



BEYOND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: UTILIZING AI-GENERATED SOCIAL NARRATIVES TO ENHANCE THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract:

Despite the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications in education, mainstream research remains heavily skewed toward academic achievement, curriculum accessibility, and personalized instruction. Consequently, the social dimension of inclusion—specifically peer acceptance, social interaction, and a student's sense of belonging—has been systematically neglected. To address this critical gap, this conceptual paper proposes a multidimensional theoretical framework illustrating how AI-generated social narratives can function as a pedagogical mechanism to support the social inclusion of elementary school students with disabilities. Grounded in a synthesis of complementary theoretical perspectives, including the Need to Belong Theory, Social Identity Theory, Contact Theory, Narrative Transportation Theory, and Recognition Theory, the framework delineates three distinct yet interrelated pathways to social inclusion: (a) a direct pathway linking narrative-induced perspective-taking and empathy to peer acceptance, (b) an indirect pathway operating through the cultivation of a supportive and inclusive classroom climate, and (c) a symbolic pathway achieved through representation, visibility, and validation of diverse identities. Furthermore, the paper critically contrasts AI-generated narratives with traditional social stories, highlighting the transformative potential of generative AI in terms of real-time personalization, adaptive responsiveness, contextual immediacy, and student co-construction. Finally, a roadmap for future empirical and longitudinal research is outlined, focusing on the verification of the proposed pathways, ethical safeguards, and the role of human oversight. Ultimately, the framework shifts the evaluation of educational AI beyond learning outcomes toward fostering authentic belonging within inclusive school communities.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, inclusive education, social narratives

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1. Introduction

Despite the rapid growth of research investigating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, the majority of existing studies have primarily focused on academic achievement, learning performance, accessibility, adaptive instruction, and teachers' perceptions of technology adoption. Systematic reviews consistently indicate that researchers have largely examined how AI can improve learning outcomes, personalize instruction, facilitate assessment, and support accessibility for students with disabilities. Comparatively little attention has been given to the social outcomes of inclusion, despite their central importance within inclusive education (Li *et al.*, 2025; Melo-López *et al.*, 2025; Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026). This imbalance is particularly noteworthy because inclusive education extends far beyond academic participation (UNESCO, 2020). Contemporary conceptualizations of inclusion emphasize not only access to learning opportunities but also active participation, social interaction, acceptance, and belonging within the school community (Ainscow, 2020; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). According to inclusive education frameworks, successful inclusion cannot be measured exclusively through academic achievement; it must also consider whether students with disabilities are accepted by their peers, develop friendships, and experience a sense of belonging in the classroom (Melo-López *et al.*, 2025; Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026).

However, students with disabilities are consistently reported to have fewer friendships and are at greater risk of social exclusion and loneliness than their typically developing peers (Schwab *et al.*, 2021; Vyrastekova, 2021). Research within inclusive education consistently identifies playground participation as one of the most sensitive indicators of social inclusion (Wenger *et al.*, 2021; Yildirim *et al.*, 2022). Recess and play activities provide natural opportunities for friendship formation, cooperation, communication, and peer acceptance (Wenger *et al.*, 2021). Another neglected dimension concerns students' sense of belonging. Within educational settings, students' perceptions of acceptance and social connectedness represent not merely desirable outcomes but essential psychological needs that influence well-being, engagement, and participation. Contemporary models of inclusive education emphasize that students should not simply be present in mainstream classrooms but should experience themselves as valued and accepted members of the school community (Florian, 2014; Norwich, 2013; Schwab, 2018). The sense of belonging has been associated with numerous positive outcomes, including academic engagement, psychological well-being, school satisfaction, motivation, and resilience (Allen & Kern, 2017; Au *et al.*, 2023).

