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Constanza Herrera-Seda & Elizabeth Walton

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Teacher education for inclusive education: a scoping review of Global South scholarship

Constanza Herrera-Seda^a and Elizabeth Walton^{b,c}

^aDepartment of Education, University of Santiago of Chile, Santiago, Chile; ^bSchool of Education, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK; ^cSchool of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

ABSTRACT

Teacher education is important for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Research on this topic has increased in recent years across the world. However, the knowledge produced in Global South countries is relatively less visible and is infrequently cited, despite its potential contribution. To visibilise this knowledge, we conducted a scoping review of journal articles on teacher education for inclusive education research in the Global South. Ninety-five conceptual and empirical studies from 2012 to 2021 from four databases were analysed, and we present findings of the review under the headings of general information, research approaches, research teams, policy referents, funding sources, and results. The findings are discussed with concepts from decolonial theory where we argue that 1) Knowledge production on teacher education for inclusive education in the Global South mostly follows Global North research agendas, methodologies, and theories; 2) Place or context serves as a mere background or site for teacher education for inclusive education, rather than agentic in creating the conditions of teachers' work; 3) Global South researchers work with limited funding and unstable research conditions, with few cross-southern partnerships. The review indicates a need for critical appraisal of current knowledge formations by teacher education policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners.

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Inclusive education; teacher education; scoping literature review; global south; decolonisation

Introduction

Teacher education is crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive education (United Nations 2016). There is a robust scholarship of teacher education for inclusive education that has increased exponentially over the years (Florian and Camedda 2020). Countries from the Global South have contributed to this body of knowledge, but publications from these countries are less visible, reflecting the reality that 'academic databases, university libraries and the publishing industry continue to prioritise northern scholarship at the expense of southern materials, meaning that there continues to be a structural exclusion of scholarship from the Global South' (Moosavi 2020, 342). To disrupt this exclusion, we present a scoping review of the literature that includes i)

CONTACT Elizabeth Walton  elizabeth.walton@nottingham.ac.uk

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a comprehensive bibliography and summary of the profile of scholarship on teacher education for inclusive education from the Global South, which should enhance the visibility and accessibility of this work and ii) the application of decolonial theory to the review process and its results, serving both as an example of decolonial research praxis and indicating future directions for the field.

Dividing the globe into the North and the South reflects a binary formerly expressed as the developed and developing world, or first and third world. These binaries are unhelpful in that they obscure the inequalities within countries (Schneider 2017) and they incorrectly suggest homogeneity among countries in each metaphorical hemisphere (Grovoğu 2011). Matching the South and the North neatly onto countries is flawed, and some countries, like Australia, occupy an ambiguous position by having both high per capita income and historical and current conditions of coloniality (Collyer 2021). Despite its acknowledged limitations, the term Global South is a useful 'symbolic designation' (Grovoğu 2011, 174). It denotes 'a substantial portion of the world living in a scenario of profound geopolitical asymmetries, poverty and isolation' with a recognition that the South lives in the North (Grech 2015, x).

Inclusive education and teacher education

Inclusive education in the Global South has been characterised as a 'second generation' version, gaining momentum after the Salamanca Statement of 1994 (Kozleski, Alfredo, and Federico 2011, 4). Since then, the flow of inclusive education discourses and practices has tended to be unidirectional, from the 'first generation' North to the South. The expectation that countries of the Global South will adopt Global North-style inclusive education is often made with scant regard for local socio-historical, political, and cultural contexts, which have been shaped by the ravages of colonialism (Walton 2018). Furthermore, this discursive flow often disregards the inclusive nature of many pre-colonial societies (Mahlo 2017) and neglects the role of colonial regimes in manufacturing inequalities. Despite this, inclusive education features in some way in policy agendas across the Global South (UNESCO 2020).

The Salamanca Statement (United Nations 1994) made it clear that the systemic change required for inclusive education included addressing pre-service and in-service teacher education, and The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires that State Parties 'Establish an effective and permanent programme for training teachers in inclusive education' (United Nations 2006, 41(c)). Teacher education has been identified as one of the 'clusters of influence' (Slee 2011, 62) in inclusive education research. Recurrent themes in this body of research include issues of impact, form, and content of various programmes and interventions.

