

Narrative Pedagogy and Inclusive Classrooms: Reimagining English Literature Teaching for Learners with Special Needs

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ABSTRACT:

Indeed, an increase in focus on inclusive pedagogies and learning environments has highlighted the importance of promoting equity in education as well as providing accessible and learner-centered pedagogical practices which can accommodate students' varying linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and communicational needs. In the case of English literature classrooms, several challenges remain in relation to inflexible curriculums, canonical pedagogies, fixed interpretations, and accessibility for students with learning disabilities. Narrative pedagogy constitutes an innovative paradigm that promotes storytelling, dialogue, interpretive reflection, multimedia literacies, and experiential learning as effective tools for enhancing inclusive participation and literary engagement. This research paper critically reviews the use of narrative pedagogy as a powerful tool for reshaping English literature lessons for learners with special needs in an inclusive environment. The review will consider the theoretical framework of narrative pedagogy as well as concepts of inclusive education. In addition, the discussion will consider the pedagogical implications of learner voice, identity construction, emotional involvement, digital stories, multimodal literacies, and cultural responsiveness. Furthermore, the review will highlight several critical barriers to inclusion and accessibility in literature classes for students with learning disabilities such as teacher preparedness issues, curriculum rigidity, accessibility, institutional factors, and lack of disability-focused pedagogical training. Finally, the review will examine future pedagogical developments including Universal

Design for Learning, advanced digital education technologies powered by artificial intelligence, adaptive literacy software applications, and democratic curricula design. It is important to note that narrative pedagogy transcends instructional techniques to represent an entire educational philosophy based on principles of accessibility, inclusion, empathy, collaboration, and participation. Through the application of narrative inquiry, multimedia learning techniques, and learner-centered practices, narrative pedagogy may enhance educational participation and literary access for students with disabilities.

Keywords: Narrative pedagogy; Inclusive education; English literature teaching; Learners with special needs; Multimodal literacy

1. Introduction

The idea of inclusive education can easily be recognized as one of the most groundbreaking educational movements of the current century. The concept focuses on equal learning opportunities, accessibility, learning diversity, and social integration of individuals with different backgrounds, skills, needs, and abilities into mainstream educational processes. At the present time, scholars tend to agree that individuals with special educational needs should not only be physically integrated into educational spaces but also feel included, represented, and engaged in various aspects of teaching and learning. It prompts educators and curriculum specialists to look for innovative ways of delivering educational content to diverse groups of learners. As a result, inclusive pedagogy is currently perceived as one of the most powerful ways to promote educational equity and empower learners in democratic classroom environments.

In such a way, the topic of English literature teaching becomes highly relevant to the current discussion since the activity involves the development of language-related skills, social competence, self-awareness, imagination, and critical understanding. Traditional approaches to the instruction of English literature, however, tend to be based on specific educational frameworks that may prevent learners with different backgrounds from full engagement in the educational process (Hunt, 2023). As a result, the problem of literature education has been recognized as rather urgent, and the introduction

of innovative teaching strategies and models becomes particularly essential.

As far as inclusive teaching strategies are concerned, many scholars highlight the power of narrative pedagogy as the means for promoting more open, accessible, and learner-focused teaching models in literature classes (Purcell, 2024). Such an educational strategy involves the creation of a space where learners can engage in dialogues, storytelling, multimodal interactions, reflective activities, and creative discussions related to the content of literature lessons. The implementation of narrative approaches to literature teaching helps to create an inclusive educational environment and increase learners' participation and motivation. Additionally, such techniques as classroom narratives and storytelling can help to reimagine disability and difference through the promotion of empathic, democratic, and socially focused classroom practices (Ucar & Friesen, 2024).

Moreover, the growing interest in learner agency, student narratives, and multimodal literacy practices provides more options for making the process of English literature teaching more engaging and accessible for students with special needs. Currently, scholars tend to recognize that multimodal pedagogies including storytelling, the use of fan fiction, collaboration, the implementation of digital technologies, and creative interpretation help to develop learners' literacy skills regardless of their special needs (Haas & Tussey, 2023). In addition, modern-day education has been significantly affected by the pandemic that forced educators to introduce

alternative instructional practices that would allow addressing emotional and psychological issues, as well as meeting the needs of diverse learners. Therefore, narrative pedagogy in literature classes is likely to become even more popular due to its flexibility and innovation.

Finally, technology appears to play a crucial role in the development of inclusive literature education. At the moment, new educational frameworks appear to be focused on providing learners with opportunities to use specific tools that could make the educational experience easier, especially for individuals with particular needs. Specifically, there is a great number of digital solutions aimed at facilitating students' learning through the introduction of innovative inclusive and literacy-enhancing technologies (Prado & Warschauer, 2024). Such developments become highly significant to the modern educational reality since they correspond to broader innovations related to educational reforms, and new teaching methods (Emenike, 2025). In this case, narrative pedagogy can be regarded not only as a teaching strategy but as a whole philosophy of inclusive education.

Nonetheless, there is a certain number of challenges to be considered when introducing narrative pedagogy to the process of teaching English literature to students with special educational needs. First of all, many educational systems are limited by such barriers as the lack of teachers' training, strict curricula, lack of resources, and institutional challenges. Additionally, the process of developing an inclusive teaching model remains rather problematic since students with different needs do not get enough opportunities to participate in literature classes and curricular processes. Consequently, the issue of rethinking literature education using the principles of narrative pedagogy requires a critical analysis of relevant concepts, models, and practices.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to discuss the significance of narrative pedagogy for the promotion of inclusive English literature education in the context of learners' special needs. Additionally, this review attempts to consider the

theories, innovative practices, potential challenges, and promising directions associated with the application of inclusive narrative approaches to teaching literature.

2. Conceptual Foundations of Narrative Pedagogy and Inclusive Education

2.1 Understanding Narrative Pedagogy

Narrative pedagogy has become one of the innovative educational paradigms, which emphasize the importance of such components as stories, dialogues, experientiality, reflection, and interpretation in learning. Contrary to traditional teacher-centered pedagogies, narrative pedagogy is focused on active learner interaction with knowledge through their experiences and reflections. In an inclusive educational context, the application of narrative pedagogy allows different students regardless of their cognitive, linguistic, cultural, and emotional characteristics to participate in class discussions and literary activity. Translanguaging approach illustrates how inclusive narrative pedagogy can subvert traditional deficit views about disabilities and language and provide flexible participation in class discussion and identification (Thuy Luong et al., 2023). Finally, narrative pedagogy should be discussed within the context of educational equity and critical inclusion in the learning environment. Today, more and more inclusive classes try to shift from mere accommodation to the development of transformative participation, which embraces learner's identity, diversity, and involvement in society (Cruz et al., 2024). Hence, narrative pedagogy is crucial in creating democratic learning settings in which students interpret literary pieces through personal narrative experiences and reflection. Thus, it becomes clear that the use of narrative pedagogy is highly appropriate in the case of English literature courses.

