students, categorise them, and sort them into normal and deviant (Rinne, 2012). This means that schools must somehow identify the students, who according to them, need special education (Moberg et al., 2015). However, if we are talking about "normal students", "special needs kids", or "deviant children" we are not living in inclusive school settings. Takala et al. (2020) explain that these labels reinforce the idea that there is normal which is good and there is negative deviance which needs support so that it can maybe change or at least look more "normal". In other words, the focus is on how to normalise students, rather than how to create a world where everyone fits. The differences and deviances in the classroom should be seen as good things. However, according to Riitaoja (2013), typically this view is based on looking at how it can be a good or positive thing for the "normal" students or the teachers, for example, how we can use the differences to teach tolerance, acceptance, and different cultures or values to students. She concludes that a positive way of looking at deviance in a classroom is rarely looked at from the point of view of the students considered not normal. So, in a way, deviance and differences are seen in a positive light only if they benefit the majority. Some can even argue that why should the "normal" students, the majority of people, modify their learning or behaviour to consider the deviant students, the minority? That would mean that the majority

would have to give something away, benefit less, or be unable to fulfil their potential which can be seen as unfair. However, Riitaoja (2013) explains that this kind of thinking does not consider that the balance between the groups, is already uneven. So, is it really that the different students are the problem for the majority's learning, or can it be that they would allow everyone to learn something other than what is now considered normal? She concludes that schools' and teachers' purpose is to teach and create normality to the masses, which can conflict with the idea of learning something else in a diverse and inclusive environment.

Education is always based on some values. What these values are is written in the National Curriculum. However, they are not some universal values and therefore, it is up to the community, politicians, and people collectively to decide what values they want their children's education based on (Antikainen, Rinne & Koski, 2013; Ikonen & Virtanen, 2007). Inclusion is an educational policy that represents a postmodern, free, and democratic ideology that promotes equality, but there also are other ideologies, for example, a neoliberal ideology of new public management (NPM) which is on the rise in government policymaking (Takala et al., 2020). This approach is not completely in line with inclusion. If student's worth is measured by their success and well-doing in competitions, special needs students might lower the school's ability to compete with other schools which can become a threat to inclusive education. Takala et al. (2020) explain that generally, it is more complicated and expensive to support students who have special needs and therefore, their support systems are more vulnerable to changes that are based on economics and politics. On the other hand, special needs schools might become a successful business. The decisions made about education are always compromises made by political parties and interest groups. The way, different political parties prioritise, what and how educational resources and other funds should be used, can differ considerably. Therefore, they conclude that even though the majority can agree that inclusion is the fundamental way of equality the decision-makers can have very different ideas about inclusion and differentiation. According to them, this could even mean that equality and inclusion could be compromised for example, because of the new public management and school election, there have been detected mechanisms that enable segregation for example of gender, social class, regional, and minority based.

When it comes to inclusion, it should be seen as an ideology of equality and equity and the idea of unity in diversity. This makes it odd that in Finnish discussions about inclusion this human rights rhetoric is seldom talked about rather, it is seen only from a pragmatic point of view focusing on pedagogical issues (Savolainen et al., 2012).

3 Inclusive Education

Navarro-Mateu et al., (2020) state that traditionally, people with disabilities or deviances have been discriminated against and excluded in various ways. In education, this has meant school segregation with different schools or at least separate classes for children with special needs. They conclude that the consequences of this exclusion from society have been an erosion of the well-being and health of the people who suffer from it and that this kind of discrimination impacts individuals' quality of life. To address this mistreatment of some students the ideology of inclusion was developed.

Inclusion comes from the Latin word *includere*, meaning to enclose (Pesonen & Nieminen, 2021). It is a philosophy and a course of action that objects to any form of discrimination at any level (Murto, Naukkarinen & Saloviita, 2001). The ideology of inclusive education is not a new one. The United Nations' decade of disabled persons starting in 1983 and the UNESCO Salamanca statement from 1994 were the basis of inclusive education stating that every child has an equal right to study in regular school close to them no matter how much support they may need. Furthermore, they state that every child has a right to receive enough support without being removed far away from home or friends and that support should be given immediately when the need has been detected. The basic idea is that education must adapt to the children's needs, not the other way around and that every child has the right to come to school regardless of disability, gender, religion, financial background, culture, the colour of skin, language, or any other factor (Forlin et al., 2011; Loreman, Earle, Sharma & Forlin, 2007; Murto et al., 2001; Saloviita, 2018; Takala et al., 2020). The statements reassure us that teaching in an inclusive way is the most equitable way for most children in all countries (Saloviita, 2018).

The course of action for inclusion is strong all over the world. To make it happen many countries have signed and ratified international documents such as the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals (Savolainen et al., 2020). In addition to the UN conventions and statements, inclusion has other bases. For example, the Constitution of Finland (731/1999) paragraph 6 declares that all people are equal by the law. Therefore, any discrimination due to gender, age, ethnicity, language, religion, health, disability, etc. is forbidden. Every child's first choice of education is a regular school. Placing someone, for example, in a special school without a particularly good reason could be then considered breaking the law. Also, Disability Services Act (380/1987) says that municipalities have a responsibility to ensure, that their services are suitable for everyone including people with disabilities. This means that the municipalities have an obligation to arrange sufficient support methods for children with disabilities in regular classes. Furthermore, the Basic Education Act (628/1998) entitles all children to learn in regular classes despite their disabilities or learning difficulties. It can be concluded that equality is not just a nice value, but a human right, and the schools have a mandatory obligation by law to ensure it happens (Loukomies & Laine, 2023). These laws and regulations are important since there is evidence to show that in countries

with laws about inclusion, teachers feel more positively towards inclusive education, meaning that teachers' opinions tend to reflect official policies (Saloviita, 2018).

The opposite of inclusion is exclusion or segregation which goes against the values of civilised society (Loukomies & Laine, 2013). In education, Takala et al. (2020) explain, that this would mean that only children considered "normal" and who do not have any special needs are allowed to attend regular classes. So, in segregation, children with special needs are left without education or segregated into different classes or separate schools. When the first critique of this was stated the term integration was invented. They further explain it to mean, that the children with special needs are not part of the regular classes, but they are allowed to come there for some classes or days. Their education is divided between special needs classes and regular classes, but segregation and labelling are still there. In integration, children with special needs are not considered to be "normal" or part of the "normal class", therefore, it is still a form of discrimination because it has the idea that some groups of people are outside the community and that they belong there (Murto et al., 2001). In contrast, in inclusion, the idea is that we all have needs, some have less, and some have more but the way education should be organised is that all children can learn together and be equally part of the school organisation.

Including all students and considering them equally important creates an environment where everyone is part of something. According to Takala et al. (2020), the idea of being part of something or a sense of belonging is one of the humans' basic emotional needs and even small children in daycare can feel a sense of belonging – or the opposite isolation and alienation which can result in a sense of being an outsider. The sense of belonging is a feeling of being connected to other people and communities, a feeling that you are part of and included. They conclude that when a student feels part of the school class, it enhances their well-being and supports their learning. When the educational world segregates students based on their needs or other characteristics these students are forced to be outsiders hence their basic emotional needs are disregarded which can then further affect their learning and make them need even more support.

There are many ways to execute inclusion which means there is no one right way to do it (Takala et al., 2020). Also worth mentioning is, that inclusive education does not mean, that all students study in the same class all the time no matter what, since some students sometimes need a smaller group and that should be respected also (Loukomies & Laine, 2023; Takala et al., 2020). A lot of time inclusion is widely misunderstood as a concept that forces all students to study under the same circumstances despite their differences. This could not be further from the truth. By stating that inclusion is about equality it often instead refers to equity. Therefore, valuing equality can mean different people getting different things, but everyone gets what they need. In the school, not all students need the same amount of support, and the need for support can also vary from day to day or even from class to class. However, if a student is decided to move, for example, to a smaller class it should always happen because it genuinely benefits the student in question and their learning (Loukomies & Laine, 2023). The purpose is to see every child as a unique beautiful learner and to find ways to help each student the way they need.

Even though inclusion is an act against discrimination and with all the statements to support it, there is also a large sector of segregated education in Finland. Compared to other European countries, Finland is below average in measures regarding inclusive education (Naukkarinen, 20212). For example, the number of students transferred to special education classrooms is one of the biggest in Europe (Saloviita, 2018). Nonetheless, due to the values of inclusion, the number of special needs schools have decreased in the last decade in Finland and more students have received intensified or special support in mainstream education (Takala et al., 2020). However, inclusion seems to spread unevenly in society since marginalised groups tend to be over-represented in special needs schools and special education classes (Moberg et al., 2015).

There can be pointed out three things to successful inclusion: bringing all the different children to regular classes, giving all the children the possibility to be involved in their school community, and for the children to succeed in learning (Loukomies & Laine, 2023). So, the main point of inclusion is not just about bringing the children with needs to learn with the children who do not have special needs in the regular classes rather it is about how to give all the children the support they need, remove the obstacles that currently causes issues, and how to increase all children's involvement in their learning and community (Loukomies & Laine, 2023; Murto et al., 2001). However, Loukomies & Laine (2023) argue that in Finland what has happened is that the focus has been on the first point, bringing all learners to the same physical environment but then leaving it at that. This means that inclusion has basically been misunderstood as integration, and therefore, they state that it cannot be said inclusion has failed or succeeded since it has not fully been implemented. What is needed is to focus on the other two points of successful inclusion, to fully include all the students in the school community and see beyond diagnoses or difficulties.

Despite inclusion's irrefutable importance to equality, some people are opposed to it and even the Trade Union of Teachers in Finland (OAJ) has publicly criticised inclusive education. The arguments against inclusive education are mainly about the increase in teachers' workload and the fact that the teachers do not possess the required skills to teach diverse classrooms. (Savolainen et al., 2020). However, United Nations (2006) article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities talks about everyone's right to education without discrimination and equal opportunities, but it also notes that professionals and staff must receive training that incorporates awareness about disabilities and different ways, teaching techniques, materials, etc. to support diverse students. So, if the teachers and pre-service teachers do not have the required skills and knowledge to answer the needs of diverse students, is that a reason to reject inclusive education? Or is it an invitation to improve the training of the educators to be more aware of inclusion and what is needed for it to be successful?

According to Savolainen et al. (2012), another debatable issue about inclusive education in Finland has been the financial resources it requires, since both, the OAJ and the Municipalities Association have claimed that inclusive education needs more money than segregation. However, they continue that there

have been different discourses stating that it isn't more expensive, and this is the stance that many international organisations such as UNESCO have taken.

In addition to teachers' qualifications and financial issues, Saloviita (2008) states that there is an obsessional belief that some children just need to be in special needs classes because they learn there better. However, he argues that there are dozens of quantitative and qualitative research about learning outcomes of children with special needs and the results do not support this belief. On the contrary, the results have proven how ineffective the special needs classes are. He continues that, typically, it is stated that special needs classes are smaller which benefits the learners but that this has been proven to be either false or that the benefits are minuscule and exist only in lower grades. In addition, the class sizes already have some restrictions if in the class there are students who receive special support. For example, if in the mainstream classroom there is a student who has severe disability or is entitled to extended compulsory education the maximum number of students cannot exceed 20 (Kupiainen & Hienonen, 2016).

