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Decolonizing inclusive education: A collection of practical inclusive CDS- and DisCrit-informed teaching practices implemented in the global South

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In this paper, we present a collection of decolonizing inclusive practices for elementary education that we have found effective when implementing them in postcolonial countries. The choice and implementation of such practices was informed by the intersectional and interdisciplinary theoretical framework of Critical Disability Studies (CDS) and Disability Critical Race Theory in Education (DisCrit), and guided by decolonizing methodologies and community-based participatory research (CBPR). The main purpose of this paper is to show how critical theoretical frameworks can be made accessible to practitioners through strategies that can foster a critical perspective of inclusive education in postcolonial countries. By doing so, we attempt to push back against the uncritical transfer of inclusion models into Southern countries, which further puts pressure on practitioners to imitate the Northern values of access, acceptance, participation, and academic achievement (Werning et al., 2016). Finally, we hope to start an international dialogue with practitioners, families, researchers, and communities committed to inclusive education in postcolonial countries to critically analyze the application of the strategies illustrated here, and to continue decolonizing contemporary notions of inclusive education.

Keywords: Critical Disability Studies (CDS); Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory (DisCrit); Inclusive Education; Decolonizing Methodology; Teacher Education

Introduction

Globally, inclusive education has been recognized as one of the best principles to address issues of equity and diversity, and it is seen as the hallmark of service provision for all children, particularly those with disabilities (Ainscow et al., 2006). Twenty-five years since the Salamanca Statement (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994), when inclusive education was proposed as being central to the development of an inclusive society, it has been endorsed by various international agencies and national governments (Hodkinson, 2009; Migliarini et al., 2019). While inclusive education is present

worldwide, inclusion is still a contested notion, one that influences education policies of countries around the globe, and one that is supported through national and international policy making (Artiles & Dyson, 2005). The lack of clarity around the concepts of inclusion, complicates efforts to aggregate and synthesize the knowledge of how best to implement inclusive practices. Consequently, teachers and educators express increasing frustration when having to adopt inclusive education in their contexts, within and beyond nations in the global South¹ (Migliarini et al., 2019; Migliarini & Stinson, 2020; Elder & Kuja, 2018).

Inclusive education promises to change attitudes and create the ground for a just and non-discriminatory society (UNESCO, 2009), benefitting all children, and to be both cost-efficient and cost-effective (Peters, 2003). These promises derive from discourses and empirical studies in Northern countries that often do not take the realities of other contexts into account. Significant financial, social, and educational barriers, as well as colonial legacies perpetuate inequities around the world, posing serious challenges to educational stakeholders who intend to keep the promises of inclusive education. In particular, the drafting of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs (UNESCO, 1994) has contributed to transfer the Northern conceptualization of inclusive education to the goals and requirements of Southern countries (Werning et al., 2016) or to Southern subjects within Eurocentric and postcolonial education systems (citation removed for anonymous review; citation removed for anonymous review). The direct transfer and application of experiences and knowledge produced in the context of Northern nations to the rest of the world is problematic, particularly if such applications have not been adapted to both local historical and cultural contexts (Singal & Muthukrishna, 2014). Often, these uncritical transfers have led to teachers experiencing frustration over the practice of inclusive education, and in some cases to them thinking that ‘inclusion sets students up for failure’ (Migliarini & Stinson, 2020).

This ‘practitioner paper’ is especially directed at, but not limited to educators, school professionals, families, researchers, and communities committed to inclusive education, with the hope of offering them additional perspectives in their struggle to advocate for grassroots changes around inclusive education. Thus, in this paper, we shed light on how intersectional frameworks, such as Critical Disability Studies (CDS) and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) can be bridged together and put into practice through decolonizing methodologies and community-based participatory research (CBPR). While the authors are cognizant of a number of successful strategies that can be implemented in the light of the above frameworks and methodology, this paper focuses on inclusive practices that help families of disabled children getting educated about their rights; facilitate the creation of a person-centered planning once the student is able to start accessing inclusive education; and provide ideas for inclusive communities and for different academic strategies. Given our decolonial purpose of this contribution, we offer ourselves as objects of scrutiny and criticism, exposing our privileges and the power we hold as white North American and European educators and researchers. As such, we take our positionalities very seriously in the endeavor to avoid uncritical North-South

transfer of inclusive strategies. In this paper, we reiterate the importance of grounding the considered practices to a specific educational context in authentic ways.

The research questions that have guided us in the process of putting together this collection of strategies are:

1. What theoretical and practical strategies for inclusion can be applied in the global South?
2. What impact may these practical strategies have, and how can they be enriched in the global South?

We begin this paper by analyzing the affordances of CDS and DisCrit for decolonizing inclusive education. This is followed by statements of our positionalities which we acknowledge have informed the inclusive strategies we present. We organize the inclusive strategies in three sections: (1) connecting families to legal resources; (2) adopting person-centered planning; and (3) employing school-based practices. In the last section, we highlight the implications for the application of such strategies, while inviting for a reconsideration of inclusion through decolonial, intersectional and interdisciplinary lenses.

Theoretical Frameworks

The main purpose of this practitioner paper is to show practitioners inclusive practices that are informed and guided by intersectional critical frameworks, specifically CDS and DisCrit. These frameworks help us recognize the complexities involved in engaging in transnational disability rights and social justice research in global education systems. This section highlights briefly the core principles of CDS (Goodley, 2011; Grech, 2011; Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011) and the tenets of DisCrit (Annamma, et al., 2013). We follow this section with an exploration of how these theories weave in with the inclusive strategies chosen.

Critical Disability Studies (CDS)

Foundational to CDS is recognizing that over 75-percent of the world's population has had their lives impacted by colonialism, with the other 25-percent being the colonizers (Meekosha, 2011). We feel it is important to frame this work through a colonial perspective because: 1. most of the world has been colonized (Meekosha, 2011); 2. the ramifications of colonization sustain even if a country is 'post' colonial (Hall, 1990); and 3. disabled bodies are colonized by able-bodied people through capitalism and globalization around the world (Meekosha, 2011).

According to Goodley (2011:157), CDS scholars begin with disability, but they locate disability as the 'space from which to think through a host of political, theoretical and practical issues

that are relevant to all,' which we strongly believe includes access to inclusive education. Critical Disability Studies allows scholars and practitioners to reject oversimplified understandings of disability and disability studies, like the social versus medical models of disability, British disability studies versus North American disability studies, and disability versus impairment (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). It allows scholars and practitioners to focus on the issues that really impact the daily realities of disabled people's lives in the global South, including educational realities. As Whyte and Ingstad (2007:11) stated, CDS scholars 'are interested in people's own experiences of what is disabling in their world rather than in some universal definition'. As it pertains to education, what may be disabling to a child in the global South could be the stigma surrounding disability that has resulted in them being hidden at home by their parents, or living in a 'special school' away from their families due to a specific disability (Elder & Kuja, 2018).

To better understand disability in the global South, a CDS-informed participatory and context-driven approach, 'allows for the formation of a full and inclusive idea of citizenship, one radical and yet every day in its appreciation of the real value of disabled lives' (Barker & Murray, 2010: 234). This notion of participatory citizenship also includes access to education at all levels in postcolonial countries, which can push back against the uncritical transfer of Western understandings of inclusive education and disability to the global South. This uncritical transfer has historically been done 'with minimal attention paid to cultures, context and histories, and rarely responsive or even acknowledging Southern voices, perspectives and theories that have been developing as a counter discourse' (Grech & Soldatic, 2014:1). Applying CDS in classrooms in the global South acknowledges the larger systems of oppression that impact the students in those classrooms like neo/post/colonialism, capitalism, globalization, and neoliberalism (Grech, 2011; Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011), and allows for new and community-based understandings of how CDS-informed inclusive education practices can emerge, evolve, and be sustained in the global South (Elder & Odoyo, 2018).

Applying CDS in educational settings in the global South, allows practitioners to deconstruct colonizing practices in education, through which we have applied decolonizing methodologies, as outlined by Smith (1999), to our own work in the global South. To do this, it means centering the perspectives and interests of students with disabilities in schools in the global South (Elder & Kuja, 2018). Enacting decolonizing methods also includes: conducting research in the local language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), promoting local ways of knowing, and encouraging local participants to direct the research (Smith, 1999). Such researchers and practitioners also must take an active role in performing decolonizing acts that focus on social justice activism (Smith, 1999; Warrior, 1995). Additionally, we view community-based approaches to inquiry as not only a method for this work, but also a useful theoretical lens through which to view inclusive education. In particular, we find work that is rooted in CBPR as useful in thinking about how to engage stakeholders in the inclusive education reform process. Such projects emphasize community collaboration and maintain collaborative practices with the goal of taking actions

that have clear and immediate application to local communities (Stanton, 2014).

Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) in education

In order to center the voices of marginalized communities and promote a critical view of inclusion in the global South, this paper draws also on the intersectional DisCrit framework (Annamma, Connor and Ferri, 2013). DisCrit exposes the fault lines in the ableist and deficit-oriented perspectives of disability-naming the social construction of disability in order to illustrate the multiple dimensions of disability and disability's interconnections with race and other socially constructed identities (e.g. class, gender, and sexual diversity). It helps in recognizing humanity in a more nuanced sense, highlighting the 'multiple dimensions of individuals and the systems of oppression and marginalization in which they survive, resist and thrive' (Connor, Ferri and Annamma, 2016:2). This convergent analytical framework has significant implications for inclusive education in the global South, precisely because it emphasizes the experiences of oppression of marginalized communities, and it focuses on how to help others view these cultures and traditions of those communities as valuable as they already are.