Themes in teacher education for inclusive education research

Several studies are concerned with the impact (or lack thereof) of teacher education initiatives. Many of these studies elicit self-reports from pre- or in-service teachers using quantitative or qualitative methodologies, and the focus is most often on measures of attitude, belief, and self-efficacy (Tristani and Bassett-Gunter 2020). The development of

knowledge and skills is also evaluated, congruent with the head-heart-hands approach to developing teacher capacity for inclusive teaching (Florian and Rouse 2010).

There are various types of teacher education for inclusive education reported in the literature. These include standalone courses, modules, and workshops, where pre- or in-service teachers engage with inclusive education content. Infused approaches are based on the idea that inclusive education has to be embedded in all of teacher education (Florian and Camedda 2020). A hybrid model of standalone and infused approaches has been adopted by some programmes (e.g. Mavropoulou, Mann, and Carrington (2021)). The role and potential of field experiences has been investigated, and researchers have shown the affordances and limitations of different placement options (e.g. Robinson (2017)). There is growing interest in the benefits of various kinds of professional learning communities for in-service teachers (e.g. Brennan, Pennycook, and Barr (2024)).

Various content clusters are recognisable in teacher education programmes for inclusive education. These include a cluster that deals with students and the need for an understanding of disabilities, often with a (neo)special education approach (e.g. Crispel and Kasperski (2021)). Another cluster concerns issues of pedagogy where research foregrounds instructional strategies and approaches (e.g. D'Intino and Wang (2021)). A third cluster emphasises various theoretical or conceptual resources that explain exclusion and inclusion (e.g. Broderick and Lavani (2017)). Topics selected for programmes reflect policy imperatives as well as the ideological commitments of teacher educators and institutions (Walton 2025). Teacher education for inclusive education is political work for teacher educators (Allan 2010). We argue that it is also political work in the global field of inclusive education, where the discourse is shaped by the geopolitics of the research and publishing economy.

Geopolitical considerations in research on teacher education for inclusive education

Scholars and scholarship from the Global North have shaped this sub-field of inclusive education and the majority of publications on the topic come from a limited number of Global North countries (Cretu and Morandau 2020). While acknowledging the significant variation within and between countries in the Global North, we note that this literature references contexts with near universal school enrolment (Langthaler and Malik 2023) and well-established special education systems (Cheryl et al. 2010). Research findings and policy recommendations from this dominant Global North scholarship may be less relevant to the intersecting conditions of exclusion in the Global South (Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht 2018). Global South research on teacher education for inclusive education is less visible in systematic or scoping reviews. Reasons for this include a focus on specific geographical areas, such as Tristani and Bassett-Gunter (2020), whose review is limited to North American and Australian literature. Limited database use will inevitably limit the breadth of a search (Harari et al. 2020). Symeonidou's (2017) review only uses Scopus, and Cretu and Morandau's (2020) bibliometric analysis is limited to Web of Science. Finally, a focus on English publications (e.g. Lautenbach and Heyder (2019)) will inevitably exclude a range of scholarship in other languages.

Decolonial theory

Decolonial theory offers conceptual resources to identify, disrupt, and ultimately dismantle versions and instantiations of the 'complex matrix' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020, 36) of coloniality. We draw on three key analytical concepts in decoloniality: the coloniality of being, the coloniality of knowledge, and the coloniality of power. The coloniality of being refers to the making of the dehumanised colonial subject through racial hierarchies and the creation of ontological differences (Maldonado-Torres 2007). The commodification of indigenous people justified oppression and exploitation and severed their relationship with the land and nature (Wright 2020), which means that the coloniality of being is also an issue of place. The coloniality of knowledge refers to the assumptions of the superiority of western knowledge as being universal and abstractable, in contrast to indigenous knowledge which is dismissed as being local and consigned to what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020, 35) calls the 'barbarian margins of society'. The coloniality of power refers to the 'emergence of a Eurocentred capitalist colonial/modern world power' (Quijano 2000, 218). The current global asymmetric power structure is maintained through political, economic, and cultural hegemony. The coloniality of being, the coloniality of knowledge, and the coloniality of power are imbricated and mutually reinforcing, but the 'most fundamental decolonial task is in the domain of knowledge' (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, 177). Cognitive justice, attained through southern epistemologies, is deemed 'a prerequisite for other forms of liberation' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020, 39), but this does not mean that writing from the South is necessarily decolonial. Grosfoguel (2007, 213) reminds that epistemic location does not necessarily match social location such that 'subjects that are socially located in the oppressed side of the colonial difference, [may] ... think epistemically like the ones on the dominant positions'.

Decolonial approaches to research emphasise relationality, respect, and reflexivity (Keane, Khupe, and Seehawer 2017; Tuhiwai Smith 2021). When applied to the literature review, the emphasis is on relationality, seeing literature as 'gifted through relationships, where scholarship is treated with care and reciprocity is acknowledged as an obligation' (Tynan and Bishop 2023, 499). The authors have both lived, studied and worked in Global South contexts on different continents, and the literature review process is a means to show respect to our academic colleagues and to bring more scholarship into 'our web of relations' (503). We acknowledge our racial, class, and educational privilege in our countries of origin, and both see inclusive education as a potential means for advancing social justice in these and other countries. Our research interests in teacher education for inclusive education align, and we have collaborated on this literature review to 'interrupt knowledge formation processes' (Muñoz-García, Lira, and Loncón 2022, 648–649) and to think 'alongside, from and within knowledges that have been rendered invisible' (Dennis 2018, 191).

Materials and methods

Our approach to the literature is through a scoping review, which maps the literature on a topic, indicating the 'extent, range and nature of research activity' (Arksey and O'Malley 2005, 21). The scoping review is useful for a topic like ours in which the literature has not yet been comprehensively reviewed (Munn et al. 2022) and suits our goal, which is not to

synthesise evidence but to map the literature, enhance its visibility, and critically analyse it with concepts from decolonial theory.

The articles considered in this literature review were selected in June 2022 from the Web of Science (WOS), Scopus, IBSS, and Scielo databases. The latter is particularly relevant in Latin American countries. Teacher education for inclusive education was the concept that guided the search. To map this concept, we organised the search keywords into three groups. The first group was about teacher education ('teacher education', 'teacher training', and 'professional development'). The second group related to inclusive education ('inclusive education', 'inclusive pedagogy', and 'inclusive teaching'). The third group was Global South countries. There are many possible lists of Global South countries, none of which include countries (like Australia) with historical experiences of colonialism, but which are now countries with high per capita income and are geopolitically and economically aligned with the Global North. These lists include the 134 member states of the Group of 77 at the United Nations (<https://www.g77.org/doc/members.html>); the 125 attendees at the Voice of the Global South summit in 2023 (<https://www.mea.gov.in/voice-of-global-summit.htm>); and The Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World list of 138 countries (<https://owsd.net/sites/default/files/OWSD%20138%20Countries%20-%20Global%20South.pdf>), which we used as the most comprehensive.

We searched by exploring the articles' titles, abstracts, and keywords, adapting the search according to the restrictions of each database browser. In IBSS, we organised keywords in the three groups described above. In WOS and Scopus, we batched the countries' names in 15 subgroups and ran the search with each subgroup adding the results. The limitations in Scielo led us to integrate the keywords of the first two groups (without the countries' names). We imposed a date range from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2021, restricted the results to journal articles, and limited languages to English, Afrikaans, Portuguese, and Spanish, with which the authors could work. [Figure 1](#) shows the identification, screening, and inclusion stages, and how we arrived at the final 95 articles. The full list of 95 articles can be found here: <https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/yr26m85g53/2>.

After a preliminary exploration of the database, we defined six broad categories to summarise each paper. These categories are influenced by our decolonial framework and concern people and places (informed by the coloniality of being), epistemology and the production of knowledge (informed by the coloniality of knowledge), and power relations among researchers, in relation to research participants and with reference to funding (informed by the coloniality of power). The categories were: 1. *General information* to catalogue authors, countries, and teacher education programmes; 2. *Research approaches and methods* to identify how knowledge is being produced; 3. *Researchers and teams* describe the research contexts and links between those producing this knowledge; 4. *Policy referents*, to link the production with national and international policies; 5. *Funding sources* to understand the conditions of research development; and 6. *Main results and research projections* to identify inclusive education understandings and their influence on teacher education. For each category, we defined a set of questions to focus the summary and to ensure that we were thorough, working ethically with care and respect for our colleagues' outputs (Tynan and Bishop 2023). A first reading of a random selection of six articles by both authors allowed us to review the pertinence of the categories and

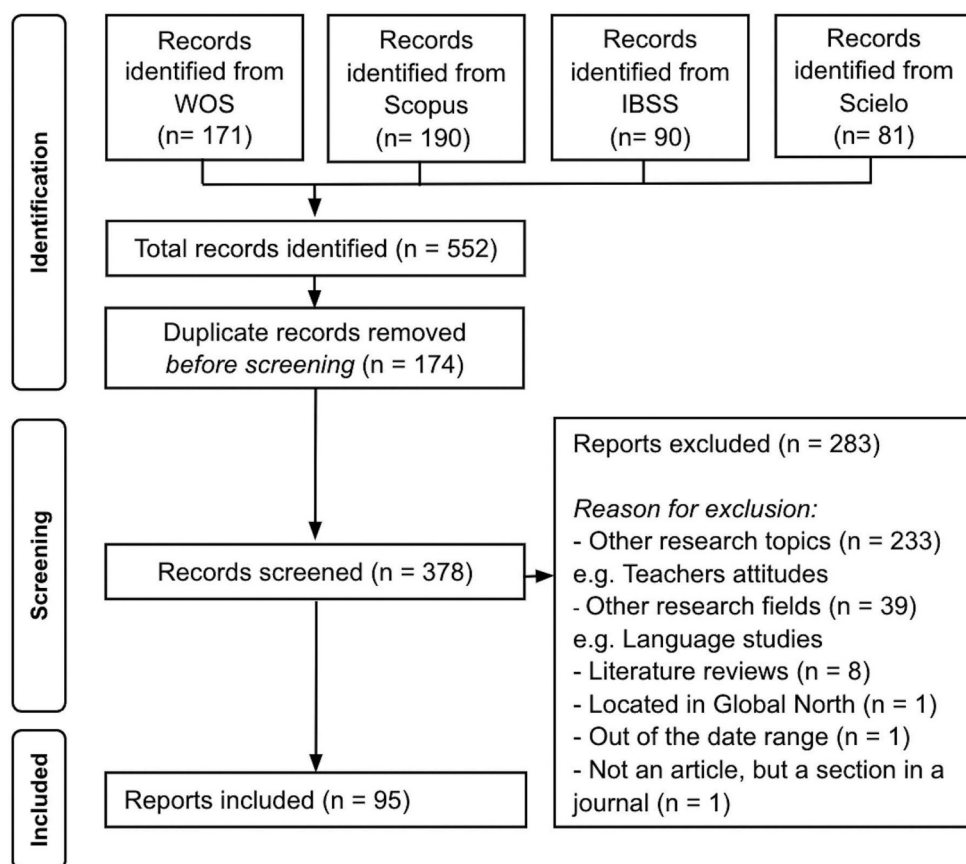


Figure 1. Identification, screening, and in/exclusion of articles.

questions and to ensure a common understanding of the categories. Then, the remaining articles were shared between the authors to summarise on a shared spreadsheet, on which the subsequent analysis was based. The first stage of the analysis used descriptive statistics to calculate percentages and frequencies and a narrative synthesis to distill the main results and research projections. The second stage was a conceptual analysis of the findings, guided by the theoretical framing. Throughout this process, the authors maintained mutual accountability through regular online meetings to challenge and support each other and in our pursuit of a 'decolonising solidarity', which we understand as an affective practice that demands our advocacy, accountability, and political commitment to disrupt coloniality (Bozalek and Zembylas, 2023, 98).

Results

Research in this field has increased exponentially over the past decade, with the highest number of articles (18 of the 95) published in 2021. Over half of the articles (55%, 52 articles) are published in Global North journals, with the *International Journal of Inclusive Education* having the most (10) articles. Thirty-two per cent of the publications (30 articles)

are in journals based in the United Kingdom, followed by 15% (14 articles) in Brazil and 8% (8 articles) in the United States. Overall, 31 Global South countries (located on this map: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=19dcb38EFE12NtiOGnPxEcnTuwo2U4&usp=sharing>) are represented by the review.

Research approaches and methods

Empirical research is most common in the dataset (79%, 75 articles), with only 20 (21%) conceptual research articles. The empirical studies mostly follow western scientific designs and methods (Tuhiwai Smith 2021), with 44 articles (59%) reporting qualitative approaches, 17 articles (23%) reporting quantitative approaches, 10 articles (13%) reporting mixed methods, and 5% (four articles) are too vague about methods to classify. The research in only five articles approximates more indigenous, decolonial approaches in their design by being less extractive and more participatory in using action research, collaboration, and cartographic methodologies (Keane, Khupe, and Seehawer 2017). Traditional research instruments are most frequently used, including questionnaires and scales (45%, 34 articles), open and semi-structured interviews (36%, 27 articles), focus groups and group discussions (17%, 13 articles). Only 11 articles (15%) offer evidence of teacher participants' co-production of data through journals or portfolios (eight articles), blogs or forums (two articles), and one arts-based reflection. Fifteen articles (20%) do not describe the analytical technique applied. In those that explicitly declare this information, the most frequent are statistical analyses (43%, 32 articles) and thematic analysis (28%, 21 articles).

