

Reading Picture Book as a Mediation Towards Social-Emotional Development

**A leitura do
livro-álbum**
como mediação para
o desenvolvimento
socioemocional

**La lectura del
libro álbum**
como mediación
hacia el desarrollo
socioemocional

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How to cite

Rodríguez-Turriago, K. L., Camargo-Martínez, Z., & Uribe-Álvarez, G. (2022). Reading picture books as mediation toward socioemotional development. *Folios*, (55). <https://doi.org/10.17227/folios.55-12657>

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Article received
08 • 10 • 2020

Article accepted
02 • 07 • 2021



Abstract

This review article examines the relationship between the understanding of literary narrative texts (book-album) and the development of socio-emotional skills in children of primary basic education. This article aims to determine if this relationship exists and what its influence on the learning processes of literature is. In the same way, it presents the study of 50 academic texts located in the Spanish-speaking context during the last 20 years. The methodology implemented for the search was based on the strategic consultation of sources, as well as on the validity criteria of the documentary corpus. After these considerations, three main categories emerge: book-album (18), literary competence (19), emotional competence, and education (13). From the analysis carried out, it appears the need to link children's literature with the mediation of the book album and the development of socio-emotional skills in children to stimulate reflection and the transformation of some attitudes that help them understand each other, themselves, and their environment, from the affective, the aesthetic, the enjoyment and pleasure of literature.

Keywords

life skills; literary analysis; picture-books; children's literature; educational sciences

Resumo

Este artigo de revisão, examina a relação entre a compreensão de textos narrativos literários (livro-álbum) e o desenvolvimento de habilidades socioemocionais em crianças do ensino fundamental. O objetivo do texto é determinar se essa relação realmente existe e qual sua influência nos processos de aprendizagem da literatura. Da mesma forma, apresenta o estudo de 50 textos acadêmicos, localizados, principalmente, no contexto da língua espanhola durante os últimos 20 anos. A metodologia implementada para a pesquisa baseou-se na consulta estratégica de fontes, bem como nos critérios de validade do corpus documental. Após essas considerações, emergem três categorias principais: livro-álbum (18), competência literária (19), competência emocional e educação (13). A análise realizada, revela-se a necessidade de vincular a literatura infantil à mediação do livro-álbum e ao desenvolvimento de competências socioemocionais nas crianças, com a perspectiva de estimular algumas atitudes que os ajudem a compreender-se a si próprios, ao seu ambiente, desde o afetivo, o estético, o gozo e o prazer pela literatura.

Palavras-chave

competências para a vida; análise literária; livros infantis; literatura; ciências da educação

Resumen

El presente artículo de revisión examina la relación entre la comprensión de textos narrativos literarios (libro-álbum) y el desarrollo de habilidades socioemocionales en niños de educación básica primaria. El objetivo de este artículo es determinar si en efecto existe esta relación y cuál es su influencia en los procesos de aprendizaje de la literatura; de igual manera, presenta el estudio de 50 textos académicos, localizados, fundamentalmente, en el contexto hispanohablante durante los últimos 20 años. La metodología implementada para la búsqueda se basó en la consulta estratégica de fuentes, así como en los criterios de validez del corpus documental. Tras estas consideraciones, emergen tres categorías principales: libro-álbum (18), competencia literaria (19), competencia emocional y educación (13). Del análisis realizado, se desprende la necesidad de vincular la literatura infantil con la mediación del libro-álbum y el desarrollo de las habilidades socioemocionales en los niños, con la perspectiva de estimular algunas actitudes que les ayuden a comprenderse a sí mismos y a su entorno, desde lo afectivo, lo estético, el goce y el placer por la literatura.

Palabras clave

competencias para la vida; análisis literario; libro infantil; literatura; ciencias de la educación

Introduction

Discussing literary education allows us to delve into what makes us human: our knowledge, emotions, and social skills. In this regard, T. Colomer (2008) asserts that:

Literature offers formative qualities—*aesthetic, cognitive, affective, linguistic, etc.*—that allow us to affirm that the goal of literary education is, first and foremost, to contribute to the formation of the person, a formation indissolubly linked to the construction of sociability and realized through the confrontation with texts that explicitly show how previous and contemporary generations have approached and address the valuation of human activity.» (p. 71)

From this perspective, we understand that literary education also encompasses the emotional. Mendoza (2004) maintains that «the essential and generic objective of the literary training and education of students [...] has a double integrative character: learning to interpret and learning to value and appreciate creations of an aesthetic-literary nature» (p. 15). From this standpoint, understanding a text goes beyond structural analysis and shifts towards forming literature readers who can interpret the meanings derived from literary discourse.