There are seven tenets of DisCrit that support our argument for rethinking inclusion in postcolonial terms. Each of the tenets unearths why curriculum, pedagogy, and school discipline are conceptualized in hegemonic ways, and how they can be reimaged in generative ways for students and teachers (Annamma & Morrison, 2018). The first tenet of DisCrit focuses on how racism and ableism are normal and interdependent (Collins, 2011). These processes are systemic and interpersonal and are often rendered invisible, in order to restrict notions of normalcy and to marginalize those perceived as 'different' in society and schools (Connor, et al., 2016). Consequently, once a child is perceived and labeled as different from the 'norm,' they can be constructed as less capable in academics and behavior.

Second, DisCrit scholars value multidimensional identities and trouble single notions of identity, such as race *or* disability *or* sexuality. Scholars of DisCrit acknowledge how experiences with stigma, discipline and segregation often vary, based on other identity markers intersecting with race and disability (i.e. gender, language, class), and how this negotiation of multiple stigmatized identities adds complexities. Multiply-marginalized students (i.e. those living at the intersections of multiple identities), have a clear sense of the mutually constitutive processes of oppression and how these processes are visible within dysfunctional systems of behavior and classroom management. Inclusive education in the global South needs to be framed according to the lived experiences of oppression of the marginalized communities themselves, without imposing a Westernized model of practices.

Third, DisCrit scholars reject the understanding of both race and disability as primarily

biological facts, and recognize the social construction of both as society's response to 'differences' from the 'norm.' Simultaneously, DisCrit scholars acknowledge that these categories hold profound significance in people's lives. Fourth, scholars of DisCrit, privilege voices of multiply-marginalized students and communities, those traditionally not acknowledged in research (Matsuda, 1987). This recognition, positions multiply-marginalized students as knowledge-generators, capable of naming interlocking oppressions and creating solutions to those systemic and interpersonal inequities. Thus, the implementation of inclusive practices should be rooted in local communities' perspectives and perception of needs.

Fifth, DisCrit requires that scholars consider how, historically and legally, whiteness and ability have been used to deny rights to those who have been constructed as raced and disabled (Valencia, 1997). Historically, education has been used to eradicate difference, such as in Indigenous boarding schools wherein discipline was used as a way to punish children for cultural ways of knowing, and practices rooted in Indigenous histories (Margolis, 2004). These colonizing projects were not only legal, they were encouraged by the government. Hence, schools have always been a place to sort and fix certain students, 'curing' them of their problematic behavior. This tenet is crucial for disrupting the often neocolonial projects underpinning inclusive education in the global South, and it is required to build a radical solidarity with local communities and educational stakeholders.

Sixth, DisCrit requires that scholars recognize whiteness and ability as 'property,' conferring rights to those that claim those statuses and disadvantaging those who are unable to access them (Adams & Erevelles, 2016). Thus, when students are positioned as less desirable, they are barred access to engaging and accurate curriculum, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and relationships that are authentic (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). By using more traditional and Northern educational practices, which are often rooted in coercive relations of power and detached from indigenous culture, teachers participate in reproducing exclusion and inequality for marginalized population.

These tenets highlight the importance of resisting the status quo, that implies centering the ideal citizen and often segregating the unwanted into spaces less public (Tenet Seven) (Erevelles, 2014). They also expose how multiply-marginalized communities resist white supremacy and new forms of colonialism in a myriad of ways, and thus, work rooted in DisCrit commits to recognizing the values and gifts of such communities (Annamma, 2018; DuBois, 1924).

As authors of this collection of practical inclusive strategies, who are deeply influenced by the frameworks outlined above, we believe that is essential to be intentional in how we apply them, while simultaneously reflecting critically on the privileges we hold. Thus, in the following section, we present our positionality statements.

Positionality

Central to Northern academics engaging in transnational research in the global South and beyond, is our recognition of our positionality. We are not from the global South, and do not speak for disabled people who are from such locations. However, we are experienced sociological researchers with backgrounds in disability rights and inclusive education in the United States and Italy, respectively. We consider ourselves allies of the disability community and feel we can leverage our privilege stemming from our academic positions to support disabled people in gaining effective access to inclusive education around the world.