A notable gap in the emerging literature on AI in inclusive education concerns the social outcomes associated with AI-supported interventions. While research has largely concentrated on evaluating academic performance, accessibility, personalization, and the usability of AI-enabled tools, considerably less attention has been paid to students' social experiences, and the potential impact of AI on interpersonal relationships remains insufficient (Dumitru *et al.*, 2026; Li *et al.*, 2025). Consequently, important questions remain regarding whether AI-supported interventions can influence classmates' attitudes

toward disability, promote peer acceptance, increase willingness to interact with students with disabilities, and foster more inclusive patterns of social participation within mainstream classrooms (Dumitru *et al.*, 2026; Li *et al.*, 2025; Paglialunga & Melogno, 2025). Much of the existing literature implicitly assumes that improving access to learning will automatically generate broader inclusive benefits (Dalgaard *et al.*, 2022). Students with disabilities may access curriculum content successfully through AI-supported technologies while continuing to encounter significant barriers in peer relationships and social participation. Therefore, evaluations of AI-supported inclusion should move beyond traditional academic indicators and incorporate social measures capable of capturing meaningful changes in students' interactions and experiences within school communities (Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026). The present study responds directly to this gap by focusing on the social dimensions of inclusion rather than exclusively on academic outcomes. Through the use of AI-generated social narratives, we seek to promote disability awareness, empathy, peer acceptance, friendship formation, and a sense of belonging among elementary school students.

2. Theoretical Foundations of AI-Supported Social Inclusion

The proposed framework is grounded in several complementary theoretical perspectives that help explain how AI-generated social narratives may contribute to peer acceptance and students' sense of belonging in inclusive educational settings. Specifically, Need to Belong Theory, Social Identity Theory, Contact Theory, Narrative Transportation Theory, and Recognition Theory collectively provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the mechanisms through which AI-supported narratives may facilitate social inclusion. According to Baumeister and Leary's (1995) Need to Belong Theory, the desire to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships represents a fundamental human motivation. Within educational contexts, students' sense of belonging reflects the extent to which they perceive themselves as accepted, valued, and connected members of the school community (Goodenow, 1993; Osterman, 2000). Inclusive education scholars similarly argue that belonging should be considered a fundamental educational outcome (Allen *et al.*, 2018; Korpershoek *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, belonging constitutes an appropriate and theoretically meaningful outcome through which to evaluate the social impact of AI-supported inclusive interventions. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides a second important foundation for understanding social inclusion. Positive social identities develop when individuals perceive themselves as accepted and valued members of those groups. Within inclusive educational settings, students with disabilities may be vulnerable to processes of social categorization that differentiate them from their typically developing peers. Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) proposes that meaningful interactions between members of different social groups can reduce prejudice and promote more positive attitudes. Although direct interpersonal contact remains important, subsequent developments of the theory have demonstrated that indirect forms of contact can also produce positive attitudinal outcomes (Wright *et*

al., 1997). Narrative Transportation Theory (Green & Brock, 2000) proposes that individuals who become immersed in a story are more likely to adopt attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives consistent with the narrative. Readers temporarily identify with characters, experience their emotions, and view events from their perspective. This process is particularly important in disability awareness education because it allows students to move beyond abstract information and engage emotionally with the lived experiences of others. Finally, Recognition Theory (Honneth, 1995) argues that individuals develop positive identities and a sense of social membership when their experiences, perspectives, and personal characteristics are acknowledged and valued by others. Experiences of misrecognition, invisibility, or social devaluation can undermine participation and belonging.

A key strength of the proposed framework lies in the complementary nature of its theoretical foundations, as each theory contributes a distinct explanatory lens while collectively offering a comprehensive account of how AI-supported social narratives may promote peer acceptance and a stronger sense of belonging in inclusive educational settings. Need to Belong Theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) establishes the overarching psychological rationale for the framework by positing that the desire to form and maintain positive interpersonal relationships is a fundamental human motivation. From this perspective, belonging is not merely a desirable educational outcome but a basic psychological need closely associated with students' well-being, engagement, and academic adjustment (Allen *et al.*, 2018; Goodenow, 1993; Osterman, 2000). However, while this theory explains why belonging is important, it does not fully account for the social processes through which inclusion or exclusion emerges. This gap is addressed by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which explains how individuals construct their self-concept through group memberships and how processes of social categorization may contribute to the marginalization of students perceived as different. In inclusive classrooms, disability may become a salient social category, potentially fostering ingroup-outgroup distinctions that undermine peer acceptance. Building on this understanding, Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) provides a mechanism through which such categorizations and associated prejudices may be reduced. Research on both Extended Contact Theory (Wright *et al.*, 1997) and Imagined Contact Theory (Turner *et al.*, 2007) suggests that positive representations of intergroup interactions, even when experienced indirectly through narratives, can improve attitudes toward stigmatized groups and decrease intergroup anxiety. These perspectives are particularly relevant to AI-generated narratives, which can provide rich opportunities for indirect contact with diverse experiences and identities. Through exposure to narrative characters who demonstrate empathy, cooperation, and inclusive practices, students may internalize and reproduce similar behaviors in their own social interactions.