In line with the above, we see the need to link the literature on children and the development of socio-emotional skills through picture books as pedagogical and didactic mediation to consolidate both cognitive and emotional competencies. This review article, stemming from an ongoing doctoral thesis, seeks to facilitate the understanding of the picture book as a strategy for developing socio-emotional skills in primary education students. Therefore, it provides an account of some research conducted at the national and international levels, contributing necessary and relevant information in inquiring about the state of the art.

In this line of thought, the inquiry considered three characteristics concerning the strategic consultation of sources, as Cisneros-Estupiñán and Olave-Arias (2012) suggested: relevance, plurality, and credibility. To achieve this, we consulted various

databases focusing on reliable and easily accessible sources: Dialnet, Unirioja, Scielo, Mendeley, Redalyc, Academia, Google Scholar, repositories of Colombian universities such as Universidad del Valle, Universidad Santiago de Cali, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Universidad Distrital, as well as repositories of international universities such as Universidad de Barcelona, Universidad de Navarra, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. This review adheres to the proposals of Gómez-Mendoza et al. (2010, p. 78), who suggest criteria for the validity of the documentary corpus regarding source access, determining the citation of primary authors based on their original works. Under this approach, information was derived from doctoral theses, master's degree theses, and research articles hosted in academic journals.

Additionally, these authors propose using recent fragments of the corpus, referring to the criterion of topicality, which, in our case, is based on research conducted from 2002 to 2020. Similarly, historicity as a criterion of validity is reaffirmed in the authenticity of texts that undergo a process of expert judgment. Exhaustiveness, as the last criterion of validity, is visualized in the corpus selection, which focuses mainly on postgraduate research (master's and doctoral programs) and research articles.

During the search process, we considered that the research focused on studies conducted at preschool and primary education levels, emphasizing children's literature, especially picture books, as a didactic resource (inclusion criteria) and that they considered emotional competencies. Undergraduate studies and specializations were not consulted sources during the search process. Research on youth literature and studies that did not address literature through the use of the picture book were also excluded (exclusion criteria); these criteria were used as suggested by Manchado Garavito, «the criteria for inclusion and exclusion would be applied, clearly describing this process along with the mechanism for detecting and eliminating duplicate studies» (2009, pp. 12-19).

To this end, and based on findings from various master's and doctoral research projects and some

articles, we grouped the documentary corpus of fifty academic texts that support this review into three broad categories: Picture Book, Literary Competence, and Emotional Competences and Education.

Picture Book

Within this category, we grouped research that utilizes the picture book as a didactic resource to enhance literary competence in children. It is essential to highlight that this artistic object (Consejo, 2011) demands its readers' skills to interpret the visual grammar specific to this narrative genre, which emphasizes the richness of images and is accompanied by written text, becoming a single narrative, a kind of narrative symbiosis¹ where the text depends on the image and the image on the text. There are eighteen investigations that we group into four trends, as follows:

Investigations regarding reading provocation, comprehension and interpretation, the publishing supply and market, and the attitudes and values that promote them. Next, we present each of these trends.

Research on Provocation for Reading

Research conducted by Valencia (2018) argues that the picture book enhances the reading of images and words, thus promoting literary learning through the sense construction these two codes produce. Also, Dueñas Lorente and Barreu Rivas (2018) affirm that the role of text and image requires a reader who activates reading mechanisms involving a different way of reading (spatiality), another way of interpreting (text-image), and a break with the canonical tradition of literature.

In this regard, Silva-Díaz (2003) asserts that this form of reading provides knowledge and experience to early readers in a way that the canonical tradition of children's literature does not. This new way of reading allows the reader and the text to be in constant dialogue; this process involves active reading,

¹ Own definition that refers to the interdependent relationship between text and image.

which, when boosted by methodologies such as the one of Chambers (2008), triggers a highly motivating reading activity by posing a series of questions to the child that lead to a literary conversation in which the reader intervenes in two ways: as an active speaker and as a listener who effectively listens to what others say. Once the child feels motivated, a desire to know and a pleasure in reading is awakened. In this regard, Vásquez (2019) argues that the interdependent relationship between text and image allows the child to complement that discontinuity of codes, using their previous experiences to build the «empty spaces» they must consolidate.

Another research that aligns with these ideas was conducted by Sepúlveda (2016), who asserts that the picture book stimulated a liking for reading by fostering imagination, thanks to the abundance of images in these texts. Similarly, Infante (2018) recognizes the image as a narrative element that captures the interest of the child. Also, this artistic object promotes active and welcoming reading, as well as pleasant, calm, reflective, and exciting, as Maldonado (2013) states. The benefits for the literary reader are multiple because, as mentioned, this type of text requires a skilled reader to interpret, infer, and understand stories, as Plazas (2019) explains. These skills are developed through contact with these two types of language that converge and require grammatical and visual mastery to assimilate what the materiality of the picture book (cover, endpapers, double-page spreads, among others) contributes to the entire understanding of the narrated story.

Research on Comprehension and Interpretation

The following investigations focus on the processes of comprehension and interpretation, employing picture books as a means of mediation. One study by Arizpe and Styles (2002) verifies that children can construct meaning from visual elements such as color, lines, designs, metaphors, and visual jokes. Valencia and Rodríguez (2019) argue that children read images and words differently, which involves «filling lexical and semantic gaps» that may interrupt the comprehension process. However, paraphrasing

and validating the fictional component contribute to the reception mechanisms of picture books, overcoming comprehension difficulties.

Similarly, Silva-Díaz (2005) advocates for the recognition of variation —the tension between the canonical and its violation—»the discovery of intentionality, and the construction of knowledge about literature and its functioning as key elements for a comprehensive understanding of metafictional narratives» (p. 492).

That said, children possess implicit knowledge of how to read not only the text but also their surroundings, according to some reviewed research, such as that of Melo (2014). Melo suggests teaching multimodal literacy based on the environment and delving into the logic of the image. This approach helps children transcend how they comprehend such texts as they independently interpret both the text and the image. In the same vein, Barrera (2010, p. 63) addresses digital reading in hypermedia format and argues that «the reader must possess literary competence, in which key referents (hypo-texts²) are stored.» Additionally, based on Mendoza (2010), Barrera reaffirms that the reader must have «a reader intertext capable of relating, associating, comparing, contrasting, nuanced, and establishing correlations and dependencies with updated versions in literature (hypertext³)» (p. 8).

Research on the Supply and Publishing Market

Due to the extensive volume of published works, one can find picture books in the market with literary quality and others that lack it. Therefore, It is necessary to select the corpus to ensure that it truly motivates and sparks interest in literature.

Regarding the materiality of the picture book, Larragueta (2019), in a research work on the Spanish production of 69 picture books, discovered the prevalence of illustrations with saturated colors, which tends to evoke sensations of pleasure and vitality in the reader. Likewise, it was found that the

level of detail in the illustrations is a tool available to the creator to communicate the intended meaning. These characteristics could be shaping the canonicity of the Spanish children's picture book in the current publishing market.

As for the internal structure of narratives—temporal and spatial frameworks for action, theme, plot, argument, characters with their traits and characterizations—and the new forms of humor, Bellorín (2015) guides us on how contemporary illustrated fairy tales are changing. This implies that «although the characters continue to be princes, princesses, witches, or fairies, they no longer act as such [sic]» (p. 188). Still, their actions evoke other ways of problematizing reality. According to the author, «it is common that in the rewriting of fairy tales, the conflicts of the characters refer to the familiar situations typical of home and the child's world» (p. 189). In this way, the intention of these narratives is grounded in the realm of what the child experiences at home, at school, and with people close to them.

In conclusion, the abundance in the publishing supply requires the literature mediator to rigorously select works that offer children the enjoyment of a quality literary experience. To achieve this, it is necessary to be attentive to the «enchantment» with the materiality of the book, in contrast to the quality of its content. It is also vital to include classic works in current versions for children; as Colomer (2008) indicates, «Through literature, children come to share linguistic, artistic, and cultural references that allow them to relate to previous generations and inscribe them in their culture» (p. 10).

