

Teacher Education for Inclusion: International Trends

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Anastasia Vlachou¹, Andrea Priestley², Olja Jovanović Milanović³, Raphael Zahnd⁴, Shannon Babbie⁵, Elin Sæther⁶, Ines Alves⁷, Michelle Proyer⁸, Sevinj Rustamova⁷, Constanza Herrera-Seda⁹, Simoni Symeonidou¹⁰, Ilektra Spandagou¹¹

¹National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; ²University of Stirling, UK; ³University of Belgrade, Serbia; ⁴Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Switzerland; ⁵University of Aberdeen, UK; ⁶University of Oslo, Norway; ⁷University of Glasgow, United Kingdom; ⁸University of Vienna, Austria; ⁹Universidad de Santiago de Chile, Chile; ¹⁰University of Cyprus, Cyprus; ¹¹University of Sydney, Australia

This 2-part panel will bring together colleagues to reflect on teacher education for inclusion in 12 country contexts: Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Chile, Cyprus, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Serbia, Switzerland, and USA.

Educating teachers that are prepared to teach diverse student populations is one of the big challenges of present times. This can be to some extent explained by the challenges experienced by teachers linked to student diversity and the international push to develop education systems that include all learners. According to Forlin (2010), TE for inclusion is a way of ensuring that teachers are prepared to teach in classrooms with diverse student populations. Livingston (2020) considers that the role and responsibility of TE 'in developing inclusive education that enables every teacher to meet the needs of all our young people', still needs to be explored.

TE can be divided into two main phases: initial teacher education (ITE) and Continuing professional Development (CPD). In trying to dissect TE across 12 different countries, we will consider its format (duration and location), purpose (transmissive-malleable-transformative) and contents. Symeonidou (2017) identified three key formats of ITE for inclusion: a) single-unit approaches: 1 lecture/seminar; b) content-infused approaches: embedded in the programme; c) approaches using school placement/experience. However, Symeonidou and Makopoulou (2019) suggest that the contents, quality and impact of TE for inclusion still need to be explored as existing research is fragmented and limited. The engagement of all teachers in CPD varies within a country and across countries, as different teacher groups are not equally involved in CPD (De Vroey et al., 2023).

Even considering that research on teacher education for inclusion has reported positive outcomes of programs with different approaches, more evidence is needed to understand in depth the content, characteristics, barriers, and facilitators related to the effectiveness of teacher education, as well as to explore the underlying mechanisms involve producing these outcomes (Tristani & Bassett-Gunter, 2019). The literature suggests that internationally TE institutions are exploring ways to actively involve teachers and their students in understanding and developing their own learning, and that those institutions must ensure that theory and research are better linked to teachers' practice. The competent bodies of educational policy in different countries accept that teachers hold a key role within the economic, social and cultural development of their country, and in promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensuring inclusive equitable quality education for all. TE still faces structural inadequacies as in many contexts elementary and secondary education are seen in a disintegrated way and not as sequentially complementary to each other, and not conceptualized in a unifying way that would enable the continuity between the initial teacher education and continuous professional development (Xochellis, 2002). Siuty (2019) notes that TE needs to support teachers in understanding and disrupting the dominant ideologies around normalcy that operate in educational systems, sustaining the

exclusion and interrogating their identities and privileges in the systems of oppression and power imbricated with these ideologies to inform decision-making about practice and social interactions.

The panel will address the following questions:

- To what extent is inclusive education present in initial teacher education and teachers' continuous professional development?

- What formats (duration and location), purposes (transmissive-malleable-transformative), and contents exist in ITE and CPD for inclusion of all students in education?

This is a timely discussion panel which will consider TE for inclusion cross-nationally to provide new insights to the format, purposes, content, quality and impact of Teacher Education for inclusion in diverse contexts.

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Chair Ines Alves, ines.alves@glasgow.ac.uk, University of Glasgow