

Original article



Towards inclusive teaching in higher education: analysis of pedagogical trends for equity and resilience in Latin America

Hacia una didáctica inclusiva en la educación superior: análisis de tendencias pedagógicas para la equidad y la resiliencia en América Latina

Em direção a um ensino inclusivo no ensino superior: análise das tendências pedagógicas para equidade e resiliência na América Latina

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ABSTRACT

Latin American higher education faces the challenge of moving from policies centered on formal access to truly inclusive pedagogical practices. This systematic review, conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) statement, examines pedagogical trends oriented toward inclusive teaching in the region between 2016 and 2026, focusing specifically on how these trends incorporate the dimensions of equity and resilience.

Drawing on 10 studies selected from Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO, and Redalyc and analyzed through thematic synthesis, three pedagogical vectors were identified: curricular accessibility, the Latin American critical tradition, and support mechanisms. The findings indicate that equity dominates as the central axis of regional scientific production, whereas resilience, particularly in its systemic and institutional dimension, represents a significant gap. The implementation of inclusive practices is moderated by factors such as institutional leadership, ongoing faculty development, and digital divides. The review concludes that the field remains in an emerging stage, with unresolved challenges regarding the integration of resilience and the articulation of pedagogical vectors within coherent institutional designs.

Keywords: inclusive teaching; higher education; Latin America; equity; resilience.

RESUMEN

La educación superior latinoamericana enfrenta el desafío de transitar de políticas de acceso formal hacia prácticas pedagógicas genuinamente inclusivas. Esta revisión sistemática, realizada conforme a la declaración Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020), analiza las tendencias pedagógicas orientadas a la didáctica inclusiva en la región entre 2016 y 2026, examinando cómo incorporan las dimensiones de equidad y resiliencia. A partir de 10 estudios seleccionados de Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO y Redalyc, y mediante síntesis temática, se identificaron tres vectores pedagógicos: accesibilidad curricular, tradición crítica latinoamericana y dispositivos de acompañamiento. Los hallazgos revelan que la equidad predomina como eje de la producción científica regional, mientras que la resiliencia, en su dimensión sistémica e institucional, representa un vacío significativo. La implementación de prácticas inclusivas está moderada por factores como el liderazgo institucional, la formación docente continua y las brechas digitales. Se concluye que el campo se encuentra en una etapa emergente, con desafíos pendientes en la integración de la resiliencia y la articulación de los vectores pedagógicos en diseños institucionales coherentes.

Palabras clave: didáctica inclusiva; educación superior; América Latina; equidad; resiliencia.

RESUMO

O ensino superior latino-americano enfrenta o desafio de passar de políticas formais de acesso para práticas pedagógicas genuinamente inclusivas. Esta revisão sistemática, realizada de acordo com a declaração Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020), analisa as tendências pedagógicas voltadas para o ensino inclusivo na região entre 2016 e 2026, examinando como incorporam as dimensões de equidade e resiliência. Com base em 10 estudos selecionados na Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO e Redalyc, e por meio de síntese temática, foram identificados três vetores pedagógicos: acessibilidade curricular, tradição crítica latino-americana e dispositivos acompanhantes. Os resultados revelam que a equidade predomina como eixo da produção científica regional, enquanto a resiliência, na sua dimensão sistêmica e institucional, representa uma lacuna significativa. A implementação de práticas inclusivas é moderada por factores como a liderança institucional, a formação contínua de professores e as clivagens digitais. Conclui-se que o campo se encontra num estágio emergente, com desafios pendentes na integração da resiliência e na articulação de vetores pedagógicos em desenhos institucionais coerentes.

Palavras-chave: didática inclusiva; ensino superior; América Latina; equidade; resiliência.

INTRODUCTION

Latin America has increased its university enrollment in the last two decades without a corresponding reduction in structural inequalities. Massification policies have expanded coverage; however, this expansion has not resulted in genuinely inclusive education systems (Ferreira *et al.*, 2017). Salmi and D'Addio (2021) warn that inclusion policies have focused on formal access and neglected the pedagogical dimensions that underpin meaningful participation, retention, and academic achievement for those who have historically been excluded. The gap between nominal access and an equitable educational experience is the fundamental problem that this systematic review seeks to define.

In this way, inclusive pedagogy refocuses the analysis on classroom practices and how these distribute learning opportunities. It is understood here as a pedagogical approach that, by integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Freirean critical pedagogy, and the principles of interculturality, seeks to remove the curricular, methodological, and evaluative barriers that segment students based

on their sociocultural background, disability, mother tongue, gender, or other intersectional variables (Waitoller & King Thorius, 2016; Condori Meléndez *et al.*, 2022; Lázaro Guillermo *et al.*, 2022). From this perspective, inclusion ceases to be conceived as a compensatory adjustment aimed at "different" students and becomes understood as a structuring principle of instructional design.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic added resilience as a central element of the regional educational agenda. The health crisis not only revealed pre-existing weaknesses in Latin American university systems but also catalyzed emergency teaching innovations that, in some contexts, opened doors to more flexible, hybrid, and potentially inclusive practices (Pedró, 2020). Here, we are interested in a notion of resilience that transcends the individual attribute of overcoming adversity and is understood as an institutional property: the capacity of universities and their educational designs to anticipate, adapt, and transform themselves in the face of disruptions that disproportionately threaten the educational continuity of the most vulnerable groups (Ainscow, 2020). Equity and resilience operate as interdependent dimensions: there is no genuine educational resilience without equitable institutional conditions, nor sustainable pedagogical equity without educational designs capable of withstanding and learning from crises.

In this sense, preliminary literature suggests that regional production is articulated in three pedagogical vectors (curricular accessibility, Latin American critical tradition and support mechanisms) which, however, appear dispersed, disconnected from each other and anchored in institutional or national experiences that are rarely integrated into an analysis of regional scope (Jerez Yañez *et al.*, 2025). Therefore, the absence of a systematic synthesis that maps, from a pan-Latin American perspective, inclusive pedagogical trends in higher education, their interrelation with the axes of equity and resilience, and the institutional conditions that determine their viability constitutes the gap that motivates this study. Existing reviews are mostly concentrated in the Anglo-Saxon world, address inclusion from exclusively sociodemographic variables, or focus on pre-university educational levels (Hernández Blancas *et al.*, 2026). Latin American higher education, with its historical specificity, institutional stratification, and cultural diversity, demands its own systematic review that captures both pre-pandemic output and post-disruption lessons learned, in line with the 2030 Agenda and SDG 4 (UNESCO, 2022).

Therefore, this review aims to answer the following question: What pedagogical trends oriented towards inclusive didactics have been researched in Latin American higher education between 2016

and 2026, how do they incorporate the dimensions of equity and resilience, and what institutional factors moderate their implementation? The specific objectives are: to identify and characterize the inclusive pedagogical trends documented in the region's scientific literature during this period; to analyze how these trends conceptualize and operationalize the notions of equity and resilience; to examine the institutional, curricular, and training factors that act as facilitators or barriers to the implementation of these practices; to identify knowledge gaps; and to propose an agenda for future research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This systematic review was conducted and reported in accordance with the *Preferred guidelines Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta- Analyses* in its 2020 version (PRISMA 2020; Page *et al.*, 2021). In turn, the review was guided by the following question: what are the pedagogical trends oriented towards inclusive didactics that have been researched in Latin American higher education between 2016 and 2026, how do they incorporate the dimensions of equity and resilience, and what institutional factors moderate their implementation?

To operationalize it, the PICO framework (Population, Phenomenon of Interest, Context), recommended in qualitative systematic reviews and thematic syntheses (Thomas & Harden, 2008), was adopted. The resulting structure was:

Table 1. PICO Criteria

PICO Component	Operational definition
P (Population)	Research on didactics, pedagogical practices and teaching in higher education
I (Phenomenon of interest)	Inclusive pedagogical trends oriented towards equity and resilience
Co (Context)	Higher education institutions in Latin American countries, 2016-2026

Source: Prepared by the author based on the PICO framework (Thomas & Harden, 2008)

This operationalization allowed the research question to be translated into precise search criteria and a reproducible selection protocol. The identification of institutional factors that moderate implementation was not used as a search criterion and, therefore, is not part of the PICO framework; this dimension was operationalized during the data extraction phase.

Information sources and search strategy

The systematic search was performed on March 15, 2026 in Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection (WoS), SciELO and Redalyc. This combination responds to the evidence that SciELO and Redalyc index a significant proportion of Latin American scientific production, absent in Scopus or WoS (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020).

The strategy was structured using the PICO framework in three conceptual blocks combined with Boolean operators: (Block 1: inclusive didactics) AND (Block 2: equity and resilience) AND (Block 3: higher education). To mitigate the risk of excluding relevant studies, a complementary manual search was implemented using backward and forward citation tracking, and the sensitivity of the equation was verified by checking the retrieval of a set of reference studies in the field. Regional delimitation was relegated to the full-text phase to prioritize sensitivity (Stansfield *et al.*, 2016).

The master search equation, before applying filters, was the following for Scopus:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("inclusive pedagog*" OR "inclusive teaching" OR "inclusive pedagogy" OR "inclusive teaching" OR "universal design for learning" OR "UDL" OR "inclusive assessment" OR "inclusive evaluation") AND (inclus * OR equity OR "educational equity" OR resilien*) AND ("higher education" OR "tertiary education" OR "postsecondary education" OR universit* OR "college*").

In Web of Science, the "Topic" (TS) field was used with an identical logical structure. In SciELO and Redalyc, their limitations for complex Boolean nesting necessitated simplified versions using iterative searches with the central terms of each block.

The protocol limits (peer-reviewed articles, January 2016 to March 2026, English or Spanish) were applied using the native filters of each database.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The eligibility criteria were defined a priori. Table 2 summarizes them.