The effectiveness of such modeling is further strengthened by insights from Narrative Transportation Theory (Green & Brock, 2000), which proposes that individuals who become deeply immersed in a story are more likely to adopt attitudes and perspectives consistent with the narrative experience. Narrative transportation facilitates

emotional engagement and perspective-taking, enabling students to move beyond abstract knowledge about disability and instead experience, albeit vicariously, the thoughts, feelings, and challenges of others. This immersive process can foster empathy, challenge stereotypes, and encourage more positive social attitudes toward peers with disabilities (Green & Brock, 2000; Mazzocco *et al.*, 2010). Finally, Recognition Theory (Honneth, 1995) broadens the framework by emphasizing that genuine inclusion requires more than social contact or positive attitudes; it requires the affirmation and validation of individuals as valued members of a community. According to this perspective, students develop positive identities and a sense of social membership when their experiences, voices, and personal characteristics are acknowledged and respected. Consequently, AI-supported narratives can serve not only as vehicles for awareness and attitude change but also as tools for enhancing the visibility and recognition of students whose experiences may otherwise remain marginalized within school communities.

Taken together, these theories operate at complementary levels of analysis and explain different stages of the inclusion process. Need to Belong Theory identifies the fundamental outcome of interest, namely students' sense of belonging; Social Identity Theory explains the social dynamics that can produce exclusion; Contact Theory describes how prejudicial attitudes may be reduced; Narrative Transportation Theory explains why narrative-based interventions are particularly effective in influencing attitudes and emotions; and Recognition Theory clarifies the conditions under which social participation becomes meaningful and sustainable. Collectively, they provide a coherent and multidimensional theoretical foundation that links psychological needs, intergroup relations, learning processes, narrative engagement, and social justice considerations, thereby offering a robust explanation of how AI-supported social narratives may foster peer acceptance and strengthen students' sense of belonging in inclusive educational environments.

3. AI-Generated Social Narratives as a Mechanism for Social Inclusion

3.1 Social Narratives and Empathy

Social narratives are brief, structured stories designed to describe experiences, emotions, social situations, challenges, and appropriate responses to everyday interactions. Their primary purpose is to support individuals in understanding social contexts and interpreting social behavior (Gray, 2015). Although social narratives were originally developed for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), their application has gradually expanded to disability awareness and inclusive education initiatives aimed at fostering positive attitudes toward diversity and inclusion (More, 2008; Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026; Voultziou & Moussiades, 2025). The effectiveness of social narratives can be attributed to their ability to promote identification, perspective-taking, and emotional engagement. Through narrative experiences, students are encouraged to connect with characters and understand their feelings, challenges, and viewpoints, thereby fostering empathy and social understanding (Gray, 2015; Reynhout & Carter, 2006). Rather than