2.2 Principles of Inclusive Education

The concepts upon which inclusive education is grounded include accessibility, participation, equity, diversity, and social justice. Inclusive education has shifted towards the belief that not only should individuals with special needs be

included in mainstream classes, but they must have equal access to participation, representation, and learning within the learning process. Disabling justice frameworks advocate for teacher education programs that embrace equity, understand inequalities and social exclusion, and are cognizant of the systemic barriers that learners with special needs face (Ko et al., 2024). Another principle underlying inclusive education involves the need for teacher cooperation, family cooperation, institutional cooperation, and community cooperation within education programs for diverse learners. Frameworks that deal with parental participation, for instance, show the importance of developing participatory educational relationships for the improvement of the outcomes of learners as well as inclusion in

classrooms (Jacobs, 2024). Another key requirement for contemporary inclusive education is a shift to flexible instructional models that incorporate a change of the curriculum design, communication methods, evaluation techniques, and learning environment. This is important since inclusive pedagogies demand flexibility in order to meet different educational requirements. Narrative pedagogy is congruent with inclusive education since it puts learners in the position of dialogue, emotional interaction, and experience. Pedagogies based on picture books and stories, for example, have shown promising results in promoting inclusive literacy engagement and development of English language skills through visuals and narrative analysis (Ellis & Gruenbaum, 2023).

Table 1. Core Principles of Narrative Pedagogy and Inclusive Teaching

Pedagogical Principle	Inclusive Education Relevance	Educational Outcome	Reference
Learner-centered storytelling	Encourages participation and voice	Greater classroom engagement	(Thuy Luong et al., 2023)
Critical inclusion practices	Promotes educational equity and belonging	Inclusive participation	(Cruz et al., 2024)
Disability justice frameworks	Supports equity-oriented learning	Socially responsive inclusion	(Ko et al., 2024)
Narrative inquiry	Encourages identity exploration	Reflective literary engagement	(Coleman, 2024)
Parent and community collaboration	Strengthens inclusive support systems	Improved learner participation	(Jacobs, 2024)
Picturebook pedagogy	Enhances multimodal accessibility	Inclusive literacy development	(Ellis & Gruenbaum, 2023)
Dialogic pedagogy	Validates diverse identities and voices	Collaborative learning	(Lin & Bauler, 2023)
Critical pedagogy	Encourages socially responsive teaching	Transformative education	(Fouad et al., 2025)
Culturally responsive teacher education	Supports diverse learners	Inclusive classroom preparedness	(Akin-Sabuncu et al., 2024)
Refugee-led inclusion models	Expands participation for marginalized learners	Community-centered inclusion	(Safarha & Zakharia, 2024)

2.3 Learners with Special Needs in Literature Classrooms

For those students with special educational needs, many obstacles exist within traditional literature classrooms owing to inflexible curriculums, instruction based on extensive textual materials, inaccessible learning materials, and standardized teaching techniques. Students who face such problems as cognitive impairment, linguistic challenges, sensory disorders, and emotional or behavioral problems are likely to feel excluded by educational programs which do not take into consideration diversity in terms of interpretation, analysis, and understanding of literature. Therefore, narrative inquiry strategies become crucial since they allow learners to work with literature via the practice of personal story telling, identity development, and cultural analysis of literature (Coleman, 2024). Another essential issue that should be taken into account when discussing inclusion of special learners in traditional literature classrooms is the connection between language, identity, and power since literary instruction is likely to perpetuate dominant culture standards and language exclusivity issues. As part of inclusive dialogue studies, the necessity of creating classroom contexts that would acknowledge and appreciate diversity of identities, perspectives, and communicative practices becomes evident (Lin & Bauler, 2023).

This may substantially facilitate participation and inclusion of marginalized learners into traditional classrooms. Finally, teachers themselves have an enormous potential influence upon creation of inclusive learning environment through such methods as curriculum modifications, critical pedagogy, and inclusive instructional techniques. Teacher perspectives research in the field of inclusion and critical pedagogy shows that modern teachers increasingly understand the necessity for flexible, socially oriented, and learner-centered instructional strategies in traditional classrooms (Fouad et al., 2025).

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks Supporting Inclusive Narrative Pedagogy

Narrative pedagogy is grounded in a variety of key educational theories, such as constructivist learning, sociocultural theory of learning, reader-response theory, dialogic pedagogy, and critical pedagogy. Together, these theoretical approaches stress that knowledge arises out of interactions, interpretation, collaboration, identity-making, and lived experiences. Frameworks of inclusive education place particular emphasis on socially-responsive teaching that accounts for diversity, cultural complexities, and inequalities in education. Research into teacher education points to the growing need to train teachers to work within culturally diverse and linguistically diverse environments, which emerge due to migration, globalization, and new social realities (Akin-Sabuncu et al., 2024).

The relevance of these perspectives is apparent in relation to inclusive literature teaching insofar as English classes usually involve students from various cultural backgrounds and linguistic experiences who face various issues related to inclusiveness. Also, refugee-initiated programs of educational development show how inclusive education models can promote inclusive learning among learners with different types of needs and experiences (Safarha & Zakharia, 2024). Critical inclusion theories suggest that, in its turn, inclusive pedagogy should address ableism, exclusions from education, hierarchies in classrooms, and promote access, power, and social justice (Cruz et al., 2024). As a result, narrative pedagogy can be seen as both teaching strategy and educational philosophy that can transform the traditional English literature classroom into a more participatory and inclusive space. Figure 1 below illustrates the key principles behind narrative pedagogy in inclusive literature teaching.