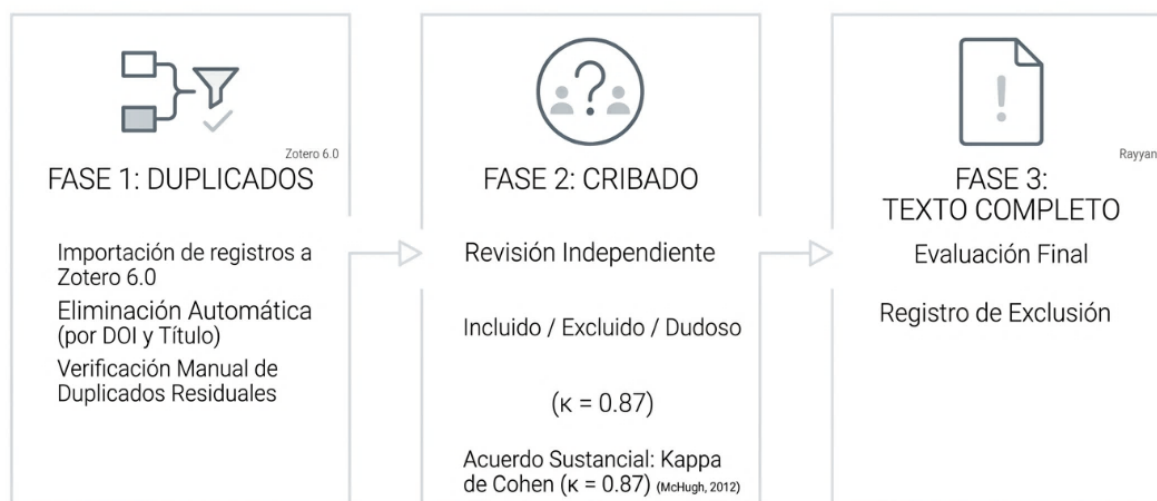
Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Parameter	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Document type	Peer-reviewed journal articles	Theses, book chapters, conference papers, reports, grey literature, editorials, reviews
Temporary window	Publication between January 2016 and March 2026	Publications prior to 2016 or after the search closing date
Language	Spanish and English	Portuguese, French, or other languages
Geographical scope	Studies explicitly contextualized in one or more Latin American countries	Studies on other regions without a Latin American component
Educational level	Higher education (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate)	Basic education, secondary education, non-university technical and professional training
Thematic relevance	Studies that address inclusive teaching, pedagogical equity, or academic resilience as a primary or substantive secondary focus	Studies that mention inclusion exclusively as a demographic variable without addressing pedagogical dimensions

Source: Own elaboration

Study selection process

The selection process was structured in three phases according to PRISMA 2020 (Page *et al.*, 2021) and was documented in figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Methodological workflow diagram for study selection

Source: Own elaboration

Note: In Phase 2, the inter-reviewer agreement was $\kappa=0.87$ (substantial agreement; McHugh, 2012). Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and, if necessary, by a third reviewer. In Phase 3, the reasons for exclusion are reported in the PRISMA diagram (Figure 2). The process was managed using Rayyan software.

Data extraction process

The data extraction was performed using a structured matrix in Microsoft Excel, piloted with 10 studies to verify the relevance and clarity of the fields. This pilot allowed for the refinement of the coding categories related to the conceptualization of resilience and the typology of pedagogical practice. The extracted data thus encompassed: study metadata (authorship, year, country, journal, DOI, language), methodological characteristics (design, population, institutional context, discipline), thematic focus (pedagogical trend, components of equity and resilience, theoretical framework), and main findings (results on inclusive didactics, facilitators, barriers, and reported limitations).

The extraction was performed independently by the two reviewers; any discrepancies were resolved by consensus.

Evaluation of methodological quality

The quality of the included studies was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), version 2018 (Hong *et al.*, 2018), for its suitability to assess qualitative, quantitative descriptive and mixed methods studies with unified criteria.

Two reviewers independently assessed each study, classifying it according to its design and scoring the five corresponding items as "Yes", "No", or "Cannot be determined". To ensure transparency and auditability, the following synthesis categories were operationally defined: High ($\geq 4/5$ items satisfied), Medium (3/5), and Low ($\leq 2/5$).

Following the recommendations of the instrument's authors, a single aggregate score was not calculated (Hong *et al.*, 2018). Instead, the quality profile was used as a narrative weighting criterion, giving greater interpretive weight to convergent findings supported by high-quality studies. Eight studies had a high profile and two a medium profile; none were rated as low.

Data synthesis

The heterogeneity of the studies made a meta-analysis inadvisable. A hybrid deductive-inductive thematic synthesis was adopted (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Thomas & Harden, 2008). The three pedagogical vectors (curricular accessibility, Latin American critical tradition, and support mechanisms) and the two analytical dimensions (equity and resilience) were used as initial deductive categories. Two reviewers independently coded the findings of the 10 studies, generating emerging subcategories such as teacher agency in the face of weak institutional support, informality of adaptive practices, and resilience limited to individual attributes. These subcategories were integrated with the deductive categories through constant comparison. This process allowed for refining the framework and constructing the three themes that organize the results. Disagreements between reviewers were resolved by consensus.