Theoretical approaches or conceptual models are not declared in more than half of the publications (60%, 57 articles). In the 40% (38 articles) that draw on theory, most (84%, 32 articles) refer to theories or concepts derived from Global North scholarship. These include the Sociocultural Theory of Lev Vygotsky (18%, 7 articles), followed by the conceptual models of Inclusive Pedagogy, mostly related to Lani Florian's work (13%, 5 articles). Only six articles use southern theories: three engage with the Latin American Critical Theory of Paulo Freire, one is based on the Human Development proposal of Amartya Sen, one uses the African concept of Unhu/Ubuntu, and one article draws on the Caribbean Pre-service Emerging Reflective Teacher Training Model.

Researchers and teams

A total of 238 authors contribute to the set of 95 articles. Of these authors, 94% (223 authors) contribute to just one article, 6% (15 authors) have two articles, and only 1% (3 authors) have more than two publications. Seventy-four per cent of the authors (176 researchers) belong to an institution in the Global South, and 26% (61 researchers) are from the Global North. There are 16 articles (17%) with authors exclusively from northern universities, 63 articles (66%) from southern institutions, and 16 articles (17%) (16 articles) with a partnership between northern and southern institutions. In five cases, an author has a joint affiliation with both a northern and southern institution. There is limited connection and collaboration between the

researchers in southern countries, and only three articles (3%) represent a partnership between Global South countries. Similarly, cross-references between articles show little relationship. From 77 articles, which have all the information needed to do this cross-referencing, 71% (55 articles) are not linked to any other article in the group.

Programme details

Teacher education programmes are described, analysed, or evaluated in 67 articles (71%), and these programmes promote a range of knowledge. The most frequent objective is building knowledge for inclusive teaching (69%, 46 articles), followed by the aim to develop positive attitudes, conceptions, or motivations about inclusive education (37%, 26 articles) and to gain knowledge about particular conditions (disabilities, learning difficulties, etc.) (24%, 16 articles). Teachers' knowledge that promotes a profound comprehension of exclusion and inclusion is less frequent. Twelve articles (18%) promote reflection or research about teachers' practice, 10 articles (15%) are oriented towards collaborative or interdisciplinary work, and seven articles (10%) encourage teachers to assume a critical perspective about exclusion and their role in power relationships. Several programmes (20 articles) are not designed in relation to their context, and 12 articles do not refer to any contextual information at all.

Policy referents

National policies are referred to in 69 articles (73%). Of these, the most frequent are general education policies or laws (49%, 34 articles) and special education or special needs (39%, 27 articles). Thereafter, there are specific policies on inclusive education (36%, 25 articles) and teacher education or professional development (32%, 22 articles). Half of the articles also refer to international policies (50%, 47 articles). The most frequently mentioned policies are the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs (1994) (57%, 27 articles), the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990) (32%, 15 articles), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2008) (32%, 15 articles), and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 (2015) (26%, 12 articles).

Funding sources

Most articles reviewed do not declare the source of research funding (70%, 67 articles). Among the articles that do refer to funding, 16 articles (57%) credit national institutions and seven articles (25%) credit universities as the source. Funding is mostly from southern countries (64%, 18 articles). Five articles (18%) report financing by Global North countries through partnership programmes with researchers in the South.

