

# Exploring the Evolution of Queer Pedagogy Research: A Bibliometric Study of Inclusive Education

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of queer pedagogy research within the context of inclusive education through a bibliometric analysis. Drawing on publication data from the Scopus database (2000–2024), the study employs VOSviewer to analyze co-authorship patterns, keyword co-occurrence, and citation networks. The findings reveal that queer pedagogy is a vibrant and interdisciplinary field grounded in critical theory and post-structural thought, with core concepts such as heteronormativity, critical pedagogy, and intersectionality at its center. Over time, the field has expanded to include newer themes such as reflexivity, ecopedagogy, and autoethnography, indicating methodological diversification and broader sociopolitical engagement. The study also identifies a concentration of scholarly activity in Western academic institutions, highlighting both the strength and the representational limitations of current research landscapes. By visualizing key trends, influential authors, and underexplored areas, this study provides a comprehensive map of queer pedagogy's scholarly development and offers insights for advancing inclusive educational practices.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a cornerstone in global education reform, emphasizing the need to accommodate diverse learners and dismantle structural barriers within classrooms. In this context, *queer pedagogy* emerges as a critical educational philosophy that challenges traditional power hierarchies, binary thinking, and normative assumptions embedded within schooling. Rooted in critical

pedagogy and post-structural thought, queer pedagogy invites educators to question not only what is taught, but how and why knowledge is produced, thereby reimagining education as a space for openness, reflexivity, and disruption of dominant paradigms [1], [2].

Over time, the discourse around inclusive education has expanded from accessibility for students with disabilities toward broader considerations of identity, difference, and marginalization. Within this

expansion, queer pedagogy offers an important lens for exploring how educational spaces can become more inclusive, not just in structure, but in thought and practice [3]. This pedagogical approach interrogates the assumptions that shape curricula, classroom norms, and teacher-student relationships. It encourages educators to think critically about how exclusion can manifest subtly within supposedly neutral practices and invites new methods for cultivating critical awareness among learners.

The scholarly development of queer pedagogy has been marked by interdisciplinary growth. From its philosophical roots to its incorporation in teacher training, curriculum theory, and classroom research, the literature has diversified across contexts and frameworks. Researchers have explored topics such as pedagogical uncertainty, identity construction, dialogic learning, and curriculum reform, often from a theoretical perspective. In recent years, more empirical studies have examined implementation challenges and reflective practices that aim to incorporate queer pedagogical principles in school and higher education settings.

Despite this growing interest, the field remains diffuse. Key terms evolve, the theoretical foundations shift, and empirical applications vary greatly. Consequently, it becomes difficult to trace how the body of literature has matured or where new directions are heading. Moreover, the complexity and fluidity of themes within queer pedagogy require a robust method to identify intellectual clusters, influential works, and temporal shifts in research attention. Traditional narrative reviews have made valuable contributions, but a more systematic mapping of the field is necessary to synthesize progress and guide future inquiry.

Bibliometric analysis provides a means to address this gap by offering a data-driven overview of publication trends, co-authorship networks, and thematic developments. Utilizing software such as VOSviewer enables the visualization of relationships among authors, institutions, and

conceptual terms [4]. In the case of queer pedagogy, such analysis can reveal how scholarly attention has changed over time, which concepts dominate discourse, and how research communities have formed. This method supports a meta-level understanding of the field's trajectory and identifies opportunities for theoretical refinement and pedagogical innovation.

Although queer pedagogy has grown as a field of inquiry within inclusive education, its development has not been systematically documented through bibliometric means. Existing literature tends to focus on theoretical debates or specific pedagogical issues, without capturing the full structure and evolution of the field. As a result, there is limited understanding of the dominant themes, key contributors, or emerging areas of research, which hinders coherence and scholarly advancement. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of scholarly publications on queer pedagogy within the domain of inclusive education.

## 2. METHOD

This study employed a **bibliometric analysis** to explore the development and intellectual structure of scholarly literature related to queer pedagogy within the context of inclusive education. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative research method used to evaluate the patterns of scientific publications, including citation networks, authorship collaborations, and thematic trends [5]. The method provides a macro-level overview of how a specific research domain evolves over time, offering insights that complement traditional literature reviews. The approach was chosen to systematically map the conceptual and structural growth of the field, identify dominant clusters of research, and highlight key contributions by authors and institutions.