Research on Attitudes and Values They Foster

Literature is one of the best allies for playfully stimulating empathy. Additionally, it leads to the development of reading habits, provides tools to enhance imagination and creativity, and possesses undeniable educational value for the socio-affective development of children. This idea is supported by Rodríguez and Vara (2019) in research on «fantasy» in picture books, where they discovered that fantasy

² Text A from which Text B is derived.

³ Text B created from Text A.

serves as a tool for «personal transition,» helpful in facing painful life moments such as personal fears, reaffirmation against teasing, learning to apologize, among others.

Similarly, Villegas (2010) expresses that shared reading contributes to formative experiences for readers. For example, reading the picture book *El pato y la muerte* (Erlbruch, 2007) together allows reflection on «life and death» and creates an explicit emotional association among readers. Similarly, Reyes and Vargas (2009) argue that when shared reading spaces are facilitated, reading comprehension levels are enhanced. Children can express themselves freely on topics related to their environment, family, and experiences, leading to a profound reflection on their reality through the literary experience.

Literary Competence

In this section, we include research that aims to investigate literary comprehension processes. We found nineteen studies grouped under four lines: aesthetic-literary experience, mediated reading and emotional competence, literary knowledge and competencies, and new ways of reading.

Aesthetic-literary Experience

In teaching literary reading, some methodological approaches focus on the instrumentalization (technique) of language functions. Although this is important, it is not enough to bring the child closer to literature. This «excessive formality of language,» as suggested by Álvarez (2011), leaves out personal connections between the reader and the text. Researchers like Suárez (2014) propose shifting the focus to the reader, going beyond strategies centered on the instrumental use of the text. Their research found that «the more elements of the text relate to the reader's capital of experience, the more their imagination is stimulated, and hence, the affective networks of connection with reading come into operation» (p. 226). They argue that an aesthetic perspective emerges when a child establishes a connection between the content and their life experiences. In the same vein, Beltrán

and Parra (2015) reaffirm that «children's literature reflects new realities around experiences, and its interpretation creates communicative spaces to acquire knowledge, enjoy literary reading, and build new meanings» (p. 122).

In this line of thought, Yubero and Larragaña (2010) recommend introducing books to children to build a pleasant relationship that provides both recreational value and enjoyment. The importance of the first encounter with literature infused with humor is significant. Thus, researchers like Troncoso and Navarro (2019) confirm that humor in children's works generates interest, motivation, joy, and surprise in the reader, touching on emotional aspects that allow a pleasant understanding of the intention of the author. Similarly, Calvo (2011) argues that humor in literary pieces awakens a desire to read and develops imagination. Exploring stories dealing with topics such as death, authority, and the role of women in society allows emotional engagement with literary language.

On the other hand, and highly relevant, Puerto (2015) refers to the art showcased by the picture book as a «facilitator of socialization spaces, meetings, enjoyment, where each line, color, and texture respond to sensations that refer to a situation. Therefore, visual experience is fundamental for understanding the environment» (p. 67).

Mediated Reading and Emotional Competence

The presence of a mediator can facially express the recognition of emotion and name emotional expressions from the world of fiction. Riquelme (2011) refers to the relationship established between the real and fictional worlds connected through mediated reading. This relationship enriches reading comprehension and allows for a deeper exploration of other aspects of human experience, such as exploring the emotional states of others. It also «provides spaces for the recognition of a child reader's emotional world, often remaining invisible until an element of fiction exposes it» (p. 190). This mediated reading, often shared, helps the reader, according to Fittipaldi (2008), give new meanings

to reading and understand different points of view. This leads to placing oneself in the other's shoes and, consequently, achieving empathy.

Regarding these expectations, Munita (2014), in a study focused on reconstructing the belief systems of teachers and students in teacher training, expresses deep concern about the absence of knowledge on these topics in the discourses of teachers and their lack of didactic knowledge, which hinders innovation and improvement processes in the field of literary reading. This is why the limited didactic training in this field continues to perpetuate methods such as reconstructing the plot or answering questions based on what was read. According to Munita, prior reading experiences, the variety of literary encyclopedias, beliefs, and practices experienced in the institutional context are factors that permeate the teaching of literary education. Therefore, a teacher with a high «reader background» and robust literary competence is required to be an effective mediator.