Brent's positionality is inherently tied to Northern perspectives on disability and education. As a result of this reality, acknowledging his location is critical. Because of his privileges as a white, educated, able-bodied, academic, non-colonized, cis-male, he has no desire to speak for colonized people. However, he believes transnational collaboration is important so that historically marginalized and colonized people have allies committed to decolonizing practices outside of their respective communities (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). Aware of such privileges, Brent understands that his positionality allows him to engage in such work, but only through his own partial lens. Through his research, he actively critiques how his work may perpetuate neocolonial, oppressive, or marginalizing systems. His hope is that his disabled students, their families, and others in the disability community view him as an ally who centers their lived experiences of disability in his work, and as one who actively values their local ways of knowing. While his positionality as an outsider is unavoidable since his epistemological foundations come from his experiences in the Northern academy, he does have extensive experience conducting transnational CBPR and decolonizing research around the world.

The famous poem *Sono uno del Mediterraneo* by Italian writer and migration activist Erri De Luca (2014) reads: '[I]'m one from the Mediterranean, which is not South or North, it is not East nor West. It is the liquid stomach between Asia, Africa and Europe. Those who are born on one of its coasts have in their blood an archipelago of people' (translated from Italian by Valentina). Born and raised in the heart of the Mediterranean for a significant part of her life, Valentina's positionality resonates with De Luca's words. However, Valentina's constructions of dis/ability, diversity and education are tied to Western conceptualizations. As a white, able-bodied, non-colonized, young academic, ciswoman, she holds more significant privileges than the colonized and migrant communities populating the schools where she has worked. Valentina is also a working single mother of a mixed-raced child within a patriarchal, racist, heteronormative society. This helped her in gaining a better understanding of the multiple forms of oppression that colonized and marginalized subjects face. Through her research, she has attempted to build trust with multiply-marginalized students by spending time with them and interviewing them multiple times, by adopting transparent research methods, by being authentic in sharing findings, and by acknowledging her own biases.

Strategy selection

As previously stated, this practitioner paper adopts a ‘non-normative’ format, as it is primarily written with practitioners, families, researchers, and communities committed to inclusive education, in mind. While the paper does not include a formal methodology section, we provide a justification for the choice of inclusive strategies presented here. The selected inclusive practices are informed by intersectional and interdisciplinary frameworks such as CDS and DisCrit, and we have adopted and successfully implemented them within postcolonial countries at primary school levels. While we are not under the assumption that the educational strategies presented in this section are the only or best ways to promote inclusive practices, they are, however, the inclusive resources we have come to value through our own teaching experiences.²

We also realize that the strategies we present here are not exhaustive, and that there are many more tools that may be successful in creating sustainable inclusive education systems. We encourage readers to explore these inclusive practices, to critically question their appropriateness for their particular setting, to modify them as needed, or choose not to use them if they are not a good fit for their classroom or personal situation.

Inclusive strategies

What we present below are inclusive strategies that we have used, and that we have found to be particularly successful in: (1) connecting families to legal resources, (2) adopting person-centered planning; and (3) employing school-based practices.

Family engagement

We begin with inclusive strategies that promote family engagement because we strongly believe that: (1) students with disabilities have a right to grow up in their families (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [UNCRPD], 2006, art. XXIII), (2) students have a right to attend the school they would normally attend in the absence of a disability (UNCRPD, 2006, art. XXIV), and (3) access to inclusive education is a basic and universal human right (Damiani et al., 2016; Elder et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2009). While we acknowledge that a universal approach to human rights can be seen as neocolonial (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2016; de Sousa Santos, 2008), we believe that giving people the language and resources through which to advocate for educational justice can be transformative for people with disabilities and their families. Additionally, families of children with disabilities and people with disabilities are the experts of their own situations, and should be treated as such (Forest et al., 1996). Centering the lived experiences of those with disabilities and their families is also central when working with CDS (Barker & Murray, 2010; Meekosha, 2011; Whyte &

Ingstad, 2007) and DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013) frameworks. When it comes to disability, however, families and people with disabilities may not understand their rights when it comes to advocating for and gaining access to inclusive education as they may have never had access to education in the first place. In other words, such people fall outside the ‘global sphere of justice’, and are not able to access their rights (Soldatic, 2013: 745). This requires that families have access to information about the domestic and international laws that mandate inclusive education. In the following section, we provide a tool that families and practitioners can access in order to get a better understanding of what the disability-related legal requirements are for their specific country context.