In addition to this, Saloviita (2008) says, that studies have proven that even the children with the most severe disability benefitted from being in mainstream education. They reached more learning goals, their interactions and social skills developed more, and their emotional growth was more positive in regular classes than in special classes. In addition, he says that the children with severe disabilities who went to regular classes were more likely to connect to society and live and work in a normal environment. Furthermore, the studies have mainly concluded that the integration of special education students into mainstream education has little to no effect on the learning of students who do not have any disability or special needs. (Takala et al., 2020). On the contrary, some studies show that it might actually be the opposite. Children are less scared of deviance and have learned to accept people with disabilities, their self-confidence has increased when they have gotten to help children with disabilities, their relationship with different people has developed their moral principles towards equality (Saloviita., 2008), and students' attitude towards children with needs were more positive when the students were all mixed in regular classes (Saloviita, 2018).

What is also worth noting, is that the complicated special education class system currently still valued by many, is not based on any educational scientific knowledge rather it has formed with time from the schools' practices (Saloviita, 2008). Renewing the system is not a simple project, even though it has been agreed upon and there are conventions and laws supporting the reform. The current school system works in a way that a difference is seen as a hindrance and not a resource and to change this, the schools' practices and assumptions need to be fundamentally changed (Saloviita, 2008).

3.1 Defining Normal and Deviant

Most people comprehend what is deviant or different, but defining the terms is a bit more complicated. Throughout history deviant behaviour has been explained in many ways, for example, it has been seen as immoral, sinful, criminal, and more recently as sickness (Conrad & Schneider, 1992). How it has been viewed, depends on the social, and cultural structures of the times – hence it is a social concept defined by people in power. (Conrad & Schneider, 1992; Murto et al., 2001.) In education, this means, that certain people decide which students are included and who are excluded (Pesonen & Nieminen, 2021).

According to Conrad and Schneider (1992) typically, there are two ways of seeing deviance, either it is seen as a person's characteristic and their fault (the positivist approach), or it can be seen as a result of the social construction, the time, place, and culture we live in, meaning that without these factors the deviance would not even occur (the interactionist approach). They explain that the difference between the two is meaningful because, in the first approach, the deviance is usually tried to get rid of and is seen as bad. However, in the second approach the difference can be seen as neutral or even good, and to overcome any problems related to the difference, rather than trying to change the person, the surrounding environment can be modified to fit the person's needs. In the school environment, this would mean modifying the school and its social norms, to accommodate the students, rather than trying to make every student fit into schools' already existing standards.

Deviance is a universal phenomenon, but because it is a socially constructed concept different societies interpret its meaning in various ways (Rinne, 2012). Moreover, there are no specific acts that would be considered deviant in all societies in every situation rather, the interpretation is contextual which means the definition of deviant changes in different cultures, times, places, etc. (Conrad & Schneider, 1992; Murto et al., 2001, Rinne, 2012.) For example, killing someone is considered to be a deviant act in normal life, but during wartime it is acceptable. In the same way nowadays in many cultures being a homosexual is seen as normal but, still, in some societies, it is seen as deviant or even criminal (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). On the other hand, if we look back historically, we can see that the way homosexuality has been viewed has changed over time in most cultures either positively or negatively. Conrad and Schneider (1992) argue that deviance can be found in every society. To elaborate, there cannot be a society without social rules and norms, and when there are social rules and norms, there are normality and deviance. They continue to state that these social rules are passed on to people in society and enforced with judgments and social sanctions. It is noticeable that societies do not make these rules and definitions of deviance – people working collectively do (Murto et al., 2001). To do so, there must be people or groups in a position of power over others. This might mean differences in social class, age, race, ethnicity, profession, sex, etc. Very seldom are the social norms created by people from less powerful groups and enforced on powerful people (Conrad & Schneider, 1992). The simplest example

is adults making rules children must live by. To define deviance, and to sanction it, is an exercise of power (Murto et al., 2001).

For centuries, humankind has been developing various forms to socialise the youngest members of its community to be part of it and to learn culturally vital skills and habits. The same community has created various social mechanisms and institutions to ensure that the child does not develop in the wrong direction and cause harm to themselves, others, or the community and to make sure that the child absorbs and adopts the community's values, norms, knowledge, skills, and manners (Murto et al., 2001; Rinne et al., 2015). These mechanisms and institutions are necessary to keep the community functioning properly and able to work and communicate with each other efficiently (Antikainen et al., 2013; Murto et al., 2001). At the same time, these are the exact institutions that also produce deviance (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). When society develops, the emphasis on education, teaching, and guidance also progresses (Rinne et al., 2015).

Conrad and Schneider (1992) explain that socialisation sometimes occurs through social control, which promotes conformity and avoids deviance. It is a broad concept that in its simplicity means the ways society encourages its people to internalise and follow the social norms set by the people. Moreover, they explain that social control can be either formal or informal. The latter contains self-control such as internalised norms, morals, and conscience as well as relational controls meaning common interactions like ridicule, praise, gossip, smiles, etc. Informal control occurs in everyday life and rarely produces lasting labels, unlike formal control, which is more institutionalised, and therefore the consequences of formal control are more fundamental and enduring. The main institutions of formal social control are usually considered to be the justice system and all its agents, welfare, the mass media, medicine, and of course, education. Schools' task is to socialise students in the school environment, so that they adopt the school's social control, and the behaviour and manners, which are expected in school institutions (Rinne, 2012).

However, socialisation is not a passive event where the information is just passed on to the individual rather the individual always has an active role in the interaction of society and their commitment to the society in question (Hirsjärvi & Huttunen, 1995). Sometimes though, the focus becomes too individualised. The individualisation of social problems is a large phenomenon in our society, where people search for the causes of problems in the individuals rather than the social systems. A good example of the individualisation of social issues is the medicalisation of deviance where treating deviant behaviours as illnesses overlooks the social conditions and situations (Conrad & Schneider, 1992). This is something that should be considered especially in educational environments. Should we be medicating children to suit the environment that already exists, or should we modify the environment to suit the children who are already perfect in their imperfections? Using medicalisation, labels, and diagnoses is not without harm. For example, a child who has a diagnosis is more likely to be considered abnormal or deviant (Määttä & Rantala, 2016).

In Finland, children's development is followed at the child health clinic, daycare, and schools. Määttä and Rantala (2016) explain how these institutions are in a key position of defining the childhood duality of normal versus abnormal or deviant. These institutions follow strict guidelines and regulations to determine the norm, that children are measured against. A child that is evaluated to be within the norm is considered normal. These "normal children" will receive guidance to recognise their strengths and develop their weaknesses according to their abilities. On the other hand, we have children who do not fully fit into the defined norm and are then considered abnormal, different, or even deviant. They will receive support to minimise the consequences caused by their defaults and to make their lives as good as they can be as abnormal. According to Riitaoja (2013), this kind of thinking is only possible when being normal is seen as "good" and being abnormal or deviant is seen as "bad" and as something to be avoided. But it should not be forgotten that difference is always related to context, meaning it is not something permanent or ever existing. She concludes that deviance can only exist if first something is declared normal or unifying. In other words, there are no differences before they are made.

Furthermore, in everyday language, normal refers to ordinary, however, in conceptual language, normal refers to the elite and the more normal is seen as the elite or even "perfection", the fewer children fit into this definition (Määttä & Rantala, 2016). As a result, most of the children become abnormal, deviant, or even sick. This becomes a problem when the schools' culture is based on normality and is meant to produce normality (Rinne, 2012). For example, Riitaoja (2013) explains that in the National Curriculum, the differences between students, are brought up through the idea of what is considered normal. The idea of an average student, which is seen as something to be achieved, is considered normal. The concept of normal is formed through various categories, for example, heritage, language, religion, developmental or learning disabilities, or family problems. These are bodily differences and are not considered to be formed by the school environment. Someone who does not fit into these categories correctly is seen as deviant or different. In Riitaoja's research, what was seen as a normal student was a Finnish student with white skin, speaking Finnish, middle class, living in a family with two heterosexual parents, secular Lutheran, learning and behaving according to the goals set to an average student and who identifies to be a boy or a girl. The school's discourse saw differences mainly not contextualised and rather as part of the individuals. The differences were constructed as the opposite of what was seen as normal. As a result, what was considered deviance was special needs in learning and having an immigrant background.

To sum up, deviance is viewed as the opposite of what is considered normal in that time, place, and culture. To define normal, we need to have people (in power) working collectively constructing social norms and governing them with social control via various social institutions. There is no society without the concept of normal – hence there will always be people seen and labelled as deviant. But to keep in mind that these kinds of labels are context-related and never permanent. Therefore, when discussing education and its problems the social and environmental situations should always be regarded as much or even more than the individuals.

3.2 Teaching in an Inclusive Environment

Takala et al. (2020) explain, that teacher-student interaction is an important factor in student education and development. They say that the quality of said interaction influences students' learning results, attitudes towards learning, school satisfaction, and the sense of belonging in school. Furthermore, they argue that the interaction between the teacher and the students can be even more crucial to the learning process than the size of the class, the learning materials, or the teaching methods. Warm and positive interaction with the students is also known to reduce misbehaving in the class. Therefore, they conclude that it is not enough that the teachers “allow” special needs students to come to their classes in the name of inclusion. Instead, the teachers must value all the students equally and see them as unique individual learners. Teachers’ ability to be sensitive and notice the positive and good in every student can make a big difference (Takala et al., 2020). So, it cannot be stated enough that the teachers have a huge responsibility when creating the learning environment and interacting with the students. In an ideal situation, teachers and students would have enough time to interact, and therefore, no special evaluation or diagnosis would be needed. The teachers would get to know all the students well enough to know their behavioural manners, trickers, and patterns to be able to create a safe environment for learning for all the students and the teacher’s knowledge would be rich enough so that no additional formal diagnoses or labels would not be needed (Määttä & Rantala, 2016).

Murto et al. (2001) conclude, that when teaching in an inclusive environment the teacher needs to observe students and see what obstacles they might have in their education and learning environment and then figure out how to remove the barriers or at least try to reduce their effects. These obstacles can be about students’ origin, gender, social status, socio-economic status, disability, religion, language, etc. The obstacles can also occur inside the school system or specific schools’ practices. They sum up that essentially inclusive education is about observing teaching and learning methods, contents, and aims so that they can be modified in a way that education considers all learners treating them equally and with respect.

Furthermore, Takala et al. (2020) state that for inclusion to work, the schools and teachers must commit to it and that implementing inclusion needs to be evaluated and improved continuously. They say that it can require various resources and commitment from the teachers, to be able to consider all different learners and work together. Therefore, to successfully implement inclusion the commitment needs to be mutual and include all the schools’ faculty. They also add that the reform to teach in inclusive ways can also require some changes in the school culture, for example, in the differentiation of the teaching, cooperation with the special education teachers, modifying learning environments to support all students, and collaboration of curriculums and individual educational plans.

European Agency's Teacher Education for Inclusion presents four values that inclusive teachers need to have: Seeing all students as valuable, supporting all kinds of learners, cooperating, and constantly developing expertise (Takala et al., 2020). In other words, the teachers understand what inclusive education means and see every learning experience as a unique process. Secondly, the teachers know how to teach in mixed-ability settings and can support all the students. Third the teachers can cooperate with other professionals and the students' families. And lastly, the teachers constantly reflect on their work and have a good background in lifelong learning.

In addition to the teachers' values, Takala et al. (2020) have specified six prerequisites for successful inclusion. They are 1. knowing the students, their strengths and giving support, 2. sterling teaching and support, 3. cooperation with different experts, 4. leadership and management of reform, 5. commitment and reflecting, and 6. participation, cohesion, and wellbeing. At the centre of these six prerequisites are teachers' values, attitudes, goals, and resources, hence the teachers have a great responsibility in implementing inclusive education. However, usually diverse teaching methods and strategies, used in efficient and flexible ways, are enough for teachers to apply support to diverse students. Therefore, teachers should know how to adapt and adjust different learning methods to support their children. One good way to ensure that every student is managing in the class is to use student-oriented pedagogy over teacher-led methods (Saloviita, 2008).