Assessment of reporting bias and certainty of evidence

Publication bias was not assessed using statistical tests, such as the Egger test or funnel plots, since these techniques are designed for meta-analysis and their application to thematic syntheses lacks recognized methodological validity. The comprehensiveness of the search strategy, which included

regional databases, and the decision not to exclude studies based on low quality helped mitigate the risk of selective availability bias. Thus, the certainty of the evidence was assessed qualitatively for each analytical theme, considering three criteria: consistency of findings across studies, aggregate methodological quality of the studies supporting each theme, and direct contextual relevance to the Latin American context. This assessment was integrated narratively into the discussion.

RESULTS

Study selection process

The search strategy applied on March 15, 2026 in Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO, and Redalyc yielded a total of 2,890 records. After removing 612 duplicates, 2,278 unique records were screened by title and abstract. Of these, 2,231 were excluded for not meeting eligibility criteria, primarily for not addressing inclusive pedagogy in Latin American higher education or for mentioning inclusion only as a demographic variable. Forty-seven full-text articles were evaluated, of which 37 were excluded. A supplementary manual search did not identify any additional studies. The final corpus consisted of 10 studies. Figure 2 presents the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram detailing the process.

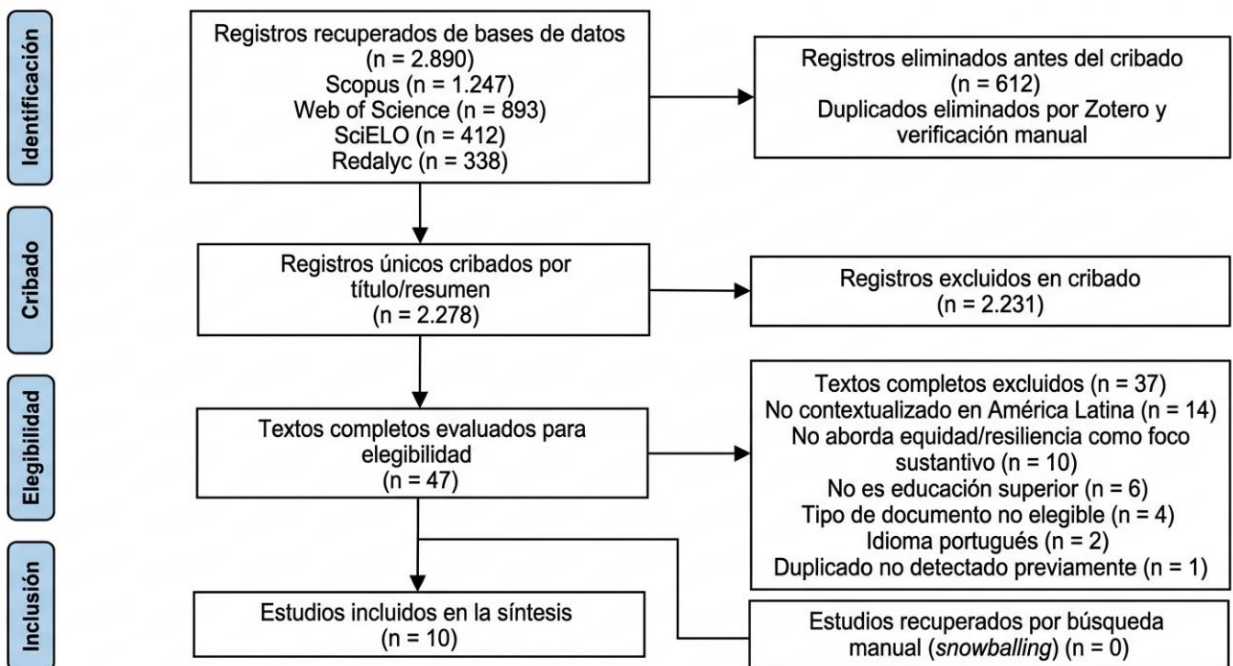


Figure 2. PRISMA 2020 flowchart of the study selection process

Source: Prepared by the author based on the use of Rayyan software and the protocol of Page *et al.* (2021)

Corpus characterization

Table 3 presents the complete characterization of the corpus, including the methodological quality assessment according to the MMAT. In summary, the studies are concentrated in the 2025-2026 biennium (n=7), with a predominance of multi-country or regional research (n=5) and qualitative designs (n=5). Eight studies presented a high-quality profile and two, a medium one; none were rated as low.