presenting disability as an abstract concept, social narratives offer concrete and relatable examples, such as a student who experiences difficulties with reading, a peer who uses a wheelchair, or a child who feels excluded during social interactions. By personalizing these experiences, narratives make disability-related issues more accessible and meaningful to young learners. Research suggests that personal stories are more likely to evoke emotional responses and empathy than the mere presentation of factual information, thereby contributing to the development of positive attitudes and inclusive behaviors toward individuals with disabilities (More, 2008; Voultsiou & Moussiades, 2025). Such processes of perspective-taking and self-reflection are closely associated with the development of empathy, as they enable students to recognize and understand the emotions and experiences of others (Gray, 2015; Reynhout & Carter, 2006). Furthermore, social narratives can challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about disability by exposing students to authentic and diverse lived experiences. Through engagement with narrative-based representations, students are encouraged to move beyond simplistic or deficit-oriented understandings of disability and develop more nuanced and inclusive perspectives. Evidence from narrative-based and educational interventions suggests that stories are often more effective than purely informational approaches in promoting attitude change because they simultaneously engage cognitive and emotional processes, fostering both understanding and emotional connection (Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026; Voultsiou & Moussiades, 2025). Consequently, social narratives represent a valuable pedagogical tool for promoting disability awareness, reducing prejudice, and fostering inclusive attitudes and behaviors among students by encouraging both emotional engagement and critical reflection (More, 2008; Reynhout & Carter, 2006).

3.2 Social Narratives and Peer Acceptance

Traditionally, interventions promoting peer acceptance have relied on cooperative learning, direct contact, disability awareness activities, and social narratives (Garrote, 2017; Lindsay & Edwards, 2013). AI does not directly change attitudes; rather, it can function as a mediating pedagogical tool that facilitates experiences known to promote positive attitudes and social acceptance (Melo-López *et al.*, 2025; Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026). One of the strongest predictors of peer acceptance is the ability to understand another person's perspective. Generative AI can create first-person narratives such as: *"This is my first day at school. I have autism, and I find loud noises overwhelming."* or *"I have dyslexia. Sometimes I need more time to read, but I enjoy the same stories as everyone else."* Such narratives allow typically developing students to experience situations from the perspective of a peer with a disability. This process promotes cognitive empathy and challenges stereotypical assumptions (Sakowich & Hamidi, 2025; Walter, 2025).

According to social-cognitive theory, perspective-taking reduces social distance and increases willingness to engage with others. As students often hold abstract or stereotypical images of disability, AI-generated stories can present students with disabilities as classmates, friends, players, learners, and problem-solvers, rather than as individuals defined exclusively by disability. This shift is consistent with contemporary

disability studies that emphasize moving from deficit-based representations toward strengths-based and participation-oriented perspectives (Melo-López *et al.*, 2025; Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026). Although AI does not replace real interactions, it can provide simulated contact experiences. For example, AI-generated dialogues, virtual role-playing, social simulations, and disability-related narratives can prepare students for authentic peer interactions, reduce anxiety, and increase openness toward peers with disabilities (Sakowich & Hamidi, 2025; Walter, 2025).

3.3 AI-Generated Social Narratives and Sense of Belonging

Within educational settings, belonging constitutes a critical component of students' social, emotional, and academic development, influencing motivation, engagement, well-being, achievement, and school participation (Allen *et al.*, 2018; Korpershoek *et al.*, 2020). In inclusive education, belonging extends beyond physical placement in mainstream classrooms and encompasses meaningful participation, social acceptance, recognition, and opportunities to develop reciprocal relationships with peers (Ainscow, 2020; Melo-López *et al.*, 2025). For students with disabilities, belonging is considered a central indicator of successful inclusion because it reflects the extent to which they are perceived and experience themselves as valued members of the school community (Bossaert *et al.*, 2013). Drawing upon literature on inclusive education, social cognition, and narrative learning, it can be hypothesized that AI-generated social narratives may influence students' sense of belonging through three interrelated pathways: (a) a direct pathway through empathy and peer acceptance, (b) an indirect pathway through improvements in classroom climate, and (c) a symbolic pathway through representation and recognition.

3.3.1 Direct Pathway: From Empathy and Perspective-Taking to Belonging

One potential mechanism through which AI-generated social narratives may enhance belonging is by promoting empathy, perspective-taking, and disability awareness among students. Research suggests that narrative engagement can facilitate empathic responses and reduce stereotypes by allowing individuals to reflect upon experiences that differ from their own (Batson *et al.*, 1997; Mar & Oatley, 2008). Within inclusive educational contexts, increased empathy and understanding have been associated with more positive attitudes toward peers with disabilities and greater willingness to engage in supportive social interactions (de Boer *et al.*, 2012; Reynhout & Carter, 2006). Positive peer attitudes can subsequently foster social acceptance, friendship formation, participation in collaborative activities, and inclusion in informal peer networks, factors consistently identified as important predictors of belonging for students with disabilities (Bossaert *et al.*, 2013; Koster *et al.*, 2009). Taken together, Narrative Transportation Theory (Green & Brock, 2000), Contact Theory (Allport, 1954), and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provide a coherent explanation of how AI-generated social narratives may facilitate perspective-taking, improve peer acceptance, reduce social distance, and ultimately strengthen students' sense of belonging.