For the teachers to be able to do all this, what they need, is good pedagogical knowledge and capability. However, this means that an inclusive way of educating demands teachers to have more advanced and broader knowledge which can burden the teachers and make them feel inadequate. Many teachers feel they do not have the acquirements to teach students, who have, for example, learning disabilities, in regular classes (Takala et al., 2020). This belief, individually and collectively to have the confidence and the ability to influence students' learning, even for the so-called deviant, difficult or unmotivated students, is called self-efficacy (Saloviita, 2020; Savolainen et al., 2012) and it is, according to research, strongly related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (Savolainen et al., 2020). Therefore, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are crucial for inclusive education.

In addition to the teachers' role, according to Boer et al. (2011), a good learning environment plays a key part in implementing inclusion in education. When there is a special needs student in the regular class, what is needed, is to ensure that the student is indeed a part of the class and not just physically in the same space. Sometimes it can be enough for the students to just "be there" (in an inclusive class) to create social participation and experience positive interaction with students who do not have disabilities and form social relationships etc. However, sometimes what happens is that even though the student is in the regular class they spend most of their time alone or with a personal assistant which does not bring the benefits of inclusion to the children but rather creates more loneliness and a sense of being an outsider (Saloviita, 2008). Therefore, a good learning environment is crucial for inclusion. Takala et al. (2020) have divided it into three categories: pedagogical, social and psychological, and physical. They elaborate that a good pedagogical learning environment means teaching diverse methods, and based on

current information, qualified teachers, communication, and pedagogical discussion about values and goals. A social and psychological learning environment is considered good when there is working interaction and communication, an open and safe environment, safe adults, a good distribution of students, support for students, and collaboration with parents and other outside parties. Lastly, a good physical learning environment means a calm space, that can be changed according to the needs, promotes learning, enables diverse teaching methods, is accessible, allows to divide groups, while being comfortable, and enforces health.

So, to create this good inclusive learning environment and to properly execute inclusion, the teachers need resources. This can mean various things. Sometimes it means fewer students in the class or new learning tools and technology. It can also mean more teaching faculty like school assistants, resource teachers, sufficient support from the special education teacher, or even co-teaching (Lutovac, Uitto, Keränen, Kettunen, & Assunção Flores 2024). It is important to remember that the teachers do not need to know and do everything by themselves and that giving the needed support to the students often requires the cooperation of different professionals (Saloviita, 2008; Takala et al., 2020). This might include a speech therapist, physiotherapist, special education teacher, social worker, psychologist, medical doctor, occupational therapist, sign language interpreter, nurse, personal assistant, etc. (Ikonen & Virtanen, 2001; Saloviita, 2008). When it comes to learning, for a student with special needs, all the professionals need to come together and write down in the study plan what are the main objectives for the student and their learning, and then they need to adjust them over time according to the needs of the student. (Ikonen & Virtanen, 2001). In addition to professionals collaborating, good cooperation with the student's parents is also important since active participation from the parents supports the students' learning outcomes (Saloviita, 2008).

To sum up, to manage to teach in mixed-ability settings teachers need more cooperation, knowledge of special education, and resources (Takala et al., 2020). However, Saloviita (2018) states, that because of the vague meaning of resources, it is sometimes unclear what is needed or missing, or if something is missing. He explains that on average, only a third of the teachers believe they have access to resources required to successfully implement inclusion. This problem is something that is often mentioned in recent studies. However, he argues that the belief that the teachers have about the lack of resources does not necessarily mean that there is a shortage of resources, after all, there is no precise way of measuring this assumed shortage since the need for different resources and the needed amount most likely varies from teacher to teacher. He continues to say that maybe by claiming that there are not enough resources the teachers can be excused in a socially acceptable way for not admitting students with special needs in their classes. The reason behind this, could be due to teachers' concerns about teaching in inclusive environments, especially when it comes to teaching students who are considered deviant or challenging (Savolainen et al., 2020). This could indicate that the inclusive education policy is not completely accepted by all teachers.

However, with the ever-changing world and its people, teachers should learn new ways of thinking and teaching. What is required to guarantee quality education is teachers who can reflect and develop their expertise throughout their careers. The teachers' ability to evaluate their own work and knowledge, and to modify their teachings and actions is also a big part of inclusive education (Takala et al., 2020). What is worrying is that, according to Prashnig (2000), teachers as professionals are amongst the most unable to change and adapt and that most of the teachers seem to have strong analytical preferences and beliefs about what is right and what is wrong when it comes to teaching methods and learning. She says that teachers want to proceed to do what they have done until now, even though their knowledge would be outdated. As a group, teachers usually also oppose changes. However, the ability to reflect on one's work is part of the development of teachers' expertise. The process of reflecting on one's work includes theoretical knowledge but also the attitudes and beliefs that one has; and the better the teachers are, at acknowledging their attitudes and beliefs, the more they develop their expertise (Takala et al., 2020). In addition, the teachers' attitudes and beliefs are among the strongest predictors of, how successful the inclusion reform will be (Forlin et al., 2011).

3.3 Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education

Typically, what is important in implementing inclusive education, are training, resources, legislation, and teachers. Because teachers are seen as a crucial part of the development and implementation of inclusive education their attitudes towards inclusion have been the subject of research for some time. The results have been that teachers tend to have a positive attitude towards the general philosophy of inclusion but have serious reservations about inclusive education in practice (Boer et al., 2011; Savolainen et al., 2020). This indicates that the attitudes towards inclusion are based on concerns about implementing inclusion sufficiently, rather than ideological arguments (Savolainen et al., 2012).

Teachers' attitudes, and beliefs are important factors for inclusive education since they influence what pedagogical solutions teachers use in their work and predict their behaviour (Forlin et al., 2011). In other words, teachers who feel more positively toward inclusion tend to use more inclusive teaching methods and strategies, (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020; Savolainen et al., 2020.) and vice versa, the teachers who are apprehensive towards diversity are more likely to use practices that promote exclusion rather than accommodating individual differences (Forlin et al., 2011). The necessity of teachers' positive attitude towards inclusive education to make inclusion work is self-evident. If the teacher does not want children with special needs in their classroom, no amount of resources could save the placement of said children from being a failure (Saloviita, 2018).

It is noted that special education teachers feel more positive toward inclusion than classroom or subject teachers (Saloviita, 2018; Takala et al., 2020). This might be explained by their broader knowledge and experience with diverse students since teachers' prior knowledge and experience with people with

disabilities and students with special needs has been linked to a more positive attitude towards inclusive education (Boer et al., 2011; Forlin et al., 2011, Savolainen et al., 2020). Or it could be because classroom and subject teachers have been concerned about increasing workload in an inclusive environment and maybe the special needs teachers do not share this possible threat (Saloviita, 2018). In addition to special education teachers, principals tend to be less critical towards inclusion (Moberg et al., 2015).

Attitudes can be affected because they are not innate, they are not something you are born with, rather they are learned and therefore, a positive attitude towards something can be learned (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020). This is why, it would be important to teach pre-service teachers to be positive toward different learners and inclusive learning environments. One way to change teachers' attitudes to be more positive is to focus on their self-efficacy. Savolainen et al. (2012) disclose there to be, strong evidence that teachers' self-efficacy is related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. They conclude that both teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs are crucial, for inclusive education and that teachers' self-efficacy might be a significant predictor of the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Vice versa the evidence was not so clear. The results were stable irrespective of gender or whether the teacher was a novice or an expert. This suggests that if we focus on increasing teachers' self-efficacy, it can lead to teachers' more positive attitudes towards inclusiveness. Moreover, the evidence shows, that successful teaching experiences in an inclusive class during pre-service, can increase teacher's self-efficacy (Savolainen et al., 2020). So, by providing student teachers with good hands-on experiences from inclusive education we could support their self-efficacy beliefs which could then change the future teachers' attitudes to be more positive toward inclusive learning environments. However, some studies suggest that teachers' attitudes and efficacy are rather stable traits meaning changing them can take a lot of time (Savolainen et al., 2020). This is even more reason to focus on them already from the teacher training phase.

Worth mentioning is also that the attitudes toward inclusion have not been indubitably associated with such variables as gender, age, or experience as a teacher (Saloviita, 2018). However, some studies have indicated that female teachers have more positive attitudes than male and that teachers with fewer years of teaching experience tend to feel more positive toward inclusion than teachers with more teaching experience (Forlin et al., 2011; Savolainen et al., 2020). So, the studies seem to be unclear. However, according to Boer et al. (2011) what has impacted teachers' attitudes towards inclusion is the class size, experience and training in special needs education, and the type of student's disability. They further elaborate that with smaller class sizes and training in special needs education, the teachers felt more positive towards inclusive education. Also, the students who have emotional or behavioural difficulties, learning disabilities, or cognitive disabilities seemed to cause more concerns in teachers than other types of disability.

In Finland, a few studies have been conducted regarding teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The results have shown that Finnish teachers' scores have been somewhere near the neutral midpoint of the

scale which is lower than in many other Western countries indicating that in Finland the teachers are less accepting of inclusion (Saloviita, 2018). However, similar to national studies Finnish teachers were most reluctant to include students with any behavioural disorders or students with developmental disabilities in their classrooms (Moberg et al., 2015). There are even fewer studies done about student teacher's attitudes toward inclusion. Nonetheless, Takala, Pihlaja & Viljamaa (2022) concluded in their research that Finnish student teachers generally tend to have almost negative attitudes towards inclusion. According to them if the attitudes were slightly positive, they typically followed the word "but", stating that the idea of inclusion was accepted *but* for some reason its implementation is problematic.

4 Researching Perception

In this research, perception is constructed through three concepts, attitudes, concerns, and attribution. Each concept is investigated to get the idea about, student teachers' perceptions towards inclusion.

4.1 Attitudes

Attitude can be seen as an individual's viewpoint or disposition towards an object in question (Boer et al., 2011). It is a psychological construct that describes a person's mental process, meaning that it cannot be directly observed or measured but may be inferred from people's actions or speech (Pennington, Gillen & Hill, 1999). It is a psychological tendency expressed by valuing an object, symbol, or aspect with some degree of favour or disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). An attitude does not exist until an individual responds evaluatively towards the object on a cognitive, affective, and behavioural basis (Hirsjärvi, 1983). It is an internal state that lasts for at least some time (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

When trying to understand attitude three components can be monitored (Figure 1). First is the cognitive response. This means all the knowledge, ideas, and beliefs one has towards the object of the attitude (Boer et al., 2011; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Hirsjärvi, 1983; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020). For example, in the case of inclusion, this could mean the teachers' belief a student with special needs should attend regular school. It is the various attributions associated with the object of attitude, that the individual establishes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The second component is the affective response which contains all the emotions, moods, feelings, and sympathetic nervous system activity that people experience regarding the object of the attitude (Boer et al., 2011; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Hirsjärvi, 1983; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020). These are irrational responses (Boer et al., 2011). With inclusion, affective response means, for example, how the teachers feel about having students with disabilities in their classroom. Lastly, there is a behavioural response which is the position the person is taking and all the actions or inactions the person is willing to take (Boer et al., 2011; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Hirsjärvi, 1983; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020). For example, is the teacher willing to use inclusive teaching methods? These three components of attitude typically have a high consistency between each other, however, sometimes due to social pressure, etc. people do not act the way they feel or think (Pennington et al., 1999).