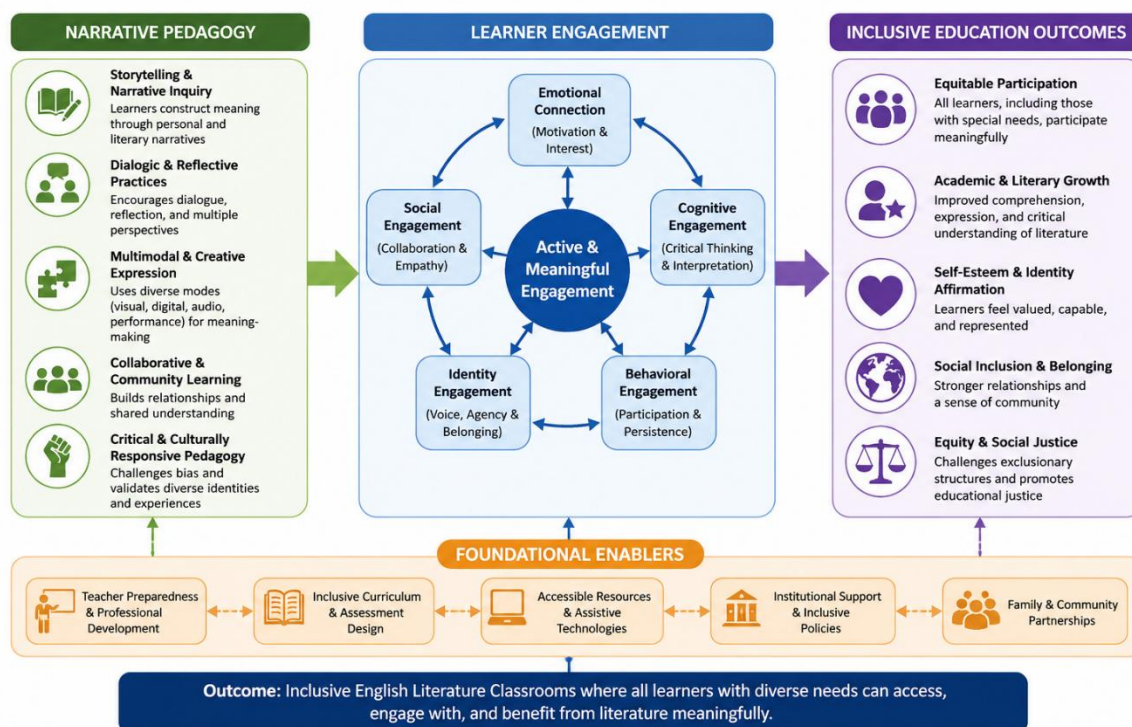


Figure 1. Relationship Between Narrative Pedagogy, Learner Engagement, and Inclusive Education

3. Reimagining English Literature Teaching Through Narrative Pedagogy

3.1 Limitations of Traditional Literature Teaching Approaches

The traditional approach to teaching English literature involves teacher-dominated instruction, textual interpretation through canonical means, standardized evaluation procedures, and strict curriculum design, which tend to marginalize diverse groups of learners. These practices emphasize such elements as memorization, singular interpretation of texts, dominant language use, and neglect diversity issues, affective dimensions of English language learning, and multimodal literacy. Inclusive classrooms, however, are likely to become places where traditional rigid teaching techniques may exclude students with specific cognitive, linguistic, sensory, and affective peculiarities by hindering their active engagement in academic processes. Critical literacy researchers stress the need to change traditional methods of English teaching in favor of more socially responsive and reflective approaches that would empower learners to participate in critically engaging with texts and exploring their identities (Susilowaty et

al., 2025). Scholars working in the area of inclusive education suggest that marginalizing factors in literature classes involve more than just physical access; ableism is also an important element of traditional curricula and instruction (Lukins et al., 2023). Thus, in order to improve the process of English literature teaching, it is crucial to develop more flexible pedagogies that can embrace diverse communicative skills and literacy practices of students. Narrative pedagogy is likely to contribute significantly in this context.

3.2 Narrative-Based Teaching Strategies in English Literature

Narrative pedagogy favors literature teaching strategies that emphasize storytelling, reflection, dialogue, expression, and multimodal literacy. Instead of framing literature lessons as a means of passing on knowledge from a collection of literary works, narrative pedagogy enables students to engage dynamically with texts through storytelling, reflection, cultural interpretation, and experience. In addition, the integration of multimodal literacy models can be

employed to foster inclusion and engagement with literary texts via music, visual communication, digital storytelling, and performance (Argyriou, 2025). Pedagogies that adopt democratic and culturally based strategies are further effective tools for creating inclusive classrooms for literary studies. Learning approaches that center on the perspectives of Indigenous communities and emphasize community-based learning question traditional Eurocentric curriculum designs and promote inclusive literary engagements among learners (Thorpe et al., 2024). Through these approaches, students are able to reflect on literary texts using

their experiences, cultural backgrounds, and connections with communities. The use of narrative pedagogy can be highly effective for enhancing the active participation, empathy, and identities of students learning English literature. Digital storytelling has also become a particularly important pedagogy for promoting inclusion and literacy as it enables special needs learners to communicate their ideas visually, collaboratively, and through multimedia (Yasar-Akyar et al., 2022). Inclusive instruction in literature lessons can be made even more effective when teachers have been prepared to teach through digital storytelling techniques.

Table 2. Narrative Pedagogical Strategies for Learners with Special Needs

Narrative Strategy	Inclusive Function	Educational Benefit	Reference
Critical literacy instruction	Encourages reflective interpretation	Improved learner agency	(Susilowaty et al., 2025)
Disability studies integration	Challenges ableist assumptions	Inclusive teacher dispositions	(Lukins et al., 2023)
Multimodal musical literacy	Enhances cultural and expressive learning	Social inclusion	(Argyriou, 2025)
Indigenous-centered storytelling	Promotes democratic learning	Culturally responsive participation	(Thorpe et al., 2024)
Digital storytelling	Supports multimodal communication	Increased learner engagement	(Yasar-Akyar et al., 2022)
Democratic disability pedagogy	Strengthens accessibility awareness	Inclusive literary participation	(Keefe, 2022)
AI-assisted instructional support	Enhances adaptive learning	Personalized accessibility	(Murungu, 2024)
Universal Design for Learning	Supports flexible participation	Equitable literacy access	(Catama, 2025)
Posthuman inclusion frameworks	Reimagines relational learning	Diverse learner recognition	(Mahadew, 2023)
Decolonizing inclusive pedagogy	Challenges exclusionary systems	Transformative educational practice	(Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2022)
Dialogical inquiry	Encourages collaborative interaction	Improved classroom belonging	(Alkhateeb et al., 2023)
Critical interdisciplinarity	Integrates diverse learning approaches	Holistic literary engagement	(Tangwe & Benyin, 2025)