Knowledge and Literary Competencies

Children develop specific skills that allow them to become competent readers over time. Literature is the field that provides them with knowledge of various works and strengthens their reader intertext. In this regard, Hoyos and Gallego (2017) consider that textual variety improves reading skills and significantly contributes to individuals' conceptual and cultural levels (p. 43).

In line with the previous research, Lozano (2013) bases his study on five of the ten critical elements proposed in the reader-response theory: hypertext, medium, inference, narrative voice, and metafiction. He asserts that the key to allowing children to enter the cultural community is hypertext, which enables them to establish connections between a picture book and different texts from the popular tradition.

In this context, literary comprehension is a fundamental factor for developing reading habits, but motivation and enjoyment sustain the habit over time. One of the keys mentioned earlier refers to metafiction, a literary key that can perpetuate this

habit. Through metafiction, children learn about the workings of literature in a playful and didactic manner by discovering the meaning of narration, leading to greater comprehension and, consequently, prolonged interest over time. Silva-Díaz (2003) explains this by stating that

Metafiction compels the reader to get up from his red velvet seat from which, absorbed, he contemplated the drama; it guides him to move behind the scenes and observe from a distance the stage and other parapets surrounding the scene. (p. 176).

However, Valdés (2013) discovers that despite some students having high reading comprehension levels, they may not necessarily develop reading habits throughout their lives. For children to embrace literature as a playful space and reflect on the knowledge represented in texts, they must feel a desire to explore it. In this regard, Fittipaldi (2013) found that

despite recognizing that the layers of reality and fiction are objectives studied by literary theory and art theory, and that they form a source of interest for children, they are not addressed in didactic studies or the programs chosen for analysis in his research (p. 449).

Unlike the ethical and aesthetic aspects of literary texts, the affective, sociocultural, and interpretative dimensions emerge recurrently in the designs, which do not receive the necessary attention.

Additionally, a study by Ramos and Crespo (2008) establishes a close relationship between theory of mind and reading comprehension in which

highlighting the importance of understanding the intentional world of others and metarepresenting their mental states — for example, understanding what characters think — as a fundamental condition for achieving comprehension of narrative texts (p. 59).

Therefore, when children understand the reasons behind certain behaviors in a character and compare them with situations they have experienced, a

greater understanding and comprehension of the literary work are achieved, connecting it with their own life experience, granting it emotional and affective value.

New Ways of Reading

Contemporary approaches to reading and literature are evident in teaching and, above all, in learning. Technological advancements have triggered new ways of reading that, through multimodality, invoke a transformation of reading practices, traditionally conceived as scanning from left to right. The positioning of the image currently constitutes the driving force for change, inviting a transformation of the reader and the act of reading. In line with this perspective, Consejo (2011) conducted research analyzing picture books in depth from the peritexts⁴ and argued that this «artistic object» is shaping a new reader from the endpapers, establishing a direct relationship between the new image culture and the current reading model, capable of interpreting the images incorporated into the discourse.

Following the same idea, Gomes-Franco e-Silva (2019) asserts the need to educate the gaze for image reading from an early age. In other words, teaching young children to read linguistic signs and iconic messages is essential, enabling them to interact critically and effectively with the signs around them.

These new ways of reading suggest a new concept of literature that requires a tool that aligns with children's interests, mobilizing knowledge, pleasure, and an appreciation for aesthetics. As mentioned in this article, the picture book meets these requirements. Many studies, such as that by Ruiz (2014), suggest that metafictional picture books allow readers to make increasingly complex inferences and interpretations. They provide the necessary strategies to develop literary competence and promote metaliterary reflection.

⁴ The author refers to the endpapers printed with colors, images, repeated symbols or patterns that allow you to enter the world created in the work. The endpapers present a great variety of shapes and fulfill different functions.