Legal resources for families and people with disabilities

It is important for families to know that they do not need to debate whether or not their child with a disability should be included with their age- and grade-appropriate- peers. Using a legal foundation to make the case for inclusion moves the conversation from ‘*Can we include this student?*’ to ‘*How can we include this student?*’ When engaging school personnel in rights-based discussions on inclusive education in postcolonial countries, Brent has found it useful to start with citing domestic and international legal mandates, and state that the objective of such discussions is not to debate if inclusive education should be allowed, but rather how to make it happen (Elder & Kuja, 2018; Elder & Odoyo, 2018). He has also found the formation of inclusion committees where local inclusive education stakeholders come together to make such conversations about accessing education rights, culturally relevant and contextually appropriate. This is one concrete example of one community that kept disability at the center of a global discourse on human rights keep in order to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities (Bickenbach, 2009; Damiani et al., 2016). Since 2000, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) (2019) has been compiling a list of all country-based laws that protect people with disabilities, including laws that mandate inclusive education. Some of these laws are in country-specific constitutions, while other laws are mandated by countries that have ratified the UNCRPD (2006). A sampling of countries on each continent are represented in the DREDF (2019) legal database.

Person-centered planning

While people with disabilities and their families learn about their domestic and international legal rights to inclusive education in their respective countries, they can simultaneously learn about foundational communicative and collaborative inclusive strategies, like person-centered planning, which aligns with disability-centric tenets of CDS (Barker & Murray, 2010; Meekosha, 2011) and DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013). As it pertains to CDS, a person-centered approach to inclusive education reminds people that disabled bodies do matter, and takes into account the ways in which disabled bodies interact with their surroundings (Goodley, 2011). There are many different approaches to person-centered planning, but for the purposes of this

paper, we focus on the McGill Action Planning System (MAPS) (Vandercook et al., 1989) in order to give readers an in-depth example to one approach to this type of planning.

The MAPS process is based on six foundational understandings which are: (1) all students are members of an age- and grade-appropriate general education classroom; (2) general educators can and do teach all students; (3) social and academic supports will be provided inclusively; (4) inclusive education is a right, not a privilege to be earned; (5) all students can be successful and graduate; and (6) teachers will create alternatives for learning for students who learn in non-traditional ways (Forest et al., 1996). Brent has found the MAPS process foundational to the development of any inclusive education plan both in the U.S. and in postcolonial countries.

Forest et al. (1996) suggest the MAPS process includes the following components: (1) the meeting is recorded graphically (i.e. main points recorded on chart paper); (2) the meeting is held in a welcoming environment (i.e. any place that is comfortable and preferred for the person with a disability, their family, and their support network); (3) key stakeholders are present (i.e. the person with a disability and anyone who cares about them); (4) main issues are addressed (i.e. educational strengths and needs); (5) a concrete plan is developed (i.e. what do we do tomorrow? Next week? Next month? In six months?); and (6) a follow-up meeting is scheduled in order to check on the progress of the action plan. The meeting should be facilitated by someone who is familiar with the MAPS process and who is comfortable leading meetings (e.g. the special education teacher). There should also be a scribe to write down group ideas as they arise. Table 1 outlines the seven main questions that MAPS process.

Table 1: Guiding Questions of the MAPS Process. Questions adapted from Vandercook et al. (1989).

1. What is the individual's history?
2. What is your dream for the individual?
3. What is your nightmare for the individual?
4. Who is the individual?
5. What are the individual's strengths, gifts, and abilities?
6. What are the individual's needs?

7. What would the individual's ideal day at school look like, and what must be done to make it happen?

At the conclusion of a MAPS, the result should be an in-depth, strength-based understanding of who the students with a disability are, what their strengths and needs are, and how they will be anticipated and supported in their future inclusive schools. Once the plan of action is developed, the inclusive education team can focus on ways to support the student through a variety of school-based inclusive strategies that include: (1) community building strategies, and (2) academic instructional strategies. These school-based inclusive strategies are the subject of the next sections. As noted in the *Strategy Selection* section above, the steps we outline of the MAPS are not intended to be prescriptive, and we encourage practitioners to critically question their appropriateness for their particular setting, to modify them as needed, or choose not to use them if they are not a good fit for their classroom or personal situation.

School-based inclusive strategies

As inclusive educators, we believe it is important to be intentional about implementing strategies that develop and foster a sense of community in classrooms. In order for disability to be considered a positive aspect of diversity (Linton, 2005, 2006), students with and without disabilities need to share the same instructional space and learn from, with, and about one another.

Community-building strategies

One way to develop a sense of belonging in classrooms is through a variety of community-building strategies that can be implemented utilizing existing school resources (e.g., strategies that do not require resources). According to Elder et al., (2015), teachers in western Kenya found a variety of community-building strategies to be useful in creating inclusive classrooms. These strategies are listed and explained in Table 2.