3.3 Storytelling, Interpretation, and Emotional Engagement

The concept of narrative pedagogy also enhances emotional involvement since it encourages students to relate literary works to their experiences, realities, and reflections. Unlike conventional approaches to literature education, where interpretation is separated from personal experience, narrative-based techniques allow learners to comprehend literary works by using their emotional and relational capacities. Moreover, modern theories of inclusion and education highlight the necessity of overcoming structural ableism and exclusionary educational beliefs in order to promote equal participation of learners with disabilities (Keefe, 2022). The emergence and development of innovative approaches, including the use of new technologies in education, provide additional possibilities to engage narratives and participate in inclusive education. As evidenced by educational innovation studies, the incorporation of artificial intelligence into learning processes offers numerous advantages to promote accessibility and personalized instruction (Murungu, 2024). Likewise, the Universal Design for Learning framework promotes flexible teaching approaches to foster effective engagement of students from different backgrounds in terms of representation, expression, and learning process (Catama, 2025). Therefore, narrative pedagogy in the contemporary environment requires adaptable approaches that would enable educators to address the needs of diverse learners. The inclusion of narrative pedagogy in literature teaching can also help learners develop emotionally and relationally by recognizing difference, diversity, and embodiment as integral aspects of literary interpretation. Posthuman perspectives on inclusion question many traditional assumptions about hierarchy, normality, and participation, as well as promoting an interconnected approach and a focus on diversity (Mahadew, 2023).

3.4 Student Voice, Identity, and Classroom Participation

Representing the voices and identities of learners is crucial to inclusive narrative pedagogy since learners tend to participate more actively in the class processes when their experiences and viewpoints are acknowledged. Contemporary inclusive literature classes are characterized by creating participatory learning spaces where the learners themselves actively participate in the discussion and knowledge building. Critical analysis of inclusive education reveals that any meaningful educational process needs critical consideration of past inequality, exclusionary practices, and culturally-dominant pedagogy (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2022). Similarly, dialogical inquiry frameworks focus on providing conditions that would allow learners with special needs and disabilities to actively participate in class communication, discussion, and collaboration (Alkhateeb et al., 2023). Overall, narrative pedagogy offers the possibility for the learners to explore literary works together with others through discussing and interpreting them. The process can help the learners feel more integrated into the academic community and society.

3.5 Inclusive Literary Practices for Diverse Learners

However, current literature-based pedagogies are increasingly moving towards more holistic educational approaches that seek to transcend conventional disciplinary divisions within the field of English literature to incorporate elements of literacy, creativity, accessibility, inclusivity, and educational transformation within the classroom context. According to theories of critical interdisciplinarity in education, learning should go beyond disciplinary boundaries in order to embrace transformative educational experiences that can tackle the complex dynamics of the social and learning worlds (Tangwe & Benyin, 2025). As a result, narrative pedagogy is a new paradigm shift in literature classes where teachers use innovative strategies that include narrative inquiry, multimodality, digital technology, critical pedagogy, and an inclusive curriculum. As

indicated by the above discussion, there are numerous ways of incorporating various aspects of narrative inquiry within English literature education. Therefore, narrative pedagogy has tremendous potential in enhancing inclusivity in literature education through emotional

engagement, multimodality, culturally responsive teaching, and accessible education. Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between narrative inquiry, multimodality, dialogical learning, accessibility, emotional engagement, and inclusion within the classroom.

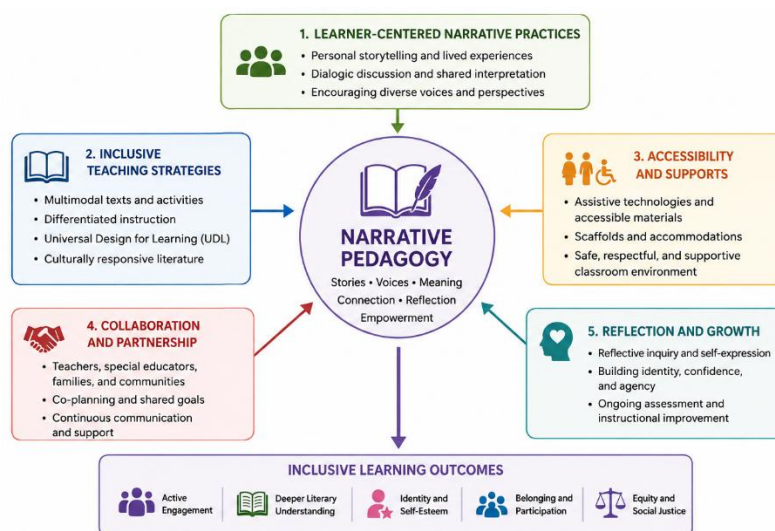


Figure 2. Narrative Pedagogy Framework for Inclusive English Literature Instruction

4. Challenges and Barriers in Inclusive Literature Classrooms

4.1 Curriculum Rigidity and Standardized Teaching Models

Among the primary obstacles to effective inclusion in English literature classes is the prevalence of fixed curricula and standardized modes of teaching that usually lack flexibility and inclusivity toward diverse learners and multiple cultural communities. The standard framework of English language teaching (ELT) tends to place undue emphasis on classical literary content, conventional assessment, and traditional teaching methods, which can be particularly challenging for students with special educational needs, multicultural, and minority learners. Studies of educational reforms highlight the increasing necessity of employing adaptive literary teaching models that would account for cultural differences and the sociocultural context of instruction (Khan et al., 2023). Nevertheless, many educational institutions tend to stick to their inflexible and predetermined curriculums, thus denying teachers their freedom in teaching English literature. With the development of

digital technologies and their introduction into the realm of education, there emerges a new set of problems related to technology and its impact on learning. While digital learning systems have been shown to increase the inclusivity of learning through enhanced accessibility, they can become an additional source of inequality due to lack of adequate access to technology and its ineffectual integration (Davoodi, 2024).

4.2 Teacher Preparedness and Pedagogical Training

The issue of teacher preparedness for inclusive literature education is another crucial concern associated with inclusive literature education. Indeed, many teachers get only little training in such areas as disability-inclusive pedagogy, narrative pedagogical approaches, accessibility principles, and differentiated instruction. Historically, traditional teacher education systems have focused mainly on the importance of delivering content and effective classroom management. Nowadays, many educational experts state that pedagogical change implies reflecting on the political aspects of education, involvement of learners, and inclusive practices.

The issue of teacher preparedness becomes especially important when considering literature classrooms in which teachers have no experience in adapting literary texts or creating multimodal lessons for students with complex support needs. Culturally responsive literature education requires teachers to manage various issues like linguistic diversity, diversity of religions and identities, and inclusion of all students. A study investigating the role of context in literature teaching showed that alternative literary perspectives and socially relevant narratives can promote inclusivity in English classrooms but also require adequate pedagogical training and support (Candraningrum et al., 2025). It is often difficult for prospective teachers to find appropriate solutions to inclusive instruction and classroom accommodation of disabled students (Miller et al., 2025). Such findings indicate the urgent necessity for changing current teacher education programs so that to focus more on disability-centered education, culturally sustaining instruction, and accessible curriculum design. In modern times, researchers suggest incorporating pedagogies that combine inclusive education, critical disability studies, and culturally responsive education (Kulkarni et al., 2024).