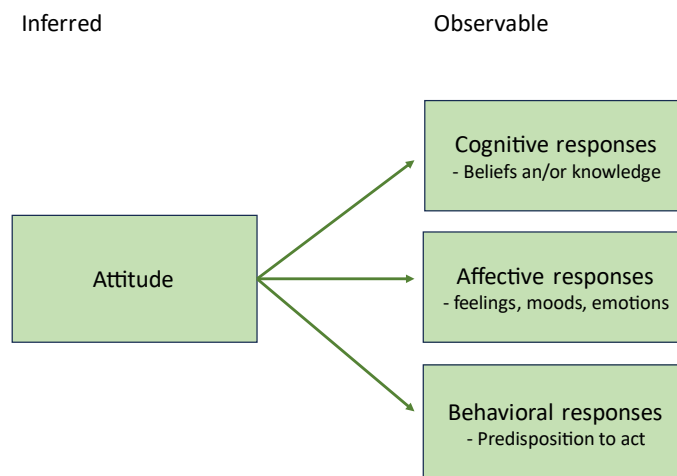


Figure 1 The Three Components of Attitude (Boet et al., 2011; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

4.2 Concerns

It is established that teachers' attitudes are important when implementing inclusive education but moreover, equally important is to investigate teachers' concerns about inclusion. These two concepts are also intertwined as research has shown there is a correlation between the two, meaning that teachers who held more positive attitudes towards inclusion also had fewer concerns and vice versa. (Forlin et al., 2011). It can even be contemplated that concerns are a sub-dimension of attitudes. Savolainen et al. (2020) explain that this would mean that under the concept of attitude, there is a sub-dimension of general attitudes that means, the general perception of, in this case, inclusion, meaning the views for example teachers have about inclusion as an educational approach. In addition to that, there is also the sub-dimension of concerns, which focuses on the teachers' teaching and how they feel about teaching in an inclusive environment and having, for example, students with disabilities in their classroom. They conclude that this dimension of attitudes is more personal, and typically it has been the one where teachers have had more reservations. According to Forlin et al. (2011), teachers are often concerned about their ability and skills to teach effectively special needs students, and the lack of resources to accommodate inclusive learning environments. They also conclude that teachers' attitudes and concerns reflected on the acceptance and commitment to inclusive education, and therefore, on the success they most likely will have in implementing inclusion.

4.3 Attribution Theory

People have an innate tendency to seek explanations for their own and other people's behaviour (Ryynänen & Rannikko, 2021). Pennington et al. (1999) suggest that it may stem from the need to predict how others are likely to behave in the future so that there is at least some degree of feeling of being in control. They also explain that looking at attribution the focus is on how the behaviour is perceivable caused, rather than how it is actually caused. For example, if you do poorly at a job interview, you may perceive the reason to be that you went to bed late and were tired. But the person who interviewed you may think you did badly because you are incompetent or not interested in the job. The behavioural causes can be either internal or external (Pennington et al., 1999). Internal causes are, for example, personal traits, motives, and intentions. These are within the individual. External causes, however, are forces located outside of a person or are social situations that make the person behave in a certain way.

What is interesting is that according to Pennington et al. (1999), if people succeed, they tend to take credit for it and claim that it was because of their talent, hard work etc. However, if they instead fail, they tend to blame external causes such as bad luck or the task being too difficult. This is called self-serving bias. This attribution error occurs also between different groups. For example, Ryynänen & Rannikko (2021, p.120) found in their research that when a relationship between a professional and a customer was good or unproblematic it was attributed to both the customer and professional. However, if the relationship had problems, the professionals named the reason to be the customer's (behaviour's) fault. Pennington et al. (1999) also conclude that self-serving bias exists in student teachers' work, meaning that when the students do well in exams, student teachers feel that it is because of their sufficient teaching. However, when the students do poorly it is attributed to be the students' fault. This error was only detected among student teachers and not in-service teachers. Furthermore, they concluded that if putting too much value on sorting people into "us" and "them" or "normal" and "deviant/different" and proceeding to see the groups' reasons behind some behaviour differently, that is called group-serving bias. For example, it can mean a setting where the people in the "in-group" (typically the group you identify yourself with) see the negative behaviour of the "out-group" as their fault and the positive behaviour of the out-group as caused by situational factors.

5 Methods

This current research is a mixed method research (MMR), where quantitative and qualitative methods are used to understand better the research issue in question (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). If using only one method, the research can have flaws or be missing something. Instead by using MMR, the results can be broader and fill out the possible gaps that would exist if only using either one approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). The qualitative section of this research was executed using the Method of Empathy-Based Story (MEBS) and the data was analysed using content analysis methods. The quantitative part of this research is based on a Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education revised (SACIE-R) scale and the data was analysed using quantitative data analysis methods using SPSS.

Using these methods, the purpose of this research is to answer the following questions:

1. What perceptions do Finnish student teachers have towards inclusion?
 - a. What general attitudes do student teachers have towards inclusive education?
 - b. What concerns do student teachers have towards teaching in an inclusive environment?
 - c. Is there any self-serving bias in the perception of student teachers?

5.1 Method of Empathy-Based Story (MEBS)

Stories produced by people create humans' social realities. Ryyänänen & Rannikko (2021) state that through stories, people form their identities, communicate with others, interpret things, and ponder human relationships. The stories that are created arise from one's personal, social, and cultural realities. Storytelling is also how people pass on their cultural heritage. They note that this habit of producing scenarios can be seen for example in media and people's everyday life. Some of these scenarios are based on statistical probabilities and other people's constructed assumptions and conceptions. This innate imagination and ability to create stories and scenarios are the key elements in the Method of Empathy-Based Story (MEBS) (Valli, 2018).

In MEBS the participants are given a short script and based on that they write small essays or stories (Eskola, 1997; Ryyänänen & Rannikko, 2021; Valli, 2018.). Eskola (1997) explains that usually, participants' responses describe what has happened before the script or what is going to happen afterwards. He also states that the scripts are not based on any real events but can be possible to happen and that the main idea of MEBS is to use different variations of the scripts. There needs to be at least two different versions of the script which normally has one thing that varies. In the analysis, it is then investigated what changes when the variable is different. What is the effect of the variable stories? How do the stories change when the variable factor changes? This variation of the scripts is the thing that makes MEBS unique and different from most of the data collection methods (Eskola, 1997; Ryyänänen

& Rannikko, 2021; Valli, 2018). You also get to analyse the data twice, first as any data and second time noticing the effects of variations. According to Valli (2018), the script is typically not more than 3 to 4 sentences, which consist of three things: the introduction, the story and variation, and the assignment. The more information the participants are given in the script the more they can be led in some direction, or they can start interpreting words, etc. This is why the script should be short. In addition, in longer scripts, there is the danger of the variation disappearing into the text.

So, why MEBS? One of the reasons behind creating MEBS is the ethical reason for protecting the participants (Ryynänen & Rannikko, 2021; Valli, 2018). Looking back on the history of research there is plenty of research particularly in social sciences that in some ways caused hurt to the participants. This was widely discussed in 1980, which was the same time MEBS was brought to Finland (Valli, 2018). So, the basic idea is to do experimental research but treat the participants as humans rather than exploiting and manipulating them to answer questions. In a way, MEBS is peeking into people's consciousness, language, thoughts, active thinking and so on. Especially in human sciences, it is important to see the participants as active subjects rather than passive laboratory rats (Eskola, 1997). However, like all the research methods, MEBS is not free from ethical issues. Although, the consequences might be subtle, sometimes writing a story can influence the participant or the researcher. For example, Eskola (1997, p.13) mentions a case where a participant used to have anxiety in the literature class in their childhood, and participating in the research brought the old feelings back. However, he concludes that these are incidents that any researcher doing empirical study cannot completely prevent nonetheless, it still can be stated that MEBS is far less likely to have ethical issues than many other data collection methods. This is because this method does not force the participant to answer any questions in any certain forms, the participant usually has a vaster way of responding than any structured form would offer and, it does not look for any liability nor does it push or courage the participant to answer in the middle of writing like in interviews (Eskola, 1997; Ryynänen & Rannikko, 2021; Valli, 2018). Therefore, it can be concluded that storytelling is a more natural and ethical way for the participants to produce information than any other experimental method. However, given the vast possibilities of answering the results can be then hard to interpret.

This brings us to a second idea behind this method. People's actions and the logic behind them are not random in different situations. MEBS was invented to investigate the mechanisms and patterns people see as important factors behind their behaviour, choices, and social patterns (Eskola, 1997). The point is to study the circumstances and the participants' sociability and cultural bond. Ryynänen & Rannikko (2021) remind us that when analysing stories, it is important to note that peoples' views on certain matters are not necessarily permanent or are they straightforward attitudes towards something but rather using argumentation people form their relationship and position towards things, themselves, and surrounding society. In other words, people describe the things that matter to them from their perspectives and premises. They continue that this is why when analysing in MEBS the idea is to communicate with the story and see what it says, rather than looking behind it and trying to guess hidden

meanings or feelings, etc. To conclude they say that the results are also not “what factually is” but rather “what could be” and what is aimed is to find a universal logic of human interaction in different circumstances in life. In other words, this type of empirical method rather than proving some existing hypotheses to be true can create some new innovative hypotheses. It gives, the researcher the ability to think creatively and the participants an opportunity to respond in broader ways than just answering the questions the researcher has constructed. This method might not answer what a large group of people think but can be very useful in figuring out the logic behind peoples’ thoughts (Valli, 2018).

When creating the script, one should decide whether to use the first pronoun or the third person and in the same way, it should be thought, if the story will be gender neutral or does a character has a gender and what might be the effect of that (Valli, 2018). Before collecting the data, it is also important to test the script, to see if you are getting the responses, you are looking for (Ryynänen & Rannikko, 2021). In MEBS a good sample size would be 15-20 for each script. This typically is enough to reach the saturation point (Ryynänen & Rannikko, 2021; Valli, 2018). However, according to Ryynänen & Rannikko (2021) sometimes the story variations do not bring any new information but only say the same thing in positive and negative. In this case, they say that the data can be looked at in parallel and focus on the big picture like the values and things the participants want to highlight.

MEBS is not one of the most well-known methods in the field of research. It has mainly been conducted in Finland since there is only about 20 or so international research, which has been mostly done by Finnish researchers (Valli, 2018). There is also very little scientific literature about MEBS even though it has been used in social and educational sciences reasonably amount (Ryynänen & Rannikko, 2021).

5.2 SACIE-R

SACIE-R is a measuring tool to assess pre-service and in-service teachers’ sentiments, attitudes, and concerns about inclusive education (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020). It was noted that since the increase in inclusive education teacher training institutions started modifying their programs to address the issue of inclusion (Loreman et al., 2007). However, there was no short, sufficient, and user-friendly empirical method of measuring the multifaceted issues linked to beliefs about implementing inclusive education (Forlin et al., 2011). Therefore, Loreman et al. (2007) felt that it was essential to create one. They developed the scale by using modified versions of already existing scales of the Interactions with People with Disabilities scale (IPD), the Concerns about Inclusive Education scale (CIES), and the Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education scale (ATIES). After conducting principal component analyses, judgment from the research team and critique of content and format from an expert group, a new scale, the Sentiment, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education scale (SACIE) was formed.