Table 2: Inclusive Community-Building Strategies

Community-Building Strategy	Explanation of the Strategy
Home Groups- This is adapted from the peer teaching strategy (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a good strategy for getting students into familiar groups quickly and easily. • Count off by 4.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 1s group with 1s, 2s group with 2s, 3s group with 3s, etc.● In your Home Group do the following things:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Come up with a group name that represents a piece of the group culture.○ Come up with a group handshake.○ Come up with a group slogan (it has to be positive and non-competitive).○ Be prepared to share with the whole group.
Cultural Artifact Share (Momaday & Leong, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students bring in a cultural artifact that represents their family culture in some way.● The only rule is that it has to be something that the students already have at home.● Students share with the class, and the audience asks questions and makes comments.
Jigsaw (Udvari-Solner & Kluth, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Count off by _____ to get people into _____ separate table groups (the number will depend on the activity)● Explain that each table group will become an ‘expert’ on instructional strategies for a certain category of disability● Group 1: strategies for accommodating students with physical disabilities; Group 2: visual disabilities, Group 3: hearing disabilities; Group 4: intellectual disabilities/learning disabilities, etc.● Each group comes up with a list of instructional strategies that would be beneficial to students with their assigned disability label● Encourage teachers to think of on-the-spot modifications as well as how to plan for these students from the outset● Group 1 has 3 minutes to share their strategies with Group 3, then Group 3 has 3 minutes to share their strategies with Group 1● Groups rotate until everyone has everyone else’s information● Students take notes as groups report their ‘expertise’

For more information on inclusive community building strategies found to be successful in Kenya, see (Elder et al., 2015).

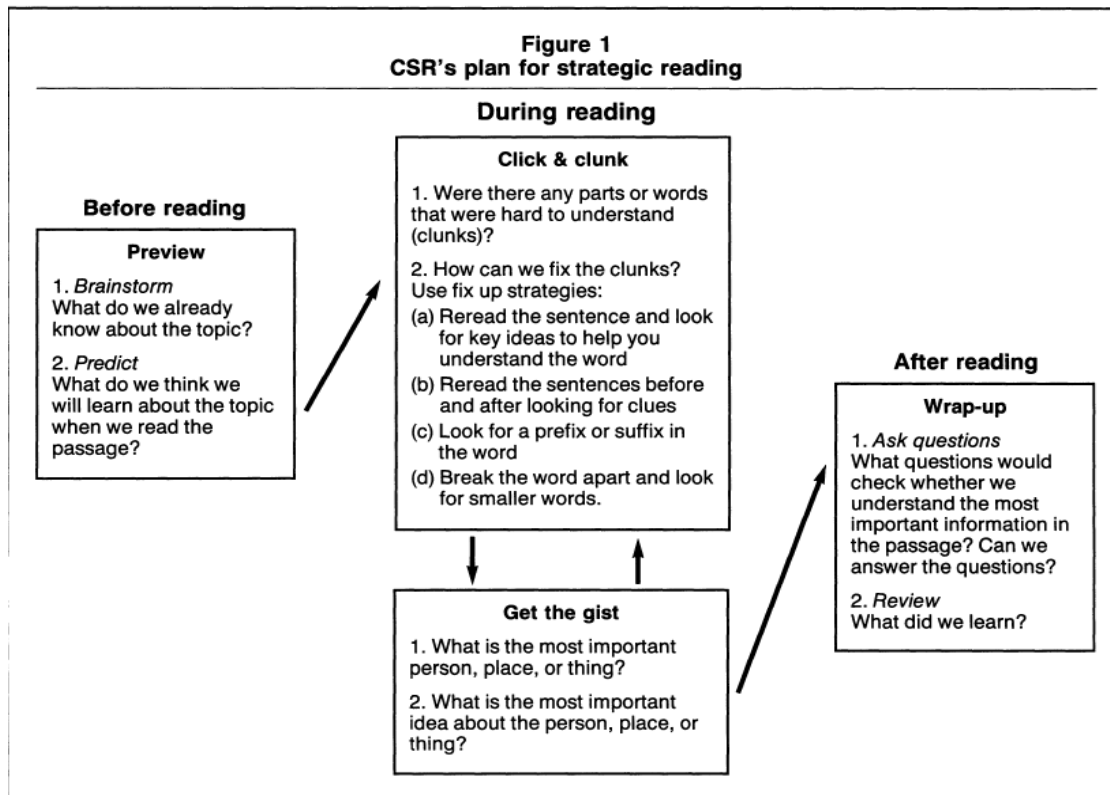
Inclusive Reading Strategies

This section presents an inclusive reading approach which has been shown to be successful for the academic achievement of all students, particularly students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999) is an inclusive strategy to promote reading comprehension, content learning, and English acquisition. It combines two instructional approaches: (1) reading comprehension strategy instruction (e.g. Palincsar & Brown, 1984) and (2) cooperative learning (e.g. Johnson & Johnson, 1989). In CSR, students of mixed reading and achievement levels work in small, cooperative groups to assist one another in applying four reading strategies to facilitate their comprehension of content area text.

Collaborative Strategic Reading combines reading comprehension and assessment of comprehension in inclusive classroom settings with heterogeneous groups of students, who might have mixed achievement and reading levels, students who might have learning disabilities, or be English Language Learners. This approach is guided by a pedagogical philosophy that is rooted in justice and equity that is student-centered, inclusive, and one that considers comprehension and assessment as co-constructed. It is also based on the perspective that literacy is socially and culturally mediated (Kress, 2003). CSR is informed by all the tenets of DisCrit, but it addresses particularly Tenet Four, privileging the voices of marginalized students, Tenet Six recognizing whiteness and ability as ‘property,’ avoiding to leave students outside of engaging curriculum, and Tenet Seven, resisting the status quo of segregated unwanted children into spaces that are less public.

After students have developed proficiency applying the strategies through teacher-facilitated activities, they are divided into heterogeneous groups where each student performs a defined role as students collaboratively implement the strategies. Within cooperative learning groups students are given two responsibilities: (1) to complete the assigned task, and (2) to make sure that all other members of their group do the same (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Students discuss the material to be learned with one another, help one another to understand it, and encourage one another to do their best. Social skills for such activities are thought to a three-step process whereby: (1) the target behavior is defined, (2) the behavior is modeled, and (3) the students have opportunities to practice their behavior using simulation and role-playing. Figure 1 outlines the CSR process.

Figure 1: CSR's plan for strategic reading.



Within cooperative groups, each student performs a designated meaningful role, which they take up in rotation. Roles include: (1) the ‘leader,’ who facilitates in the implementation of CSR, asks the teachers for assistance, and reads the cue card, (2) the ‘clunk expert,’ who uses ‘clunk cards’ to remind the group the steps to follow when trying to figure out a difficult word or concept, and keeps the group focused on ‘fix up’ strategies, (3) the ‘gist expert,’ who guides the group toward the development of a gist, and determines that the gist contains the most important ideas but no unnecessary details, (4) the ‘announcer,’ who calls on different group members to read and share an idea, makes sure everyone participates, that only one person talks at a time, and keeps the time of the discussion, and (5) the ‘encourager,’ who watches the group, provides feedback, and looks for behaviors to praise. Each of the students in a specific role gets a card with cues that guide them into ‘what to look for’ in the text they are reading. Figures 2 and 3 show samples set of cue cards. Cue cards help students stay focused on tasks and increase their confidence.

Figure 2: Pattern for making clunk cards.

<p style="text-align: center;">Clunk card 1</p> <p>Reread the sentence with the clunk and look for key ideas to help you figure out the unknown word. Think about what makes sense.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Clunk card 2</p> <p>Reread the sentences before and after the clunk looking for clues.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Clunk card 3</p> <p>Look for a prefix or suffix in the word that might help.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Clunk card 4</p> <p>Break the word apart and look for smaller words that you know.</p>

Directions: Cut out the clunk cards and glue them onto different colors of posterboard or tagboard cut in squares.

Figure 3. CSR student leaders cue cards. Adapted from Klingner and Vaughn (1999)

Before reading	During reading	After reading
<p>Preview</p> <p>S: We know that today's topic is _____.</p> <p>S: Let's brainstorm and write everything we already know about the topic in our learning logs.</p> <p>S: Who would like to share their best ideas?</p> <p>S: Now let's predict. Look at the title, pictures, and headings and think about what we might learn today. Write your ideas in your learning logs.</p> <p>S: Who would like to share their best ideas?</p>	<p>Read</p> <p>S: Who would like to read the next section</p> <p>Click and clunk</p> <p>S: Did everyone understand what we read? If you did not, write your clunks in your learning log.</p> <p>S: (if someone has a clunk): Clunk Expert, please help us out.</p> <p>Get the gist</p> <p>S: Gist Expert, please help us out.</p> <p>S: Now we will go around the group and each say the gist in our own words.</p> <p><i>Go back and do all of the steps in this column over for each section that is read.</i></p>	<p>Wrap-up</p> <p>S: Now let's think of some questions to check if we really understood what we read. Remember to start your questions with who, when, what, where, why, or how. Everyone write your questions in your learning log.</p> <p>S: Who would like to share their best question?</p> <p>S: In our learning logs, let's write down as much as we can about what we learned.</p> <p>Compliments and suggestions</p> <p>S: The Encourager has been watching carefully and will now tell us two things we did really well as a group today.</p> <p>S: Is there anything that would help us do even better next time?</p>

Valentina has successfully applied CSR in primary and middle schools in Italy. It was particularly helpful for students from migrant backgrounds who arrived in Italy in the middle of the school year.

Implications and limitations

Through the inclusive strategies we presented in this paper, we summarize inclusive education practices that are underpinned by intersectional and interdisciplinary frameworks such as CDS and DisCrit. We have successfully implemented these practices we present in this paper in and outside of postcolonial countries. Once again, we want to be clear that inclusive practices presented in this paper are non-exhaustive, as they derive mostly from English literature that we have applied in our practical teaching experiences. Also, in this collection of practical inclusive strategies, we consider such practices that focus specifically on decolonial strategies. Thus, we acknowledge this limitation, while being cognizant of many researchers in Southern countries writing in different languages, who may articulate their conceptualization of inclusive education beyond the narrative of European colonization. However, by presenting inclusive strategies that have been guided by the critical frameworks CDS and DisCrit, we hope that we have made it clear that the simple and uncritical transfer of Northern strategies of inclusion is absolutely problematic. Such uncritical transfer and implementation of inclusive practices do not take into account the nuances and complexities of the systems of Southern countries.

We would like to encourage practitioners, families, researchers, and communities committed to inclusive education to infuse a critical lens into their daily mindset before putting into practice strategies generated from colonial, heteronormative, and racist social and political contexts. We also are very hopeful that teachers, families, and researchers from postcolonial countries will read these strategies, and perhaps pick one of the strategies outlined, and contact us about its implementation, or even start a research project on the strategy's success and limitations in a specific context. Such a response would increase the knowledge production of Southern teachers, families, and researchers conceptualizing and implementing inclusion and inclusive education from a Southern, non-European, non-North American perspective. Sharing successful inclusive strategies developed and implemented in Southern countries is greatly needed not only in Northern journals, but also in schools with few resources in the global North.

Conclusion

To conclude the paper, we first provide a brief summary of our work. We began this paper by highlighting the intersectional theoretical lenses that inform our views on international inclusive education. Then we presented our positionalities and explained how they informed the practical inclusive strategies we laid out in this paper. We then provided a variety of community-based strategies and academic inclusive strategies that culminated in a collection of practical inclusive strategies we hope practitioners in low-resourced schools around the

world can modify to fit their classroom contexts.

We wrote this paper to learn about what has worked in regards to inclusive education around the world, to put together promising international inclusive education practices in one place so teachers, families, and researchers can access it, and to highlight the need for publication and dissemination of more effective inclusive strategies that can be applied in low-resource contexts like classrooms in the global South. When we began collecting these inclusive strategies, we knew that finding practical inclusive strategies that work with minimal extra school resources would be a challenge. However, the Northern tools we present, confirm that an overwhelming amount of effective inclusive education strategies come from Northern countries. This is a trend that must change.

While we recognize that the strategies we have presented here are not exhaustive and certainly not presented in any order of efficacy, it is at least a start. We feel it is our responsibility as academics to produce work that can actually be used in inclusive classrooms to benefit all learners. We hope that this paper is not only used by teachers working in low-resourced classrooms around the world, but that the strategies we presented are also critiqued and modified by people who actually attempt to use them. We see this paper as an invitation for teachers, families, and researchers to reach out and share what they have tried, for them to share what was successful, and what was not. We hope to use this paper as a way to amplify and increase the stories from the global South that are often ignored by the Northern academy. While we recognize our privilege and our status as outsiders when it comes to our call for teachers working in the global South to contribute to Northern literature on inclusive education, we also strongly feel that inaction (e.g. continuing to exclude students with disabilities in education, particularly in the global South) has the chance to cause more damage than the risks we take as researchers attempting to create a more inclusive and socially just systems of education around the world.

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Notes

¹In this paper, we use terms like ‘Southern countries’ and ‘global South’ to reference countries that have been colonized and exploited by wealthy countries (i.e. much of Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australia). In contrast, we use the term ‘Northern countries’ and ‘global North’ when we reference countries with colonizing histories (e.g. United States, the United Kingdom,

countries in western Europe, Japan). While we mainly use the terms ‘Southern countries’ and ‘postcolonial’ to describe countries in the global South, we recognize the power relations and colonial dynamics that render certain countries purposefully ‘underdeveloped.’ Postcolonial governments throughout the world, were established to benefit Northern colonizers more than indigenous populations. As a result, these countries have been purposefully underdeveloped by Northern powers to maintain past colonial oppressions (Hall, 1990; Mwaura, 2005; Zembylas, 2013). Subsequently, ‘underdeveloped countries’ better reflects our views of colonial exploitation by countries considered to be in the global North. This is especially the case when the term ‘underdeveloped countries’ is used by many researchers in Southern countries.

²While we have purposefully focused on primary schools since we have most teaching experience at that level, we strongly believe that certain aspects of all the inclusive strategies introduced in this paper can be modified and applied to primary, secondary, and tertiary education (Glass et al., 1981).

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