4.3 Accessibility and Classroom Accommodation Challenges

Access issues persist as the primary barrier in English literature classes that seek to incorporate the principles of inclusivity since literary instruction largely relies on the textual learning process, abstraction, and standardization of communication. Learners who have certain developmental disorders (for instance, autism), learning difficulties, particular sensory traits or communication difficulties might face serious obstacles when the class materials are not tailored to the needs of diverse learners. The research on inclusive literacy shows the necessity of flexible teaching aids, visual prompts, multimedia sources, and access to various communicative formats to promote meaningful inclusion in classes that teach English literature to the learners with autism and other support needs (Tracy-Bronson & Scribner, 2024). It goes without saying that the preparation of general

education instructors for inclusive classrooms has become an important area since their role in creating more accessibility and learner involvement becomes crucial for improved educational outcomes. Special education teacher preparation curriculums place emphasis on the key elements of collaboration, differentiation, inclusive assessment and adaptation to disabilities that are necessary for implementing inclusivity. Nonetheless, the shortage of training, teaching resources, and institutional frameworks that could accommodate the complexity of inclusive literature classrooms persists at numerous educational establishments (Gomez-Najarro et al., 2023). Pedagogies that focus on narratives might prove to be helpful in overcoming certain accessibility challenges since learners would be able to engage with literary works through storytelling, visual communication, interpretive reflection, and multimodal participation.

4.4 Linguistic, Cognitive, and Emotional Barriers

Literature classrooms can include learners with widely varying backgrounds and experiences, both intellectually and socially. Learners requiring special educational accommodations will likely engage with texts in unique ways; their comprehension of narrative and emotional intelligence levels will be atypical as compared to neurotypical learners. Literature classes investigating the intersections between disability studies and special education show us how institutional and curricular divisions can unintentionally result in exclusionary educational paradigms (Johnson, 2024). The power of personal narrative as an approach in educational research shows the value of incorporating emotions, identities, and lived experience into discussions surrounding educational engagement (Head, 2025). Learners who are marginalized, isolated socially, or unable to use language-based communication methods will find themselves alienated from traditional literature class experiences, which focus on standardized educational approaches. Hence, inclusivity requires that emotional difference, learner identities, and alternate modes of engaging with

literature become a part of pedagogy. Similarly, teacher narratives can provide useful insight into the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusive practices, especially when such practices are undertaken in underserved communities. Research into the lived experiences of special education teachers reveals many institutional, systemic, and emotional barriers faced by educators in their attempts to implement inclusive teaching practices (Deliva et al., 2024).

4.5 Institutional and Policy-Level Constraints

Limitations associated with institutional aspects and policies continue to play a role in the implementation of inclusive teaching of literature across various educational settings. Despite the significant development of inclusive education policies in recent years, a great number of institutions continue experiencing a lack of funding, accessibility, readiness of teachers,

adaptability of curricula, and support for implementation. Practices in education are also affected by the cultural, religious, and sociopolitical characteristics of societies which shape their attitudes towards inclusive practices, disability, and participation in education (Balasubramanian & Banerjee, 2024). Inclusive policies in many educational environments are often not aligned with what happens at school or in the classroom, leading to gaps between policy requirements and practical obstacles to their realization. It is possible for an institution to promote inclusive education ideologically yet keep its assessment criteria, curricula, and methods of teaching standardized rather than flexible. The inclusion of learners through innovative English literature classes thus requires transformation on both pedagogical and institutional levels to promote accessibility, teachers' competence, and equal participation. Figure 3 illustrates the interplay between all these factors.