The SACIE scale has three sub-scales, Sentiment, Attitude, and Concerns, which each measure different aspects of attitude towards inclusion in education (Loreman et al., 2007). The first sub-scale ‘sentiment’

measures attitude towards people with disabilities; the second sub-scale 'attitude' measures attitude towards inclusion of students with disabilities or special needs; and the last sub-scale 'concerns' measures the teachers' concerns about having students with disabilities or special needs in their classroom (Savolainen et al., 2012). Forlin et al. (2011) state that these three aspects of attitude are critical to assess when inclusive education is implemented. The way teachers feel toward children with disabilities or special needs impacts the way they will treat them as students. Furthermore, they conclude that the more positive the pre-service teachers feel towards including special needs students in their classrooms the more successful they will most likely be in implementing inclusive education. The concerns aspect is also important according to them, since it gives future teachers a way of pinpointing exactly where they have anxiety or worries which then can help take actions to try to alleviate them.

The original SACIE scale included 19 statements that were assessed using a Likert scale with 4 possible answering options, strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree (Loreman et al., 2007). However, Forlin et al. (2011, p. 53) conducted a revised version of the scale to provide a more "concise, clear, balanced, and statistically defensible research instrument", which reduced the statements to 15 and renamed it to SACIE-R (R referring to revised). The remaining 15 statements meant there were 5 for each sub-scale. However, since Savolainen et al. (2012) concluded in their research that the sub-scale "sentiment" showed poor psychometric qualities in the Finnish version of the scale, it was decided to exclude the sub-scale of Sentiment from this research. Leaving 10 statements remaining, five statements measuring the general attitudes towards inclusive education (e.g. "Students who need an individualized academic program should be in regular classes."), and five statements measuring the teachers' concerns about having students with special needs in their classroom (e.g. "I am concerned that my workload will increase if I have students with disabilities in my class.").

5.3 The Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of a few background questions, the two MEBS scripts, and the SACIE-R questions (Forlin et al., 2011). The questionnaire was done by using webropol and the language used was Finnish.

Before finalising the questionnaire, it was tested with a few student teachers. For this pilot, two responses were received, which gave a good indication that the questionnaire worked as it should. For the MEBS questions the respondents gave two different answers focusing on different things but both answered the scripts in a way that was expected. Another response was long with many thoughtful points of view, and the other was shorter and gave a nice variation to the script. Based on the responses the feeling was confident that the scripts were working as intended. However, based on the pilot questionnaire and the suggestions that came from it, some modifications were made.

One change was made to the categories of question number 6. teaching experience as a class teacher (including internships). The highest possible option that was in the pilot was 6 months or more. Because both respondents had chosen this option, making more variations, and raising the number of months higher was better. The categories were changed to none, less than 1 month, 1-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-12 months, and more than 12 months. Also, the pilot suggested adding a separate question about teaching experience as a special education teacher, which was added to the questionnaire. There was also a notion about the quantitative questions being hard to answer based on the nature of the questions. One respondent thought, the way the questions were formed, did not give the option to say what they were thinking. In a way, the questions were very black and white even though it is not so in real life. However, no changes were made to these questions since the SACIE-R has been proven to be a proficient questionnaire according to previous studies. For the same reason, the Likert scale was kept how it was even though it is usually preferable to have the neutral middle option.

In addition to the pilot questionnaire, feedback was received from the thesis group and based on it the story was changed from a personal to a third-person perspective. Originally the story was told from the reader's perspective, but someone pointed out that it might be easier to reflect on the story if it is written from the third person's point of view. This was a relevant observation since the participants might be more reluctant to truly write their thoughts if they were talking about themselves rather than a third person. In this way, the participants could be more honest and critical. Even when writing hypothetical stories, if the I-perspective is used, people tend to play by the social rules and conform to what is, assumably, expected of them (Ryynänen & Rannikko, 2021).

Typically, in MEBS, each participant replies to only one variation of the story, however, to maximise the sample size, the questionnaire was formed so that all the participants would respond to both versions of the script. To create more variation and avoid bias from either version, the instrument was supposed to vary which of the script's versions came first to each participant. However, due to an unknown technical issue, the whole sample replied to the scripts in the same order, the negative script first and the positive script later.

The MEBS script was about a teacher (Paju), who is teaching in an inclusive classroom with a lot of diversity and different students needing various forms of support. It is the end of the week, and they are on their way home and are thinking about the week gone by. In the negative version, Paju's week has gone badly, and the participants are asked to write down what has happened during the week and what could have been done to prevent the week from being bad. The second version of the script was identical, but now Paju's week had gone well. Once again, the participants were asked to describe the week and to state how the teacher's weeks can be successful also in the future.

5.4 Sample and Data Collection

The research sample consists of Finnish teacher education undergraduate students. The questionnaire was sent to the Universities of Turku, Rauma, Joensuu, Helsinki, Tampere, Oulu and Jyväskylä. It was sent to each University using their student mailing lists to all student teachers. The Data was collected during the spring (March-April) of 2022. One reminder was sent to each mailing list. The responses came from the Universities of Turku (N11), Rauma (N9), Tampere (N2), and Jyväskylä (N6). So, even though the questionnaire and a reminder were sent to the Universities of Oulu, Helsinki, and Joensuu, there were no responses.

From the 28 responses, 21 replied to the open questions of the method of empathy-based story. Furthermore, one person disagreed with participating in this research, another did not respond to any of the questions other than agreeing to participate, and a third person responded only to the background questions but neither of the real research questions. These three responses were taken out of the sample. This concluded that the total number of participants for the SACIE-R was 25 and the MEBS 21.

Out of the 25, only 4 were male and 21 female. This can be most likely explained by the ratio of females/males in the universities in teacher training. More than half of the participants were age 25 or more (52%), and most had studied for five years or more (40%), although, there were participants from all the categories from 1st - 4th year. All participants had at least some experience teaching as a class teacher, which makes sense since the mandatory teaching practices in the curriculum. Most participants (N14) had teaching experience as a class teacher for 1-6 months, 9 had more than 6 months, and two less than a month. However, the vast majority (N15), had no experience teaching as a special education teacher, 6 had experience for less than a month and only 4 participants said to have experienced more than that. Worth mentioning, is also that only 3 participants had studied special education as a minor, and one of them was studying the qualification of a special education teacher. Other minor studies varied from the most popular one of health science and PE to more individual interests in different languages and history, music, digital learning environments, etc.

6 Results

6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

At the beginning of the quantitative data analysis, the data was inserted into the SPSS program. The subscales of ‘general attitudes’ and ‘concerns’, from the previous studies were used. Each subscale included five items. The items in the subscale concern were reversed to be similarly positive as the attitude items. This made it possible to calculate them both in a way that a higher number means a more positive attitude, for example, a positive general attitude and fewer concerns. Next, the descriptive statistic for all the items was examined (Table 1).

Descriptive Statistics of the Whole Scale of Attitude					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.	25	1	4	2,72	0,79
Students who are inattentive should be in regular classes.	25	1	4	2,48	0,77
Students who require communicative technologies (e.g. Braille/sign language) should be in regular classes.	24	1	4	2,13	0,85
Students who frequently fail exams should be in regular classes.	25	1	4	2,72	0,84
Students who need an individualized academic program should be in regular classes.	25	1	4	2,24	0,78
I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class.	25	1	4	2,52	0,65
I am concerned that it will be difficult to give appropriate attention to all students in an inclusive classroom.	25	1	3	1,32	0,63
I am concerned that my workload will increase if I have students with disabilities in my class.	25	1	4	1,60	0,91
I am concerned that I will be more stressed if I have students with disabilities in my class.	25	1	4	1,76	0,88
I am concerned that I do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach students with disabilities.	23	1	4	2,09	1,12

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the whole Scale

The first five items measure the participants' general attitude and the last five items the participants' concerns. From Table 1 it can be seen that, like in the previous studies, the attitude scores are somewhere close to the midpoint or even below it. The most positive the respondents were about the items “Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.” ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 0.79$) and “Students who frequently fail exams should be in regular classes.” ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 0,8.4$). But even these items scored close to the middle since the scale was from 1 to 4, meaning the middle point is 2.5. Furthermore, all the items in the concern subscales had a lower mean than any of the items in the general attitude subscale, except for one, “I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class.” ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.65$). The lowest means had the items “I am concerned that it will be difficult to give appropriate attention to all students in an inclusive classroom.” ($M = 1.32$, $SD = 0.63$), “I am concerned that my workload will increase if I have students with disabilities in my class.” ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 0.91$), and “I am concerned that I will be more stressed if I have students with disabilities in my class.” ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 0.88$).

Using the already existing subscales, two sum variables were formed, the sum for general attitude and the sum for concerns (Table 2). Each of these sum variables consisted of 5 items. As was seen from the statistics from the whole scale the general attitude ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.52$) scored higher than the concerns ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 0.65$). Furthermore, both sum variables measured below midpoint meaning that the attitudes and concerns are not positive but rather yet indifferent or even negative.

Descriptive Statistics for the subscales					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
the sum of the general attitude	24	1,60	3,40	2,44	0,52
the sum of concerns	23	1,20	3,60	1,87	0,65

Table 2 The Descriptive statistic of the subscales

The scale's reliability was examined by calculating Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale and both subscales. The Cronbach's alpha for the subscale of general attitude was $\alpha = 0.654$ and for the subscale concerns $\alpha = 0.803$. The Cronbach's alpha, for the whole scale including all 10 items, was $\alpha = 0.790$. Generally, the alpha is considered reliable when it is bigger than 0,7 (Tähtinen, Laakkonen & Broberg, 2020) but considering the sample size in this research, the alphas in previous studies using the same scale, and that the $< 0,7$ is only a recommendation, all the scales here were concluded to be in the limits of reasonable reliability.

The next step was to inspect some independent variables to see if they would show significant differences in attitudes and concerns. Because of the lack of male participants, there were no calculations done with gender, even though it would have been interesting to see since the results from previous studies have been mixed. The variables age, teaching experience as a class teacher, and teaching experience as a special education teacher were recoded to new variables. The age variable was grouped into people aged under 25 and people aged 25 or more. Since all the student teachers had at least some experience the variable of teaching experience as a class teacher was regrouped to be students who had teaching experience for less than 6 months and more than 6 months. Since most of the student teachers did not have any teaching experience as a special education teacher this variable was changed to two groups of no experience or any amount of experience.

Age

Shapiro-Wilk's test showed that the whole sample was not approximately normally distributed for example, with the age group under 25 and the sum scale for concerns had $p = .002$, and skewness of 2.132 (SE = 0.661), and kurtosis of 5.203 (SE = 1.279). Since the sample was not normally distributed, as it should be, when using t-tests (Muuronen, 2009; Tähtinen et al., 2020), the Mann-Whitney U test was performed. The Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant difference in attitudes between the students aged under 25 (Median = 2.6, $n = 12$) and 25 or more (Median = 2.5, $n = 12$), $U = 71$, $z = -0.59$, $p = .953$. In the same way, the test revealed that there was an insignificant difference in concerns between the students aged under 25 (Median = 1.4, $n = 11$) and 25 or more (Median = 1.8, $n = 12$), $U = 48.50$, $z = -1.096$, $p = 0.273$.

Teaching Experience as a Class Teacher

Using Shapiro-Wilk's test it was detected that the sample distribution was not optimal for a parametric test. For example, students, with less than 6 months of teaching experience and the sum scale of concerns, had $p = .003$ and skewness of 1.687 (SE = 0.580), and a kurtosis of 2.764 (SE = 1.121). Because of the significant difference, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the non-parametric test Mann-Whitney U test was chosen again. The Mann-Whitney U test showed that there were no significant differences in attitudes between the student teacher who had less than 6 months of teaching experience as a class teacher (Median = 2.6, $n = 16$) and student teachers who had more than 6 months of teaching experience (Median = 2.5, $n = 8$), $U = 59$, $z = -0.311$, $p = .756$. In the same way, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there were insignificant differences in concerns between student teachers with less than 6 months of teaching experience (Median = 1.4, $n = 15$) and student teachers with more than 6 months of teaching experience (Median = 1.9, $n = 8$), $U = 36$, $z = -1.576$, $p = .115$.