Table 3. Characterization of the included studies and evaluation of methodological quality

Study	Country(ies)	Design	Predominant pedagogical vector	Dimension	MMAT Quality
Anzelin <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador	Comparative qualitative	Critical tradition / Accompanying devices	Equity	High
Arteaga-Alcívar <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Ecuador / Latin America	Mixed	Companion devices	Equity	High
Becerra Sepúlveda (2021)	Chile	Qualitative ethnomethodological	Critical tradition (interculturality)	Equity	High
Gacel-Ávila (2022)	Latin America and the Caribbean	Critical analysis essay	Critical tradition (inclusive internationalization)	Equity	High
García Pérez (2026)	Mexico	Qualitative (intercultural action research)	Critical tradition (interculturality)	Equity	High
Jerez Yañez <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Latin America	Essay / systematization	Support devices (teacher training)	Equity	High

Medina Vásquez <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Peru	Multi- method quantitative	Curriculum accessibility / Support devices	Equity	High
Nolasco-Salcedo (2026)	Latin America	Qualitative (multiple case study)	Curriculum accessibility (digital pedagogies)	Equity	High
Otero Escobar <i>et al.</i> (2026)	Mexico	Quantitative cross-sectional	Curriculum accessibility	Equity	Average
Rigo <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Argentina	Descriptive mixed	Companion devices	Resilience	Average

Source: Own elaboration based on the thematic synthesis of the corpus

Note: Methodological quality was assessed using Mixed Methods. Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), version 2018 (Hong *et al.*, 2018). The quality profile was established according to the degree of compliance with the criteria corresponding to each design, without calculating an aggregate score.

Thematic summary

The analysis of the 10 studies allowed the identification of three analytical themes that organize the findings around inclusive didactics in Latin American higher education.

Conceptualizations of inclusion: between the rights approach and institutional fragmentation

A first finding across the corpus is the coexistence of multiple conceptualizations of inclusion, which range from a rights-based approach, focused on social justice and equity, to an institutional fragmentation that hinders its operationalization in concrete pedagogical practices.

Anzelin *et al.* (2025) documented this tension in Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador, revealing a growing awareness of the rights of diverse groups entering higher education, along with differing conceptualizations of inclusion across countries and institutions. They noted that significant

challenges persist regarding student retention, graduation rates, and employment opportunities. Becerra Sepúlveda (2021), in three Chilean private universities, found that the transition to an inclusive and intercultural approach is a project that is just beginning, and that a multicultural approach still predominates, complicating the development of institutional agreements. Arteaga-Alcívar *et al.* (2025), in a regional analysis focused on Ecuador, observed a significant gap between theory and practice in the implementation of inclusive education, despite advances in legal frameworks and policies. This discrepancy between normative discourse and pedagogical reality emerges as a constant throughout the corpus.

Inclusive pedagogical practices: vectors of innovation between teacher agency and structural barriers

The second analytical theme groups the documented pedagogical practices, organized according to the three vectors identified in the literature.

Curriculum accessibility and digital pedagogies

Authors such as Medina Vásquez *et al.* (2025), with 167 Peruvian university students, reported a strong and statistically significant correlation ($r=0.862$, $p<0.001$) between inclusive teaching competencies, operationalized according to the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in planning, pedagogical practice, and assessment, and active methodologies, particularly student-centered strategies, personalized learning, and global-intercultural integration. Cluster analysis revealed three distinct teacher profiles (high, moderate, and developing), identifying gaps in the integration of student-centered practices with the intercultural dimension.

Nolasco-Salcedo (2026), using a qualitative approach with 15 Latin American university professors, documented how faculty actively develop adaptive, justice-oriented approaches in hybrid learning environments, integrating gamified elements such as quizzes, point systems, and digital challenges to encourage participation. The study notes that these practices remain largely informal, unsystematized, and precariously sustained, highlighting faculty agency as a driver of inclusion in the face of insufficient institutional support. Otero Escobar *et al.* (2026), in a quantitative study at the Universidad Veracruzana (Mexico), identified a gap between faculty perceptions and student experiences, as well as barriers related to infrastructure, limited resources, a lack of Mexican Sign

Language (LSM) interpreters, and insufficient faculty training in inclusive strategies. They reported, however, institutional willingness and faculty commitment to improving their inclusion skills.

Latin American critical tradition: interculturality and inclusive internationalization

Researcher García Pérez (2026), using the case of the Autonomous Indigenous University of Mexico (UAIM) (8,725 students, 48 ethnic groups, and 9 languages at its Los Mochis campus), showed that while the institution strengthens human capital development in culturally complex contexts, challenges to student integration persist due to linguistic barriers, academic differences, and the absence of systematic inclusion programs. Gacel-Ávila (2022) analyzed the feasibility of transitioning to inclusive internationalization in Latin America and the Caribbean and found that this transformation could be highly complex for the region because, prior to the pandemic, its internationalization process lacked consolidation and institutionalization.

Support mechanisms: teacher training, tutoring and resilience

Jerez Yañez *et al.* (2025) systematized the Scholarship movement of This study examines the role of SoTL in Latin America, highlighting how institutions have adopted innovative practices such as teacher development programs, the integration of SoTL methodologies across various disciplines, and active student participation in pedagogical innovation. The study identifies challenges such as the cultural integration of SoTL concepts, heavy faculty workloads, a limited availability of interdisciplinary programs, and technological disparities. Rigo *et al.* (2024), the only scholar in the corpus to explicitly address resilience as a central category, investigated the effect of peer tutoring in a Statistics course in Argentina. The results demonstrate the importance of supporting students' progress throughout the course by fostering collaborative work with peers and developing the ability to cope with adverse situations in order to complete the course. This finding operationalizes resilience from a perspective closer to an individual attribute than to the systemic resilience proposed in the conceptual framework of this review.