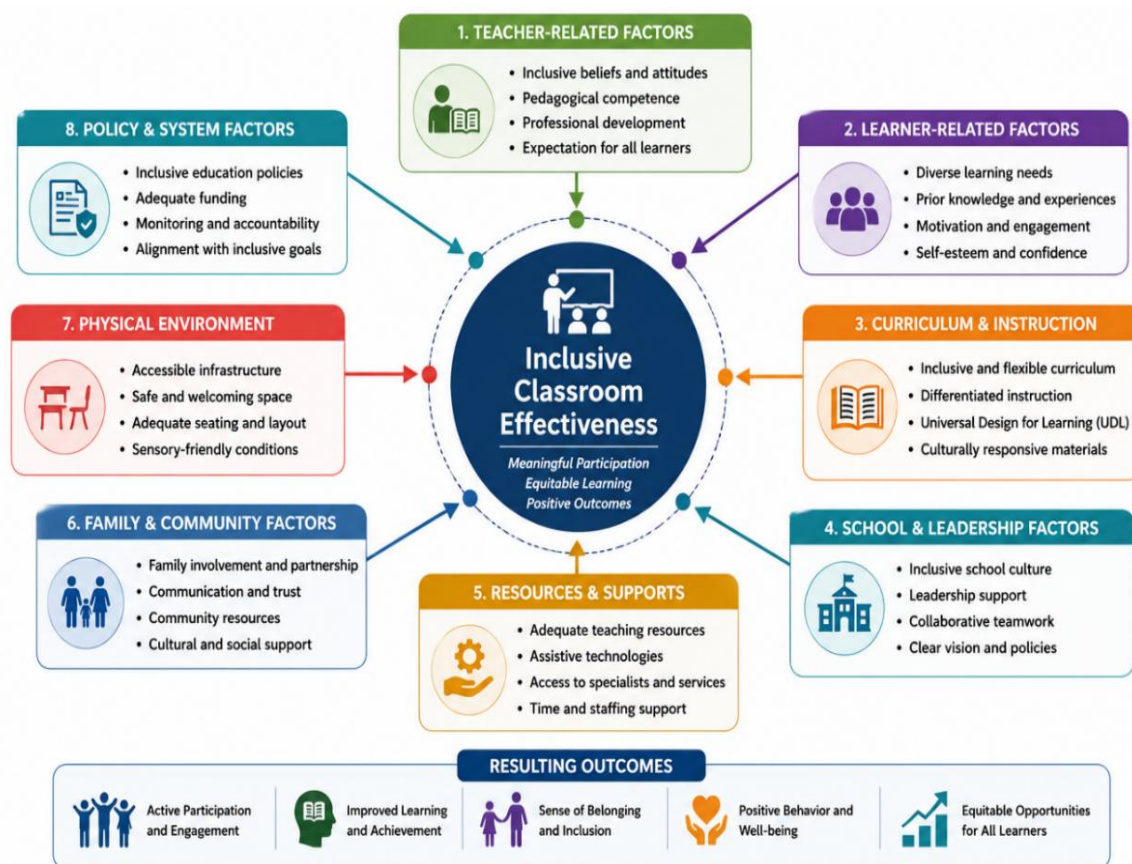


Figure 3. Factors Influencing Inclusive Classroom Effectiveness

4. Challenges and Barriers in Inclusive Literature Classrooms

4.1 Curriculum Rigidity and Standardized Teaching Models

Among the greatest barriers for inclusive English literature lessons include the continued prevalence of inflexible curricula and instructional frameworks that often do not provide space for accommodating individual differences, including cultural and linguistic pluralism, educational needs, among other factors. Canonical ELT curricula and standardized instructional strategies often marginalize learners who come from special needs backgrounds, multilingual communities, or those whose cultural background differs from the dominant groups.

Reform research increasingly points at the need for incorporating cultural responsiveness in pedagogies to ensure flexibility in teaching literature in multicultural, socioculturally diverse settings (Khan et al., 2023). Despite that, rigid curricula continue to be prevalent in the majority of education systems around the globe, limiting the ability of teachers to adapt instructional strategies.

The incorporation of new technologies in education has introduced a whole different set of barriers to inclusion, including unequal access to digital devices and lack of necessary digital literacy skills. Although the use of artificial intelligence and digital learning tools has been found to benefit multilingual students through increased accessibility, inequity in technology use, and lack of pedagogic strategies may exacerbate the problem (Davoodi, 2024).

4.2 Teacher Preparedness and Pedagogical Training

One area where there are significant concerns is teacher preparedness in inclusive literature classrooms. In particular, many teachers are not prepared for disability-inclusive pedagogy,

narrative teaching methods, access frameworks, and differentiated instruction. Traditionally, teacher education programs focused mainly on content delivery and classroom management rather than on transformative pedagogy and student engagement through literary texts.

Today, educational researchers are increasingly recognizing the need for critical reflections on educational politics, learner involvement, and inclusive classroom teaching (Whitton, 2022). The literature classroom may become challenging in terms of pedagogical innovation and inclusive practice if teachers feel uncertain about working with literary materials in an adaptive way or using multimodal literary approaches with students having more complex support needs. Culturally sensitive literary teaching is another area that teachers must learn how to address effectively.

Specifically, teachers have to create an inclusive learning experience by incorporating alternative literary texts that relate to various cultural, linguistic, religious, and identity-specific backgrounds of learners (Candraningrum et al., 2025). Studies on contextually informed literature teaching indicate that such pedagogy could be useful for enhancing inclusiveness; however, teacher education will also be required (Candraningrum et al., 2025).

In addition, teacher candidates express doubts related to the application of inclusive instruction and accommodation strategies to students with disabilities and complex support needs (Miller et al., 2025). Therefore, today, there is an urgent need for new teacher education programs emphasizing disability-centered pedagogy, culturally sustaining instruction, and access-oriented curriculum development. Contemporary teacher education programs are increasingly focusing on developing pedagogical models that would incorporate inclusive education and critical disability studies.

Table 3. Major Barriers Affecting Inclusive English Literature Teaching

Barrier	Impact on Inclusive Literature Education	Educational Consequence	Reference
Rigid curriculum structures	Restricts flexible instruction	Reduced accessibility	(Khan et al., 2023)
Unequal AI and technology access	Creates digital disparities	Limited inclusive participation	(Davoodi, 2024)
Traditional pedagogical systems	Limits learner-centered engagement	Reduced inclusivity	(Whitton, 2022)
Culturally narrow literary curricula	Marginalizes diverse identities	Weak learner representation	(Candraningrum et al., 2025)
Limited teacher preparedness	Weak support for complex learning needs	Reduced classroom inclusion	(Miller et al., 2025)
Lack of disability-centered pedagogy	Inadequate accommodation practices	Learner marginalization	(Kulkarni et al., 2024)
Insufficient teacher training	Weak inclusive instructional design	Accessibility challenges	(Gomez-Najarro et al., 2023)
Fragmented curriculum boundaries	Reinforces exclusionary practices	Educational disconnect	(Johnson, 2024)
Limited literacy accommodations	Restricts literary participation	Reduced learner engagement	(Tracy-Bronson & Scribner, 2024)
Emotional and identity barriers	Limits self-expression and participation	Reduced learner confidence	(Head, 2025)
Institutional support limitations	Weak implementation of inclusion	Teacher stress and inconsistency	(Deliva et al., 2024)
Sociocultural and policy constraints	Influences educational accessibility	Unequal inclusive implementation	(Balasubramanian & Banerjee, 2024)

4.3 Accessibility and Classroom Accommodation Challenges

There are several issues of accessibility that can be found in inclusive English literature classrooms due to the fact that teaching literary subjects involves working with written sources, using abstract thinking, and applying standard methods of communication. People with autism

spectrum disorders, learning difficulties, sensory and communicative differences will face many challenges in the classroom where instructional and educational materials were not developed with consideration of their learning abilities. Studies conducted within the framework of inclusive literacy research highlight the significance of providing learners with various types of instructional support, visual scaffolds,

multimodal literacy resources, and effective methods of communication to foster inclusive participation of people with autism (Tracy-Bronson & Scribner, 2024). It goes without saying that the preparation of general educators for inclusive instruction is of key importance as it increases possibilities for making classrooms accessible and welcoming for all participants. Special education teacher preparation models focus on the implementation of collaboration, differentiated instruction, inclusive assessment, and adaptive curricula as elements of inclusive education (Gomez-Najarro et al., 2023). However, the lack of specialized instruction, inclusive literacy resources, and supportive infrastructure still persists in educational institutions, thus hindering the process of implementing inclusive instruction in literature. Narrative-centered instruction can alleviate some of the identified barriers by allowing students to participate in storytelling, communication, and interpretation of texts from multiple angles. Nonetheless, narrative teaching can prove to be challenging due to certain restrictions imposed by educational institutions and instructors.