An ability highly potentiated through the reading of metafiction is perhaps the activation of their reader intertext. In other words, literary competence is strengthened when the reader comes into contact with a broad and varied corpus of literature. Simultaneously, another determining factor that favors this competence is the discussions woven at the group level regarding the stories, leading to feedback and turning literature into a shared experience.

Emotional Competencies and Education

In this section, we compile thirteen studies that have directly examined emotional competencies in the educational act. These studies can be grouped thematically into three trends: emotion and school, literature and emotional intelligence, and socio-emotional development.

Emotion and School

Making the school a conducive space for learning prompts reflection on how this environment either facilitates or hinders the development of socio-emotional competencies. The school setting is supposed to promote inclusion, respect for differences, and conflict mediation. Several studies suggest promoting and facilitating the acquisition of social skills in the school environment to train students to manage their emotions. Camacho et al. (2017) found a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and school coexistence, emphasizing the need to offer students new possibilities of relationships leading to reflection when resolving peer conflicts. The results suggest integrating socio-emotional education into the curriculum and achieving balance with the cognitive dimension.

In this order of ideas, the curriculum must be managed to make these learnings a reality, along with classroom intervention and human relationships. In this regard, Abarca (2003) found that some emotional education objectives are present in curricular designs. However, their structuring and organization do not follow a logical sequence based on theoretical and empirical knowledge available on emotional development.

The trends indicated that teacher training reflects a lack of knowledge in emotional education, both in the curriculum and educational practice. One aspect often emphasized in schools is the interest in maintaining «order» within the class. Another finding refers to teachers using their emotional competencies to relate to students but not promoting these competencies in students to use autonomously. Concerning this research, Calderón Rodríguez et al. (2014) consider that «emotional, affective, and social skills must be taught by a teaching team that masters these capabilities, as classrooms are models of socio-emotional learning for children» (p. 20). In summary, insufficient knowledge about new tools for emotional management by teachers is evident in the research, as teaching and action are based on their empirical knowledge.

Literature and Emotional Intelligence

Literature is a liberating practice that helps make sense of life, as emphasized by Sanjuán and Senís (2016), who assert that «the ethical and intellectual dimensions of literature should be inseparable from the aesthetic and emotional if the formative potential is to be recovered» (p. 17). These researchers conducted an analysis of five autobiographical texts by contemporary Spanish writers and made the following findings:

- Reading fiction promotes creativity and provides an alternative way of assimilating knowledge.
- The traditional way of teaching literature does not embrace the emotional factor, which should be considered an inherent component of the reader.
- Readers understand texts based on their life experiences.

Based on these conclusions, the authors suggest that children have access to various books to facilitate encounters with literature.

In line with the previous research, Dos Santos and Franco (2014) sought to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and the number of books read based on the idea of Chartier (1999):

Reading is fundamental for the construction of emotional knowledge, and reading activities in school are not only useful for the repetition of the reading process but fundamentally for the internalization that they provoke in the individual and for the formation of their social consciousness» (p. 163).

A more significant number of books read leads to a more extensive vocabulary and a willingness to read in school and leisure time. Regarding the increase in vocabulary variation, Vargas-García et al. (2020) assert that dialogic reading increases cognitive processes such as expressive language and comprehensive language, generally endowing the reader with a better and broader vocabulary. Additionally, the cited researchers state that adult mediation in reading processes allows interactive relationships, as it involves children and leads them to optimize their linguistic and cognitive skills.

As mentioned, emotions play a fundamental role in learning processes, the quality of social relationships, and academic performance. Hence, there is an affinity with the proposals of Ramos (2014) who declares that children's literature helps shape confident individuals with high self-esteem, capable of loving, accepting, and valuing themselves. Therefore, children's literature facilitates the improvement of the classroom environment.

Similarly, Alzola (2007), in a study analyzing the book *Tener amigos es divertido* (Lewis, 1999), indicates that sometimes painful experiences are needed to change negative attitudes in people. The narrative suggests friendship is a social learning involving openness to others. It demonstrates how «the importance of the consolidation of the story, the solidness of the characters, the figurative, the thematic, the identifications it provokes, the emotions it arouses, are important elements in the literary and axiological analysis of a narration» (p. 163). Well-constructed characters, both primary and secondary, are always life models. Thus, reading requires the activation of cognitive and socio-emotional processes in the classroom and reading and metacomprehensive skills. In this sense, Mengual (2017) highlights the importance of teaching in

promoting emotional education as a buffer for academic stress and a vehicle for greater involvement in learning.