Institutional factors: facilitators and barriers in implementation

The third objective of the review focused on identifying the factors that moderate the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices. Figure 3 summarizes the facilitators and recurring barriers identified in the corpus.

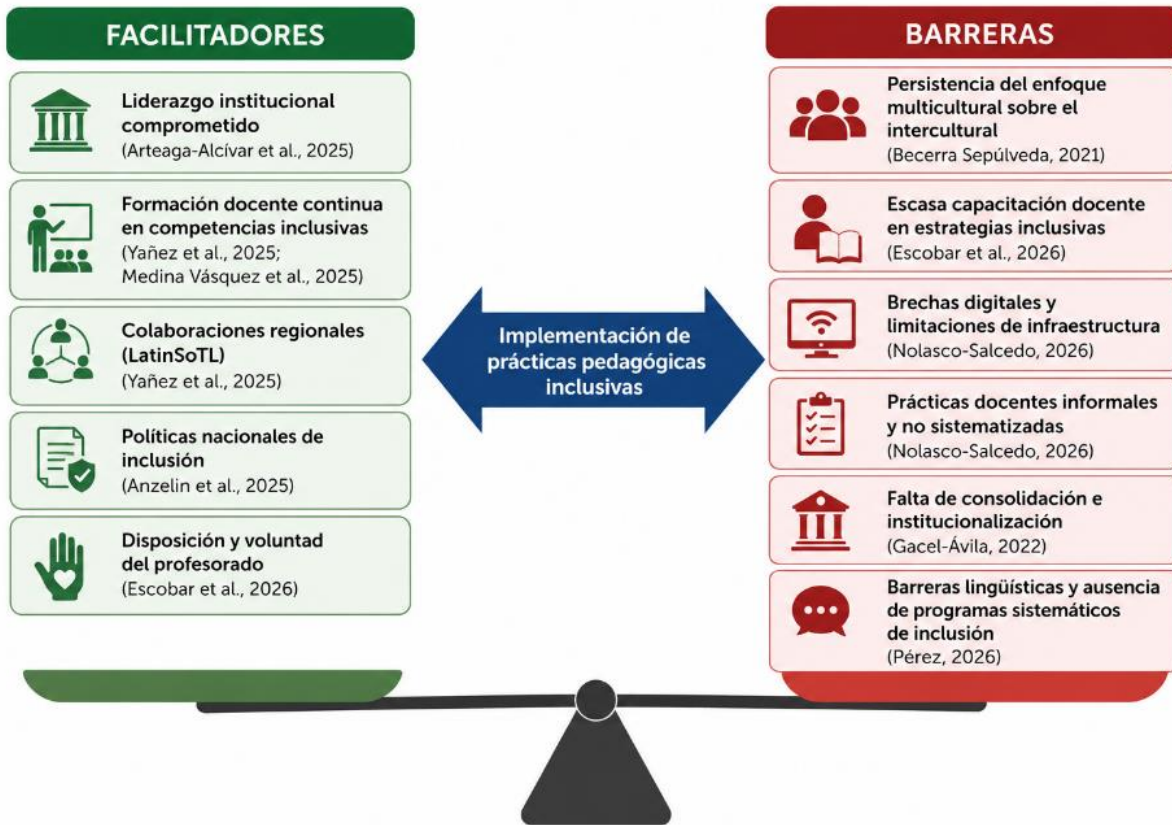


Figure 3. Facilitators and barriers in the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices in Latin American higher education

Source: Own elaboration based on the thematic synthesis of the corpus

Equity and resilience in literature: an asymmetric integration

A cross-cutting finding of the synthesis is the asymmetric integration of the dimensions of equity and resilience in the reviewed literature.

Equity, understood as fairness in access, participation, and educational outcomes, constitutes the dominant theme, being present as the main focus in eight of the ten studies. Its conceptualizations range from a rights-based approach (Anzelin *et al.*, 2025), a social justice approach (Nolasco-Salcedo, 2026) and an institutional capacity approach to reducing gaps (Medina Vásquez *et al.*, 2025).

Resilience, on the other hand, appears as a marginal category. Only Rigo *et al.* (2024) explicitly address it, conceptualizing it as statistical resilience, the capacity to cope with adverse situations in order to complete the course, in a sense closer to an individual attribute than to the systemic and institutional property proposed in the conceptual framework of this review. The other studies, while implicitly alluding to resilience through notions such as overcoming barriers or pedagogical continuity, do not incorporate it as an explicit analytical category, revealing a significant gap in the regional literature.

DISCUSSION

Contrast with existing literature

The findings of this review engage with the international and regional literature on inclusive teaching in higher education, both in their convergences and their specificities.