4.4 Linguistic, Cognitive, and Emotional Barriers

Indeed, many times, literature classes in inclusive settings are composed of students who have different cognitive, communicative, emotional, and social backgrounds, making the task of the educator very challenging. Some students with special educational needs might understand literary texts differently, express themselves using different languages, require individualized instructional and emotional pacing, among other things. Educational narratives on the boundaries of disability studies and special education show us how institutional classifications and fragmentation of curricula may inadvertently perpetuate exclusionary educational practices (Johnson, 2024). The use of personal narrative methodology in educational research also emphasizes the need to understand emotional experience, identity construction, and life experience in relation to educational participation (Head, 2025). Students who find themselves marginalized, socially isolated, or

unable to communicate because of communication disabilities may find it difficult to actively engage in the literature class due to the exclusive focus on academic language rather than relational and experiential learning in the classroom environment. Therefore, the practice of inclusive narrative pedagogy should account for emotional diversity, learner identity, and several literary engagements in the design of such classes. Teacher narratives provide us with insights into some of the difficulties involved in maintaining inclusive teaching practices in under-resourced classrooms. Studies looking at the lived experience of special education teachers show that the educators are faced with various institutional, support, and emotional barriers in their pursuit of inclusivity in the classroom setting (Deliva et al., 2024).

4.5 Institutional and Policy-Level Constraints

However, institutional limitations continue to play a role in the adoption of inclusive approaches to English literature teaching. While inclusive education policies have grown considerably throughout the last few decades, there are still institutions where inequalities in terms of funding, accessibility, technological capabilities, teacher training, curricular adaptability, and implementation support exist. Educational processes can also be influenced by external factors such as culture, religion, or sociopolitical dynamics, affecting the understanding of inclusion, disabilities, and participation in education processes in different countries (Balasubramanian & Banerjee, 2024). In many cases, institutions have policies that support the development of an inclusive educational system; however, those policies remain separate from the reality of practice, and there is a gap between them due to assessment procedures, curriculum, and instructional methods that prioritize standardization over learner diversity. Hence, inclusive teaching in English literature classes involves changes on the level of practice as well as at an institutional level to foster accessibility, teacher empowerment, and equal participation in education. Figure 3 illustrates this connection.



Figure 3. Factors Influencing Inclusive Classroom Effectiveness

5. Innovative Pedagogical Frameworks and Future Directions

5.1 Digital Storytelling and Transformative Narrative Learning

Transformative pedagogical methodologies have been found to play an integral role in shaping inclusive English literature education that is centered on empowering students, involving them in dialogue, and facilitating their active engagement in education. For instance, according to Majola (2025), Freirean pedagogical paradigms are based on the principles of conscientization, critical reflection, and student empowerment which are all important aspects of socially responsive pedagogy. Through such pedagogies, students can be encouraged to engage with literary works not only from a scholarly point of view but also as a means of exploring one's identity, criticizing society, connecting emotionally with others, and taking part in democratic processes. Narrative pedagogy is very much aligned with transformative educational theories, as it is built upon such key concepts as storytelling, lived experiences, and reflection. The development of online and distance education has changed the way of implementing inclusive narrative pedagogy since it has brought about increased flexibility,

accessibility, and interaction between students and educators. Innovative approaches to open and digital interaction have allowed those learners whose participation might be hindered by traditional classroom settings because of such factors as mobility, communication, sensory, and psychological barriers to be involved in education.

5.2 Democratic Curriculum and Inclusive Literary Engagement

Future-focused literature education that aims to be inclusive recognizes the need for curriculum design that is democratic enough to accommodate such components as learner experience, cultural diversity, accessibility, and learner participation in classroom teaching. Current curriculum studies suggest that educational experience should be flexible and relational rather than strictly tied to the institution as it occurs through people's interaction and not limited to any particular setting (Nigar et al., 2024). As a result, narrative pedagogy is helpful for fostering a more democratic style of literature teaching by making its interpretation dialogic and multilateral. Another important point concerning inclusive pedagogy in English language teaching is that it implies preparation of teachers who are able to

teach students with disabilities successfully by providing them with appropriate adaptive strategies (Effendi et al., 2024). This is necessary because literature lessons often involve learners

with diverse linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and communicative needs. Therefore, future teaching in literature must focus on flexibility and responsiveness to learners.

Table 4. Emerging Innovations Supporting Inclusive Narrative Pedagogy

Innovative Pedagogical Approach	Inclusive Education Function	Educational Outcome	Reference
Freirean transformative pedagogy	Encourages learner agency and critical reflection	Empowered participation	(Majola, 2025)
Online and distance learning models	Expands accessibility and flexibility	Inclusive engagement	(Stapleford & Lee, 2024)
Democratic curriculum design	Supports collaborative meaning-making	Participatory literary learning	(Nigar et al., 2024)
Disability-inclusive teacher preparation	Strengthens adaptive instructional practice	Improved classroom inclusion	(Effendi et al., 2024)
AI-driven language learning	Supports personalized accessibility	Enhanced learner engagement	(Lee, 2024)
Dynamic relational pedagogy	Encourages experiential interaction	Inclusive learning environments	(Sakr & Kaur, 2024)
Teacher-centered inclusive support systems	Strengthens learner accommodation	Better support for complex needs	(Mansouri et al., 2024)
Reimagined teacher education models	Prepares educators for evolving classrooms	Future-ready inclusive pedagogy	(Flores & Craig, 2023)

5.3 AI, Technology, and Multimodal Accessibility

Innovative technologies will be vital in the coming years concerning inclusive narrative pedagogy and English literature education. There is an increasing trend of using technologies such as artificial intelligence, adaptive learning systems, digital storytelling technologies, and multimodal literacy platforms in the education sector to promote personalized learning and accessibility-focused education. Innovations related to AI technology-based language learning have been shown to hold great promise in regards to engaging learners, making literacy more accessible, supporting differentiated and adaptive instruction, and offering educational support to learners with varied learning needs (Lee, 2024). Innovative technologies can enhance learner engagement in classrooms by

removing barriers to participation in traditional text-based learning. However, educational experts warn against the use of technology as a replacement of the teacher and pedagogy, but instead as tools of supporting relational, creative, and collaborative learning in education. Modern perspectives of pedagogy are focusing on the creation of dynamic learning environments that involve interaction, experimentation, play, and social engagement (Sakr & Kaur, 2024). Therefore, inclusive English literature classes will require the incorporation of technology alongside emotionally-responsive dialogic pedagogical methods.