Teaching Experience as a Special Education Teacher

For the teaching experience as a special education teacher, Shapiro-Wilk's test showed again that the sample was not approximately normally distributed. For example, student teachers, with no experience and the sum scale of concerns had $p = .001$ skewness of 2.168 (SE = 0.597) and kurtosis of 5.731 (SE = 1.154). So, again the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test was chosen. The test showed that there were no significant differences in attitudes between the students who had no teaching experience as a special education teacher (Median = 2.6, $n = 14$) and students who had experience as a special education teacher (Median = 2.6, $n = 10$), $U = 65$, $z = -0.298$, $p = .766$. In the same way, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there were insignificant differences in concerns between the students who had no experience (Median = 1.4, $n = 15$) and students who had some experience as a special education teacher (Median = 1.9, $n = 8$), $U = 34.5$, $z = -1.675$, $p = .094$.

To conclude, none of the Mann-Whitney U tests showed significant differences, meaning the attitudes and concerns did not vary between the mentioned groups. So, according to this research, the person's age or the amount of work experience as a class teacher or special education teacher did not influence the person's attitudes or concerns. However, the more work experiences the respondents have had, either as a class teacher or a special education teacher, the concerns item showed a slightly more positive median. In addition, since the gap between the experiences in this research was fairly low, meaning that the experience differences were only some months and not even years, one could wonder if the differences between the groups would increase, when there would be a bigger variance between the work experiences. In the same way, since all the participants were university students, it could be predicted that they were all somewhat close in age, meaning there were no big differences between each other's ages and that could affect the results. Also, maybe with a bigger sample, there would have been more precise results. Furthermore, since there were no significant differences between the participants, it could be concluded that the pre-service teachers have neutral or indifferent attitudes toward having children with special needs in their classrooms and high levels of concern towards inclusive education, despite their age or experience. To sum up, it can be stated that Finnish student teachers' attitudes are neutral or even negative toward inclusion.

6.2 Content Analysis

The participants' responses to the MEBS scripts were analysed using content analysis methods. First, all the responses were collected into one document, that was read through multiple times. After familiarising with the data, what was focused on were two things: what was being seen as a cause of concern and what pedagogical measures were suggested. These would represent the cognitive (what is known or believed) and behavioural (what actions or inactions are willing to take) components of

attitude described previously in the theory (figure 1). In addition to these two, based on the data, the attribution approach was taken to reveal any possible self-serving bias that the student teachers might possess. So, the content analysis includes three sections: concerns, measures suggested, and attribution approach.

6.2.1 Concerns

The two scripts in MEBS were about a teacher who teaches in a classroom with diverse students. The teacher is on their way home after the week and is thinking about how the week was and what has happened. In the first variation their week has gone badly and in the second variation the week has gone well. The respondents were asked to write about the two weeks and suggest measures to improve the teacher's weeks. After reading the whole data multiple times, the data was then reduced by separating interesting or valuable parts of this subject, into another document. From the negative version, all the events, things, or causes that were told to be reasons, why the week went bad, were collected. Similarly, the things that made the good week go well, were included. After the data reduction, the data was again read numerous times and coded using colours. Each of these colours represented certain themes of events or factors. From these themes 5 categories of "concerns" were formed.

The categories were named as climate, conflicts, learning, resources, and acknowledging diversity (Table 3). In the stories about the week that went bad, these themes were seen negatively present, as concerns, and in the stories about the week that went well, these themes were written to be successful. This means, that the same five categories, could be detected from both, negative and positive week's responses. This tells that these categories exist in the respondents' perceptions and whether the week goes well or not, does not necessarily have an effect. Meaning these concerns are rather deeply rooted and stable. However, it would have been interesting to see if the same categories would have risen in both variations if each respondent had only replied to one of the script variations, instead of now responding to both of them.

Category	Sub-Category	Example from Data
Climate (N19)	Disruptions (N17)	“Some [students] constantly make noise and ruckus and nobody can concentrate.” ST1 “During the week neurodivergent students have been disturbing the classes.” ST6
	Class spirit (N7)	“There has been a good atmosphere in the class all week and a nice little ripple of conversation.” ST3 “The class spirit has been poor and there has been no time to make any progress on it.” ST20
	Class management (N5)	“Students have had difficulties attending the teaching and the class has been restless. --Class management has not been successful--.” ST19
Conflicts (N14)	Disputes and violence (N11)	“The situations have many times escalated to disputes and there has also been physical violence.” ST22 “--the week has been harmonious, meaning no bigger disputes or they have been managed to solve quickly in a constructive way. There have been peaceful working environments and students were encouraging each other.” ST23
	Bullying (N4)	“There has been bullying and the restlessness in the class has made many students cranky.” ST5
Learning (N13)	Successful learning (N9)	“Paju is frustrated because he feels no child has learned anything.” ST18
	Reaching set goals (N7)	“Paju is disappointed and upset that things do not go well in the class and students’ learning outcomes are poor.” ST19 “--both students and teacher have had successful experiences, learning schedule has been worked as planned.” ST24
Resources (N13)	Teachers own resources (N12)	“I am exhausted and do not know whether to cry or laugh.” ST23 “--and the teacher's resources have been enough for everyone.” ST16
	Other professionals (N4)	“Typically, the week is not so bad, since the school assistant is present, and the special education teacher is available.” ST3
	Time (N2)	“--Teacher has had time to ask everyone how they are in the dining hall/yard/corridor/classroom.” ST20
Acknowledging Diversity (N10)	Support for all (8)	“Especially they feels that the so-called “easy children” who do not have any need for special support are being neglected which troubles Paju. Also, the needs for support have not been able to address the way they would require.” ST3
	Embracing diversity (N3)	“Diverse learners in the class are a richness, --.” ST10

Table 3 Concerns

The first category was climate. This seemed to be something that most of the respondents were concerned about. 19 out of 21 participants mentioned it in some way in their responses. A good climate

in the class did not occur during the week that had gone bad. It manifested as disruptions such as chaos, restlessness, and students making constantly loud noises.

“There has been an awful chaos in the class and no teamwork has worked. Some [students] constantly make noise and ruckus and nobody can concentrate.” ST1

It also included poor class management, and the atmosphere was generally negative.

“Students have had difficulties attending the teaching and the class has been restless. --Class management has not been successful--.” ST19

However, when the week had gone well, these things were the opposite, meaning that there was a nice and quiet enough learning environment, teaching the class was effortless since everybody was focusing, and the class had a good spirit. This indicates that the student teachers associate teaching in diverse environments as somewhat chaotic or restless and difficult to manage. There might even exist some prejudice against students with behavioural problems or neurodivergent students since some of the respondents even mentioned those students to be the direct cause of the disturbances in the class.

“During the week neurodivergent students have been disturbing the classes.” ST6

“ADHD-student has thrown a desk to the wall, --.” ST25

This would correlate with the previous studies saying that teachers are most reluctant to take students associated with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties in their classes.

The second category that seemed to be causing concerns amongst the respondents, was conflicts. This meant, during the bad week, bullying, fights, students not getting along, and sometimes even physical violence.

“There are constant disputes during group work and some [students] even start physically to fight. Someone has to be taken to the ER and the rest are crying.” ST1

During the good week, students got along well with each other and were able to help and support one another. Conflicts, disputes, and even physical violence were mentioned in the data by 14 respondents. This tells that most respondents are at least somewhat concerned about issues between the students and the ability to confront them. However, it is difficult to say if the student teachers associated the conflicts with the class's diversity or if it was just something that came to their mind when they were thinking

about a bad week as a teacher. So, even though, in this study, there cannot be confirmed causation between diversity and conflicts since the majority of the participants mentioned conflicts, it can be stated that it is something that they are concerned about.

Concerns about learning meant concern about students not being able to learn or students not reaching set goals in their education. When the teacher's week had gone well there were no concerns about the learning, the students reached their set learning goals and they got to experience the joy of succeeding. In addition, even the teacher felt the experience of success.

“--both students and teacher have had successful experiences, learning schedule has been worked as planned.” ST24

This means that more than half (N13) of the respondents, put great emphasis on learning and wrote that a bad week for the teacher would mean an inability for the students to reach learning goals. Interestingly, so many of the respondents were concerned about the students being able to learn, since the studies have mainly concluded that having an inclusive environment does not negatively affect students who do not need special support and on the other hand, that the students who do need special support do better in regular class. However, perhaps the concern for the learning outcomes, arises more from the teachers' efficacy beliefs and the fear of failing. Furthermore, there was a pattern of some students being the fault (disturbers) and “others” being the victims who could not learn because of the disturber(s). This setting enforces the idea of “us” and “them”, “normal” and “deviant”, putting some students at risk of being segregated or left outside.

More than half of the respondents also mentioned resources or the lack of it. The absence of resources consisted of different resources that the participants saw lacking during the bad week or that were specially told to have been there in the good week. What was most mentioned was a teacher's resources. This meant their abilities, well-being, and the feeling of being enough.

“After the week the teacher is extremely anguished, tired and frustrated and does not understand what they has done wrong. Both, the teacher, and students are not well.” ST25

In addition, what resources were lacking according to the respondents was help from other adults, meaning the presence of a special education teacher or classroom/school assistant, etc. Having constantly to hurry and not have enough time for the students was also seen as a negative factor. Furthermore, a few mentioned the class size having a matter on, whether the week went well or not. Sometimes, the events in the classroom affected even the teacher's free time. When the week went well, the teacher received help from other professionals, had enough “resources” and time, the class was small, and the teacher managed to do all the work during work hours and did not have to worry about anything

outside of work. Based on previous studies and the opinions of teachers and their trade union representatives, it was not a surprise resources were a concern. For example, Takala, Pihlaja & Viljamaa (2022) concluded in their research that according to the student teachers what was missing from inclusion was help from other professionals and special educators, the class size was too big, and the teachers did not have enough training or materials. Similarly, in this research, most respondents felt that resources played a crucial part, in the week's failure or success.

The last category of concern was the ability to acknowledge diversity. During the week that had gone badly, the teacher could not provide enough attention or support to all the diverse students. This could mean difficulties in differentiating the teaching, there wasn't enough time to address all the students or finding each student's strength was unsuccessful. Sometimes, it was even the students without any need for special support, that were neglected. When the teacher's week had gone well the diversity in the class was seen as a positive thing. It also meant that there had been time to address all the students and the diversity, for example, culture or ethnicity was seen as inspiring, and diversity has become the new normal for the students.

“On the other hand, there has been time to talk about diversity and the need for support, so the students consider diversity quite normal.” ST20

To conclude, the respondents had concerns about the teacher's ability to keep the class's climate peaceful, without disputes or prevent acts of aggression between the students. Furthermore, they had doubts about the ability of everyone being able to learn in such a diverse environment especially if there were certain types of students or lack of resources. The major concern was if every student in an inclusive environment would receive the support they would need.

6.2.2 Measures Suggested

This section aims to see what measures the student teachers suggested so that Paju's week would be successful (also) in the future. This would serve as a behavioural component of the attitude exposing student teachers' willingness to use inclusive practices or suggest segregative measures. First, the data reduction was done by separating all the measures proposed, directly or indirectly, from the data. Then, again like with the concerns, the remaining data was coded using colors to help detect certain themes of measures. These measures were then divided into seven categories, which included all the measures and actions the student teachers suggested. These categories were named resources, teaching, prevention, class's well-being, students' diversity, adjusting, and teacher (Table 4).