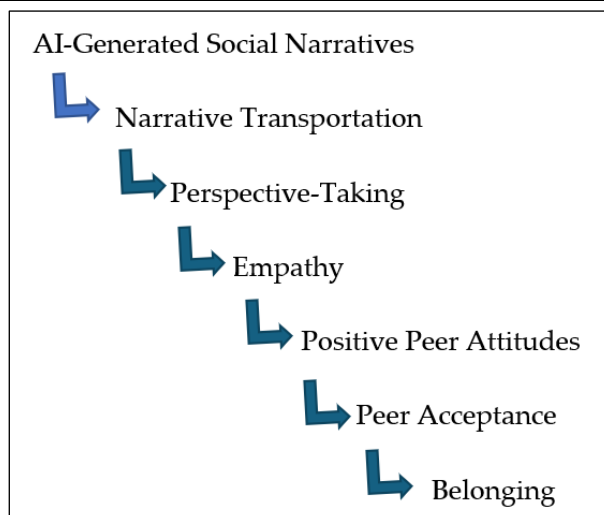


Figure 1: Direct Pathway

3.3.2 Indirect Pathway: Enhancing Classroom Climate

A second pathway may operate indirectly through the development of a more inclusive and supportive classroom climate. AI-supported narrative activities frequently involve reflection, dialogue, collaborative discussion, and critical examination of diverse experiences. Such pedagogical processes can encourage students to exchange viewpoints, challenge assumptions, and develop shared understandings of diversity and inclusion (Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026).



Figure 2: Indirect Pathway

Research on school belonging consistently highlights the importance of classroom environments characterized by psychological safety, mutual respect, social support, and equitable participation opportunities (Korpershoek *et al.*, 2020). Positive classroom climates have been linked to stronger feelings of connectedness, increased engagement, reduced social isolation, and improved psychosocial outcomes among students, particularly those from marginalized groups (Osterman, 2000). From this perspective, AI-generated social narratives may not influence belonging solely through individual attitude change but also by contributing to classroom cultures that promote inclusion and respectful interactions. Through collaborative reflection on diversity and disability-related experiences, students may collectively construct norms that support social

inclusion, thereby strengthening the conditions necessary for belonging to emerge (Melo-López *et al.*, 2025).

3.3.3 Symbolic Pathway: Representation, Recognition, and Validation

Inclusive education scholars have argued that belonging is not determined exclusively by participation in social activities but also by experiences of recognition, visibility, and identity affirmation within educational communities (Bossaert *et al.*, 2013; Slee, 2011). Students are more likely to feel that they belong when their experiences, identities, and perspectives are acknowledged as meaningful and legitimate. AI-generated social narratives may contribute to such recognition by incorporating the voices, experiences, and perspectives of students with disabilities into classroom discourse. Representation can serve an important symbolic function by challenging invisibility and fostering recognition of diversity as an integral aspect of the classroom community (Nantaburom & Wetcho, 2026). Accordingly, AI-generated narratives may strengthen belonging by validating students' identities and supporting their perception that they are legitimate and respected members of the educational community.

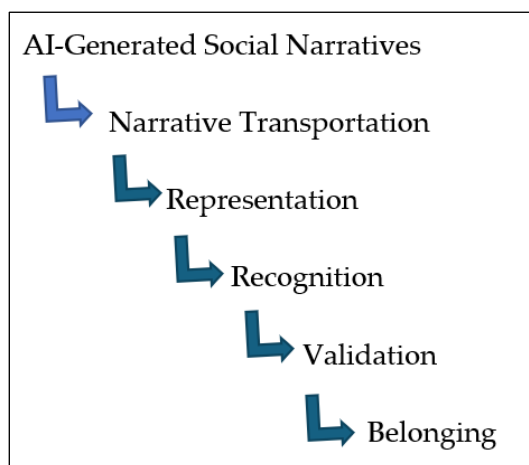


Figure 3: Symbolic Pathway

3.4 Proposed Theoretical Model

Based on the preceding literature, a theoretical model can be proposed in which AI-generated social narratives influence students' sense of belonging through multiple interconnected mechanisms. First, these narratives may facilitate empathy and perspective-taking, leading to more positive peer attitudes and greater social acceptance of students with disabilities. Increased peer acceptance may, in turn, promote participation in social and academic activities and support the development of meaningful interpersonal relationships. Second, AI-generated narratives may contribute to a more inclusive classroom climate characterized by psychological safety, mutual respect, and social support. Third, they may function as mechanisms of representation and recognition by increasing the visibility and legitimacy of disability-related experiences within classroom discourse. Collectively, these processes are hypothesized

to enhance students' perceptions of acceptance, connectedness, participation, and value within the school community, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging. Figures 1, 2, and 3 present the integrated conceptual model proposed in this study. Drawing upon Need to Belong Theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), Contact Theory (Allport, 1954), Narrative Transportation Theory (Green & Brock, 2000), and Recognition Theory (Honneth, 1995), the model illustrates how AI-generated social narratives may influence students' sense of belonging through three complementary pathways: a direct pathway involving empathy and peer acceptance, an indirect pathway involving classroom climate, and a symbolic pathway involving representation and recognition.

3.4.1 AI-Generated Versus Traditional Social Narratives

Social narratives have long been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool for promoting social understanding, empathy, and disability awareness within inclusive educational settings (Gray, 2015; More, 2008). Traditional narratives allow students to explore the experiences and perspectives of others, facilitating perspective-taking and reducing stereotypical beliefs through narrative engagement (Green & Brock, 2000). However, the growing emergence of generative AI has prompted scholars to reconsider the limitations of conventional narrative approaches and explore whether AI-generated narratives may offer additional pedagogical advantages for fostering social inclusion (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022; Melo-López *et al.*, 2025).

The primary limitation identified in traditional social narratives concerns their largely standardized and static nature. Conventional narratives are typically developed prior to implementation by teachers, researchers, or intervention designers and then delivered uniformly to learners. While such narratives may be theoretically sound and pedagogically structured, they are often unable to accommodate the considerable diversity that characterizes inclusive classrooms. Students differ in age, interests, cultural background, disability knowledge, prior experiences, and social-emotional needs, yet traditional narratives generally assume a relatively homogeneous audience (Gray, 2015). Consequently, the relevance and emotional resonance of a narrative may vary considerably across learners. In contrast, generative AI introduces an unprecedented degree of personalization. Drawing upon advances in adaptive learning technologies, AI systems can generate narratives tailored to individual students' characteristics, interests, classroom experiences, and educational goals (Holmes *et al.*, 2022; Zawacki-Richter *et al.*, 2019). Narrative Transportation Theory suggests that narratives exert greater influence when readers perceive them as personally relevant and identify strongly with characters (Green & Brock, 2000). By creating stories that closely reflect learners' everyday experiences, AI may increase narrative immersion, emotional engagement, and perspective-taking. From this perspective, AI does not merely generate more stories; rather, it generates stories that are potentially more meaningful for specific learners.

A second distinction concerns adaptability. Traditional narratives generally remain unchanged throughout implementation regardless of students' responses,

misconceptions, or evolving learning needs. Such rigidity may limit their effectiveness within dynamic classroom environments in which social situations and educational objectives constantly evolve. AI-generated narratives, however, can be modified continuously during implementation. Narrative content can be revised in response to student questions, classroom discussions, or emerging social issues, allowing teachers to provide immediate pedagogical scaffolding. This adaptability aligns with contemporary conceptions of inclusive pedagogy, which emphasize responsiveness to learner diversity and ongoing adjustment of instructional practices (Florian, 2014). Consequently, AI-generated narratives may support a more iterative and responsive learning process than traditional narrative interventions.

The literature also highlights the importance of contextual immediacy and real-time generation. Traditional social stories are typically selected from pre-existing resources and may not directly address specific incidents occurring within the school environment. AI systems enable educators to create narratives immediately in response to actual classroom situations, such as peer exclusion, friendship conflicts, misunderstandings related to disability, or challenges emerging during collaborative activities. This contextual responsiveness may strengthen the connection between narrative experiences and students' real-world social interactions. From the perspective of Contact Theory and its extensions (Allport, 1954; Turner *et al.*, 2007), AI-generated narratives can function as situational forms of indirect contact that address social dynamics precisely when they occur, potentially increasing their relevance and effectiveness. Perhaps the most transformative distinction between traditional and AI-generated narratives concerns student participation in narrative creation. Traditional social narratives are largely teacher-authored and position students as readers or recipients of content. AI-supported storytelling enables a shift toward narrative co-construction, where students actively participate in developing characters, selecting perspectives, generating dialogue, and shaping story outcomes. This participatory model aligns with sociocultural views of learning that emphasize collaborative knowledge construction and learner agency. Moreover, from the perspective of Recognition Theory (Honneth, 1995), co-construction may foster a stronger sense of visibility, voice, and ownership because students contribute directly to representations of their experiences and identities. Such participation may be particularly valuable in inclusive classrooms, where belonging is closely linked to opportunities for meaningful participation and recognition.

Despite these advantages, the literature also cautions against an uncritical adoption of AI-generated narratives. Unlike carefully constructed traditional narratives, AI-generated content may occasionally contain inaccuracies, stereotypical representations, simplified portrayals of disability, or culturally insensitive descriptions if adequate safeguards are not implemented (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022; Sakowich & Hamidi, 2025). Furthermore, excessive personalization may inadvertently reinforce individual rather than collective understandings of inclusion, while disproportionate reliance on AI-generated content may reduce opportunities for authentic human

dialogue and reflection. These concerns suggest that AI should not replace traditional narratives but rather complement and extend them. Educational effectiveness ultimately depends not on the technology itself but on how AI-generated narratives are pedagogically designed, critically evaluated, and integrated into inclusive learning environments. Taken together, the literature suggests that AI-generated narratives represent an evolution rather than a replacement of traditional narrative approaches. Traditional narratives provide established pedagogical structures and evidence-based practices for promoting empathy and social understanding, whereas AI extends these foundations through personalization, adaptivity, immediacy, and collaborative authorship. Consequently, the value of AI may reside not in its capacity to automate storytelling, but in its ability to transform narratives into dynamic, participatory, and context-sensitive tools capable of supporting peer acceptance, recognition, and belonging within inclusive educational settings

4. Conclusion

Inclusive education extends beyond access to academic learning and requires attention to the social conditions that enable all students to participate meaningfully in school life. Although Artificial Intelligence (AI) has increasingly been discussed as a tool for enhancing accessibility, personalization, and educational attainment, considerably less attention has been devoted to its potential contribution to the social dimensions of inclusion. This conceptual paper sought to address this gap by proposing a theoretical framework that explains how AI-generated social narratives may support peer acceptance and students' sense of belonging within inclusive educational settings. Drawing on Need to Belong Theory, Social Identity Theory, Contact Theory, Narrative Transportation Theory, and Recognition Theory, the proposed framework identifies three interrelated pathways through which AI-generated social narratives may influence social inclusion. The first pathway emphasizes the role of narrative transportation, perspective-taking, and empathy in fostering more positive peer attitudes and greater peer acceptance. The second pathway highlights the contribution of narrative-based activities to the development of inclusive classroom climates characterized by dialogue, mutual respect, and psychological safety. The third pathway focuses on the symbolic significance of representation and recognition, suggesting that the visibility and validation of diverse experiences may strengthen students' perceptions of themselves as valued members of the school community. Collectively, these pathways offer a multidimensional perspective on belonging that incorporates psychological, relational, and sociocultural dimensions of inclusion. The paper further argues that generative AI may extend the possibilities of traditional social narratives through personalization, adaptability, contextual responsiveness, and opportunities for collaborative narrative construction. These characteristics may increase the relevance of narratives to students' lived experiences and provide educators with additional tools for addressing disability awareness, social understanding, and inclusive participation. Nevertheless, the