The dataset was retrieved from the **Scopus database**, which is recognized for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals across multiple disciplines, including education, social sciences, and the humanities.

The search was conducted using combinations of keywords such as “*queer pedagogy*”, “*inclusive education*”, “*critical pedagogy*”, and related terms. Boolean operators (AND, OR) were used to refine the search and filter results for relevance. The search was limited to journal articles and conference papers published between **2000 and 2024** to capture recent developments and historical growth. Duplicates, irrelevant articles, and non-English publications were excluded to ensure consistency and clarity in the analysis.

To process and visualize the bibliometric data, the study utilized

**VOSviewer** software, which enables the creation of network maps based on co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and citation analysis. These maps help identify the most influential authors, journals, and terms within the literature. The keyword co-occurrence map was used to detect dominant themes and research clusters, while citation and co-authorship networks were analyzed to understand collaboration patterns and the academic impact of specific contributions.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Co-Authorship Analysis

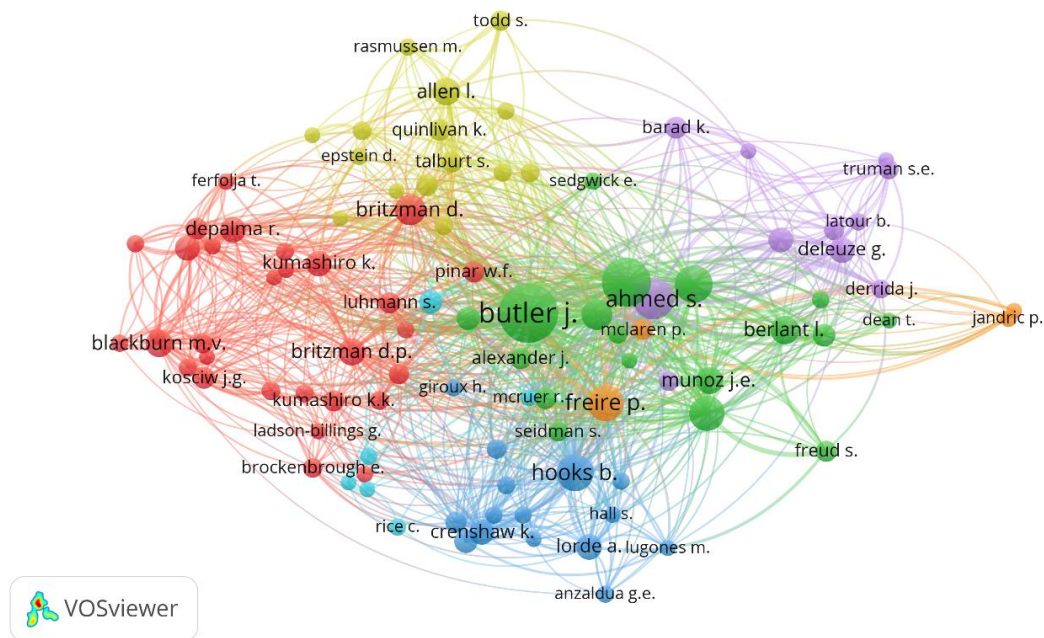


Figure 1. Author Visualization  
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 1 is a network visualization map displays the co-citation network of influential authors in the field of queer pedagogy and inclusive education. The nodes represent individual authors, while the size of each node indicates the frequency of citations, and the colors reflect distinct thematic clusters. At the center of the network, figures such as Butler J., Freire P., Ahmed S., and Hooks B. are prominent, indicating their foundational and cross-

cutting influence across multiple research streams. The green cluster appears to represent critical theory and poststructural philosophy, while the red cluster includes authors like Kumashiro K., Britzman D., and Blackburn M.V., reflecting a strong focus on educational reform and pedagogical critique. The blue cluster, which includes Crenshaw K., Lorde A., and Anzaldúa G.E., likely corresponds to intersectional and decolonial feminist perspectives in

education. Purple and yellow clusters feature thinkers like Latour B., Barad K., and Allen L., suggesting philosophical

expansions into materiality and performativity.

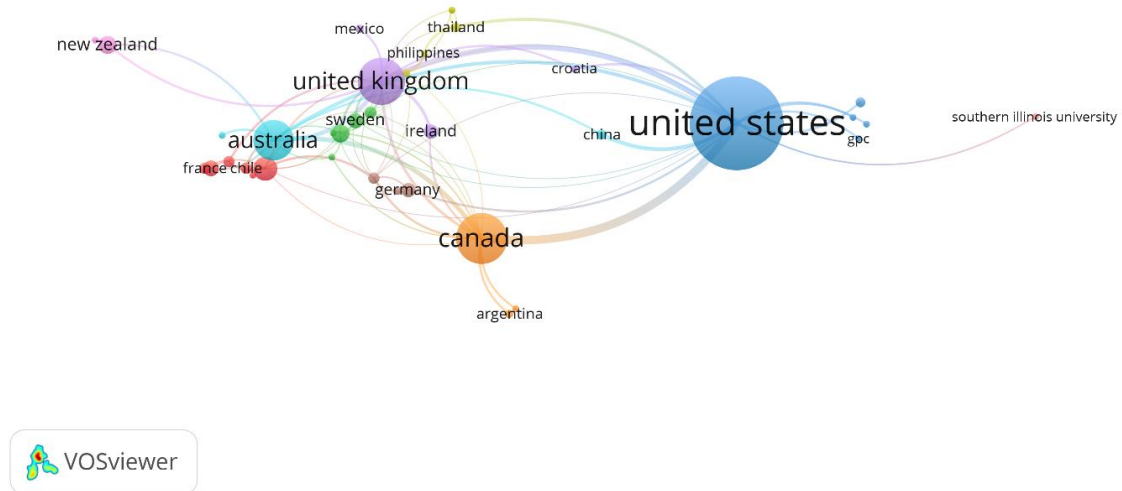


Figure 2. Country Visualization  
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 2 illustrates the geographical distribution and international co-authorship patterns in queer pedagogy and inclusive education research. The United States stands out as the most dominant and interconnected hub, evidenced by its large node size and extensive links with other countries. This suggests that a significant portion of the literature is either produced in or co-authored with scholars based in the U.S. Countries such as Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia also appear as major contributors, forming strong regional clusters and connections,

especially within the Anglophone academic sphere. Emerging collaborations can be observed with Sweden, Germany, and Ireland, indicating increasing European engagement in the discourse. Notably, smaller nodes representing countries like Thailand, Mexico, and Philippines signal growing but still limited participation from Global South regions. The presence of Southern Illinois University and GPC in the map further points to institutional centers actively involved in producing or disseminating research in this field.

### 3.2 Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

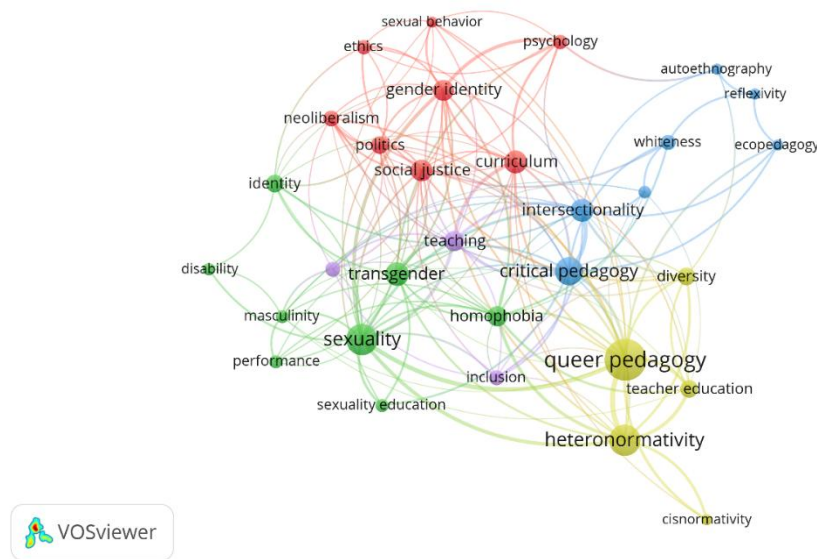


Figure 3. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 3 visualizes the conceptual structure of research in the field of queer pedagogy and inclusive education. The map is composed of multiple color-coded clusters, each representing a thematic grouping of frequently co-occurring terms. The centrality and size of keywords such as "queer pedagogy", "critical pedagogy", "heteronormativity", and "intersectionality" suggest that these are foundational concepts in the field, forming the core around which other ideas revolve. These terms anchor the map and show high connectivity, indicating that they are frequently discussed together in the literature, especially in relation to issues of educational practice, teacher training, and identity formation.

The yellow cluster, centered on "queer pedagogy," links closely with terms like "heteronormativity", "teacher education", "inclusion", and "cisnormativity". This indicates a research stream focused on challenging normative frameworks within teacher training and pedagogy, particularly those that reinforce binary or exclusive educational

structures. The presence of "teacher education" in close proximity to queer and critical pedagogy suggests that much of the applied work in this area is oriented toward transforming pedagogical methods and curricula to be more reflexive and inclusive of diverse identities and learning experiences.

The red cluster revolves around broader sociopolitical and psychological dimensions of education, with keywords like "social justice", "curriculum", "politics", "ethics", and "psychology". These terms highlight the intersection of pedagogy with ideological frameworks and disciplinary discourses. The inclusion of "neoliberalism" and "gender identity" points to critical examinations of how education systems are shaped by broader societal ideologies and how pedagogical content can either reinforce or resist dominant narratives. This cluster reflects a strand of scholarship that situates queer pedagogy within a larger critique of educational structures and policymaking.

The green cluster emphasizes terms related to embodiment, identity, and affect, such as "sexuality",

"masculinity", "performance", "disability", and "education". These keywords are often found in studies that explore the lived experiences of learners and teachers, particularly in relation to how identity categories influence classroom interactions and knowledge production. The linkage between "performance" and "sexuality" also suggests a theoretical engagement with performativity and expression, which are common in literature that draws from post-structuralism and cultural studies in education.

The blue cluster includes terms such as "reflexivity", "whiteness", "autoethnography", and "ecopedagogy",

indicating a more methodologically oriented or reflective stream of literature. These terms point to research that is self-critical and concerned with positionality, identity, and ecological or environmental concerns within pedagogy. The appearance of "ecopedagogy" alongside "whiteness" and "reflexivity" suggests emerging interest in how issues of race, environment, and self-awareness intersect in inclusive and critical pedagogical practices. This cluster reveals an expanding boundary of queer pedagogy toward interdisciplinary engagements with decoloniality, race, and environmental ethics.