Category	Sub-Category	Example from Data
Resources (N13)	Other professionals (N11)	“What is needed in the class, is extra help, for example, support from school assistant or special education teacher.” ST4
	“resources” (N6)	“Fixing up the resources.” ST14
Teaching (N11)	Diverse methods (N9)	“The teacher ensures that many teaching methods are used in the class. Students get activated and the teacher uses action-based teaching methods.” ST25
	Differentiation (N7)	“In the future also, it is useful to carefully differentiate teaching so that everyone gets to do work suitable to their level.” ST1
	Structure (N3)	“Teaching is, among other things, structured.” ST20
Prevention (N10)	Anticipation (N6)	“In the future, this [good week] can continue if Paju can anticipate possible problems in advance.” ST7
	Planning (N6)	“With better planning, Paju could have controlled the learning situations, --.” ST17
Class’s well-being (N9)	School Spirit (N6)	“In the class, there are lessons held that uplift school spirit, the teacher can instruct the class to play games together.” ST25
	Social and emotional skills (N5)	“Students’ relationships have been supported by teaching emotional skills and it has clearly enhanced better atmosphere.” ST22
	Inclusion (N2)	“Students’ inclusiveness and holistic well-being are aimed to advance more and more.” ST20
Students’ diversity (N9)	Knowing the students (N4)	“--and get to know better their students’ special traits and needs.” ST18
	Embracing diversity (N4)	“Different cultures and languages have been acknowledged and they have inspired students.” ST5
	Supporting everyone (N4)	“The support for learning is hidden as part of the teaching, allowing everyone to benefit from the support, and the special needs are not overemphasised.” ST20
Adjusting (N7)	Lowering the bar (N4)	“Maybe it would have been the smartest to set the bar for teaching and learning really low, and only focus on the class management and basic things like peaceful working and practising.” ST18
	Segregation (N4)	“It would make it easier if some of the students would be transferred to special classes or some smaller classes.” ST6 “Eric [the most energetic student] could be moved for some time to another class to study (for example, with younger students).” ST23
	Class size (N2)	“Number [of students] feels too much, --.” ST15
Teacher (N4)	Self-development (N3)	“The teacher could go to in-service training, which would be about supporting different challenges and creating useful practices.” ST22
	Self-care (N2)	“The bad weeks could be prevented by taking care of your own well-being in everyday life.” ST10

Table 4 Suggested measures

Most respondents (N=13) felt that what could improve the teacher's week, is to ensure there are enough resources. What was most often meant by this, was assistance from other professionals or colleagues. Most respondents suggested that the class would need help and support from a special education teacher, school assistant, or other teachers.

“Usually, the week has not been so bad since the school assistant is there and the special education teacher is available. The bad week could have been prevented by having enough teacher/assistant resources.” ST3

In addition, there were a few remarks about the need for more resources, without further explaining what they meant by “resources”.

The second biggest course of action that was suggested had to do with teaching. What was proposed by 11 respondents was to improve the teacher's week by using sufficient differentiation, diverse teaching methods, and structure in the class. The main idea was that by using adequate differentiation, the teacher would provide teaching that considers all the learners. In addition, teaching should not be the teacher preaching in front of the class, but rather activating the students and finding the teaching methods that would work including all the students.

“The teacher ensures that many teaching methods are used in the class. Students get activated and the teacher uses action-based teaching methods. -- The teacher clarifies assignments and difficult concepts so that s2 students and developmental language disorder [students] understand what we are doing.” ST25

Moreover, the teaching methods should be flexible but at the same time, the class should have a clear structure.

Furthermore, many respondents (N=10) were certain that properly planning the lessons and anticipating possible problems, would make the teacher's week good. The main idea was that the teacher should plan the lessons ahead of time and make possible plan Bs to prevent any undesired situations. Also, if any conflicts or disputes happen, between the students, they should be sorted out before escalating to violence, etc. In addition, the teacher needs to be aware of any impairments the students may have so everything is accessible for every student.

The class's well-being by enhancing school spirit, teaching social and emotional skills, and making sure that everyone is involved was something that almost half of the respondents suggested. This could mean having lessons about emotional skills and regulation, social skills, or any group activities that boost the class spirit. In addition, any bullying, or discrimination in the class must be stopped immediately. When everyone follows the agreed rules and helps each other out the class will have a harmonious atmosphere.

“Equality is focused on the class and all name-calling and discrimination of minorities are intervened immediately. -- In the class, there are lessons held that uplift school spirit, the teacher can instruct the class to play games together.” ST25

Nine respondents suggested that to prevent a bad week from happening, the teacher should acknowledge the students’ diversity. In other words, the teacher needs to know their students, embrace diversity, and ensure everyone receives the support they need. It was stated that the teacher should know the students so they could figure out what support everyone needs, but also so that they would know, which students put together to work, for example, in group projects. The respondents also felt that it was important to see the students as unique individuals and not to focus on the student’s diagnoses or challenges. Furthermore, they felt that what was needed was open talk about differences and diversity to make them normal. When diversity and inclusion are seen as normal, the various support practices could be included in all teaching, so that everyone, not just the ones labelled needing special support, would benefit from it.

“The support for learning is hidden as part of the teaching, allowing everyone to benefit from the support, and the special needs are not overemphasised.” ST20

Seven respondents felt that what was needed in Paju’s class was for some adjustments. According to them, Paju needs to set the bar lower for themselves and the students, and not to expect too much. The perception was that there was too much to do, and one teacher could not do it all. Two respondents thought that the class size needed to be smaller, which is interesting since in the script there were not even mentioned how many students there were in Paju’s class. But the most alarming suggestions were the ones where actual segregation for some of the students was suggested. 4 respondents proposed that some of the most challenging students should be transferred to special classes or schools.

“In addition, it was attempted to find a special class/school place for the most challenging students.”

ST18

The reasons for these suggestions were to make the teacher's week easier, and not because the students in question would benefit from the transfer, which makes the suggestions discriminative.

“It would make it easier if some of the students would be transferred to special classes or some smaller classes.” ST6

One respondent even felt it would be a good idea to remove the most energetic student from the class to study for a while with younger students. This kind of practice seems disgraceful and a purposeful shaming of a student.

Lastly, only five respondents felt that, to make the teacher's week better, the teacher's well-being and constant development of expertise would be crucial. Only three respondents suggested that Paju should do refreshment courses or in-service training to provide sufficient support for everyone, and only two respondents thought that teachers' well-being at work needed to be taken care of for the week to be successful.

To sum up, most of the suggestions to make the teacher's week go well, were in line with inclusive education. For example, using diverse teaching methods, differentiating the teaching according to every student's needs, and focusing on the students' strengths rather than their challenges or diagnosis are very much what inclusive teaching is all about. Furthermore, the suggestion about increasing resources is expected since as stated previously, the student teachers feel concerned, that teaching successfully in inclusive classes lacks certain resources, like the support from special educators or school assistants. What was troubling was the clear suggestions for the segregation of some students. These suggestions did not come from the needs of the students but rather from the need to make teacher's and other students' life easier. This should never be the reason, for segregating students into special schools or classes. Also, what was somewhat surprising, was that only a few respondents felt that maybe the teacher should develop their expertise and competence to provide better for the students and to make the weeks successful.

6.2.3 Attribution Approach

The idea for the last part of the content analysis, the attribution approach, arose from the data. In this research, what is investigated is when a teacher's week has gone badly who or what do the respondents "blame" for it? In the same way, when the teacher's week has gone well who or what gets credit for it? So, what was researched, is there a self-serving bias amongst student teachers when it comes to teaching in inclusive classrooms? First, the data reduction was done by separating all the parts from the data that had value to this subject. Meaning that all the parts that had remarks of someone or something as the reason, for failure (negative week) or success (positive week), were collected. From there they were separated based on where the attribution was, either the students, teacher, or external factor (Table 5). The same respondent could be included in multiple attributions.

	Attribution	Example from data	f
Week went bad	Students	<p>“Some of the students have been very restless and cannot concentrate on the teaching despite the aids. ST14</p> <p>“Actions of some students have taken time and energy from teaching the whole class, --.” ST21</p>	14
	Teacher	<p>“The teaching has been one-sided, so everyone has not been able to get teaching or could attend in any way, so there have been disturbances all week.” ST17</p> <p>“The class management is unsuccessful, and the instructions might have been inadequate or unclear.” ST19</p>	14
	External/Situational factors	<p>“During the week, the school assistant and special education teacher, who typically are in the class, have been away and Paju has had to manage alone with almost 30 students.” ST3</p> <p>“The teacher has no time to receive enough support from colleagues and they get left alone in challenging situations. The teacher can also feel that because of the lack of time, they cannot use the expertise they would have.” ST20</p>	9
Week went well	Students	<p>“Everyone has been able to concentrate on doing assignments and even group work has been successful without any bigger conflicts.” ST1</p> <p>“Students have been interested to learn and have tried their best in affairs and behaviour. When problems occurred, the students were ready to sort them out and to figure out, what was the reason for them and how to fix them.” ST8</p>	6
	Teacher	<p>“-- and the teacher’s resources have been enough for all. The differentiation done by the teacher has felt effortless.” ST16</p> <p>“The class management and instructions have been successful.” ST19</p>	13
	External/Situational factors	<p>“The resources have been sufficient, so the teacher has not been alone with the students.” ST14</p> <p>“Students needing intensified or special support have been getting the support they need from a school assistant and special education teacher among other things.” ST15</p>	11

Table 5 Attribution approach

What could be seen was, when the week had gone badly it was attributed to students and the teacher an equal amount (f=14), and 9 times it was explained with external factors. When the students were seen as fault, it was about disturbing the class, general restlessness, stealing the teacher’s attention and keeping the teacher from teaching.

“Actions of some students have taken time and energy from teaching the whole class, --.” ST21

What was seen as the teacher's fault, was poor class management, using wrong teaching methods and not planning the lessons properly. In addition, situational factors, meaning mostly a lack of resources or too many students in the class, were seen to be the cause of the bad week.

Furthermore, Table 5 shows that when the week had gone well, it was attributed to the teacher 13 times, for the external factors 11 times, and only 6 times for the students. In the week that went well, the teacher used sufficient teaching methods and differentiating and also managed to activate all the students.

“Many new and interesting things have been learned and I have managed to experientially teach things so that everyone has learned at least something, and the differentiation has hit the spot. I have also managed to be in contact with those students who usually are not so much interactive and make the student in the class, who does not talk, laugh.” ST1

The situational factors were similar but opposite to the ones in the bad week, there was help from other professionals and enough resources so that every student got the support they needed. Moreover, the week’s success was attributed to the students less than half the times than the teacher and when the credit was given to the students it was mostly from them behaving well and willing to learn or being helpful and nice to each other.

“Students have been interested to learn and have tried their best in affairs and behaviour. When problems occurred, the students were ready to sort them out and to figure out, what was the reason for them and how to fix them.” ST8

To sum up, the result could indicate that when the week is unsuccessful student teachers feel that there is a fault in both teacher’s and students’ and in some cases also situational factors play a role in it. However, when the week is successful, student teachers feel it is more likely to be the teacher’s achievement or because the situation was favourable, rather than giving credit for the success to the students. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is plausible that the student teachers have some form of self-serving bias when it comes to teaching in an inclusive classroom and it should be something to be aware of.