educational value of AI-generated narratives should not be attributed to the technology itself. Rather, their effectiveness is likely to depend on thoughtful pedagogical design, critical evaluation of content, appropriate ethical safeguards, and ongoing human oversight. From a theoretical perspective, the framework contributes to the emerging literature on AI and inclusive education by broadening discussions of inclusion beyond academic outcomes alone. By foregrounding peer acceptance, classroom climate, recognition, and belonging, the model highlights social indicators that have often remained peripheral in research examining educational applications of AI. In doing so, it offers a conceptual basis for understanding how AI-supported interventions may contribute to the social experiences of students with disabilities within inclusive school communities. At the same time, the framework remains conceptual in nature and therefore requires empirical validation. The proposed relationships, pathways, and mechanisms should be examined through rigorous empirical research capable of testing both their effectiveness and their underlying processes. Consequently, the future research directions outlined in this paper are essential for determining whether AI-generated social narratives can produce meaningful improvements in peer acceptance, social participation, and students' sense of belonging across diverse educational contexts. In conclusion, AI-generated social narratives may represent a promising avenue for supporting the social goals of inclusive education. By placing belonging at the centre of the discussion, this paper encourages a shift from evaluating whether students merely learn together to examining how educational environments can support all students in becoming recognized, accepted, and valued members of their school communities. Future research will ultimately determine the extent to which this potential can be realized in practice and under what conditions AI can contribute to more socially inclusive and equitable educational environments.

5. Future Research

The present paper proposes a conceptual framework linking AI-generated social narratives to peer acceptance and students' sense of belonging. Although the proposed relationships are grounded in established theories and existing research, empirical evidence examining these mechanisms remains limited. Future research is therefore needed to investigate the validity of the proposed model and explore the conditions under which AI-supported narrative interventions may contribute to social inclusion. Future studies should examine whether AI-generated social narratives produce measurable improvements in empathy, peer acceptance, social participation, and belonging among students. Longitudinal and experimental research designs would be particularly valuable for determining whether these effects are sustained over time and whether improvements in peer attitudes ultimately translate into stronger feelings of belonging. Future research should also investigate the mediating mechanisms proposed in the present framework. Specifically, researchers may examine whether perspective-taking, empathy, peer acceptance, classroom climate, and recognition function as

mediators between narrative exposure and belonging outcomes. Such analyses would provide stronger evidence regarding the psychological and social processes through which AI-generated narratives exert their influence. In addition, researchers should explore whether narrative effectiveness varies across different disability groups. AI-generated narratives describing autism, ADHD, dyslexia, physical disabilities, or social-emotional difficulties may produce different levels of empathy, identification, and peer acceptance. Understanding these differences may support the development of more targeted and effective interventions. Developmental factors may also influence students' responses to AI-generated narratives. Future investigations should therefore compare the effectiveness of interventions across different age groups, including elementary, middle, and secondary school students. Finally, future research should examine issues related to the accuracy, authenticity, and ethical implications of AI-generated disability narratives. While generative AI offers significant opportunities for personalization and the ability to be implemented across different contexts, it may also reproduce stereotypes, oversimplifications, or inaccurate representations of disability. Consequently, future studies should explore approaches that combine AI-generated content with human oversight and co-design processes involving individuals with lived experience of disability. Collectively, these research directions can contribute to the development of a stronger evidence base regarding the role of artificial intelligence in promoting social inclusion. By moving beyond traditional academic outcomes and examining friendship, peer acceptance, participation, and belonging, future research may help clarify how AI can support not only learning together but also belonging together within inclusive educational communities.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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The author is Doctor in Special Education and teaches in the Department of Special Education at the University of Thessaly. Her research interests focus on the multi-level inclusion of individuals with disabilities in educational, professional, and broader social

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