Main results and research projections

The results of the studies and their conclusions explicitly or indirectly state that teachers are unprepared for inclusive education and lack the necessary knowledge and skills. The

teacher education programmes described to address this can be divided into two broad categories. The first category of results is affirmatory and describes the characteristics of good practice in teacher education for inclusive education. Conclusions in this category include that effective teacher education for inclusive education must have both conceptual depth and contextual relevance (Walton 2025). Conceptual depth is achieved through a range of content choices that include knowledge about various disabilities; pedagogical and curriculum knowledge that includes differentiation, cooperative learning, developing individual education plans and classroom management; and policy expectations. Contextual relevance is achieved through equitable and collaborative partnership arrangements with colleagues in schools and an understanding of the complexity of schooling and cultural contexts. Field experiences of different kinds with good mentoring are regarded as useful in advancing contextual relevance. The development of various skills and dispositions contributes to good teacher education practices. These include inquiry-based practices and mutual problem-solving, reflective practices, professional collaboration and dialogue, and the development of self-efficacy. Several successful methods of delivery of teacher education are identified in addition to lectures and workshops, and these include the use of ICTs and virtual learning environments, lesson study, action research projects, and communities of practice. A number of articles emphasise the importance of infusing the principles of inclusive education across the teacher education curriculum.

The second category of results is less favourable and describes characteristics of programmes that are not deemed effective or successful, together with various reasons for the failure of teacher education for inclusive education. In many cases, it is the absence of the positive characteristics described above. Some articles raise the problem of a theory-practice 'gap', otherwise described as a lack of coherence between components of programmes. Inadequate conceptualisations of inclusion explain some poor practice, as does the limited time and space it is given in the broader teacher education curriculum. A recurring concern is that teacher education cannot be seen as the primary driver for inclusive education, and systemic issues like inadequate resources, infrastructure, district support, and employment conditions have to be addressed.

Discussion

Concepts from decolonial theory enabled us further to analyse the results of the review presented above, and we comment on the persistence of the coloniality of knowledge in research; how research is decontextualised, linked to the coloniality of being; and inequalities in research relationships, which references the coloniality of power.

Colonial epistemologies

The coloniality of knowledge, that is, the presumption of, and deference to, the superiority of Global North epistemologies, is evident in the scholarship of teacher education for inclusive education in the Global South. Across the dataset, we see an 'obedience' (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, 114) to Global North research agendas, methodologies, and theories. Despite the availability of rich and generative southern theories (Connell 2007), only six articles draw on these to frame their studies or to understand their results.

Indigenous knowledge systems hardly feature in the dataset, and instead, Global South scholars predominantly use northern theories to explain their southern findings in a process that Hountondji (2002) calls *extraversion*. There is also very little evidence of the decolonising methodologies that Tuhiwai Smith (2021) describes, with most articles rehearsing colonial ‘systems of classification and representation’ (46). This is particularly evident in the quarter of all reported programmes that are focused on mastery of special education concepts, categories, and diagnoses. In those cases, we note little critique of special education as a ‘product of western culture’ (Kalyanpur 1999, 111) nor an acknowledgement of the complexity of disability in the Global South (Grech 2015).

Findings, results and conclusions from the Global South articles bear striking similarities to the overall themes in research on teacher education for inclusive education in the Global North described above. This is unsurprising, given that many articles follow Global North research designs, ask similar questions, and use similar instruments. Many articles are framed by the deficit assumptions of teacher capacity for inclusive education, which can be found in Global North publications (e.g. Dignath et al. (2022)), and position teachers as needy recipients of knowledge and not knowledge-creators in their own right. For example, only one in six teacher education programmes in the reviewed articles is oriented towards teachers collaboratively building inclusive education in schools. In the specific findings about the value of collaborative work, we see some hints of the collectivist culture of many Global South contexts (Thomas and Markus 2023), but there is little in the dataset that is intentionally concerned with non-extractive approaches to participants or a quest for indigenous methodologies (Marovah and Mutanga 2023).

The dominance of Global North publishing outlets for research about teacher education for inclusive education in the Global South further indicates the reach of the coloniality of knowledge. There are many reasons for choosing Global North outlets, including visibility for authors, the potential for citations and indexing, and the prestige associated with journal rankings (Collyer 2018). However, Global North journals often come with expectations about what is to the ‘taste’ of their Global North readers (65), and notions of depth and rigour are often conflated with the western scientific tradition. It is understandable that to ensure that their work is published and visible, many Global South scholars doing work on teacher education for inclusive education follow this western tradition. The ‘epistemic disobedience’ (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, 114) demanded by a decolonial turn is, in the current publishing economy, very, if not too risky.

