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Importance of emotions in teaching and learning processes: A systematic review

Importancia de las emociones en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje: una revisión sistemática

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Abstract

Emotions play a fundamental role in the teaching and learning processes, directly influencing students' performance and overall development. For this reason, it is essential that teachers implement strategies that promote emotional management in the classroom, creating environments conducive to meaningful learning. The objective of this article is to analyze the state of the art on the importance of emotions in education, for which a systematic review was conducted using the PRISMA methodology. Several articles published between 2021 and 2025 were selected, all indexed in recognized databases such as Mendeley, SciELO, ERIC, and Scopus, and which applied the PRISMA method in their research. The results show that emotions significantly influence the way students learn, highlighting the importance of teaching strategies aimed at both motivation and emotional management. Furthermore, the impact of cultural factors on the perception and management of emotions within the school environment was identified. In conclusion, promoting positive emotions and teaching how to manage negative emotions are essential to achieving educational objectives, as these practices contribute significantly to deep learning and student well-being.

Keywords: learning, emotions, teaching, motivation.

Resumen

Las emociones desempeñan un papel fundamental en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje, influyendo directamente en el rendimiento y desarrollo integral de los estudiantes. Por esta razón, resulta imprescindible que los docentes implementen estrategias que favorezcan la gestión emocional dentro del aula, creando ambientes propicios para el aprendizaje significativo. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar el estado del arte sobre la importancia de las emociones en la educación, para lo cual se realizó una revisión sistemática utilizando la metodología PRISMA. Se seleccionaron diversos artículos publicados entre 2021 y 2025, todos indexados en bases de datos reconocidas como Mendeley, SciELO, ERIC y Scopus, y que aplicaron el método PRISMA en sus investigaciones. Los resultados evidencian que las emociones influyen notablemente en la forma en que los estudiantes aprenden, destacando la relevancia de las estrategias docentes orientadas tanto a la motivación como a la gestión emocional. Además, se identificó la incidencia de factores culturales en la percepción y manejo de las emociones dentro del entorno escolar. En conclusión, promover emociones positivas y enseñar a gestionar las emociones negativas resulta esencial para alcanzar los objetivos educativos, ya que estas prácticas contribuyen significativamente al aprendizaje profundo y al bienestar de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje, emociones, enseñanza, motivación.

Introduction

In the comprehensive development of students, various factors—psychological, social, biological, physical, and emotional—are recognized that allow for a holistic understanding (Posso et al., 2021). In this context, and with the aim of enhancing the educational experience, research has been undertaken to investigate the role emotions play in teaching and learning processes, as these are fundamental for constructing meaningful learning. In this regard, Cervantes (2022) points out that emotions play a central role in learning, necessitating their consideration from a perspective that contributes to this process.

Moreover, transforming education in the 21st century entails recognizing it as an integrative process involving multiple factors, including emotions, which strengthen students' learning. Bächler and Pozo (2021) emphasize that we are currently undergoing a shift in how education is conceived, effectively incorporating the emotional dimension into teaching, even in areas traditionally considered challenging, such as mathematics or the sciences in general. Similarly, Jácome et al. (2023) provide evidence that the application of teaching strategies that include playful and interactive resources promotes the development of socio-emotional skills in students.

On the other hand, García (2012) notes that emotions and cognitive processes, such as learning, mutually influence each other, which means that educators must integrate both reason and emotion into their educational practice. This confirms that both elements coexist in an interrelated manner and jointly affect knowledge acquisition. Consequently, Arana et al. (2023) highlight that positive emotions facilitate learning, while emotions such as fear, anger, or frustration can hinder it. In line with this, Gutiérrez de Blume (2021) suggests that students experience positive emotions when mastering content, contrasting with the negative emotions that arise in response to difficult or unappealing topics.

From various perspectives, teaching-learning processes are understood as intentional individual actions that occur when there is motivation to engage with new knowledge, which integrates into the student's cognitive structure. