How People with an intellectual disability experience inclusive third#level education: A scoping review

British Journal of Learning Disabilities

WILEY

ORIGINAL ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

How People With an Intellectual Disability Experience Inclusive Third-Level Education: A Scoping Review

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Received: 19 July 2024 | **Revised:** 12 October 2024 | **Accepted:** 15 October 2024

Funding: The authors received no specific funding for this work.

Keywords: experience | higher education | inclusion | intellectual disability | learning disability | postsecondary | third level education | university

ABSTRACT

Background: Third-level education is a relatively new opportunity for people with intellectual disabilities. The development of third-level educational opportunities for this population rests on understanding their experiences and suggestions for programme development and improvement. The aim of this study is to establish how inclusive third-level education is experienced by people with intellectual disabilities.

Method: A scoping review was conducted using Arksey and O'Malley's framework of peer-reviewed empirical research published between 2002 and 2023 that reported on the experience of third-level education for people with intellectual disabilities.

Findings: People with intellectual disabilities are engaging in third-level education courses within University Campuses. They consider such programmes as opportunities to meet aspirations and to enable independent living especially through employment. Their experiences are influenced by supportive staff, initiatives and challenges and they have opinions on how to improve third-level programmes.

Conclusions: People with intellectual disabilities value and embrace the opportunities to engage in third-level education. Their experience is mixed with positive personal outcomes and challenges. Future research is needed to examine effective approaches to overcoming challenges and finding ways to develop programmes that meet the needs of adults with intellectual disabilities.

1 | Introduction

Countries around the world are investing in strategies that champion equality, diversity and inclusion in third-level educational institutions. Since the 1970s, there has been a growing awareness of the need to provide educational opportunities at third level for people with intellectual disabilities, nonetheless the numbers remain low. For example, in Ireland, people with an intellectual disability account for only 0.4% ($n = 133$) of third-level education places (HRB 2021). Through pioneering work and legislation, people with intellectual disabilities have achieved and succeeded in third-level education. Policy documents such as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO 1994), Guidelines for Inclusion: Access for All (UNESCO 2005) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (United Nations 2006) were amongst the early catalysts initiating the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities. In Ireland, the ratification of the UNCRPD by the Government of Ireland (2018) and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015) are driving a rights-based approach to give voice to people with intellectual disability to make known their choices on matters impacting upon how they live their lives. With both

Summary

- The number of people studying in third-level colleges is increasing.
- This research looks at how people with intellectual disabilities experience third-level education.
- Going to college can help people reach their goals and find jobs.
- Third-level education helps people grow and develop personally.
- People with intellectual disabilities want more opportunities to go to college.

international and national legislation and policy countries are looking at how to include people with intellectual disability in the third level education system which was previously unattainable to them.

It is estimated that the global prevalence of intellectual disability is 2% and ranges from 0.33% to 2.42% of the population by country (Nair et al. 2022). In Ireland approximately 2% of the population have an intellectual disability (Central Statistics Office CSO 2023). An intellectual disability is a neurodevelopmental condition, characterised by significant impairments in intellectual functioning (reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgement, academic learning and/or experiential learning) and adaptive functioning (including communication, social skills, personal independence and/or school functioning) that occur during the developmental period of childhood or adolescence (Patel et al. 2020; Schalock, Luckasson, and Tassé 2021). Intellectual disability can be further categorised according to severity or IQ scale; mild (IQ of 50–55 to 70), moderate (IQ of 35–40 to 50-55), severe (IQ of 20–25 to 35–40) and profound (an IQ below 20–25) (American Psychiatric Association 2013). Given these defining characteristics people with intellectual disability encounter varying challenges when participating in their everyday life activities. Labelling a whole group of people as 'intellectual disability' has inherent dangers such as low expectations, over protection and exclusion. Therefore, it is important to be cognisant of the uniqueness of each individual irrespective of their disability and to avoid a 'one size fits all' approach (Werner and Abergel 2018).

Social inclusion is the opposite of social exclusion (Brown, Cobigo, and Taylor 2015) which results in feelings of social disintegration, victimization, partisanship, oppression, marginalisation and a suppression of rights (Van Wart, McIntyre, and Hall 2023). Social inclusion is not 'tokenism', it is more than just being present, it is a dynamic, complex and multifaceted concept, a series of complex interactions between environmental factors and an individual's personal characteristics resulting in opportunities for access, being valued, respected as a contributing member of society, with a supportive social network (Cobigo et al. 2012). Therefore, inclusion in the context of third level education means having equal access to all educational opportunities and resources, and being accepted as a competent person, trusted to make decisions, free to adopt social roles and/or belong to a social network. Inclusion is about societal structures supporting dignity, respect, meaningful participation, reciprocity and the feeling of belonging (Hall 2009; Brown, Cobigo, and Taylor 2015). An environment that supports inclusion within third level college campus communities fosters and promotes opportunities and challenges that support professional and individual growth (Smith 2014), having a positive impact on students with intellectual disability and the wider community (Griffin et al. 2012; Meyers and Lester 2016).

The concept of inclusive education in third level has grown substantially and third level education programmes aimed at people with intellectual disability have developed over the years and are generally structured using one of three models (Hart et al. 2006).

1. *Substantially separate model*: As the name suggests such programmes remain separate from the rest of the campus, they have a separate base with little to no mixing with nonintellectually disabled people.
2. *Mixed/hybrid model*: The programme and curriculum are separate from other campus programmes, but students have opportunities to mix with other nondisabled peers.
3. *Inclusive individual support model*: The programme is supported by the college structures where an individual with intellectual disability can pursue a programme or course of their preference attending non segregated lectures/activities.

There are wide variances in programmes from model of delivery, time span and award/credential. However, there is a general agreement that inclusive third level education for people with intellectual disability is advantageous and supports autonomy and independence (Grigal et al. 2021; Moore and Schelling 2015). With increased incentives at policy level and education providers mandated by law to assist people with intellectual disability access third level education there is a need to scope the literature to recognise the perspectives and experiences of individuals with intellectual disability in third level education. Therefore, it is timely to conduct a scoping review on the experience of inclusive third level education for people with intellectual disability.

2 | Methods

The aim of this review is to establish how people with intellectual disability experience inclusive third level education. This question was addressed by identifying the range and extent of international literature reporting the experiences of people with intellectual disability undertaking a third level college/university programme.

2.1 | Design

Scoping reviews are useful for answering broad questions or providing an overview of existing research and gathering information before conducting further research (Munn et al. 2018; Sucharew 2019). This scoping review adopted the

Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, enabling a thorough and systematic search of the literature to establish the full range and nature of published studies on the chosen topic. The framework involves a five-step interactive process: (1) identification of the research question, (2) identification of relevant studies, (3) study choice, (4) charting the data and (5) collating, summarising and communicating the outcomes. Each step was returned to and advanced during the review. The review's focus was to identify, map and chart the nature and extent of the literature, there was no attempt made to make judgement or draw conclusions on the quality of the literature as critical appraisal and risk of bias assessments are optional in scoping reviews. The review is reported in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews Checklist (Tricco et al. 2018). The protocol for this scoping review was registered on Open Science Framework (OSF) (Hennessy 2023) and data available on Figshare (Hennessy, Doody, and McMahon 2023).

2.2 | Search Strategy

The search process was piloted and agreed by all authors and in September 2023, a systematic search of five databases (Scopus, British Education Index, ERIC, Australian Education Index and SPORTDiscus) which are relevant to education was conducted using keyword search strings (Table 1). Each search/string utilised Boolean operators (OR/AND). In addition, hand searching of the reference lists (backward chaining) of included studies was conducted as databases may only yield 50% of eligible studies due to indexing and inconsistent search terminology (Whittemore and Knafl 2005).

2.3 | Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

All papers that met the inclusion criteria were included in the review. The inclusion criteria required studies to be published in English, peer-reviewed and to report primary research. Studies published between 2002 and 2023 were included to capture research conducted both before and following the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006. Eligible studies focusing on adults with intellectual disability who participated in third-level education, including those that capture the student experience either during the educational programme or after its completion. Studies were included if they focused on individuals with intellectual disabilities aged 18 and older. Studies were excluded if they were literature reviews, commentary papers, not published in English, did not address adults with intellectual disability or did not explore their experience of third level education. Additionally, studies that focused solely on intervention outcomes without referencing the student experience of individuals with intellectual disability were also excluded. Initial interrater agreement checks were conducted by paired reviewers to assess consistency in applying the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Where disagreement occurred, the paired reviewers met to discuss and form an agreement, and a third reviewer was available if a consensus could not be reached.

2.4 | Study Selection

All database searches results ($n = 1714$) were exported to Endnote and screened for duplicates ($n = 290$). The remaining papers ($n = 1424$) were screened at titles/abstracts stage using the inclusion exclusion criteria and resulted in the exclusion of $n = 1228$ papers. The remaining $n = 196$ papers underwent a full-text review and $n = 138$ papers were excluded. Leaving 58 studies for inclusion. Hand searching of the reference lists (backward chaining) produced $n = 12$ studies and these were included resulting in $n = 70$ papers being eligible for inclusion in the review. The search process is illustrated in a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram (Page et al. 2021) in Figure 1.

2.5 | Data Extraction

A data extraction table (Table 2) was developed to extract details relevant to the review aim. The extraction table was pilot tested using a sample of 25 studies. The pilot resulted in a more refined data extraction table, providing a framework to focus and structure the examination of papers according to the headings: Author, Year, Country, Study aim, Research Design, Participant detail, Participants experience, Programme details.

2.6 | Mapping the Data

The data from this scoping review is presented through narrative, and tables. To assist in mapping the data, a content analysis process was conducted by paired reviewers adopting Colorafi and Evans (2016) eight steps; (1) create a coding framework, (2) add codes and memos, (3) apply the first level of coding, (4) categorising codes and applying the second level of

TABLE 1 | Search strategy.

Search	Terms	Field
S1	"Intellectual disabilit*" OR mental retardation OR learning disabilit* OR developmental disabilit* OR intellectual and developmental disabilit*	Title OR abstract
S2	Higher education OR college OR university OR postsecondary OR postsecondary OR 3rd level OR third level OR third level	Title OR abstract
S3	Inclusi*OR participation OR involvement OR diversity OR presence	Title OR abstract
S4	S1 + S2 + S3	

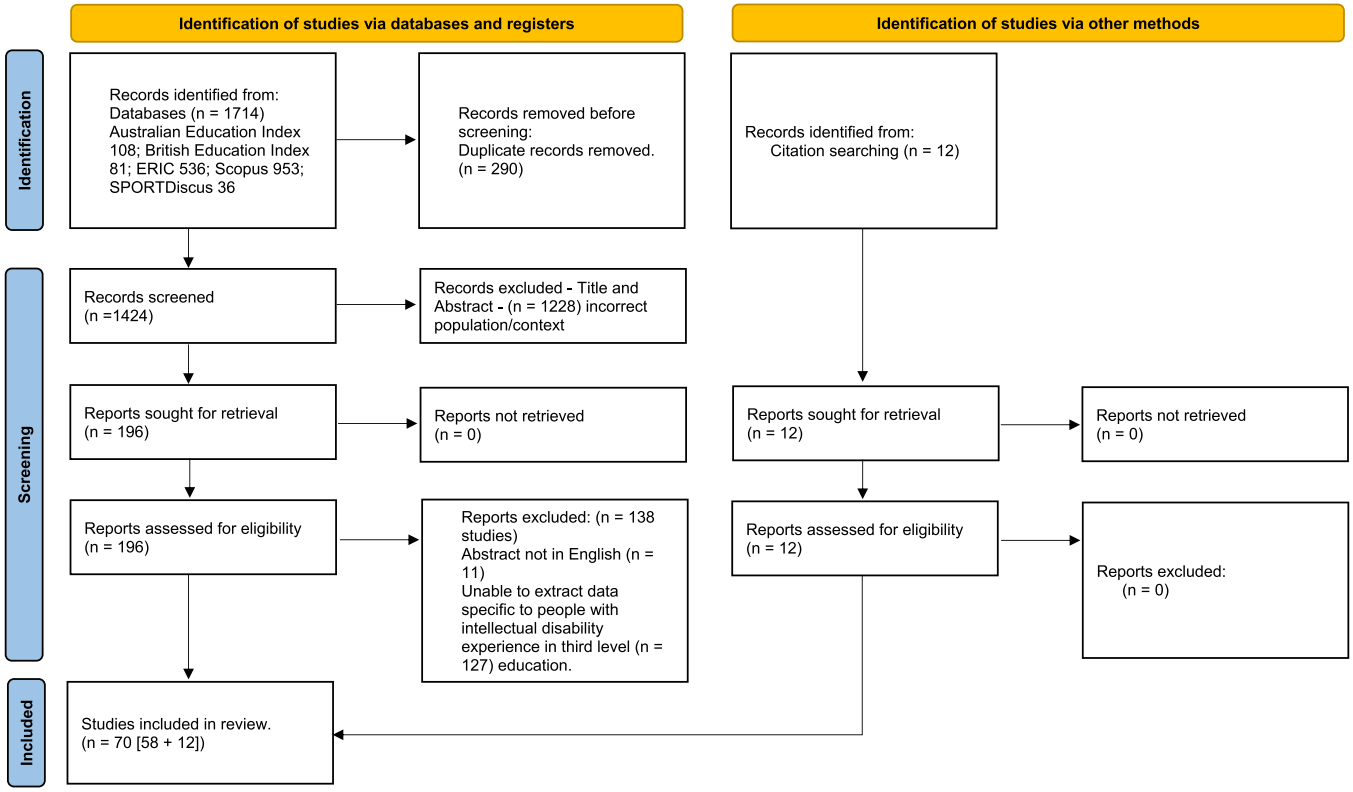

FIGURE 1 | PRISMA 2020 flow diagram. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

coding, (5) revise and redefine codes, (6) add memos, (7) visualise data and (8) represent the data.

2.7 | Arranging, Summarising and Communicating the Outcomes

Scoping reviews aim to map the concepts underpinning a research area, the findings of this review provide an overview of how inclusive third level education is experienced by people with intellectual disability. The reporting of the results is based on the researchers' analysis of the selected papers that met the review criteria. Data was summarised descriptively inline with the screening and data extraction table. Colorafi and Evans (2016) inductive approach was used to organise and summarise the results where similarities, and differences were identified relating to the experiences of people with intellectual disability engaged in third level education and resulted in the development of four themes. The results were discussed by all the authors who agreed on the final groupings of the results.

3 | Findings

A total of 70 papers were included in this review, resulting in the development of four themes; Opportunities; Personal development; Influencing factors and Improving the experience, Table 3 provides an illustration of the papers included in each theme. In describing the themes, the word 'college' is frequently used instead of 'third level'. The studies included spanned 10 countries with the United States contributing the most studies (Table 4). The methodologies of the studies are illustrated in Table 4, $n = 37$ papers were qualitative design, $n = 21$ used quantitative design and $n = 12$ was mixed method design. The age range of participants with intellectual disability ranged from 17 to 50 years of age and sample sizes ranged from 1 (Casale-Giannola and Kamens 2006) to 1145 (Hardman and Clark 2006). Of the studies included $n = 33$ described the programme(s) as inclusive or fully inclusive, $n = 10$ as mixed/hybrid and $n = 20$ studies did not provide detail and $n = 3$ studies were substantially separate model with the remaining studies ($n = 4$) included a mix of programme models. Programme duration ranged from 12 weeks (Rickson and Warren 2018) to 4 years (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021; Drew et al. 2023; Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; Love and Mock 2019; Madden, Carroll, and Schuler 2021; Papay et al. 2018; Schillaci et al. 2021; Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican 2021; Spruit and Carter 2021) with most programmes having a duration of 2 years. Only 27 studies identified the programme award students received, $n = 24$ certificate, $n = 2$ diploma level and $n = 1$ degree level. Out of the 70 studies only 12 listed the student residential status, with $n = 5$ living on campus, and $n = 7$ in student accommodation off campus.

3.1 | Opportunities

The theme 'Opportunities' describes what being in college means for people with intellectual disability, for example having purpose, setting goals, aspiring for the future and employment. Being in college was referred to as a personal ambition (Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), 'being out in the world' (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; Marder et al. 2017; Mock

TABLE 2 | Data extraction table.

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Belmonte Almagro and Bernárdez-Gómez (2021) Spain	To evaluation self-concept for people with intellectual disabilities	Qualitative phenomenological study utilising a SWOT analysis process with qualitative analysis	$N = 18$ (age range 18–30 years old)	Greater autonomy, developed relationships and felt greater social inclusion	We are all campus inclusive (but no clear explanation)
Berástegui et al. (2023) Spain	To describe the employability competencies and career trajectories following the completion of the programme	Quantitative prospective longitudinal design using an online questionnaire and statistical analysis conducted	$N = 217$ (current and past pupils)	Access to employment and higher competency levels	No data on inclusion, certificate of intellectual disability
Berg et al. (2017) United States of America	To explore the experiences of students with IDD and stakeholder perspectives of a postsecondary education programme	Qualitative exploratory case study using a demographic survey, semistructured interviews and content analysis conducted	$N = 10$ (average age of 21 years and 4 months, 60% female, 40% male)	Needed educating to know what supports to ask for. Limited awareness of their disability. Supports and services needed. Technology was a strength, tool and coping strategy in overcoming practical skills challenges. Only a few were comfortable disclosing their disability.	Comprehensive Transition Programmes, Hybrid and a certificate peers and peers with disabilities
Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh (2021) United States of America	To explore the social and academic inclusion of students with ID/DD on a programme	Qualitative phenomenological design using interviews and thematic analysis conducted	$N = 3$	It's good that you're not home that much Wanted to be a college student and wanted to attend university. Wanted socialisation. Friends mainly in the PSE group. Joy of independence and living on-campus. To get involved with what they liked and having choices. Some of my instructors don't understand where I come from. Stressed about the assignments and exams.	Fully inclusive, live on campus, 4-year programme and a nondegree programme
Butler et al. (2016) United States of America	To examine the life outcomes for individuals who have experienced higher education	Quantitative survey design using a questionnaire and statistical analysis conducted	$N = 19$	Employed in the community. Higher levels of exercise and overall health. Less psychotropic medication. Have friends to talk to or do things with.	College in Kentucky no detail
Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006) United States	To explore the impact of inclusion at a university on a student, her classmates and	Mixed methods utilising case study inquiry, field notes, observations, email	$N = 1$ (21-year-old woman with	Interaction with age-appropriate peers and was a positive learning experience. Challenges emerged	Private university, 4-year speech

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
	preservice teacher who offered peer support	communication, notes from phone conversations, progress meeting minutes, pre and post Likert survey. Qualitative analysis conducted no detail provided on survey analysis.	Down syndrome)	related to assessment, expectations, and building relationships.	communications course
Cook, Wilczenski, and Vanderberg (2017) United States of America	To explore learning outcomes for students enroled in an inclusive concurrent enrolment programme	Mixed methods sequential explanatory design using self-determination assessment and interview with statistical and content analysis conducted	$N = 9$ ($N = 6$ male, $N = 3$ female, age range 18–20 years old)	Growth in self-determination	Inclusive concurrent enrolment (ICE) programme; transition programme, fully inclusive
Corby, Taggart, and Cousins (2020) Ireland	To explore the lived experiences of people with intellectual disability in postsecondary and higher education	Qualitative phenomenology design using interviews and hermeneutic interpretive analysis conducted	$N = 27$ (female $N = 14$, male $N = 13$, age range 21–57 years old)	Want to go to college have employment and have job opportunities, qualification, be out in the world, to increase their independence, confidence and ultimately self-esteem be confident and made friends. Learning skills such as, money management, travel.	Hybrid, 2-year course full-time and part-time. FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) levels 2 and 3 with a certificate of attendance.
De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow (2021) Australia	To evaluate a pilot education-to-work programme for adults with Down syndrome	Mixed-methods formative evaluation using interviews and focus-group interviews and thematic analysis conducted	$N = 4$	Colour coding, step by step with pictures/words made learning easier, used, whiteboard and writing on paper/worksheets, learnt to read a timetable/schedule, did individual tasks and active work like packing, benefitted from the speech therapy sessions, enjoyed choir, walks, and games. Interacting built up confidence. Difficult to talk and explain ideas. Developed confidence, make friends. Willing to mix with other students and participate in organised activities.	Hybrid model, 2-year programme

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez (2021) Spain	To present a training programme for the employment and university inclusion of young people with intellectual disabilities	Mixed method using questionnaires and focus group interviews, conducted both qualitative and quantitative analysis no detail provided	$N = 66$ (56% female, 44% male, age range 19–30 years old)	Expectations re personal autonomy, employment opportunity. Made friendships throughout campus and were self-confident more autonomous. Enjoyed belonging to the university and being free to be themselves, learning to live on your own is very important. Wanted more freedom from family and more time in college (more years).	Hybrid model
Drew et al. (2023) United States of America	To analyse sexuality and relationship education in inclusive higher education	Quantitative survey design using questionnaire pre and post with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 7$ (female $n = 2$, male $n = 5$).	Significant increases in knowledge	Positive Choices comprehensive transition programme. Inclusive higher education programme, blended learning and a 2 or 4-year programme.
Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden (2012) United States of America	To describe the process of developing and piloting an inclusive postsecondary college model for students with ID and share the voices and experiences of participants, partners and staff	Mixed method descriptive report using field observations, reviews of existing records, structured interviews, focus groups and surveys with statistical and qualitative analysis	$N = 4$ (female $n = 2$, male $n = 2$, age range 18–19 years old)	New social environment, fresh chance to learn, get out of the house. Get to do different things a variety of experiences and opportunities, college help one to learn more, to reach one's potential, and to show other people what they could do. Act and view themselves differently, can do homework. Deciding to join the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) project was a bold act of self-determination.	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) project inclusive postsecondary college education transition programme, full inclusion
Francis, Reed, and Howard (2020) United States of America	To examine the perceptions of postsecondary education graduates	Qualitative phenomenology design using interviews with qualitative data analysis conducted	$N = 14$ (age range 19–25 years old)	Learnt goal setting, helped with problem solving and anxiety management. Received meaningful support from staff and parents. Want more independence and control over they decisions, be	Four different programmes, Comprehensive Transition Programme,

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
				trusted. They require more skills to live independent of their parents.	inclusive with 2 and 4 year programmes
García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez (2023) Spain.	To explore the expectations for personal development and decision-making of students with ID	Qualitative grounded theory and case study design using interviews and a biogram with grounded theory analysis conducted	$N = 28$ (female $N = 15$, male $N = 9$)	Want to develop the ability to make choices, experience autonomy achieve their own goals, to grow personally. Viewed training and work as development opportunities. Importance of personal relationships.	We are all Campus, hybrid model
Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra (2022) Australia	To explore the experiences of adults with ID after they completed an inclusive higher education university programme	Qualitative phenomenological design using interviews with thematically analysed conducted	$N = 6$ (female $N = 3$, male $N = 3$, age range 30–50 years old).	Participants developed lasting connections with mentors and staff but not with peers. Some participants accessed more opportunities, returned to study, increased topic-specific knowledge, and developed life skills. However, others faced challenges with transition from the programme.	Up the Hill Project (UTHP), inclusive 3-year programme with UTHP certificate of completion
Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta (2022) Australia	To explore the experiences of those who transitioned from face-to-face peer mentoring/ learning to online during COVID-19 and explore facilitators and barriers to successful online peer mentoring/learning for adults with ID at university	Qualitative descriptive design using interviews with thematic analysis conducted	$N = 2$	The online experience supported participants to develop new technology skills. However, challenges were that participants needed support, and missed face-to-face contact.	The Up the Hill Project (UTHP), inclusive 3-year programme with a UTHP certificate of completion
Hardman and Clark (2006) United States of America	To examine the characteristics and perspectives of college students and people with ID who participated in the Best Buddies College	Quantitative survey design using a questionnaire with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 1145$	Less enthusiastic than the college students regarding the overall impact of Best Buddies on their lives. Because of Best Buddies, they were more comfortable participating in social settings and in speaking up for themselves.	No details

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Hendrickson et al. (2015) United States of America	To compare the college experiences of first year students with and without ID	Quantitative survey design using a questionnaire with statistical analyses conducted	$N = 42$	Sense of self-efficacy, social, cultural and interpersonal competency, goal setting, problem ownership and problem solving, and managing personal, academic, and social concerns. Active and collaborative learning experiences. UI REACH students likely experience their first year at college/university similarly to their peers without ID.	UI REACH is a comprehensive, inclusive college experience, a 2-year programme with a certificate
Hendrickson et al. (2013) United States of America	To assess students' psychological well-being after a year in college and students' openness to diversity and response to diversity challenges	Quantitative survey design using measures (psychological well-being, openness to diversity/challenge) with statistical analysis	$N = 20$	UI-REACH and first-year college students are adjusting to college similarly on such dimensions as self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy	University of Iowa Realizing Educational and Career Hopes (UI REACH) is a comprehensive, inclusive college experience, a 2-year programme with a certificate
Jones and Goble (2012) United States of America	To examine what makes a mentoring programme effective and how the programme should evolve	Qualitative phenomenological case study design using focus group interviews with phenomenological analysis conducted	$N = 4$ (age range 19–21 years old)	Want independence and proud of achieving course work. Friends help with academic tasks.	Inclusive individual support model
Judge and Gasset (2015) Spain	To report outcome data for students with ID who completed a programme	Quantitative design using computer-assisted telephone interview with structured questionnaire, no analysis detail provided	$N = 60$	Gained the opportunity to increase their autonomy and self-confidence. Currently employed.	Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM)-Prodis Patronage Chair Programme, no detail on inclusion, 2 years (70 credits total programme with a certificate of Training for Employment Inclusion)

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
King et al. (2023) United States of America	To explore student experiences in their first semester living on a college campus	Qualitative phenomenological design using interviews and analysis not reported	$N = 6$ (female $n = 3$, male $n = 3$, ages range 18–24 years old)	It's important to go to college so I can gain experience for a career. Helped to make so many friends, independent living, gain independence and life skills. Described growth in self-knowledge, work/play balance. Learnt to understand self-learning how to better understand and help others.	Inclusive with residential accommodation and a 2-year programme (five semester)
Kleinert et al. (2012) United States of America	To describe the rationale for a programme and its scope and benefits to students and the community	Qualitative case study design using narrative analysis	$N = 2$ ($N = 1$ female, $N = 1$ male, age 21-year old)	Opportunities to meet new people, engage socially with other college students and be a valued contributing member of a group on campus. Wants employment and opportunities to make many friendships. Experienced increased determination developed business skills. Will succeed with the patience and help of friends, (supportive staff) and family.	Inclusive
Kubiak et al. (2021) Ireland	This paper presents a selection of voices from students which highlights their experiences of becoming both co-researchers and second language learners	Qualitative phenomenological design using focus groups with phenomenological analysis conducted	$N = 6$ (female $n = 3$, male $n = 3$, age range 18–24 years old)	The skill the co-researching process, and second language learning	The Arts, Science, and Inclusive Applied Practice (ASIAP) curriculum, no detail on inclusion, a 2-year programme Level 5 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications
Kubiak (2017) Ireland	To allow the 'voice' of people with ID to emerge so they can exert some control over the process, the outcomes and the dissemination of a research project	Qualitative phenomenological design using interviews with phenomenological analysis conducted	$N = 24$	Autonomy and engagement of college students with ID increased	No detail on inclusion with a certificate in contemporary living

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TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Kubiak (2015) Ireland	To explore how people with ID learn in one Irish college	Qualitative phenomenological design using visual (drawing) stimulus and interviews with analysed according to Marton's (1986) description of practice	$N = 18$ (female $N = 8$, male $N = 10$)	The learning experiences are complex and multifaceted as any other college student. A model that captures this learning is presented using four categories: The Cognitive Stages of Learning, Self-regulation of Learning, Learning as Collective Meaning Making and the Supportive Environment and Learning.	Mixed/hybrid' model with a certificate in contemporary living
Lawler, Joseph, and Greene (2018) United States of America	To evaluate the contribution of a postsecondary programme on the students with disabilities	Qualitative design using focus group interviews and analysed using the Mat Lab 7.10.0 Statistics Toolbox	$N = 13$	The contributions of academic identity, content learning of information systems technology and limited norms of sociability from the programme, as a foundation for opportunities in STEM for students	Inclusive (THINK model). Certificate noncredit nondegree programme.
Lee et al. (2021) United States of America	To examine four areas of student growth: Adaptive behaviours, self-determination, executive functioning and social skills	Quantitative longitudinal design using behaviour, self-determination executive function and social skills scales with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 30$ (age range 18–26 years old)	Students entering the programme tended to have more executive functioning challenges. First year of college increases in communication and socialization. No improvements in the domain of daily living skills observed until the second year of the programme. Student growth in self-determination (i.e. autonomy, self-regulation, self-realization) across the freshman year and onto second year. Observed improvements in the socialization domain of adaptive behaviour.	Next Steps programme, inclusive with a certificate of completion
Lifshitz (2023) Israel	To examine the influence of postsecondary education on the cognitive performance of adults with ID and their attitudes towards the programme	Mixed method design using questionnaire and interviews with quantitative analysis and content analysis	$N = 50$	Willing to continue learning even after 3 years. Students reached a level of functioning previously absent from their behavioural repertoire from both a cognitive and an emotional point of view. Improved their quality of life and helped them facilitate their human	Expose students with ID to typical development adults in class and during breaks. Once a week for 1 year programme.

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TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
				potential and achieve self-actualization. For the first time they were exposed to a high order of cognitive knowledge.	
Lifshitz, Meirovich, and Vakil (2023) Israel	To examine differences between adults with ID who participated in postsecondary education vs. adults with ID who did not participate	Quantitative follow-up study using intelligence measures (IQ, vocabulary and performance) with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 24$ (students with ID $N = 12$ and adults with ID non in the programme $N = 12$, female $N = 14$, male $N = 10$)	Only PSE students showed improvement in Full-scale IQ (FSIQ) score, verbal and performance to achieve academic goals	Postsecondary education (PSE) programmes Empowerment Project integrated three models of inclusion. Separate adapted enrichment model in first year, inclusive adapted requirements model in second year.
Lifshitz et al. (2018) Israel	To examine the attitudes towards the programme of students with ID in an inclusion model	Mixed method design using measures (intelligence, tests) and interviews with statistical and qualitative analysis conducted	$N = 31$	Higher motivation and self-determination, self-determined to continue in the programme from both a cognitive and emotional point of view. Facilitated their human potential and self-actualization. learning in undergraduate courses and achieving academic accomplishments. Fulfilling their esteem needs, the confidence in their abilities, and empowerment of their self-image.	Full inclusion model adapted enrichment model, Year 1: Model 1: Separate model—Adapted enrichment courses, year 2: Model 2: Full inclusion with support, work towards a degree award
Lindell, Daniels, and Michener (2021) United States of America	To explore the lived experience of college students with ID	Qualitative phenomenological design using interviews with phenomenological analysis conducted	$N = 6$ ($N = 4$ female, $N = 2$ male, age range 20–25 years old)	Improved independence, safety and belonging. Respondents used language that suggested that safety and belonging was foundational to their lived student experience.	BUILD programme is an inclusive model Residential programme. Two-year programme with an Applied Skills Certificate.

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Love and Mock (2019) United States of America	To describe the experiences of students with ID going to college	Qualitative action research design using iPads to record and take pictures and focus group interviews with qualitative analysis conducted	$N = 6$	Believed having physical access to the campus and opportunity to develop relationships with other people led to growth as adults. Students remained concerned about their ability to seek paid employment	Hybrid-model and programme between 2 and 4 years
Madden, Carroll, and Schuler (2021) United States of America	To study examines the science learning experiences of college students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in a postsecondary inclusive programme	Qualitative narrative design using interviews with qualitative analysis conducted	$N = 17$ (age range 19–25 years old)	Textbook reading frustrating, need clearer readings with highlight of important information. Be patient, students require assignment extended time. Use images and diagrams, send notes the night before class and provide handouts or modified readings, field trips.	The Career and Community Studies Programme (CCS) programme is a comprehensive transition/ postsecondary residential programme (4-year)
Maebara et al. (2022) Japan	To explore the experiences of people with ID on a programme	Quantitative survey design using pre and postquestionnaire with statistical and content analysis conducted	$N = 11$ ($N = 3$ female, $N = 8$ male)	Acquired new knowledge, changes in their perspectives on daily life and society. Expressed the need for continuous learning.	Lifelong Education Programme for Persons with Disabilities (AULEPP). No detail on inclusion, blended learning 1-h lectures twice monthly with an original participation certificate.
Manikas, Carter, and Bumble (2018) United States of America	To examine an inclusive community service project for college students with and without ID	Qualitative design using field notes and interviews with constant comparative analysis conducted	$N = 5$ (age range 18–26 years old)	Completing activities independently. Developed self-determination skills, led group exercises, and interacted. Formed relationships with new peers. Learned about differences and diversity and took on new service roles.	No detail on inclusion, 2-year programme
Marder et al. (2017)	No aim stated programme evaluation	Qualitative programme evaluation design using	No specifics (50–70	Made many friends, enjoyed being out in the community, not being	No details

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
United States of America		reflection forms, oral presentations, written evaluations and programme grading with thematic analysis conducted	participants with disabilities)	alone, not stuck at home. Increased feelings of social connectedness, making friends, knowledge of recreation and leisure opportunities, levels of self-esteem, confidence in advocating for themselves, positive attitude, and overall happiness.	
Mock and Love (2012) United States of America	To examine youths with ID, their families, universities, schools, agencies and funders perspectives in improving access to inclusive postsecondary education	Qualitative grounded theory design using research team member meeting notes. Four regionally based summits, stakeholders engaged in a series of structured conversations at individual level, small group and large group. Qualitative analysis conducted.	$N = 24$	Future goals: Employment, relationships and independent living. Exploration of careers through course work and internships. Equipped to make choices, made friends, treated like anyone else. Would like better communication with college, be the primary contact, have information earlier to better self-advocate for a college options, better preparation in high school. Have diverse options on campuses with access to courses. To receive a meaningful high diploma.	No details
Moore and Schelling (2015) United States of America	To explore graduates of a postsecondary education programme for individuals with ID employment outcomes and personal developments	Mixed method comparative case report using structured interview web-based survey, thematic analysis conducted and quantitative analysis	$N = 26$	Opportunity to earn a competitive job, a desire to improve social skills, to gain more independence and improve basic academic skills. Social interaction with other individuals with/without disabilities. Employment rates are high.	Two types of postsecondary education (PSE) programmes programmes for individuals with ID, (1) integrated programme and (2) specialised
Zimmerman Nilsson (2015) Sweden	To explore the interaction of students with ID with a group of Master of Education in music	Qualitative design using observation video-documented lessons, no detail on analysis provided	No details	To integrate two student groups in the same classroom at the same time, does not automatically lead to inclusion	A course especially designed for people with ID at the Music Academy
Oakes et al. (2022) United States of America	To examine campus recreation and sports experiences of students with IDD	Mixed method design using web-based survey and	$N = 33$ ($N = 11$ female, $N = 12$	Unified Sports participation opens pathways for students with IDD to participate in other campus	No inclusion detail on specific

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
		interviews with statistical and thematic analysis conducted	male, age range 19–34 years old)	recreation. Type 3 and type 2 universities reported better experiences within various types of campus recreation and sports programming and within the larger campus community.	programmes of the three colleges
O'Brien et al. (2009) Ireland	To investigate the experiences of students with ID gaining access into a university setting	Qualitative design using focus groups, questionnaires, photo voice and document analysis, thematic analysis was conducted	$N = 19$ (female $n = 13$, male $n = 6$, age range 19–48 years old)	Self-image: Saw themselves more alike than different to their peers. Student as a class member; student as a friend; student as a worker; student as a different person. Within the journey, students saw themselves as learning new things, gaining new friendships, and raising hopes for a different future. Learned how to travel independently, make new friends from other centres. Work placement led to being employed within the same organisation.	Mixed hybrid model, 2 years with a certificate in contemporary living
O'Rourke (2011) Australia	To capture inclusion within Belle's university	Qualitative case study design using field notes and interviews no analysis detail provided	$N = 1$	Described the experience as enjoyable, had a series of disputes with mentors and felt excluded	Not categorised but appears to be inclusive
Papay et al. (2018) United States of America	To describe and identify predictors of inclusive course enrolments	Quantitative design using the Think College Data Network, software Stata, version 15 was used to analyse the data	$N = 672$	80.7% courses were taken based on career goals and personal interest are important motivating factors	Think College Transition and Postsecondary Programmes for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID) model, inclusive and programmes range from 1 to 4 years
Parker and Schillaci (2018) United States of America	To examine the impact of college transitions on job seeking skills, career readiness,	Quantitative quasi-experimental design using measures (career construction, career maturity, self-	$N = 103$ (age range 18–22-year-old)	Increased self-determination broad and rich experience with opportunities to engage in academic classes, college social life,	Three colleges, Think College Transition (TCT),

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TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
	self-determination, college self-efficacy and employment	determination, self-efficacy) with statistical analysis conducted		institutional supports and employment with their same aged peers to increase their level of independence	inclusive dual enrolment
Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2018) United States of America	To monitor changes in independence for students with ID participating in an inclusive postsecondary education programme	Quantitative: Pre-postdesign using measures (independent behaviours, support intensity, weekly hours of support provided) with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 6$ (age range 19– 23 years old)	Students, living on college campus and participating in a PSE programme, learn to function in ways that reduce need for support without limiting participation in inclusive activities. Enjoyed living on campus and participating in a PSE programme.	Inclusive, residential accommodation, 2-year programme with a certificate
Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2016) United States of America	To analyse and interpret the daily reflections created by students with and without ID who participated in an inclusive study abroad trip	Qualitative grounded theory design using journal entries with qualitative analysis conducted	$N = 3$	Personal development, bonding/ social inclusion, and learning. Importance of mobility/ transportation and fun.	Study abroad programme. No inclusion detail.
Qian, Johnson, et al. (2018) United States of America	To identify predictors associated with paid employment outcomes for community and technical college students with ID	Quantitative design using the Think College Data Network, an online database, analysis conducted using SAS version 9.4	$N = 228$	Likely to earn at or above minimum wage during their most recent year in the programme. Students who only took inclusive classes, participated in campus events, had prior paid work experience, and participated in volunteering and/or community service	No inclusion detail, 2-year programme. Degree or certificate programme.
Qian, Clary, et al. (2018) United States of America	To explore student perceptions of how mentoring influenced their postsecondary education experiences	Qualitative phenomenological design using interviews with qualitative analysis	$N = 39$, ($N = 20$ female, $N = 19$ male, average age 21 years)	Improved academic achievement, increased academic motivation and engagement. Flexible meetings and open-door policy students could meet coaches without an appointment, development of a positive student-coach relationship.	Transition and postsecondary programmes for students with intellectual disabilities, inclusive
Rickson and Warren (2018) New Zealand	To determine how the course was perceived and valued by participants (enroled students, support staff for students with	Qualitative case study design using interviews with thematic analysis conducted	$N = 9$	Improved ability to tolerate unpredictability, to take on new roles, make choices and communicate preferences, increased	Specific (intention was for inclusion but became specific). Inclusion

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
	ID and research assistant), facilitators (registered music therapist and music specialist) and others who were closely associated with it (university staff involved with continuing education courses)			awareness of self and others through focused listening and musical interaction. Self-determination, setting goals, independence.	not classed in the article. Two hours per week for a 12-week course.
Rillotta et al. (2020) Australia	To explore the experiences of participating in an inclusive university programme for students with ID	Qualitative design using interviews with thematic analysis conducted	$N = 4$, ($N = 2$ female, $N = 2$ male, age range 19–41 years old with a mean age of 28 years)	Four major themes identified: Self-determination (e.g. self-confidence), social development (e.g. social networks), intellectual development (e.g. subject knowledge) and inclusive practices. Results emphasize the value of inclusive postsecondary education for students with ID	Up the Hill Project, inclusive 3-year programme with a certificate of recognition on completion of six academic semesters
Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia (2020) Spain	To explore students' perceptions of their training experience in an inclusive higher education course	Qualitative phenomenological design using focus group interviews with content analysis conducted	$N = 14$ ($N = 8$ female, $N = 6$ male, age range 22–44 years old)	Social inclusion, professional and personal development or self-esteem	People with intellectual disability for work, mixed model of inclusion. Two-year (120 credits) programme with a diploma for Training Young
Rose, Kelley, and Raxter (2021) United States of America	To examin the effect of PEERS for young adults with IDD enroled in an inclusive postsecondary education programme on a college campus	Quantitative quasi-experimental pretest–post-test design using measures (friendship, social skills, conversational skills) with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 10$ ($N = 4$ female, $N = 6$ male, age range 18–26 years old)	Showed increased social skill knowledge, friendship quality and conversational skills	The Programme for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS). Residential accommodation, 2-year programme with a certificate.
Ross et al. (2013) United States of America	To report employment and independent living outcomes of a programme	Quantitative survey design using a questionnaire with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 125$ ($N = 55$ female 44%,	Graduates of the programme had employment and independent living outcomes that exceeded rates	Taft College Transition to Independent Living

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
			$N = 70$ male 56%)	observed in the general population of persons with IDD	programme, inclusive with residential accommodation and certificate of completion
Ryan et al. (2019) United States of America	To determine the effectiveness of a mixed/hybrid postsecondary education programme on employment and independent living outcomes for individuals with ID	Quantitative survey design using a questionnaire with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 25$	Findings indicated 96% of students had at least one paid employment position after graduation, while the remaining 4% enroled in additional postsecondary education training	Mixed/hybrid, 2 years basic programme with an extended 2-year advanced programme
Ryan (2014) United States of America	To describe a programme and evaluation results	Mixed method design using a questionnaire and interviews with qualitative and quantitative analysis	$N = 12$ ($N = 6$ female, $N = 6$ male, age range 19–30 years old)	Increased ability navigating the campus independently. Successful academic inclusion because of mentor support. Matured, can handle stressful situations. Having people who care, a super great professor makes me happy and excited. Would like dormitory living experiences.	Think College TPSID project. Inclusive and a 12-credit certificate.
Saarinen, Jahnukainen, and Pirttimaa (2016) Canada	To describe the social networks of four young people with ID in supported adult education	Qualitative case study design using relationship maps and interviews with content analysis conducted	$N = 4$ ($N = 3$ female, $N = 1$ male, age range 17–35 years old)	Relationships with family members, other relatives and neighbours were close. One participant had a friend of her own age with no disabilities. The other three had varying, superficial peer relationships and friends of the family.	No details on inclusion
Sala-Bars et al. (2023) Spain	To explore the access of students with ID to higher education	Qualitative phenomenological design using interviews with qualitative analysis conducted	$N = 34$ ($N = 22$ female, $N = 12$ male, age range 18–30 years old with average age 20–22 years old)	Want to find a job to enable independent living, an education. Excited to go to a university, possibility of doing professional internships. Encouraged by family to do the course, family are happy.	Three programmes, inclusive and hybrid over 1–2 years

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Schillaci et al. (2021) United States of America	To explore college-based transition services' impact on self-determination for youth with IDD	Quantitative quasi-experimental pre-post design with statistical analysis	$N = 67$ (age range 18–21 years old)	A significant effect on students' scores of self-determinations at posttest	College-based transition services Think College Transition, inclusive college classes with college-aged peers, 2-year community college programme and 4-year universities programme
Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican (2021) United States of America	To describe how participants conceptualise belonging and the impact of inclusion	Qualitative design using interviews with thematic analysis	$N = 6$ (age range 18–26 years old)	Belonging is shaped by multiple factors rather than a singular experience. Individual experiences of belonging are made possible through shared space, shared experiences, shared understanding and shared interests. Social benefits were new friendships. Three areas of challenges were: content, personal factors and mentality	Postsecondary programme, inclusive 4-year programme with a certificate of completion
Sheppard-Jones et al. (2018) United States of America	To evaluation life outcomes of students who had attended at least two semesters in a higher education programme for students with ID	Quantitative survey design using a questionnaire and interview, analysis detail not available	$N = 19$	Better outcomes for young adults who participated in a postsecondary education programme compared to young adults who did not. 37% of the students were employed in the community.	Kentucky's five postsecondary programmes, inclusive
Shogren et al. (2018) United States of America	To explore students; experiences of a postsecondary programme	Quantitative study using theN CC for TPSID programmes database, scale Self-Determination, The Arc's Self-Determination Scale—Postsecondary Version (SDS-PV. Statistical analysis was conducted.	$N = 251$ ($N = 81$ female, $N = 170$ male, age range 17–42 years old)	Fifty-five percent of the students received accommodations from the programme staff, only 6% received accommodations from the disability services office, and only 8% received accommodations from both	Transition and postsecondary programmes for students with intellectual disabilities, inclusive

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Spassiani, Clince, and Ó Murchadha (2021) Ireland	To explore the learning experiences of students with ID learning Irish sign language in a university course for students with ID	Qualitative grounded theory design using focus group interviews with grounded theory analysis conducted	$N = 6$ ($N = 3$ female, $N = 3$ male)	Learning experience was challenging. Teaching style of the instructor was supportive, the instructor made herself available to support students over email. Having more people in class, makes it more interesting, and class fuller. OT students a source of peer support. Learning languages useful for travelling.	No inclusion detail. Fulltime 2-year programme.
Spassiani et al. (2017) Ireland	To explore students, experience of college	Qualitative participatory research design using photo voice and nominal group technique with qualitative analysis conducted	$N = 12$ ($N = 3$ men, $N = 9$ women, age range 19–39 years old with average age 26 years)	Liked socialising, graduating, learning, technology, sports and being healthy. Opportunities to learn new things and communication skills. Liked reading, supporting new people, pretty campus. Disliked: Study, examinations, road works, traffic, trains, ramps, getting up early, sports and birds. Supports needed: Classroom support; ramps, automatic doors and lifts; joining in sporting games; services; reception for information and help; signs and braille maps; emergency equipment and stations. Barriers: Hard to open doors, steps, stairs, things too high up, cobble stones, signs hard to read and going through the main gates.	No inclusion detail. Fulltime 2-year programme with a certificate.
Spruit and Carter (2021) United States of America	To examine the friendships and social networks of college students and alumni with IDD	Qualitative design using interviews with thematic analysis conducted	$N = 12$ ($N = 3$ female, $N = 9$ male)	Uni friendships provide emotional support, shared life experiences, large social networks average size of 27 members. Programme may be a catalyst for making friends. Learned new social skills and gained social confidence because of participating in the programme. Few friendships	Inclusive postsecondary education programme, 2-year expanded to a 4-year Certified Transition Programme

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TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
				originated within inclusive university courses (just 8 of 131).	
Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir (2016) Iceland	To explore how a programme could be improved and how students were supported academically and socially	Mixed method design using interviews, focus group interviews and employment outcomes with thematic analysis conducted	$N = 39$ ($N = 24$ female, $N = 15$ male, age range 23–42 years old)	The graduated students described increased social participation, knowledge and self-esteem	Inclusive, part time 2-year programme with a diploma 60 ECTS
Torres et al. (2023) United States of America	To examine the changes in self-determination levels of students with IDD during a programme	Quantitative longitudinal study design using a self-determination scale with statistical analysis conducted	$N = 23$ ($N = 10$ female 43.5%, $N = 13$ male 56.5%, age range 20–45 years old, mean age of 26.52 years old)	Increase in students' self-determination scores, exposed to learning opportunities and practice self-determination skills, which increased self-efficacy, making them more likely to continue to engage in self-determined behaviours even when confronted with barriers	Postsecondary education programme, inclusive with a certificate of completion
Wilson et al. (2012) Canada	To chronicle the experiences of two young adults during their university studies	Qualitative case study design using a story telling, questioning and scribing, no analysis detail available	$N = 2$ ($N = 1$ female, $N = 1$ male)	Increased knowledge of the world expanded vocabularies, new personal relationships, contacts and networks, personal identities, self-determination. Occurred through study, work, sports, artistic and social pursuits, employment. Developed job-related skills, independence, self-awareness, setting goals, making choices, solving problems, taking risks, accepting limitations, self-esteem, self-respect. Challenges: Navigating campus, access resources, developing time management skills, academic stress, relationships with academic tutors and classmates, coping with issues related to personal identity, living independently	Campus Life programme, inclusive and part-time

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TABLE 2 | (Continued)

References, country	Aim/focus	Research design	ID participants	Experience of persons with ID	Programme name/ details
Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu (2018) United States of America	To present inclusive employment outcomes of individuals with IDD who graduated from a postsecondary education programme	Mixed methods design using survey and interviews, no analysis detail provided	$N = 3$	Required supports: Assistive technologies, independent living skills training; training for managing stress and anxiety; mentoring and tutoring support. class learning helped on the job. Programme challenging, interesting, worthwhile. Challenges: Making new friends, navigating college/ station, managing money. Curriculum helped: Practicum placement, learning rights of people with disabilities, matching individual's interests with community resources, and documenting activities. Felt proud being in college. Initially anxious, shy, away from home for the first time, unsure of ability to pass. Result: More confident, use buses Future goals: Continue using the skills acquired to continue living independently.	Postsecondary access and training in human services (PATHS) programme programme postsecondary programme, fully inclusive two-semester programme with a certificate
Zimmerman Nilsson and Ericsson (2012) Sweden	To critically discuss the first collaboration between students with intellectual disabilities (SID) and the Academy of Music (AM) in Sweden	Qualitative ethnographic design using video observations with ethnographic analytical tools used	$N = 6$	The results show that the silenced discourse, the unspoken, is constructed from the fact that the students with disabilities both are insufficiently skilled for the task as leaders in rhythmics, and less skilled than the student teachers, students continue to question their own capability to lead the other group	Music course over one semester

TABLE 3 | Theme representation.

Opportunities	Berástegui, et al. (2023); Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh (2021); Butler et al. (2016); Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006); Corby, Taggart, and Cousins (2020); De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow (2021); Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez (2021); Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden (2012); Francis, Reed, and Howard (2020); García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez (2023); Jones and Goble (2012); Judge and Gasset (2015); King et al. (2023); Kleinert et al. (2012); Love and Mock (2019); Marder et al. (2017); Mock and Love (2012); Moore and Schelling (2015); Rickson and Warren (2018); Ryan (2014); Sala-Bars et al. (2023); Spassiani et al. (2017); Torres et al. (2023); Wilson et al. (2012); Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu (2018)
Personal development	Belmonte Almagro and Bernárdez-Gómez (2021); Berástegui, et al. (2023); Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh (2021); Butler et al. (2016); Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006); Cook, Wilczenski, and Vanderberg (2017); Corby, Taggart, and Cousins (2020); De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow (2021); Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez (2021); Drew et al. (2023); Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden (2012); García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez (2023); Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra (2022); Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta (2022); Hardman and Clark (2006): Hendrickson et al. (2015); Hendrickson et al. (2013); Jones and Goble (2012); Judge and Gasset (2015); King et al. (2023); Kleinert et al. (2012); Kubiak et al. (2021); Kubiak (2017); Lawler, Joseph, and Greene (2018); Lee et al. (2021); Lifshitz (2023); Lifshitz, Meirovich, and Vakil (2023); Lifshitz et al. (2018); Lindell, Daniels, and Michener (2021); Maebara et al. (2022); Manikas, Carter and Bumble (2018); Marder et al. (2017); Moore and Schelling (2015); O'Brien et al. (2009); Parker and Schillaci (2018); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2018); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2016); Qian, Johnson, et al. (2018); Qian, Clary, et al. (2018); Rickson and Warren (2018); Rillotta et al. (2020); Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia (2020); Rose, Kelley, and Raxter (2021); Ross et al. (2013); Ryan (2014); Ryan et al. (2019); Saarinen, Jahnukainen and Pirttimaa (2016); Schillaci et al. (2021); Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican (2021); Spassiani, Ó Murchadha, and Clince (2021); Spassiani et al. (2017); Spruit and Carter (2021); Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir (2016); Torres et al. (2023); Wilson et al. (2012); Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu (2018)
Influencing factors (on/of/or for what)	Berg et al. (2017); Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh (2021); Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006); Corby, Taggart, and Cousins (2020); De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow (2021); Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez (2021); Folk, Yamamoto and Stodden (2012); Francis, Reed, and Howard (2020); Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra (2022); Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta (2022); Hendrickson et al. (2015); Jones and Goble (2012); King et al. (2023); Kleinert et al. (2012); Kubiak (2015); Lee et al. (2021), Lifshitz (2023); Lifshitz et al. (2018); Lindell, Daniels, and Michener (2021); Love and Mock (2019); Madden, Carroll and Schuler (2021); Manikas, Carter, and Bumble (2018); Mock and Love (2012); Moore and Schelling (2015); Zimmerman Nilsson, (2015); Oakes et al. (2022); O'Brien et al. (2009); O'Rourke (2011); Papay et al. (2018); Parker and Schillaci (2018); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2018); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2016); Qian, Clary, et al. (2018); Rickson and Warren (2018); Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia (2020); Ross et al. (2013); Ryan (2014); Ryan et al. (2019); Sala-Bars et al. (2023); Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican (2021); Sheppard et al. (2018); Shogren et al. (2018); Spassiani, Clince, and Ó Murchadha (2021); Spassiani et al. (2017); Wilson et al. (2012); Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu (2018); Zimmerman Nilsson and Ericsson (2012)
Improving the experience	De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow (2021); Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez (2021); Francis, Reed, and Howard (2020); Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta (2022); King et al. (2023); Kubiak (2015); Lifshitz, Meirovich, and Vakil (2023); Madden, Carroll, and Schuler (2021); Maebara et al. (2022); Mock and Love (2012); Ryan (2014); Spassiani et al. (2017); Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu (2018)

and Love 2012) and not being at home (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021) having opportunities to mix with others (Casale-Giannola and Kamens 2006; Kleinert et al. 2012). If not in college some would be in centres, at home watching TV or sleeping (Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden 2012). Attending college was considered 'a gift' (Ryan 2014), having an opportunity to grow personally (García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez 2023) to learn (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden 2012; Mock and Love 2012; Moore and Schelling 2015; Spassiani et al. 2017;

TABLE 4 | Countries and methodology representation.

Countries of origin	
Country	**Study/paper**
United States ($n = 41$)	Berg et al. (2017); Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh (2021); Butler et al. (2016); Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006); Cook, Wilczenski, and Vanderberg (2017); Drew et al. (2023); Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden (2012); Francis, Reed, and Howard (2020); Hardman and Clark (2006); Hendrickson et al. (2015); Hendrickson et al. (2013); Jones and Goble (2012); King et al. (2023); Kleinert et al. (2012); Lawler, Joseph, and Greene (2018); Lee et al. (2021); Lindell, Daniels, and Michener (2021); Love and Mock (2019); Madden, Carroll, and Schuler (2021); Manikas, Carter, and Bumble (2018); Marder et al. (2017); Mock and Love (2012); Moore and Schelling (2015); Oakes et al. (2022); Papay et al. (2018); Parker and Schillaci (2018); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2018); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2016); Qian, Johnson, et al. (2018); Qian, Clary, et al. (2018); Rose, Kelley and Raxter (2021); Ross et al. (2013); Ryan et al. (2019); Ryan (2014); Schillaci et al. (2021); Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican (2021); Sheppard-Jones et al. (2018); Shogren et al. (2018); Spruit and Carter (2021); Torres et al. (2023); Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu (2018)
Ireland ($n = 7$)	Corby, Taggart, and Cousins (2020); Kubiak et al. (2021); Kubiak (2017); Kubiak (2015); O'Brien et al. (2009); Spassiani, Clince, and Ó Murchadha (2021); Spassiani et al. (2017)
Spain ($n = 7$)	Belmonte Almagro, and Bernárdez-Gómez (2021); Berástegui et al. (2023); Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez (2021); García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez (2023); Judge and Gasset (2015); Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia (2020); Sala-Bars et al. (2023)
Australia ($n = 5$)	De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow (2021); Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra (2022); Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta (2022); O'Rourke (2011); Rillotta et al. (2020)
Israel ($n = 3$)	Lifshitz (2023); Lifshitz, Meirovich, and Vakil (2023); Lifshitz et al. (2018)
Canada ($n = 2$)	Saarinen, Jahnukainen, and Pirttimaa (2016); Wilson et al. (2012)
Sweden ($n = 2$)	Zimmerman Nilsson, (2015); Zimmerman Nilsson and Ericsson (2012)
Iceland ($n = 1$)	Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir (2016)
Japan ($n = 1$)	Maebara et al. (2022)
New Zealand ($n = 1$)	Rickson and Warren (2018)
Methodologies used	
Design	**Study/paper**
Qualitative ($n = 37$)	Belmonte Almagro and Bernárdez-Gómez (2021); Berg et al. (2017); Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh (2021); Corby, Taggart, and Cousins (2020); Francis, Reed, and Howard (2020); García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez (2023); Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra (2022); Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta (2022); Jones and Goble (2012); King et al. (2023); Kleinert et al. (2012); Kubiak et al. (2021); Kubiak (2017); Kubiak (2015); Lawler, Joseph, and Greene (2018); Lindell, Daniels, and Michener (2021); Love and Mock (2019); Madden, Carroll, and Schuler (2021); Manikas, Carter, and Bumble (2018); Marder et al. (2017); Mock and Love (2012); Zimmerman Nilsson, (2015); O'Brien et al. (2009); O'Rourke (2011); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2016); Qian, Clary, et al. (2018); Rickson and Warren (2018); Rillotta et al. (2020); Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia (2020); Sala-Bars et al. (2023); Saarinen, Jahnukainen, and Pirttimaa (2016); Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican (2021); Spassiani, Clince, and Ó Murchadha (2021); Spassiani et al. (2017); Spruit and Carter (2021); Wilson et al. (2012); Zimmerman Nilsson and Ericsson (2012)
Quantitative ($n = 21$) 20	Berástegui et al. (2023); Butler et al. (2016); Drew et al. (2023); Hardman and Clark (2006); Hendrickson et al. (2015); Hendrickson et al. (2013); Judge and Gasset (2015); Lee et al. (2021); Lifshitz, Meirovich, and Vakil (2023); Maebara et al. (2022); Papay et al. (2018); Parker and Schillaci (2018); Prohn, Kelley, and Westling (2018); Qian, Johnson, et al. (2018); Rose, Kelley, and Raxter (2021); Ross et al. (2013); Ryan et al. (2019); Schillaci et al. (2021); Sheppard-Jones et al. (2018); Shogren et al. (2018); Torres et al. (2023)
Mixed methods ($n = 12$)	Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006); Cook, Wilczenski, and Vanderberg (2017); De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow (2021); Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez (2021); Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden (2012); Lifshitz (2023); Lifshitz et al. (2018); Moore and Schelling (2015); Oakes et al. (2022); Ryan (2014); Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir (2016); Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu (2018)

Torres et al. 2023), to improve social skills (Moore and Schelling 2015), to achieve (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; Rickson and Warren 2018), get involved in what they liked (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021), showing others what people with intellectual disability can achieve (Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden 2012; Kleinert et al. 2012) and making choices (García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez 2023; Torres et al. 2023). Students aspired to gaining independence (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; Jones and Goble 2012; Kleinert et al. 2012; Moore and Schelling 2015; Rickson and Warren 2018; Wilson et al. 2012), autonomy (Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez 2021; Judge and Gasset 2015) and self-confidence (Judge and Gasset 2015). College can give purpose and provides opportunities to set goals (Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018) and opportunities to achieve them (García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez 2023). College was seen as fresh start a gateway to employment (Berástegui et al 2023; Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez 2021; King et al. 2023; Mock and Love 2012; Sala-Bars et al. 2023; Wilson et al. 2012). People with intellectual disability wanted an opportunity to work and earn a decent wage (Butler et al. 2016; Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020). However, there were some who worried that there may not be employment opportunities at the end of their programme (Love and Mock 2019).

3.2 | Personal Development

The theme 'Personal Development' summarises how people with intellectual disability experienced personal growth because of engaging in third level education. Within this theme developing refers to interpersonal relations, personal growth and developing skills, knowledge and behaviours. Third level education provides social, and relationship benefits that are equally important for people with intellectual disability who often engage positively in social environments (Butler et al. 2016; Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; García-Candel, Belmonte, and Bernárdez-Gómez 2023; Kleinert et al. 2012; Moore and Schelling 2015; O'Brien et al. 2009; Rose, Kelley, and Raxter 2021; Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican 2021; Spruit and Carter 2021; Wilson et al. 2012), and able to integrate into communities (Judge and Gasset 2015). Being part of a college campus afforded students many opportunities to mix and form friendships (Butler et al. 2016; Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez 2021; Hardman and Clark 2006; King et al. 2023; Kleinert et al. 2012; Moore and Schelling 2015; O'Brien et al. 2009; Prohn, Kelley, and Westling 2016; Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican 2021; Spruit and Carter 2021; Wilson et al. 2012) and feel socially included (Belmonte Almagro and Bernárdez-Gómez 2021; Lindell, Daniels, and Michener 2021; Qian, Johnson, et al. 2018). While some students had friendships outside of the programme (Saarinen, Jahnukainen, and Pirttimaa 2016) most interactions and friendships were amongst students who had intellectual disability (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021; O'Brien et al. 2009), and staff (Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra 2022). Overall, students enjoyed the social aspect greatly and their confidence grew from being with people (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021). Yet, there was evidence to suggest that many of the friendships did not last beyond college (Rickson and Warren 2018).

Through the various programmes students developed and increased their skill and knowledge base (Drew et al. 2023; Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden 2012; Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra 2022; Kleinert et al. 2012; Lawler, Joseph, and Greene 2018; Qian, Clary, et al. 2018; Rickson and Warren 2018) and as a result they were able to develop new perspectives on life (Maebara et al. 2022; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), learnt 'to function in ways that reduced the need for support' (Prohn, Kelley, and Westling 2018), and could live independently (Judge and Gasset 2015; Lindell, Daniels, and Michener 2021). They learned life skills such as reading (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020), timetables (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021), taking the bus on their own (Rillotta et al. 2020; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), engaging with technology (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta 2022; Spassiani et al. 2017) money management (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020), research, a second language (Kubiak et al. 2021; Spassiani, Clince, and Ó Murchadha 2021) and developed a wider range of vocabulary that enabled their ability to engage in conversations (Casale-Giannola and Kamens 2006; De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; Rose, Kelley, and Raxter 2021; Spassiani et al. 2017) and express their opinions (Hardman and Clark 2006). Students experienced personal growth through college engagement and the subsequent acquisition of knowledge and skills (Lifshitz, Meirovich, and Vakil 2023), they became more independent and competent (Berástegui et al. 2023; Hendrickson et al. 2015; Kleinert et al. 2012; Kubiak 2017; Manikas, Carter, and Bumble 2018; Marder et al. 2017; Prohn, Kelley, and Westling 2018; Ross et al. 2013) and gained employment (Ross et al. 2013; Ryan et al. 2019). All of which contributed to students' increased sense of confidence (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez 2021), self-worth, self-awareness (Rickson and Warren 2018), self-esteem (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia 2020; Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir 2016; Wilson et al. 2012), autonomy (Belmonte Almagro and Bernárdez-Gómez 2021) and self-determination (Cook, Wilczenski, and Vanderberg 2017; Lee et al. 2021; Lifshitz et al. 2018; Marder et al. 2017; Parker and Schillaci 2018; Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia 2020; Schillaci et al. 2021; Torres et al. 2023). Maturity and confidence increased (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia 2020; Wilson et al. 2012; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018) as did students' ability to manage difficult situations (Hendrickson et al. 2015; Rickson and Warren 2018; Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia 2020; Ryan 2014) and expressed pride in their achievements (Jones and Goble 2012). The experience of adjusting was similar to nonintellectual disability students regarding life purpose, autonomy, mastery of environment (Hendrickson et al. 2013). People with intellectual disability saw themselves as more alike than different from their peers (O'Brien et al. 2009). The improvements were not just academic, cognitive and emotional (Lifshitz 2023), but included well-being/behavioural changes, levels of exercise increased, medication use reduced, and students felt healthier (Butler et al. 2016; Spassiani et al. 2017).

3.3 | Influencing Factors

This theme identified factors that influenced the student experience, the theme is described through the subthemes, (1)

factors that positively influenced the experience and (2) factors that challenged the experience.

Factors that supported the experience include programme supports, progression and personal factors. Physical access to the campus (Love and Mock 2019; Mock and Love 2012; Parker and Schillaci 2018), a feeling of belonging (Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez 2021; Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; King et al. 2023), shared space (Prohn, Kelley, and Westling 2016) and safety was fundamental to the education experience (Lindell, Daniels, and Michener 2021). A positive experience was achieved through good educational student life support structures (Hendrickson et al. 2015; Kubiak 2015; Shogren et al.2018) and friend support (Jones and Goble 2012; Kleinert et al. 2012). Programme staff are one of the main supports to students (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; King et al. 2023; Kleinert et al. 2012), and mentors being a key component to a successful student experience (O'Brien et al. 2009; Ryan 2014). Another important component was having a flexible, open door support approach (Qian, Clary, et al. 2018). Progression is important such as achieving academic accomplishments (Lifshitz et al. 2018) achieving goals (Papay et al. 2018; Rickson and Warren 2018; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), engaging in new roles (Manikas, Carter, and Bumble 2018), graduating (Spassiani et al. 2017; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018) and gaining employment (Moore and Schelling 2015; Ross et al. 2013; Ryan et al. 2019; Sheppard-Jones et al. 2018; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018). Living on campus was viewed favourably by students (Prohn, Kelley, and Westling 2018). Students are driven by a need to be like their siblings (King et al. 2023) and families were influential in encouraging and supporting students (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; Kleinert et al. 2012; Sala-Bars et al. 2023). Personal characteristics that positively impacted on the experience were having confidence in the staff, self-determination (Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden 2012), self-motivation (King et al. 2023), having patience (Kleinert et al. 2012) and having a sense of freedom (Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez 2021; Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh (2021) to engage in enjoyable activities (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021).

Factors that challenged the experience, describes the challenges encountered both at a personal and organisational level. Personal challenges (Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican 2021) were often related to anxiety (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021; Wilson et al. 2012; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), fear (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020), frustration (Madden, Carroll, and Schuler 2021), self-doubt (Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), exclusion (Zimmerman Nilsson, 2015; O'Rourke 2011) apprehension as a result of communication difficulties (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; King et al. 2023) for some they were anxious about meeting new people especially at the beginning of the programme (Casale-Giannola and Kamens 2006). Students expressed that they found it difficult to make relationships with lecturers and students (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; Zimmerman Nilsson and Ericsson 2012). Some people with intellectual disability had little awareness of their disability and were uncomfortable about disclosure (Berg et al. 2017). Upon programme commencement students had more executive functioning challenges such as difficulties with working memory and concentration compared to their peers without disabilities (Lee et al. 2021). Other difficulties students faced were getting up early (Spassiani et al. 2017), time management, campus orientation (Wilson et al. 2012), money management (Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018) and managing transport and access to college (Wilson et al. 2012; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018). Challenges associated with the programme related to instructor competence (Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia 2020) and staff having a poor understanding of people with intellectual disability (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021), policy level barriers relating to campus recreation and sports engagement (Oakes et al. 2022) and mobility environmental issues (Rodríguez Herrero, Izuzquiza Gasset, and Cabrera Garcia 2020; Spassiani et al. 2017). Students found the experience of attending college challenging (Spassiani, Clince, and Ó Murchadha 2021), often being their first exposure to third level academia (Lifshitz 2023). Difficulties were experienced in relation to transition (Gobec, Rillotta, and Raghavendra 2022) to assessment (Spassiani et al. 2017), content (Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican 2021), managing expectations and building relationships (Casale-Giannola and Kamens 2006; Wilson et al. 2012; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018) and online learning (Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta 2022).

3.4 | Improving the Experience

This theme describes opinions from people with intellectual disability on how to improve the experience of third level education. People with intellectual disability when engaging in third level education want to be trusted with personal decision making (Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez2021; Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; Kubiak 2015), and to be the primary contact (Mock and Love 2012) for correspondence. It is important for them to learn to live independently from their parents (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020). Mentoring and tutoring support is a vital component of any programme (Spassiani et al. 2017; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), and 'meaningful' parent support (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020). Programmes need to ensure that students are challenged (Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018) and equipped to identify their own needs and be able to identify and request resources/supports (Berg et al. 2017). Students suggested that programmes should offer the option of selecting modules to align with their interests and needs (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020; Mock and Love 2012). Additionally, students felt that they would have benefited from better preparation during secondary or high school education and recommended receiving programme details in advance to help with informed decision-making before starting their studies (Mock and Love 2012). Practical strategies to support learning were suggested such as colour coding, use of pictures, timely notes, handouts, memory aids (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021; Madden, Carroll, and Schuler 2021), highlight areas of importance and include clearer readings (Madden, Carroll, and Schuler 2021). Suggested programme activities were choir, walks and games (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021), goal setting, problem solving, stress and anxiety management training (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; Zhang, Grenwelge, and Petcu 2018), field trips (Madden, Carroll, and Schuler 2021) and skills training (e.g. money management, taking transportation training and cooking). Students expressed that they would like volunteering opportunities (King et al. 2023) and increased community engagement. For online programmes they require extra support, and they miss the contact with lecturers and other students (Gobec, Turnbull, and Rillotta 2022). Furthermore, students expressed a preference for

more years in college (Díaz-Jiménez, Terrón-Caro, and Yerga-Míguez 2021; Lifshitz 2023), opportunities for continuous learning (Maebara et al. 2022), a chance to live on campus (Ryan 2014) and that the campus environment should be accessible for example, ramps, signposting clear help points and so forth (Spassiani et al. 2017).

4 | Discussion

This scoping review sought to provide a comprehensive overview of how people with intellectual disability experience third level education within a college campus. Supporting inclusive education environments are important for people with intellectual disabilities who often experience social exclusion (van Asselt-Goverts, Embregts, and Hendriks 2015). Third level education offers opportunities to be active participants in society, connecting with others and developing positive social identities and skills to support independence (Chadwick and Fullwood 2018). Students were thankful for the variety of opportunities and experiences that allowed them to achieve an academic award (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020). They appreciated the opportunity to study in a third level college, and they flourished, enjoyed the experience of being part of a campus community and valued the friendships they made, even though such relationships may not last outside of college. Students identified the challenges they encountered and suggestions for an improved experience were evident throughout the review papers.

This review concurs with previous research that third level education is advantageous for people with intellectual disability. The experience enables networking, a means to achieve and realise ambitions. Students were thankful for the college experience and described it as the 'best gift I have had in my lifetime' (Ryan 2014), having a place in the world and different to 'day services' (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020). When colleges have the right structures and supports students with intellectual disability had similar experiences to their peers without intellectual disability (Hendrickson et al. 2015; Hendrickson et al. 2013; Carpenter 2023) and they were able to meet academic challenges and successfully complete programmes. They recognised that college provides opportunities to be part of something bigger where one can learn, share and grow (Carpenter 2023). Students enjoyed living on campus, being involved in campus activities, having choice, making friends (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021), having college roles that show they are valued (Manikas, Carter, and Bumble 2018; Rickson and Warren 2018) and being contributing members of the campus community for example becoming an advocate or supporting other students (Kleinert et al. 2012).

The experience was influenced to some extent by other people especially staff connected to the programme, parents and family. While the support of parents was important (Kleinert et al. 2012) students were glad of an opportunity to be independent of their parents (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020). Students were happy that their parents were proud of their achievements and for studying in a third level college (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020). Staff were supportive (Becht et al. 2020; Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020), inclusive, respectful, provided direction (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020) and offered emotional support (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; Kleinert et al. 2012), making students feel just like everyone else, as if they hadn't a disability (O'Brien et al. 2009).

When colleges have little awareness of disability and don't understand the need for supports and strategies to overcome the inherent challenges of disability, students with intellectual disability face issues related to 'diminishing autonomy, privacy and dignity' issues (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020). Students can find assessments challenging (Casale-Giannola and Kamens 2006), others found it difficult to express their ideas (De Souza and Vongalis-Macrow 2021). The 2012 study conducted by Wilson et al. identified several other challenges encountered by intellectual disability students such as navigating the campus, accessing campus resources, time management skills, managing academic stress, developing relationships with academic staff and peers, developing friendships, coping with personal identity issues and living independently. Zimmerman Nilsson (2015) observed that students with intellectual disability can be treated differently and excluded if the right conditions are not in place. Often it takes just getting to know people with disability to breakdown ableist and stereotypes attitudes (Carpenter 2023; Beunza-García et al. 2023). It is equally as important to provide staff with training and support to be able to work effectively with this population of students. Education can address stereotypical attitudes and address issues such as low expectations and lack of appropriate supports that contribute to the difficulties and challenges people with intellectual disability face when accessing and engaging in third level education (Doyle, Mc Guckin, and Shevlin 2017; Moriña, Perera, and Carballo et al., 2020).

In the studies included in this review, adults with intellectual disabilities received mainly certificate awards some of which were attendance certificates. Only one programme was awarded at degree level (Lifshitz et al. 2018), there was little evidence of clear progression pathways for students to progress their studies. Each individual student experiences inclusion differently (Gilson et al. 2020) however, once students become established, they can feel a sense of belonging and achievement incentivising a wish to engage in further third level education (Becht et al. 2020). Students attend third level education with the belief that they will gain employment (Corby, Taggart, and Cousins 2020). Having an employment component to programmes can enhance students' opportunities to gain employment after they complete their education (Berástegui, et al. 2023). Matching students to programmes that will facilitate their needs and ambitions are important, third level institutions need to be cognisant of this and develop programmes that have clear outcomes, are student focused and provide meaningful qualifications.

From this review it is evident that when students with an intellectual disability become confident, and secure they want more autonomy (Hendrickson et al. 2013; Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020) and independence (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020; Moore and Schelling 2015). Students made suggestions for improved college experience such as wanting their parents and course facilitators to trust them more (Francis, Reed, and Howard 2020). Technology support (Berg et al. 2017)

and having access to the campus was important to their personal development (Love and Mock 2019). Others sought increased social engagement and living on campus opportunities (Ryan 2014). Mobility/transport was also considered an important consideration (Prohn, Kelley, and Westling 2016). Programme and academic staff play a fundamental role to a successful student experience, providing support, planning and accessible programme content (Smith and Myers 2024). To create a sense of belonging it is necessary to have; shared space, shared experiences, shared understanding and shared interest (Schroeder, Carter, and Simplican 2021) and it is important to include fun activities (Prohn, Kelley, and Westling 2016). Strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) when successfully implemented are valuable resources for faculty, such resources support good student engagement and support programme content planning and evaluation (Watts and McKenna 2022), addressing challenges of instruction, and content accessible and assessment and engagement opportunities for students. Scheef, Hollingshead, and Barrio (2020) recommend for instructors' ways to increase learning and address the difficulties students face, the recommendations include adopting flexible teaching strategies, enlisting peer support, make curricular connections, having discussion entry points and consider grading alternatives. Watts, Davis, and López (2023) suggests that direct communication between lecturers and students promotes more effective teaching and a better student experience.

As noted in this review peer/mentor supports are especially helpful in promoting the development of social skills, creating a sense of belonging, student engagement, and learning (Gibbons et al. 2018; Jones and Goble 2012; Watts and McKenna 2022). Peer mentoring is successful in supporting students with intellectual disability to achieve academic success, employment and personal goals (Heron, Agarwal, and Burke 2023), to feel connected and to practice ways of interacting in a new environment (Watts, Davis, and López 2023). Peer support is a key programme component and when developing a programme at third level one of the first tasks is to identify a peer support model (Ryan 2014; Freedman, Lackey, and Becht 2022).

Commencing college can be stressful (Crack and Doyle-Baker 2022) due to daily academic and personal challenges, people with intellectual disability often find change difficult (Hsieh, Scott, and Murthy 2020). Like many students, before commencing college some students in this review were shy and unsure of themselves, they questioned their ability to thrive, make friends and succeed. Even though many students are aware that their programme is tailored to their strengths some have little understanding of the true purpose of the programme (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021) or their need for supports (Berg et al. 2017), and it can take time to engage into the learning environment (Brewer and Movahedazarhouligh 2021). It is well documented that people with intellectual disability experience higher rates of anxiety than their peers without intellectual disability (Reardon, Gray, and Melvin 2015; Hsieh, Scott, and Murthy 2020; Hofmann 2023). If a student's stress and anxiety is not addressed, student mental health, relationships and academic success are negatively impacted (Hofmann 2023; Pascoe et al. 2020). From the review it is evident that students are aware of this barrier to academic success, and they would like to see the inclusion of stress and anxiety management in their programmes of study. It is crucial to acknowledge the impact of stress and implement support systems and strategies to better manage interpersonal stressors (Hsieh, Scott, and Murthy 2020). For example, transition programmes, mentorship support (Watts and McKenna 2022) and the creation of inclusive and equitable learning environments (Hsu and Goldsmith 2021). Additionally, training programmes for faculty and staff on awareness and inclusive teaching methods (Jones et al. 2022; Watts et al. 2024; Burgin et al. 2017; Jones et al. 2016; Moriña, Perera, and Carballo 2020) can make a significant difference to the student experience. Equipping students with the skills to seek well-being support (Douwes et al. 2023) and incorporating enjoyable activities into programmes, as highlighted in this review, are also essential for fostering a supportive environment.

There is much debate about inclusion versus segregated education for people with intellectual disability (Hornby and Kauffman 2024). Despite moves to create inclusive education for children and young adults with intellectual disability in mainstream education most receive their education in some form of segregated setting either a segregated classroom or school (Agran et al. 2020; Murphy et al. 2023). Many do not receive career guidance and are usually not aware of the availability of postsecondary education programmes (Mock and Love 2012; Sheppard-Jones et al. 2015). It is worth noting that when a person with intellectual disability finishes secondary school education, they may have never used public transport on their own or engaged independently in other activities most adults take for granted (Merrells, Buchanan, and Waters 2019; Wilson et al. 2017). Before attending third level education or other courses/employment it is necessary to develop career and education pathways for students which would provide them with options to achieve personal goals and alleviate any uncertainty they may have. To support the decision-making process prospective students would benefit from the provision of clear and accessible information on the application process and on what they can expect (Stinnett, Lazo, and Pound 2023). Irrespective of the level of inclusion third level programmes need to meet the needs of each individual student (Watts, Davis, and López 2023). Such programmes need to be developed within context and planned for success and sustainability. The fully inclusion model is desirable and achievable however the other models of delivery have their merits and can be used as stepping blocks in the person's education journey.

The evidence from this review highlights a growing interest in supporting people with intellectual disability to attend third level education. In the United States, there is a well-established tradition in providing third level education for people with intellectual disability, they have moved from more segregated models towards fully inclusive programmes where the student with intellectual disability is immersed into campus life without barriers. Other counties such as Ireland are increasingly adopting the initiatives and structures pioneered in America. Such growth is influenced by the introduction of legislation and provision of funding. The majority of programmes in this review were described as inclusive followed by mixed/hybrid model programmes. However, a substantial proportion of studies provided very little programme context description. The

absence of accurate description makes it difficult to compare programmes and hence possibly making progress in education provision that bit more difficult (Strnadová et al. 2023). There is a growing body of research in this area however, Brady (2021), likens the development of such programmes and research to a metaphor of building an aircraft while in flight. As evidenced in this review the research supporting third level education for people with intellectual consists of a wide variety of research design, collection and analysis methods. Researchers need to be cognisant of the need to provide accurate contextual information for example, programme models, participants, awards, duration, student progress, assessment (Becht et al. 2020; Serrano Fernández and Viguera Monje 2024). For sustainable growth the establishment of a framework or agenda to inform and develop policy, legislation, practice and future research and research funding needs to be considered (Brady 2021).

5 | Conclusions

While more and more third level institutions are opening their doors to people with intellectual disability the numbers remain small, however, demand continues to grow (Carpenter 2023). It is vital that third level opportunities are supportive and student-centred, providing meaningful qualifications that will support people with intellectual disability to live independent lives (Watts, Davis, and López 2023). People with intellectual disability carry a label that contributes to segregation and is associated with lower expectations and reduced opportunities. By providing people with an intellectual disability educational opportunities to develop their knowledge, and skills they can realise their aspirations and full potential as adults. Third level educational institutions are well placed to provide challenging, inclusive education programmes for people with intellectual disability that will afford them purpose and opportunities. Up to this point, much of the PSE development has not been informed by people with intellectual disability and it is clear from this review that they appreciate the opportunities, they know what they want and they have opinions on how to tailor programmes to meet their needs. If future development is to be successful and sustainable there needs to be a more structured framework to guide policy, legislation, research and development.

Author Contributions

Therese Hennessy, Jennifer McMahon and Owen Doody made substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data or analysis and interpretation of data. Therese Hennessy, Jennifer McMahon and Owen Doody were involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content. Therese Hennessy, Jennifer McMahon and Owen Doody given final approval of the version to be published. Each author participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content. Therese Hennessy, Jennifer McMahon and Owen Doody agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work was appropriately investigated and resolved.

Acknowledgements

Open access funding provided by IReL.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available on figshare at https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.24201441.v1, and data related to analysis are all published sources.

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