Research and research territories

Place, in decolonial thinking, is not a passive stage on which humans act, but it co-constitutes activity. Wright (2020, 214) argues for a ‘deeper engagement with the ontological underpinnings of place, including place’s agency, and a greater attentiveness to geographies of responsibility’. However, a quarter of all articles describe teacher education for inclusion disconnected from the local context, and many more only describe context as background. Historical, societal, and policy referents are provided, but conditions of inequality are usually taken as given without reference to the colonial legacies that engendered them. Then, having described the specificities of context, the results and conclusions echo much of what is found in the Global North research on this topic. Not a lot points to the ‘unique cultural and social fabrics’ of Global South contexts

(Kamenopoulou 2018, 1193) and only seven programmes reported in the research are aimed at teachers critically understanding the contexts of exclusion and their role in them.

Knowledge about teacher education for inclusive education in the Global South seems to be oriented ‘to the metropole’ (Connell et al. 2017, 26), with findings discussed in relation to Global North literature. The studies reported in this dataset thus function as case-studies for northern ideas (Collyer 2018). Inclusive education itself may be considered one such northern idea, and we think this may be a starting point for questioning universalising definitions of inclusive education. Since southern scholars know that their work is deemed parochial and lacking in capacity to be of international (i.e. Northern) relevance (Collyer 2018), it is unsurprising that many authors write a-contextually. Overall, the dataset represents a teacher education scholarship for inclusive education merely located in the Global South, rather than a Global South scholarship of teacher education for inclusive education. The difference between the two matters and a decolonial approach demands the re-placing (Walton 2025) of inclusive education.

Researchers and conditions of research

The colonality of power draws our attention to research relationships and to the effects of global inequities in the conditions of knowledge production reflected in the dataset. Our review indicates that there is a significant amount of work on teacher education for inclusive education being done in the Global South, contrary to what previous reviews and citation patterns might suggest. This work has also increased over time, and many scholars in Global South institutions (176 identified in our review) are publishing on the topic. Their contribution to knowledge is valuable in better understanding the particular tensions and difficulties of teacher education in post-colonial societies. However, scholars face challenges in producing this knowledge, such as limited access to international networks and scarce funding, and our own experiences attest to this.

Academic partnerships across the Global South are known to be unusual (Gueye et al. 2022) and feature in only three articles in the dataset, compared to the 16 North–South partnerships. Scholars from the Global South collaborate more with colleagues in European countries who share linguistic commonalities and a history of relations of colonial dependency. In the same way, only three articles in the dataset cite others in the dataset, confirming the tendency of Global South scholars to cite core northern texts rather than other southern authors (Collyer 2018). We believe that Global South scholars in teacher education for inclusive education need to question their dependency on Global North research framings and to value southern knowledge for educational systems with colonial histories.

The results of this review have led us to interrogate the circumstances of knowledge production in the field and to note expressions of limited and unstable research conditions in the Global South. More than 90% of scholars authored only one publication, and several countries have just one article in the dataset. This points to the difficulties scholars in the Global South are known to have in developing a focused research programme with a medium- or long-term trajectory, and their abilities to build teams around topics (Rakotonarivo and Andriamihaja 2023). This may be related to a lack of research funding,

confirmed by less than a third of the articles reporting funding sources. Limited access to funding in Global South institutions constrains their capacity to build and lead international research partnerships and thereby contribute to global knowledge (Molosi-France and Makoni 2020). Finally, there is a need to interrogate what Muñoz-García, Lira, and Loncón (2022) call ‘fundable knowledge’ in the Global South and how funding priorities determine what is deemed worthwhile research.

Conclusion

This article promotes the recognition and visibility of research on teacher education for inclusive education in the Global South and also draws attention to the complex and underappreciated issues of knowledge production in the field. The findings are significant for teacher education policymakers, researchers, and practitioners worldwide and have implications for the foundations, purposes, and methodologies of teacher education programmes. These implications include a recognition of the entanglement of theories and methods with (colonial) epistemologies and ontologies, together with an awareness of ways in which teacher education research is positioned and positioning, especially in reinforcing deficit constructions of (inclusive) teachers. Greater criticality and caution are needed in the pursuit and uptake of research. Context needs careful scrutiny in research and its translation to policy and practice. Contextual specificities may be overemphasised, leading to research from other places (especially the Global South) being ignored as being too particularistic. Or, context may be under-emphasised, leading to assumptions of the universality of (usually Global North) experiences, or to the misrecognition of the role that context plays in shaping experience. Wherever in the world teacher education for inclusive education is a concern, there is an urgent need for a robust interrogation of the complexity of materialising inclusion in societies with high inequality, whatever the cause, and a critical appraisal of what this means for teachers.

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