Convergences

The centrality of UDL as a framework for curricular accessibility, documented in our corpus by Medina Vásquez *et al.* (2025) and, from unsystematized practice, by Nolasco-Salcedo (2026), is consistent with international evidence. Recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of UDL and Universal Design for Instruction as strategies that increase student motivation, comprehension, and participation in inclusive higher education (Espada- Chavarria *et al.*, 2023). In the Latin American context, it has been noted that UDL faces specific opportunities and challenges regarding teacher training and curriculum adaptation in resource-limited environments (Cueva Cabrera *et al.*, 2024). A systematic review of inclusive pedagogies in higher education (2015–2025) identified UDL, active learning, and differentiated instruction as the predominant strategies at the classroom level, although it cautioned that systemic inclusion at the institutional level remains less developed (Sumonte-Rojas *et al.*, 2026). This convergence suggests that the gap between classroom practices and institutional policies is not unique to Latin America, but rather a global challenge.

In turn, the tension between institutional discourse and everyday pedagogical practice, evidenced in our corpus by the coexistence of formal inclusion policies with informal and unsystematized teaching practices (Nolasco-Salcedo, 2026; Becerra Sepúlveda, 2021), coincides with what has been reported in previous studies. The literature has indicated that teachers' competencies for inclusion remain

largely at the discursive level, without translating into concrete pedagogical implementations (Medina García *et al.*, 2021). This gap, identified by Ainscow (2020) as one of the main obstacles to educational equity, is confirmed in our corpus as a regional constant.

Divergences and specificities

Unlike the available systematic reviews, which are mostly concentrated in the Anglo-Saxon world or focused on sociodemographic variables of inclusion, our study reveals two Latin American specificities that previous literature had not clearly captured. The first is the vitality of the critical tradition as a distinct pedagogical vector. Studies such as those by García Pérez (2026) and Gacel-Ávila (2022) show that interculturality and inclusive internationalization are not mere adaptations of global frameworks, but rather responses rooted in the historical, cultural, and epistemic conditions of the region. As Romero-Contreras *et al.* (2024) argue, inclusion in Latin America cannot be understood without considering its sociocultural determinants and the persistence of forms of exclusion linked to Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural status. The second specificity is the role of teachers as a driving force for inclusion in the face of weak institutional support, as documented by Nolasco-Salcedo (2026) and Otero Escobar *et al.* (2026), which contrasts with Anglo-Saxon literature where the emphasis is more on institutional policies and quality assurance frameworks.

Resilience: a regional gap

The most striking finding of this review is the virtual absence of resilience as an explicit analytical category in the literature on inclusive didactics in Latin American higher education. Only Rigo *et al.* (2024) address it, and they do so from a perspective of individual resilience (statistical resilience). Systemic and institutional resilience, conceptualized by Ainscow (2020) as the capacity of universities to anticipate, adapt to, and transform themselves in the face of disruptions, does not appear in the corpus. This absence contrasts with the importance that post-pandemic literature has given to resilience in higher education. Ainscow himself (2020) warned that the pandemic had revealed the interdependence between equity and resilience, and the need for educational systems to develop institutional capacities to protect the most vulnerable groups from disruptions. Our finding suggests that this call has not yet permeated research on inclusive didactics in the region, which continues to operate under a paradigm of equity decoupled from resilience.

Interpretation of the findings

Why is the regional literature on inclusive pedagogy structured around three disconnected vectors? It is plausible to interpret this fragmentation as a reflection of the institutional stratification of Latin American higher education. Universities with a greater research orientation tend to adopt frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (a vector of curricular accessibility), while institutions with strong territorial and community ties, such as the Autonomous Indigenous University of Mexico, develop intercultural approaches (a vector of critical tradition).

Support mechanisms, for their part, appear as the most cross-cutting vector, precisely because they operate at the micro level (tutoring, teacher training) and do not require profound institutional transformations. This interpretation is consistent with the distinction proposed by Waitoller and King Thorius (2016) between first-order reforms, which are limited to adjustments within existing structures, and second-order reforms, which question and transform the structures themselves. The corpus of studies included suggests that Latin American inclusive pedagogy operates predominantly at the level of first-order reforms, with few experiences of structural transformation.

Regarding the asymmetry between equity and resilience, the omission of the latter as an analytical category could be attributed to two factors. On the one hand, the COVID-19 pandemic, despite having catalyzed pedagogical innovations, does not appear to have generated a body of empirical research on institutional resilience in inclusive education that has gained visibility in indexed literature during the period 2016–2026. On the other hand, the Latin American tradition of critical thought, heir to Freirean pedagogy, has tended to emphasize equity as structural social justice, to the detriment of categories such as resilience, which may be perceived as closer to discourses of individual adaptation to the *status quo*. This conceptual tension, however, is not irresolvable: Walker and Boni (2020), from a capabilities approach, offer a framework in which equity and resilience can be articulated without sacrificing epistemic justice.

Implications

Theoretical implications

This review makes three contributions to the field of inclusive pedagogy in higher education. First, it proposes a mapping of regional pedagogical trends organized into three vectors, which, without

claiming to be exhaustive, offers a heuristic framework for future research. Second, it highlights the need to theoretically integrate systemic resilience into inclusive pedagogy frameworks, overcoming the current conceptual asymmetry. Third, it recovers the specificity of the Latin American critical tradition as a distinct pedagogical vector that cannot be subsumed under the generic *inclusive pedagogy frameworks* prevalent in Anglo-Saxon literature. This finding is consistent with recent systematic reviews that have identified the need for multilevel approaches that align classroom practices, teacher development, curriculum coherence, and institutional policies (Sumonte-Rojas *et al.*, 2026).