5.4 Teacher Agency and Inclusive Classroom Transformation

The agency of the teacher is essential in promoting the practice of inclusive narrative

pedagogy because of the educator's responsibility in making modifications to the curriculum and accommodating diverse learner populations. Studies analyzing teachers' perceptions about inclusive education show that there is an increasing awareness among educators of the significance of creating relationships, accessibility, collaboration, and differentiation for complex needs learners (Mansouri et al., 2024). Inclusive narrative teaching also demands organizational support, continuing professional training, and a flexible pedagogy approach able to cope with current classroom dynamics. The modernization of teacher education systems in light of contemporary challenges such as teacher shortages, changes in the learning process after the pandemic period, advances in digital education, and diversification of classrooms is underway (Flores & Craig, 2023). It can be expected that future teacher preparation programs will focus more on inclusive pedagogy, multimodal literacy, trauma-informed teaching, disability studies, and narrative education. These tendencies are expected to improve teachers' skills for providing accessible and engaging classrooms to special needs learners.

5.5 Future-Oriented Models for Inclusive Literature Teaching

The future of inclusive literature education in English should be characterized by the development of interdisciplinary, technological, and learner-centered approaches that would be capable of successfully incorporating elements of narrative inquiry, accessibility, cultural responsiveness, and multiliteracies. Narrative pedagogy holds considerable promise in terms of turning literature classes into learning spaces where emotions can be engaged, identities affirmed, meaning coconstructed and negotiated, and participation democratized for students with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Another set of features that future pedagogical models may possess includes integration with AI-based tools to make texts accessible, adaptive literacy training systems, immersive story spaces, online collaborative environments, and culturally sustaining approaches to instruction. Narrative pedagogy is likely to be one of the crucial elements of English literature teaching for learners with special needs in the context of growing emphasis on accessibility, diversity, and democratic participation. Figure 4 illustrates the connection between the aforementioned aspects.

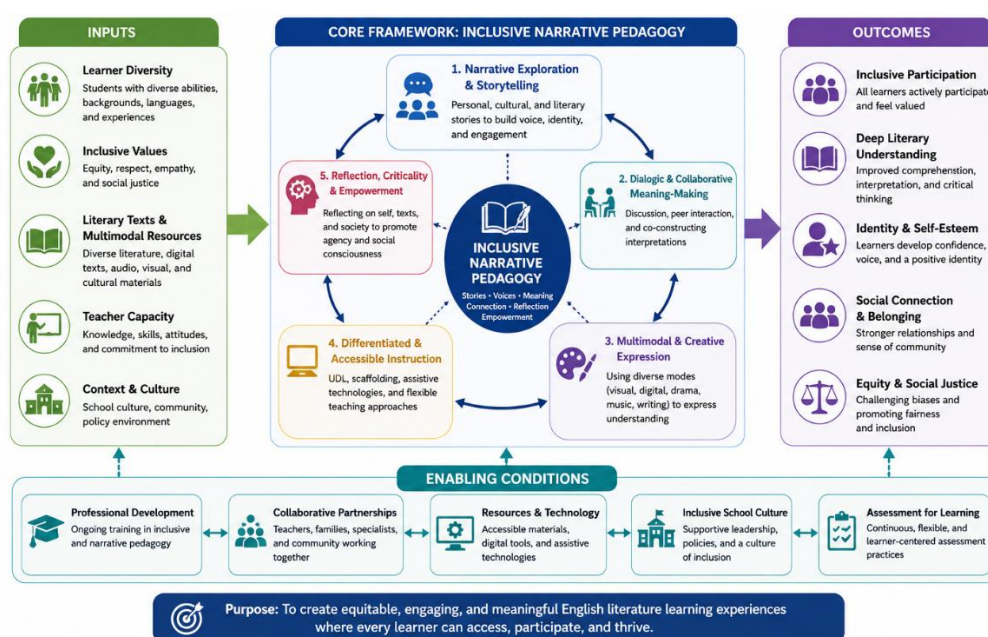


Figure 4. Integrated Framework for Inclusive Narrative Pedagogy in English Literature Classrooms

6. Future Prospects

For future inclusive English literature classrooms, the following features are expected: accessibility, learner agency, technological innovations, and disability-specific teaching approaches. With the increasing diversity of classrooms, future instructors are expected to develop flexible teaching approaches enabling special needs learners to understand and appreciate literature through various literary activities such as storytelling, drawing, using multimedia content, discussing, presenting, etc. Future inclusive English classrooms may focus on such aspects as promoting learner autonomy, ensuring learners' emotional comfort, recognizing learner identity, etc.

In addition, artificial intelligence and innovative technologies can also facilitate inclusive English literature instruction. For instance, the use of AI-assisted reading applications, text-to-speech devices, vocabulary aids, multimedia materials with captions, assessment tests, etc., may be helpful for learners having specific learning differences, language problems, visual impairments, etc. However, these tools should be used to enhance human-centered literature instruction instead of replacing interaction between the learners and instructors.

Moreover, future teacher education programs will have to include issues related to disability studies, Universal Design for Learning, trauma-informed literature instruction, inclusive access to literacy, and culturally responsive literature instruction. Therefore, future teachers should be ready not only to modify literary texts and assessment tools but also to ensure a welcoming environment for all learners including those with special needs. Thus, inclusive literature teaching requires continual professional development and close cooperation among teachers, special educators, parents, and policymakers.

Overall, inclusive English literature education in the future will depend on creating an engaging and accessible environment in literature classrooms. Narrative pedagogy can facilitate this process since it is centered around experience

and identity and includes various literary activities.

7. Conclusion

The inclusion of narrative in the teaching of English literature is one such human-centered approach that can contribute immensely to making literature classrooms inclusive and engaging for people with different educational needs. Traditionally, literature instruction has been characterized by strict pedagogic approaches and methods, which limit the potential for the inclusion of students with special needs due to their restrictive nature. In contrast to these traditional practices, narratives allow educators to create a platform where learners can explore various aspects of literature by means of stories, discussions, emotions, multimodal communication, and collaboration. Therefore, a closer look at the literature on inclusive literature education will demonstrate how much it requires more than just physically including learners into classrooms to provide learners with meaningful learning experience. Narrative pedagogy is one such strategy that can be highly effective in making classrooms inclusive and enabling learners to feel involved, emotionally engaged, critically literate, able to construct their own identities, and participate in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the incorporation of multimodal literacies, digital storytelling, AI-driven accessibility tools, and the concepts of universal design for learning can offer new opportunities for more inclusivity in learning. On the other hand, numerous barriers prevent instructors from incorporating narrative into their work with literature effectively. The problems such as rigid curriculum design, inadequate preparation of teachers, constraints posed by institutions, barriers related to accessibility, and lack of necessary support systems stand in the way of developing more inclusive approaches to narrative-based literature learning. These obstacles need to be addressed to facilitate positive changes in classrooms that will involve reformation of teacher education programs, development of policies and strategies aimed at inclusivity, provision of accessible

technology, and application of innovative pedagogical techniques.

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