Socio-Emotional Development

Emotional literacy is a fundamental pillar in the education of children; thus, the school ensures that they learn essential lessons for life. With this, the role of the school goes beyond teaching content and extends to caring about students' feelings and reactions, making them feel valued and respected, leading them to act accordingly. Related to this, Barrios-Tao and Peña (2019) consider emotional experiences as an essential factor in educational actions and warn that the challenge for everyone is to deepen awareness, understanding, and training about emotions.

While exploring these studies, a trend emerged questioning how teachers carry out this task. For example, Berger et al. (2009) conclude that there is great concern about self-esteem and social skills issues. Still, the absence of tools, both from teachers and institutions, to promote socio-emotional well-being is evident. Within this context, Roque (2018) insists on the urgent need for deep and comprehensive academic training for teachers, ensuring proper guidance for their students. He also emphasizes the importance of bringing activities into the classroom that are close to students' experiences so that they find meaning in the tasks proposed in class.

Conclusions

An educational system that fosters the connection between cognitive and emotional processes enables the integral formation of the human being. Children's literature, undoubtedly, allows for this integrality, especially when considering emotional aspects that help enhance cognitive processes. The task of the teacher is to bring the book closer to the child and encourage them to discover what lies within. In this regard, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Regarding the first category of analysis, we perceive the *picture book* as a didactic mediation with artistic characteristics that captures

the child's attention and serves as an activator of reading. Due to the materiality that shapes this artistic object, it is crucial to delve into the literacy of visual grammar. Understanding its narrative symbiosis enhances literary competencies. Despite many studies focusing on the picture book and teaching objectives related to cognitive comprehension and interpretation, there is a lack of attention to the emotional aspects that children may infer. None of the eighteen studies cited in this category contemplate the possibility of establishing a connection between literature and the development of socio-emotional skills.

- Concerning *literary competence*, our second category, the mediator, plays a crucial role between the book and the child. They become the bridge that allows the interconnection of emotions, generating motivation and a love for reading, and utilizing the picture book to achieve this. Many of the nineteen studies in this category suggest repeatedly implementing metafictional picture books. This is because of the interest it arouses in the reader, its capacity to prompt reflection on one's emotional state and that of others, and its requirement for the reader to use various literary competencies, including inferential ones. Having a wide variety of texts available is equally essential for strengthening intertextuality and reading skills.
- Within these studies, it is declared that reading is now done differently due to the positioning of images in this type of text and the cultural context. This transformation in reading inevitably transforms the reader.
- On the other hand, in the context of previous research, although emotional aspects directly related to literature are considered, no studies seek, through literature, the deployment or development of socio-emotional skills—competencies as crucial as literary ones.
- In our last category, *emotional competencies and education*, it is evident how, through literature, children connect their personal expe-

riences with the stories told in texts. This close experience to their reality can be transformative and meaningful for them. The quality in selecting literary works that provoke reflections about life, death, and painful or happy moments is crucial as it fosters different ethical values. However, the reference to ethical values is not equivalent to developing emotional competencies. These studies do not use literature to develop social skills but see it as a means to teach values, which is not the focus of our investigative interest. In other words, we consider literature as one of the best allies to stimulate imagination and creativity and cultivate interpersonal aspects such as empathy, self-control, conflict resolution, and essential social skills for these times.

- Similarly, based on the analysis of these studies, there is a noticeable concern among researchers who agree that teachers' training in emotional competencies is limited. Consequently, the learning processes related to socio-emotional skills in students are not as expected. This is because the teacher is responsible for constructing the human being, and their actions, thoughts, attitudes, and worldview directly influence their pedagogical work.
- This recapitulation leads to the assertion that, during the exploratory review, no study has been found that recognizes the understanding of the picture book as a strategy for developing socio-emotional skills. While most studies acknowledge the importance of emotional aspects for children's engagement with literature, none of them systematically establishes the learning of these skills as the guiding thread of teaching. This situation opens the door to the study of a theme that still needs to be further explored in children's literature education, particularly in the genre of picture books.

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