7 Conclusion

The quantitative part of this research showed that the general attitudes of student teachers towards inclusive education were somewhere close to the neutral midpoint. This result is similar to the studies done previously. It means that the student teachers feel that some students, with certain difficulties or differences, do not belong to mainstream education. For example, they felt reluctant to admit students who need communicative technologies as aid or students who have personalised study plans in their classes. However, if the students' challenges were about struggling in exams or having difficulties verbally expressing emotions, the student teachers were more likely to admit them to their classes. So, the willingness to accept inclusive measures is related to the students' deviance and the degree of it.

Furthermore, the research showed that the student teachers are very concerned about teaching in an inclusive setting. Both the quantitative and qualitative parts presented several concerns. According to the quantitative analysis, the student teachers were most concerned about being able to give appropriate attention to all the students in inclusive classrooms. Similarly, in the qualitative analysis, the concern for the teacher to be able to provide sufficient support for all the diverse learners was mentioned multiple times. In addition, the student teachers expressed their concerns about managing the class and keeping the climate peaceful, where all the students got along with each other. Unsurprisingly, one cause of concern was getting enough resources, mostly help and support from other professionals like school assistants and special education teachers. This is something that the previous studies have also concluded to be a subject of concern amongst pre-service and in-service teachers.

In addition, what caused concern, was the student's ability to learn and reach set goals in inclusive environments. This typically was explained by a victim narrative, meaning that in a diverse classroom, some students are seen as troublemakers or disturbers and due to them the "other" students, the victims, are unable to learn. The disturbers either make so much noise and ruckus that nobody can focus on the teaching, or the teacher cannot teach because their focus and attention go to the troublemakers. This visualises the setting of "normal good students" and "deviant bad students". Some respondents even labelled these disturbers to be the "neurodivergent students", "student with autism", "Asperger-student" and "ADHD-student", which demonstrates that some student teachers have negative attitudes towards neurodivergent students. This indicates that there exists a prejudice against neurodivergence among student teachers since having a negative attitude toward minority groups can be considered prejudice (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Since the respondents were pre-service teachers, who had little if any experience working as special education teachers and only 3 had studied special education as a minor, it can be considered that most respondents did not have much experience with students with special needs. Therefore, it would be crucial to find out, where these prejudices come from. One thing to consider is the general discourse and the role of the media when talking about diverse learners or students

with a diagnosis. If the talk is mainly negative, it is no wonder, that the student teachers are forming negative attitudes even before entering their service. This could then make the teachers reluctant to use inclusive measures, in their teaching since the attitudes would already be biased.

However, when examining the measures that the student teachers suggested in this research, it can be seen that most of them were in line with inclusion. The majority of the respondents proposed, that to guarantee a good week for a teacher, what was needed was more resources, the teaching to be diverse and well-prepared, and the well-being of the class needs to be considered. Additionally, they suggested that all the students should be seen as unique individuals and that the focus should be on finding the methods and practices that would support each student and to find everyone's strengths. Moreover, what was interesting was that only 4 respondents suggested that the teacher should take some extra training or courses to gain expertise to provide better for the diverse students. What makes it interesting is that, according to the quantitative analysis, most respondents felt fairly concerned about their knowledge and skills in teaching students with special needs. Similarly, previous studies have concluded that most pre-service teachers did not feel ready to teach in mixed-ability settings (Takala et al.,2020). So, would not extra training or courses be an obvious answer for the teachers to gain at least the knowledge and possibly the skills, to encounter better all the diverse learners?

Even though most of the measures suggested were positively inclusive, few suggestions were segregative, and the reason behind them was not the good of the student. Four out of 21, so almost a fifth of the respondents, suggested that some of the most "difficult" or "energetic" students should be removed from the class to be transferred to special classes or schools. The quantitative analysis presented that most of the student teachers are concerned about the extra amount of work that they relate to teaching in inclusive settings. This concern might be why the student teachers feel it would be better and "easier" for them if some students were transferred elsewhere. However, these suggestions are not in line with inclusion and might even be discriminative, thus they reveal that some of the student teachers have strong negative perceptions towards inclusive education.

Furthermore, when investigating attribution, what was found was that student teachers have a self-serving bias about teaching in an inclusive class. This manifested as an unwillingness to give credit to the students when the week had gone well. When the teacher's week had gone badly the attribution was equally divided between teacher and students. However, when the week had gone well, mostly only the teacher got credit for it, or the situation was explained to be favourable. This is something that the student teachers should be aware of since it is well known that most people work better when receiving carrots instead of sticks.

To answer the research questions, it can be concluded that the student teachers' perceptions towards inclusion were fairly negative. Their attitudes towards inclusive education, tend to be more negative than positive and they have many concerns about teaching in an inclusive environment. However, most pedagogical measures suggested by the respondents were inclusive, except for the few that were borderline discriminative. In addition, the results stated that the student teachers tend to have an

attribution error when the teacher's week has gone well. Worth noting is also that there was a division among the student teachers as some of them saw the children as "challenging students" which implies that the positivist approach was implemented as the challenge was seen as the students' fault, while others were narrating about students who had challenges, which in turn implies to interactionist approach where the challenges are seen to be caused by the surrounding environment. When the results were reflected in the components of attitude (figure 1), it can be concluded that the student teachers' cognitive responses, meaning their knowledge and beliefs about inclusion, were fairly negative. However, the behavioural responses, their willingness to act, seemed mostly positive except for the few discords. The perceptions, that student teachers have towards inclusion, are something to be concerned about. Even though the hypothetical measures suggested in this research were quite inclusive, other results showed, student teachers to have negative perceptions toward inclusion. When they hold such negativity against diversity in the classroom, one may only wonder, what will actually be the teaching methods and measures, they will choose to put into practice after graduating? The data brought up a very enlightening example, of how two people can perceive the same situation completely differently and therefore, take such a different approach. The first respondent felt that it is important for the teacher to know their students so they can tell, which students should put together to work.

"In group work, group division is in the key position, so knowing your students is important so that you know, which students can be put together to work." ST1

Another respondent, however, thought that instead of making only certain students work together based on their compatibility, it would be better to teach everyone to work with different people.

"During the week everyone has done pair work with different students allowing students to get used to all the time working with different people." ST20

It was the same situation, doing group or pair work, but the respondents took a completely different approach, which resulted in different outcomes. This type of difference in the perceptions towards inclusion and teaching diverse students construct the realities in the classrooms. Furthermore, it creates a school setting where inclusive measures can be taken in one class but are rejected in the next. For the school system to be coherent and indiscriminate, the teacher training institutions should put effort into changing the student teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education to be more positive. In addition, the schools should find ways to adequately support teachers, so they can succeed in teaching in inclusive environments. All the teachers should embrace differences and pursue to teach children to see diversity as a "richness" as one of the respondents wrote.

8 Discussion

The result of this research confirms that student teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, are fairly negative and that they have many concerns about it. However, surprisingly, the measures proposed by the student teachers, to improve the teacher's week, were mainly inclusive practices. This indicates that even though the attitudes are negative, student teachers are aware of what is socially and through regulations expected of them. Furthermore, it might be because they were asked to suggest the measures to another teacher and not themselves. So, it cannot be known what would be the measures that they would actually take themselves. In addition, a few respondents rejected the idea of inclusion by proposing segregative measures to ease the teacher's job, which implies that some of the student teachers have a strong negative perception towards inclusion.

However, there are a few things to consider about the results. One thing is that the results from qualitative data were formed in way that it cannot be confirmed how much the respondents were thinking about the diversity of the students when answering the questions about the script. Perhaps their responses would have been the same even without mentioning that the class had been inclusive. Nonetheless, the concerns and measures suggested were real, but the causality cannot be verified solely by this data. In addition, since inclusion is such a big concept it is impossible to say if all the respondents understood it the same way or the way this research intended. In addition, the script mentions a few types of students from the class, to give a general idea of the diversity. This could have led the respondents too much in some direction and in a way narrowed their thinking.

To check the consistency of the qualitative data analyses it could have been efficient to use a second researcher to confirm the categories and to check the clarity of the categories (Cohen et al., 2018). However, since this research was conducted by a single author and there were no interested parties to check the consistency, the categories were double-checked by the same author. In addition, when analysing data by themes the wholeness and integrity of every participant can be lost and there is a risk of decontextualising the data or of valid data being unnoticed (Cohen et al., 2018). Nevertheless, since the themes found in the qualitative section of this research, were created inductively and were somewhat similar to each other, to the quantitative questions and what the previous studies have found, it could be stated that the suggested measures and concerns are consistent. Also, the data was analysed from multiple aspects (the three sections of content analysis) which gave the texts more wholeness and lessened the possibility of losing data or for it to be decontextualised.

When examining the research's quantitative part's internal validity, which tells if the research's theory and concepts are chosen correctly and if the measurements measure what they are meant to measure (Metsämuuronen, 2009), it can be said that the SACIE-R scale's validity and reliability have been confirmed to be adequate by previous studies. In addition, since one section (out of three) of the scale had poor psychometric qualities in previous Finnish studies (Savolainen et al., 2012), that part was decided to be left out to improve the quality of the scale. Moreover, the sample size was small and had

little variation, so any definite conclusions cannot be made solely from this data. This also means that the external validity, which examines, if the results can be generalised and to what group(s) (Cohen et al., 2018; Metsämuuronen, 2009), could be uncertain. However, since the previous studies all indicate the same, the student teachers' attitudes are somewhere near neutral or even negative, the results from this research can be considered to be at least some extent valid. However, more research is needed to gain an enhanced comprehension of student teachers' perceptions and improve inclusive education.

To sum up, since inclusion is about everyone's human rights and equality, and if those things are not vanishing from this world, every teacher and school should commit to the values and practices of inclusion. This would happen only when the perceptions towards inclusion collectively change to more positive. This research indicates that most student teachers have fairly negative perceptions towards inclusion and tend to have serious concerns about it. Because one's attitudes are hard to change and can take time, the focus should be on the student teachers. For this to happen special education and teaching about inclusion should be embedded in all the teacher training. Therefore, what is needed is deeper research about the subject to understand why the attitudes of student teachers are so negative, what can be done to change them to be more positive and how can the concerns of the student teachers be properly addressed. Furthermore, what should be investigated is what type of practices and measures the teachers indeed use in their work and if they support or contradict inclusion.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 The Instrument

1. By responding “yes”, you agree to participate in the research and can continue. By responding “no”, the questionnaire will end.

Yes

No

Background questions

2. Age

under 20

20-24

25-29

30 or more

3. Gender

Female

Male

Other

Do not want to respond

4. Study Year

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. or more

5. Minor Studies

6. Teaching Experience as a Class Teacher (including internships)

None

Less than a month

- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- More than 12 months

7. Teaching Experience as a Special Education teacher

- None
- Less than a months
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- More than 12 months

Read the text about Paju and then respond to the questions 8. and 9.

Paju is a class teacher and has been given a primary school class to teach. The class is inclusive and has many diverse learners, personalities, and nationalities. In the class, some students need intensified and special support, and they have, for example, learning disabilities, developmental disorders, emotional disturbance, physical challenges, and social maladjustments. At the end of the week, Paju is going home and is thinking about the past week.

8. The week has gone very bad. Imagine and write down what has happened during the week. Describe the events, teaching situations, thoughts, feelings, etc. Think and also write down, how the unsuccessful week could have been prevented, and in the future the school days be successful.
9. The week has gone very well. Imagine and write down what has happened during the week. Describe the events, teaching situations, thoughts, feelings, etc. Think and also write down, how in the future the school days can again be successful or even better.