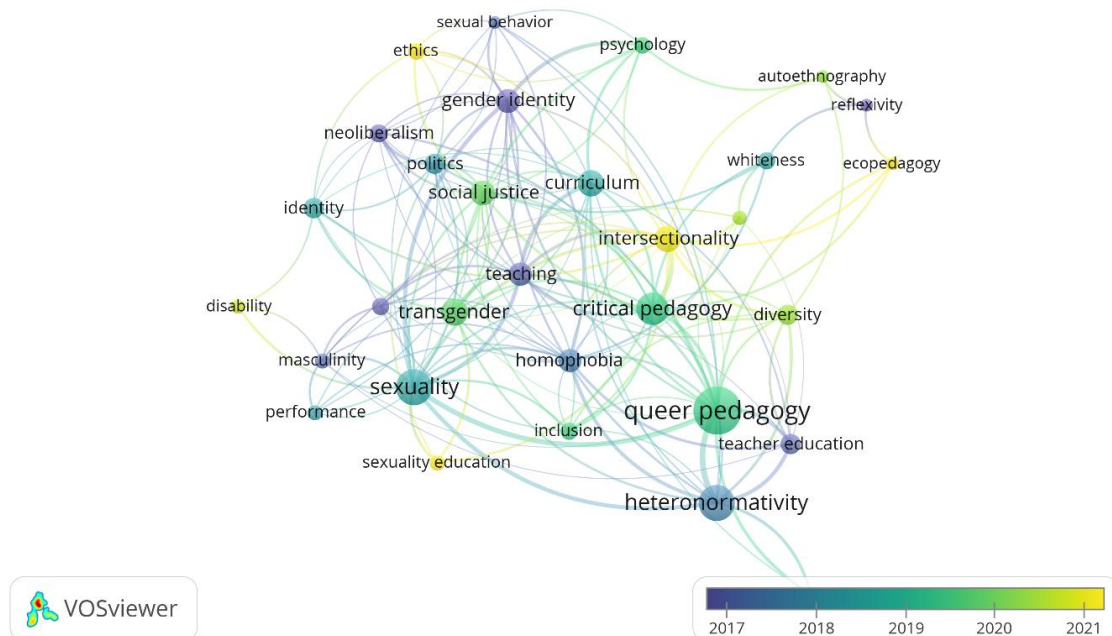


Figure 4. Overlay Visualization  
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 4 shows the temporal evolution of keywords associated with queer pedagogy and inclusive education from 2017 to 2021. The color gradient, ranging from dark blue (earlier publications) to yellow (more recent works), reveals shifting trends in research focus. Terms such as "transgender," "sexuality," "heteronormativity," and "critical pedagogy" appear in darker tones, indicating that they were more

frequently explored in earlier studies. These keywords formed the conceptual backbone of earlier literature, which centered on interrogating normative structures, identity politics, and foundational critical pedagogy frameworks.

In contrast, keywords such as "diversity," "reflexivity," "ecopedagogy," "whiteness," "education," and "ethics" appear in

lighter green to yellow hues, signifying their prominence in more recent publications. This shift suggests a growing interest in expanding the boundaries of queer pedagogy to include environmental concerns (as seen in “ecopedagogy”), critical self-reflection (e.g., “reflexivity”), and systemic structures of privilege (e.g., “whiteness”). The emergence of these newer themes reflects a broadening discourse that moves beyond foundational critiques of identity and gender norms toward more nuanced investigations into intersectionality, positionality, and global ecological responsibility within pedagogy.

The map illustrates a chronological diversification of the field. While early literature was anchored in traditional themes such as identity, sexuality, and heteronormativity, recent scholarship increasingly integrates interdisciplinary approaches and contemporary social issues. The prominence of terms like “autoethnography,” “ethics,” and “diversity” in recent years indicates a methodological and conceptual evolution. Scholars are not only questioning the content and delivery of education but also interrogating the positionality of educators and the broader implications of pedagogical choices in a rapidly transforming global context.

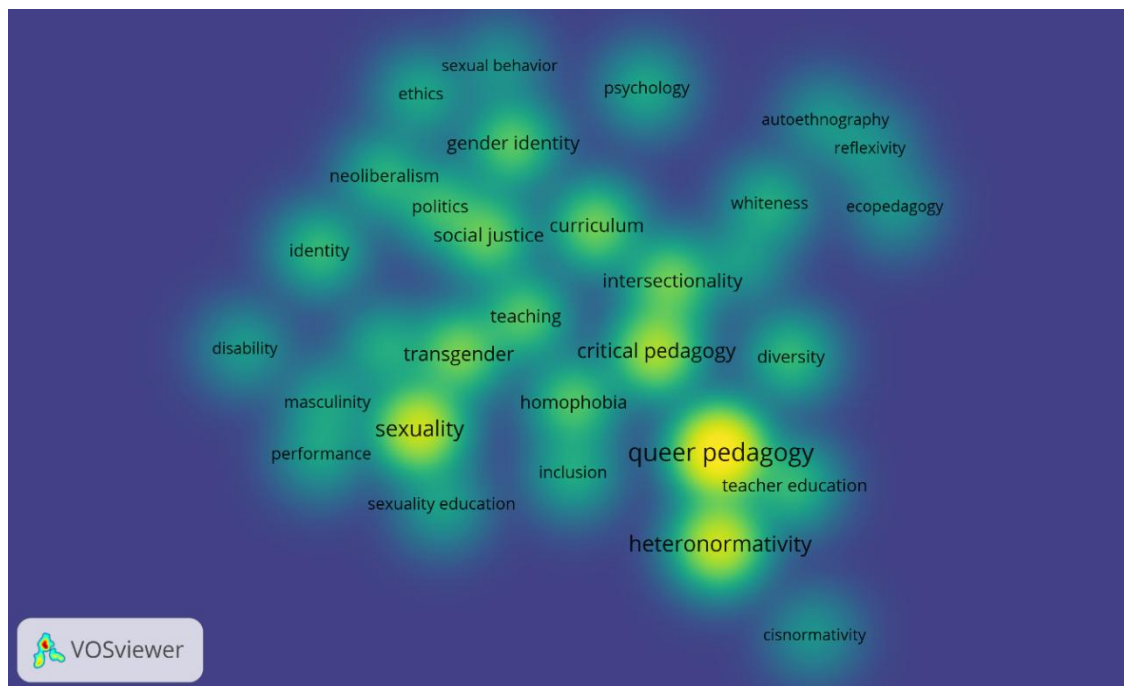


Figure 5. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

The density visualization map as shown in figure 5 above highlights the most frequently occurring and thematically dense keywords in the field of queer pedagogy and inclusive education. Brighter areas—particularly around “queer pedagogy,” “sexuality,” “heteronormativity,” and “critical pedagogy”—indicate a high

concentration of studies and keyword co-occurrences in these zones. These terms represent core conceptual anchors of the field, reflecting a sustained scholarly focus on disrupting normative educational structures, interrogating identity constructs, and developing inclusive pedagogical frameworks. The consistent prominence of these terms

suggests their centrality in shaping both theoretical and applied research in inclusive education discourses.

Surrounding these core terms, moderately dense clusters form around concepts such as “teacher education,” “social justice,” “curriculum,” “transgender,” “gender identity,” and “intersectionality.” These keywords reflect the broader thematic scope of the

field, integrating critical education theory with topics of equity, representation, and power. Though slightly less dense, the presence of terms like “neoliberalism,” “disability,” and “reflexivity” indicates an emerging scholarly interest in linking queer pedagogical concerns with wider systemic critiques and reflective practices.

3.3 Citation Analysis

Table 1. Most Cited Article

Citations	Author and Year	Title
458	[6]	Is There A Queer Pedagogy? Or, Stop Reading Straight
166	[7]	The decolonizing generation: (Race and) theory in anthropology since the eighties
133	[8]	Sexual identities in ESL: Queer theory and classroom inquiry
130	[9]	Hegemonic Heteronormativity: Toward a New Era of Queer Family Theory
111	[10]	Queer theory: Under construction?
99	[11]	To tell the truth and not get trapped: Desire, distance, and intersectionality at the scene of argument
91	[12]	Contesting Neoliberalism Through Critical Pedagogy, Intersectional Reflexivity, and Personal Narrative: Queer Tales of Academia
77	[13]	Postdigital Ecopedagogies: Genealogies, Contradictions, and Possible Futures
77	[14]	Critical Applied Linguistics: A Critical Re-Introduction: Second Edition
77	[15]	From homophobia and heterosexism to heteronormativity: Toward the development of a model of queer interventions in the university classroom

Source: Scopus, 2025

3.4 Discussion

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution and current structure of scholarly research on queer pedagogy within the broader context of inclusive education. By analyzing publication trends, key author networks, international collaborations, and co-occurring keywords, the study reveals the conceptual depth, interdisciplinary scope, and geographical concentration of this research area. The findings reflect not only how queer pedagogy has been constructed and debated over time, but also how it continues to expand in response to evolving educational, cultural, and sociopolitical dynamics.

One of the most striking observations from the co-citation analysis is the central positioning of foundational theorists such as Judith Butler, Paulo Freire, Sara Ahmed, bell hooks, and Michel Foucault. Their works collectively shape the epistemological and ideological underpinnings of queer pedagogy, emphasizing criticality, the deconstruction of normative binaries, and the political nature of education. The presence of authors like Kumashiro, Britzman, and Pinar in proximity to these foundational thinkers further illustrates how educational scholars have extended philosophical critiques into pedagogical practices. Their positioning within the network suggests that queer pedagogy has maintained its roots in critical

pedagogy while evolving into a distinct yet overlapping discourse that redefines inclusion beyond accessibility or accommodation.

The keyword co-occurrence maps reinforce this finding by showing how “queer pedagogy,” “critical pedagogy,” “heteronormativity,” and “intersectionality” form tightly interconnected clusters. These concepts consistently appear at the core of the scholarly network, demonstrating their ongoing relevance in shaping the discourse. However, as the overlay and density visualizations reveal, the field has gradually shifted its emphasis over time. Terms like “sexuality,” “gender identity,” and “heteronormativity” dominated early research, reflecting initial efforts to challenge normative constructs in education. In more recent years, newer terms such as “diversity,” “reflexivity,” “ecopedagogy,” and “autoethnography” have gained prominence, indicating a methodological diversification and a broader thematic expansion.

This evolution signals a growing complexity in how queer pedagogy is theorized and practiced. The increasing use of keywords like “reflexivity” and “autoethnography” suggests a turn toward introspective, qualitative, and narrative-driven methodologies. These approaches emphasize the positionality of educators and researchers, highlighting the importance of self-awareness and ethical engagement in pedagogical spaces. Similarly, the emergence of “ecopedagogy” reflects a novel intersection between environmental justice and queer theory, pointing toward a more holistic view of inclusivity that transcends human identity categories and addresses planetary concerns. Such developments imply that queer pedagogy is not a static or narrowly defined framework, but one that is responsive and adaptive to broader epistemic shifts.

Geographically, the analysis reveals a dominant contribution from

scholars based in the United States, followed by strong activity in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. These countries form the core hubs of knowledge production, often linked by co-authorship networks and institutional affiliations. While this concentration has facilitated the growth of a cohesive scholarly community, it also raises concerns about the representational limitations of the field. The relative absence of voices from the Global South, Eastern Europe, or East Asia suggests that queer pedagogy may be developing within a predominantly Western paradigm, potentially overlooking local educational realities and culturally specific understandings of inclusion.

However, there are signs of emerging global participation. Countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, Argentina, and Thailand have started to appear in the bibliometric network, though their presence remains marginal. Encouraging broader international collaboration and integrating non-Western epistemologies may be key to enriching the discourse and ensuring that queer pedagogy does not become a culturally insular or overly theoretical field. This aligns with recent calls within inclusive education to engage more deeply with indigenous, decolonial, and context-responsive pedagogical models that can adapt queer frameworks to diverse learning environments.

The density visualization also sheds light on the relative thematic saturation of certain areas. For instance, “sexuality” and “queer pedagogy” appear as high-density zones, indicating substantial scholarly attention. This could suggest either conceptual maturity or thematic saturation, where further contributions may risk redundancy unless they push boundaries or introduce novel perspectives. In contrast, terms like “ecopedagogy,” “disability,” and “performance” appear in lower-density regions, pointing to underexplored areas

that may offer fertile ground for future research. The presence of these concepts, even if peripheral, suggests that scholars are beginning to interrogate intersections between queer theory and other axes of marginalization and ecological thought.

Another notable observation is the persistence of “teacher education” and “curriculum” as central keywords. Their continued presence emphasizes the applied dimension of queer pedagogy—how it translates into tangible teaching practices, curriculum design, and professional development. This reaffirms that queer pedagogy is not only a theoretical critique but also a practical framework with implications for educator training, classroom management, and policy implementation. Nevertheless, the challenge remains in moving from theoretical engagement to institutional transformation. As schools and universities adopt inclusive mandates, the operationalization of queer pedagogical principles requires more evidence-based research, practitioner-led inquiry, and evaluative models.

Moreover, the co-occurrence of terms like “neoliberalism,” “social justice,” and “politics” with core pedagogical concepts indicates ongoing tensions between educational ideals and institutional realities. The presence of neoliberal rationalities in schooling—emphasizing standardization, performance metrics, and depoliticized curriculum—often stands in stark contrast to the critical and disruptive

ethos of queer pedagogy. This tension suggests that the implementation of inclusive pedagogies may be constrained by systemic factors, necessitating a critical engagement not only with pedagogical content but also with structural power relations in education systems.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study has illuminated the intellectual evolution and structural dynamics of queer pedagogy within the broader discourse of inclusive education. The analysis reveals that while the field is grounded in critical and post-structural theories—anchored by influential thinkers and concepts such as queer pedagogy, critical pedagogy, heteronormativity, and intersectionality—it has progressively expanded to incorporate diverse themes including reflexivity, ecopedagogy, and teacher education. The concentration of scholarly output in Western countries highlights both the strength of established academic networks and the need for greater global inclusivity. Emerging trends point toward a more interdisciplinary and reflective orientation, signaling opportunities for future research that bridges theory and practice, expands geographical representation, and addresses the evolving challenges of inclusion in education. Through this mapping, the study offers valuable insights for scholars, educators, and policymakers seeking to advance equitable and transformative pedagogical frameworks.

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