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Building knowledge from the epistemology of the South: the importance of training researchers in initial teacher training

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This study aims to reflect on the importance of considering epistemologies of the South and research training as benchmarks in the initial teacher of educators in the Latin American context. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to diversify and decolonize knowledge production in education, especially in the Global South. The epistemology of the South provides a conceptual framework that challenges traditional Eurocentric perspectives and promotes alternative ways of knowing and understanding education. To achieve the research objective, a literature review was conducted focusing on key concepts such as Southern epistemology, researcher training, and initial teacher education. The review encompassed academic articles, books and relevant theoretical frameworks. Content analysis techniques were employed to critically examine the literature, identifying themes, theoretical perspectives, and implications for research training in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). The findings of this study suggest that the incorporation of the epistemology of the South into researcher training can have a transformative impact on the educational sector. By adopting ways of knowing and understanding, future researchers can develop a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of educational phenomena. This approach promotes critical thinking skills and encourages researchers to question dominant narratives and power structures in education. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of integrating research training into initial teacher education. By fostering the development and consolidation of research skills and a critical mindset in future teachers, it promotes their transformation into change agents within the Latin American educational system in which they operate. From this perspective, research-oriented teacher training programs empower educators to engage in evidence-based practices, contribute to educational research, and advocate for pedagogical approaches that respond to local contexts and social realities in which they act. This study underscores the need to integrate Southern epistemologies and research training within into initial teacher education. By doing so, we can nurture a new generation of educators with critical thinking skills capable of effecting significant societal changes. This research contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the decolonization of education and promotes the development of inclusive and contextually relevant educational practices.

KEYWORDS

epistemology of the South, training of researchers, initial teacher training, university, pedagogy

1 Introduction

Currently, one of the most significant challenges in initial teacher training (ITT) in the Latin American context in general, and particularly in Chile, is the implementation of specific actions aimed at achieving quality and social relevance in teacher education (Peña-Sandoval and Venegas-Weber, 2022). This necessarily entails a profound reflection on the political, economic, socio-cultural, curricular, and epistemological aspects, among others, that have underpinned the models used so far for this purpose.

In the opinion of Bigi et al. (2019), initial teacher training (ITT) is a process that should be in constant flux due to the natural dynamism of universities and the variety of components and situations involved in this process. Additionally, there's an obligation to address the range of existing problems in the myriad educational contexts in which teachers will operate in their future professional endeavors. This challenge can only be met through ITT with social relevance, where teachers' reflective capacity, their research skills, and their epistemological training play a fundamental role in understanding the diverse realities they will encounter.

From this perspective, Peña-Sandoval and Venegas-Weber (2022) argue that "Empirical evidence in Chile shows that the quality of ITT depends on the institutional quality of the universities" (p. 88), as well as recognizing another significant group of factors related to the hegemonic models inherited from Eurocentric epistemologies. These models have conditioned the various curricular and educational models that, to date, have silently but powerfully influenced initial teacher education in its various dimensions.

This has led many Latin American teachers, according to authors such as Quijano (2007), De Sousa Santos (2011), Lárez (2012), and Medina (2016), to adopt professional action models focused on the repetition of practices and scripts (often unconsciously) rather than on a professional practice centered on genuine professional praxis. Such praxis allows for the positive transformation of the educational reality, paying attention to contextual needs through the use of research and the application of their investigative skills.

Therefore, from the perspective proposed by De Sousa Santos (2011), it becomes urgent to create new reference models and epistemological frameworks for interpreting reality and giving social relevance to human actions by contextualizing them and allowing the redefinition of their realities based on the progressive awareness of the emergence of these new contextual epistemologies. This implies, as Medina (2020) points out, the need to provide both teachers in initial training and those who train them with the opportunity to situate themselves in time and space, locally. As expressed by Martínez (2013) Gualdieri and Vázquez (2017), it's about providing new ways of knowing, approaching reality, producing and valuing knowledge, and generating new formative instances based on the references of emerging epistemologies from the south.

In this sense, it is relevant, as already pointed out and as noted by Medina (2016), to consider research skills and abilities as

pivotal elements in initial teacher education, using Southern epistemologies as references for constructing new frameworks of rational interpretation of reality. It is deemed imperative to deconstruct Eurocentric epistemologies that have become hegemonic in the Latin American context (including South and Central America) and other developing countries in the African continent, which have served as almost exclusive references for the construction of everyday and scientific knowledge (De Sousa Santos, 2011).

This has overlooked the possibility of generating, as pointed out by Ramírez (2008), Escobar (2010), Meneses (2011), and Medina (2016), new ways of conceiving and interpreting reality, based on regional and local elements and specific contextual aspects. Sometimes, this can lead to constructing a unique approach to specific problematized situations, under emerging methods and methodologies proposed from Latin America, as is the case with the systematization of experiences and other approaches derived from Critical Theory and Pedagogy (Ramírez, 2008). In this vein, Medina (2020) states:

Decolonizing thinking, as part of contemporary social theory, requires understanding the epistemic axes that articulate it in difference. The active participation of certain intellectuals, in which differences, discussions, debates, fractures, and reinventions persist, highlights the heterogeneity of this movement and reaffirms that we cannot properly speak of a single perspective (p. 10).

From this perspective, the relationship between research and pedagogical work become and reconstitute themselves as an inseparable complement to implement educational processes relevant to the realities of educational institutions, their actors, and the various relationships established between them (Núñez et al., 2017; Cervantes, 2019). These give rise to different ontologies that are addressed through the epistemological relationships established between the knowing subject and the object of study. Through the interaction between philosophical categories, represented by the current paradigms for knowledge production and their methods, with operational categories such as methodology, which ultimately constitutes the operationalization of the method and therefore a heuristic category. This provides the teacher in initial training with the possibility to interact with their immediate reality to know it, understand it, analyze it, or transform it as appropriate according to their interests and needs and those of their community (Lárez, 2012; Lárez et al., 2021; Parada et al., 2021).

Therefore, the research problem concerns how the incorporation of this epistemology in the training of researchers in education during initial teacher training would contribute to the development of a more inclusive and contextualized pedagogy (Lárez, 2012; Lárez et al., 2021).

Given the points made in the preceding paragraphs, the objective of this study is to reflect on the importance of considering the

epistemologies of the south and research training as references in the initial teacher training in the Latin American context.

2 Method

This study, given its characteristics, is a documentary research. It was developed under a bibliographic design with a critical-reflective approach, based on the analysis of selected materials concerning the importance of considering southern epistemologies and research training as references in initial teacher training in the Latin American context.

As stated by [Gómez et al. \(2014\)](#), bibliographic review work should allow the researcher to obtain the most relevant information on the topic or field that has become their object of study. This is derived from a universe of documents that can be vast and will require the researchers to have adequate skills in searching, selecting, and reviewing materials. This will enable them to handle the information efficiently to achieve the set objectives.

The corpus used was selected non-probabilistically, using the criteria of convenience and the judgment of the researchers, based on what was proposed by [Muñoz \(2013\)](#) and [Gómez et al. \(2014\)](#). This was done through the use of five (5) databases: ERIC, Education Database; EBSCO; Scopus, and Google Scholar. The descriptors used to compile information were as follows: “southern epistemologies in initial teacher training,” “research in initial teacher training,” “initial teacher training and epistemologies from the south,” “deconstruction of Eurocentric epistemologies and decolonization,” “decolonization of initial teacher training,” and “research skills in initial teacher training.”

The methodology used for the development of this critical-reflective documentary review was structured based on the steps proposed by [Gómez and others \(2014\)](#). They are represented by the following sequence: (a) definition of the problem; (b) information search; (c) organization of information; and (d) analysis of information.

Regarding the techniques for information analysis, content analysis was used. Understood from [Andréu's \(2002\)](#) perspective, it is a technique for interpreting texts, in this case, written ones, which contain information of interest about the study object addressed. When properly and sufficiently analyzed, they provide researchers with knowledge of a specific construct of interest. In our specific case, it was represented by considering southern epistemologies and research as benchmarks for initial teacher training in Latin America.

The content analysis undertaken was operationalized through the development of a methodological sequence consisting of six steps, as outlined by [Fernández \(2002\)](#), and are described as follows: (a) identification of the analysis themes based on the constructs of interest previously established by the researchers; (b) compilation of data from descriptors and the use of selected databases; (c) development of categories and coding scheme, utilizing the constructs of interest selected by the researchers based on the study's objective; (d) application of the coding scheme to a small sample of compiled material; (e) coding of the entire corpus by applying the coding scheme to all compiled and pre-selected documents; and (f) evaluation of coding coherence by checking consistency through processed information. This involved using a data compilation matrix based on the criteria and coding categories employed, allowing for the construction of the presented text.

3 Research and southern epistemologies as new benchmarks for initial teacher training

In its broadest sense, initial teacher training can be defined, according to [García \(2015\)](#), as the “process that allows the future education professional to acquire knowledge, skills, values, and principles to develop the educational teaching process in a specific historical-social and institutional context” (p. 143). In this author's opinion, such training is a complex process that must respond to a set of requirements, ranging from challenges posed by globalization phenomena to the understanding of social change processes, the need for paradigmatic resignification that allows establishing new rational logics to address them, and the adaptation of pedagogical and didactic models that help confront these new contextual realities.

Within this framework of ideas, authors like [García \(2015\)](#) and [Montesi et al. \(2017\)](#) argue that universities are currently concerned about incorporating research into initial teacher training and consider it as one of the fundamental and cross-cutting pillars in their curricula. As [García Canclini \(2017\)](#) maintains, this investigative capacity that aims to be developed in the training teachers seeks to provide them with heuristic tools aimed at continuously strengthening the quality of teaching and the permanent application of pedagogical and didactic principles in interpreting reality. Furthermore, recognizing the transformative power of education, conceiving human beings as socio-cultural beings, intertwined with their contextual conditions, and capable of self-managing them from a critical perspective.

[Montesi et al. \(2017\)](#) believe that research skills are closely related to pedagogy, allowing teachers in initial training to acquire the competencies to reflect on their own practice, with a view to transforming and developing it within a framework of social relevance, within the communities in which they operate. To achieve this, it is essential for the teaching staff to understand each educational reality and the socio-cultural, political, economic, and epistemological elements that converge in them, as well as the practices that have influenced their construction. This necessarily involves proposing real situations that must be addressed from a pedagogy based on scientific evidence and systematically documented under a critical-reflective approach.

In this scenario, the emphasis on initial teacher training should highlight the integration of southern epistemologies and knowledge production as cornerstones for developing research projects and applying procedures linked to the scientific method ([Turpo et al., 2020](#)). This approach would enable the construction of problem-based learning, addressing topics pertinent to the discipline, thereby creating a meaningful connection between students and their prospective work environment.

Hence, the incorporation of research into the curricular plans of pedagogical careers is seen as ideal for achieving evidence-based pedagogy ([Martínez, 2014](#)). This proposition, as [Martínez \(2013\)](#) suggests, should be accompanied by the use of active methodologies, like problem-based learning and the construction of field observation portfolios in pedagogical practices. Such an approach encourages student-teachers to undertake research based on inquiry, grounded in the school environment where they will presently and futurely operate. This strategy fosters the creation of contextualized knowledge and strengthens initial teacher training, deeply aligned with local realities and student needs.

Authors like Escobar (2010), De Sousa Santos (2011), Medina Melgarejo and Baronnet (2013), and Medina (2020), to name a few, concur that Latin American countries possess distinct and specific characteristics resulting from their unique socio-historical processes. Yet, these attributes have not always been acknowledged and embraced by dominant systems. Nonetheless, the dominance of Eurocentric and Anglo-American epistemological models in political, economic, cultural, social, educational, and scientific-technological realms is undeniable (Herrera et al., 2016). Hence, it is imperative for these elements to be incorporated into initial teacher training processes, approached from a holistic, integrative, and critically reflective perspective, as once proposed by Freire (1971).

In this context, De Sousa Santos (2010) and Herrera et al. (2016) assert that from the 1970s, a resurgence was observed in many Latin American countries. This was largely due to multiple scenarios of inequality, exclusion, and attempts to implement new forms of political, economic, and socio-cultural colonialism, among others, in the region. Such factors carved a societal space for introspection and the collective and individual realization of the necessity to contemplate and forge initiatives. These initiatives were aimed at enabling the region to establish platforms for exchange and political management to tackle its escalating challenges.

In this line of thought, Jaramillo (2003), Acevedo Aguirre (2008), González and Villegas (2009), Ghiso (2011), and Cartin (2011), when referring to the emergence of epistemologies from the South, argue that one of the main objectives of this movement was to construct a more inclusive and diverse epistemological approach, one that valued and promoted the plurality of voices, knowledge, and experiences present in Latin America. Such was the intent, to generate new interpretive frameworks and rational logics to the existing ones, enabling an effective approach to the political, economic, cultural, and social challenges that the region faced and still faces today.

In the opinion of Alvarado and García (2008) and De Sousa Santos (2011), these emerging epistemologies represent an opportunity to decolonize thought and construct a more inclusive theoretical and practical horizon, in which local voices and knowledge are recognized and valued, and the protection of the environment is promoted (Rivera, 2011; Infante, 2013; Gutiérrez et al., 2019; Fontaines et al., 2020; Morales et al., 2020). From this perspective, the aforementioned authors maintain that by questioning the Eurocentric epistemological bases, spaces are opened for the construction of contextualized knowledge and for the emancipation of the Latin American peoples in their struggle for social justice, equity, and autonomy. These elements undoubtedly underscore the importance of including references to the epistemologies of the South as part of the initial teacher training curriculum in the Latin American context.

4 Generating new rational frameworks for interpreting reality based on understanding the epistemological relationship as a reference for knowledge production in and from initial teacher training

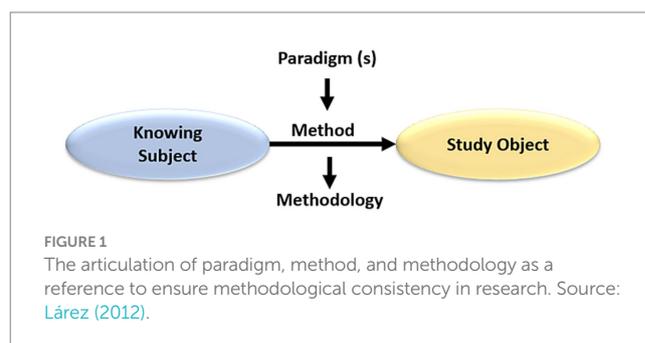
As has been mentioned throughout this study, research and the development of investigative skills in initial teacher training should be considered as part of the curriculum used for teacher education. In

this regard, Muñoz and Garay (2015) argue that “Research in education is an increasingly indispensable process to renew and transform school, teaching, and learning environments, achieving quality in education, that is, meeting the needs of students according to their contexts” (p. 390). In the opinion of these authors, it is through the development of investigative competencies that teachers can identify, understand, deepen, take action, and in many cases create viable solutions to problematic educational situations, as well as specific needs for social transformation.

Authors such as Cochran and Lytle (2009) and Muñoz and Garay (2015) agree that research allows the teacher, both in initial training and in practice, to reflect on their own actions and use educational theory and practice as heuristic tools for emancipation and transformation of reality. This will require, as pointed out by Sobarzo et al. (2021), mastery of the components that establish the epistemological relationship and understanding of the various interactions between them as enhancing elements of the understanding and transformation of reality in general and educational reality in particular (Martínez and Ríos, 2006; Rodríguez, 2009; Cartin, 2011).

Referring to the epistemological relationship, authors like Lárez (2012) and Sobarzo et al. (2021) contend that the relationship between the knowing subject (represented in our case by the teacher in initial training) and the object of study (materialized through the study of different educational realities and their various components) is only possible through the method chosen for this purpose. This method is related to a higher epistemological category, represented by the paradigm, but also by a heuristic category below the method corresponding to the methodology. These relationships and interactions can be clearly observed in Figure 1, which is shown below.

From the perspective presented in the preceding paragraphs, it is important to note, as pointed out by Jaramillo (2003) and Martínez and Ríos (2006), that a clear understanding of the primary epistemological issues associated with the field of research and knowledge production in educational research related to FID ties to several fundamental aspects. These are: (a) the epistemological dimension (represented by the relationship established between the teacher as the knowing subject and the object of study); (b) the ontological dimension (depicting the nature of reality that becomes the teacher's object of study); (c) the axiological dimension (referring to the values present in the teacher-researcher and in the subjects of study when they become the object of study); (d) the teleological dimension (represented by the purpose and uses the teacher will apply to the research results); and (e) the methodological dimension (depicted by the methodology (techniques, instruments, and



procedures) through which the teacher-researcher realizes the investigative process, transitioning from the epistemological categories (paradigm and method) to the operational category represented by the research methodology).

5 Training of educational researchers within the framework of initial teacher training

The training of researchers within the framework of Initial Teacher Training (FIT), is seen by [Muño and Garay \(2015\)](#) as not only an urgent need but also a means to the development and refinement of the teaching profession. Referring to the importance of training researchers, [Cochran and Lytle \(2009\)](#) highlight that the development of skills, abilities, and values associated with consolidating investigative competencies from the early stages of teacher training could yield immeasurable benefits.

These benefits are not only for future teachers but also for educational systems and organizations. After all, a teacher is essentially a decision-maker whose research skills could enhance the generation of data, information, and knowledge, serving as a foundation for evidence-based decision-making.

For [Cochran and Lytle \(2009\)](#), “the idea of using research findings in the classroom is linked to professional development programs and teacher professionalization strategies, to school and curriculum improvement seeking structured and organized changes” (p. 4). However, it’s also related to making informed decisions about aspects such as educational leadership, curriculum, institutional management, and handling the uncertainty that characterizes the current educational contexts at global, regional, national, and local levels.

In this same vein, [Compagnucci and Cardós \(2007\)](#) argue that integrating research into initial training processes allows educators to timely hone their skills for reflecting on their pedagogical actions. This creates a space for their professional growth through reviewing their professional knowledge, represented by their way of being and existing within the profession. This review is done through a critical and questioning lens on knowledge, how it’s generated, how it’s used, and the epistemology (or epistemologies) upon which its production and interpretation are based, as well as the realities in which they are immersed.

This is where one of the junctures at which research in Initial Teacher Training intersects with the knowledge of epistemologies from the South. It acts as a structuring, articulating, and cross-cutting element in teacher training and a heuristic tool for understanding the Latin American contextual reality.

This is seen through the deconstruction ([Derrida, 2005](#)) and decolonization of the main references that have conditioned the initial teacher training curriculum. Its foundations are deeply rooted in and from Eurocentric epistemologies that shape the understanding and interpretation of reality.

In this context, authors like [Martínez \(2020\)](#) urge initial training teachers to “decolonize” reason, language, the theoretical-practical interpretation of history, social reproduction from the standpoint of leaving its economic root, and the developmental models that have harmed both the environment and human beings. They also call for redefining epistemic sources to reframe and generate new benchmarks for reality interpretation.

While it’s true that the aforementioned elements contain, in the opinion of the authors of this study, a touch of utopia, it’s crucial that within the Initial Teacher Training curriculum, methodological pathways are developed. These pathways should contribute in the medium and long term to actualizing these accomplishments around refining the teaching and learning of research and developing investigative competencies in teachers.

Authors such as [Lárez \(2012\)](#), [Perazzi and Celman \(2017\)](#), and [Núñez et al. \(2017\)](#) argue that currently, it’s vital to reflect on the didactic aspects of teaching and learning research in order to generate methodologies, strategies, techniques, and didactic sequences that promote the development of research skills in initial teacher training. This necessarily means understanding the nature, not only of the investigative process from the epistemological and methodological perspectives, but also the distinguishing features of the contents in conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal orders, and the features of methodological strategies that allow their integration and lead to the development and consolidation of research competencies in teachers.

In this vein, [Sotomayor \(2019\)](#) emphasizes, when referring to Initial Teacher Training processes, the importance of systematizing the evidence derived from research on formative processes. This is to integrate it into the teaching of courses and to generate specific didactics for the development of research content. All with the purpose of promoting conditions that allow for the construction of genuine meaningful learning around the true development of skills and abilities in such a specific area as research; but also in cross-cutting aspects related to the development of critical thinking and basic and higher mental processes associated with scientific thinking in the social and natural sciences.

Below is [Table 1](#), which synthetically includes some methodologies and activities recommended by [Núñez et al. \(2017\)](#), [Perazzi and Celman \(2017\)](#) and [Claure \(2019\)](#) for teaching and learning research.

The use of active methodologies has a positive impact on students’ perception, learning, and grading, allowing them to acquire research skills applied to relevant educational topics and related to their future jobs. By linking research with pedagogy, options for addressing educational problems with methodological support are expanded. However, it should be noted that the use of these methodologies also presents challenges, especially in terms of the time required to implement the procedures associated with each method.

Based on the elements discussed throughout this work, it is clear that the Epistemologies of the South result, on the one hand, from the process of deconstructing Eurocentric Epistemologies, as well as from colonization processes. On the other hand, they represent an effort to generate new systems of knowledge production and management, centered on paradigms, methods, and methodologies alternative to traditional ones. These aim to respond to the contextual conditions specific to a significant group of Central American, South American, Caribbean, and other continents’ countries, such as African countries. Despite being dominated by hegemonic Eurocentric epistemologies and considered by them as developing countries or belonging to the third world, these nations have been able to create new reference systems to meet their particular needs and oppose the notion of self-assumed and self-declared superiority by traditional Eurocentric Epistemologies ([Meneses, 2016](#)).

From this perspective, as [Barrios \(2019\)](#) points out, the emergence of Epistemologies of the South not only allows for the creation of new rational, relational, interactive, and understanding

TABLE 1 Active methodologies suggested to enhance learning of research in education in initial teacher training.

Methodology	Operational dimension for its execution	Reported results of its application
Feedback methodology	Implemented through formative assessment applied to all practical assignments of the subject, providing written or oral feedback as appropriate in synchronous or asynchronous time.	Students have shown a positive reception and appreciation for having consistent guidance in the construction of their research. It also helps improve student grades in summative assessment.
Research-based learning methodology	This is implemented through the construction of a research preliminary project in the format of a scientific article. This is done under the umbrella of either the quantitative or qualitative paradigm, with the freedom to choose the type of research and theme associated with one of the research lines or areas of the student's major.	Students have given a positive response, expressing that the dynamics of the classes, which consist of conceptual aspects intrinsic to the research methodology, are immediately put into practice in the development of research that is structured step by step.
Research-based learning methodology	It is implemented through the construction of a research pre-project in the format of a scientific article, which is developed under the umbrella of the quantitative or qualitative paradigm, having the freedom to choose the type of research and topic associated with one of the research lines or areas of the degree program being studied.	On the part of the students, a positive response has been obtained, expressing that the dynamics of the classes, which include conceptual aspects of research methodology, are immediately put into practice in the development of research that is structured step by step.

Source(s): Own creation with information adapted from Perazzi and Celman (2017) and Núñez et al. (2017).

logics of reality but also serves as a tool for interpreting these anthropological, sociological, and natural characteristics in a contextualized manner. According to its actors, this interpretation requires a knowledge production model rooted in the local, historical, and even moral context, which entirely escapes the prevailing models for the production of dominant scientific knowledge. It calls for alternative methodologies for knowledge production from a distinct epistemological, ontological, axiological, and teleological standpoint, based on praxeology, dialectics, and the interplay between action-reflection-action as determining elements in transforming reality socially.

Unlike traditional Eurocentric Epistemologies, this new epistemological proposal acknowledges the need not only to promote but also to value knowledge that, from the perspective of hegemonic epistemologies, was deemed non-scientific. It emphasizes the necessity of recognizing as valid the various practices of social classes and groups whose ancestral knowledge and wisdom generation should be equally respected. This approach gives rise to a plurality of knowledge (everyday knowledge, ancestral knowledge, peasant knowledge, among others), which, when approached from alternative epistemological perspectives, can be considered alongside scientific knowledge. They can serve as references for the interpretation and reinterpretation of reality.

Within the framework outlined, it is evident that achieving such objectives requires a robust research-oriented training for teachers. This is not only due to the role education plays in social change processes and the construction of citizenship but also because of the relationship between the quality of education and the initial teacher training received (Vega, 2022). According to this author, the quality of teacher training is associated with the conceptual, practical, and professional dimensions. These dimensions are, in turn, linked to the mastery of the teaching discipline, the ability to plan, execute, and evaluate the teaching and learning process, and the command of research tools to reflect on one's own practice, understand the environment, and engage in educational praxis with social relevance and possibilities for social transformation.

In this frame of reference, the Epistemologies of the South not only enable the creation of new social spaces for transforming educational practices and implementing alternative methodologies for the production of contextualized knowledge but also provide an opportunity to visualize and re-signify traditional, popular, peasant knowledge, among others, as alternative but equally valid knowledge. This is due to the contributions they can make to improving the quality of life and enhancing a better understanding of the world. It favors the adoption of new worldviews alternative to Eurocentric epistemologies that have been considered hegemonic in the fields of natural and social sciences and education.

The ideas presented undoubtedly constitute just one element contributing to the debate on potential interactions. These ideas, based on the concepts discussed, could serve as a reference for a deeper exploration from an epistemological, research-oriented, and educational standpoint. This exploration would serve as a guide for updating the social, ethical, political, and curricular aspects that serve as a reference for teacher education in Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and even in some countries in the African continent, whose characteristics are similar to the Latin American context.

6 Discussion and conclusion

Initial teacher training is a complex, comprehensive, and integrative process that requires careful planning and execution within a quality framework. This framework should provide future teachers with a set of heuristic tools that allow them to reflect on their professional praxis and understand their contextual reality. The aim is to positively transform it through actions with social relevance, oriented toward the collective well-being and improving the quality of life of the population.

From this perspective, both research training and epistemological reflection on the Eurocentric foundations that have permeated the understanding of Latin American social reality to date are challenges. These foundations have limited the construction of new forms of

reality interpretation from a unique contextual viewpoint, designed by and for the South. These challenges are part of the broader goal of achieving true emancipation through the deconstruction of Eurocentric and hegemonic thinking established from the colonization and imperialization processes of Latin American countries by Europe and North America.

To achieve this goal, it is essential to strengthen the critical thinking of teachers from the outset of their initial training. This can be done by developing research competencies and creating social spaces that promote reflection and the construction of new forms of rationality and knowledge interpretation. These new forms should prioritize the understanding of the regional and local without losing sight of the global perspective.

The current Latin American moment demands its actors to look beyond the obvious and create spaces for recognition, mediated by new epistemologies from and for the South. This will allow us as citizens to recognize ourselves and others from a perspective of respect and understanding the various contexts and cultures in the region. To do this, it is imperative to understand the role of education and educators in building new realities based on the real needs of our societies.

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Author contributions

MP, JL, and ÓV-G: information seeking and writing and critical review. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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