Practical implications

The findings suggest at least three lines of action for Latin American universities. First, ongoing teacher training emerges as the most consistent facilitator across the corpus, especially when it integrates active methodologies with UDL principles and when it is supported by committed institutional leadership. A recent systematic review on the profile of the inclusive teacher in Latin America (2020–2025) concluded that, despite existing policies, deficiencies persist in teacher preparation to address student diversity, underscoring the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses both pedagogical training and attitudinal and contextual aspects (Rodríguez Ortiz *et al.*, 2025). Second, the systematization of informal inclusive practices, such as those documented by Nolasco-Salcedo (2026), could transform individual teacher agency into institutional capital. Third, the creation of systematic inclusion programs that transcend multicultural approaches and move towards interculturality, as suggested by García Pérez (2026), requires policies that promote intercultural dialogue and equitable participation.

Implications for regional education policy

In line with the 2030 Agenda and SDG 4, the findings reinforce the need for policies that go beyond formal access and address the pedagogical dimensions of inclusion. Evidence suggests that inclusion policies in Latin America have been more effective in expanding access than in transforming teaching practices (Salmi & D'Addio, 2021). To move toward inclusive pedagogy, investment is needed in ongoing teacher training, technological infrastructure that reduces the digital divide, and assessment systems that recognize and reward excellence in inclusive teaching. Regional collaboration, exemplified by initiatives such as LatinSoTL, offers a promising model for sharing practices and building capacity.

Agenda for future research

In addition to the methodological limitations already noted, the findings of this review allow us to identify five priority lines for future research, which are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Agenda for future research on inclusive didactics in Latin American higher education

Priority	Line of research	Emptiness that attends	Suggested design
High	Institutional resilience in inclusive education: the capacity of universities to anticipate and adapt to disruptions that threaten the educational continuity of vulnerable groups	Total absence in the corpus; only one study addresses resilience and does so as an individual attribute	Multiple case studies, longitudinal designs in post-crisis contexts
High	Coverage of underrepresented countries: Bolivia, Paraguay, Central America, the Caribbean and Portuguese-language production (Brazil)	Linguistic and geographical bias of the current corpus	Systematic reviews including Portuguese; multi-country studies with purposive sampling
Medium-High	Effectiveness of teacher training interventions that integrate UDL, active methodologies and an intercultural approach	Scattered and predominantly qualitative evidence	Quasi-experimental designs, longitudinal studies with control groups
Average	Artificial intelligence in critical digital pedagogies from a rights and equity approach	Only one study in the corpus addresses digital pedagogies; none examine AI	Participatory action research, case studies in hybrid environments
Average	Contextual mechanisms: what practices work, for whom, under what conditions, and through what processes	Predominance of descriptive studies that do not examine causal mechanisms	Realistic review, comparative studies with mechanism analysis

Source: Own elaboration

This systematic mapping reveals three tensions that define the field of inclusive didactics in Latin American higher education. First, regional production is articulated along three vectors (curricular accessibility, critical tradition, and support mechanisms) that rarely converge in integrated institutional designs, reflecting the stratification of university systems and the absence of policies that articulate inclusion as a structuring principle of the curriculum. Second, equity dominates research attention, while resilience is barely mentioned, despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted its relevance. Third, the gap between formal inclusion policies and informal classroom practices persists as a regional constant, moderated by institutional leadership, teacher training, and the digital divide.

Similarly, it is important to mention that the study contributes to the field by offering the first systematic pan-Latin American synthesis on inclusive didactics, equity, and resilience in higher education, and proposes a map of pedagogical vectors that can guide future research. The evidence gathered underscores the urgent need to move from formal access policies to inclusive didactic designs, from isolated teacher agency to systemic institutional strategies, and from a multicultural approach to transformative interculturality. In line with SDG 4, the region faces the challenge of transforming its higher education systems into spaces where equity and resilience are not merely rhetorical aspirations, but pedagogical principles effectively practiced.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the current review has four limitations. First, the exclusion of Portuguese as a search language may have underrepresented Brazilian scientific output, introducing a linguistic bias that limits the generalizability of the findings to Latin America as a whole. Second, the search strategy, which required the co-occurrence of terms related to inclusive didactics with terms related to equity or resilience, may have excluded relevant studies that address inclusive practices without explicitly stating these dimensions in the metadata, despite the safeguards implemented. Third, the number of studies ultimately included ($n=10$) is small, reflecting both the nascent nature of the field in the region and the specificity of the inclusion criteria applied; this suggests caution in generalizing the findings. Fourth, the concentration of studies in the 2025-2026 biennium (seven out of ten) suggests that research on inclusive didactics in Latin American higher education is an emerging field, whose more consolidated production may still be underway.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

Authors' contribution

The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.



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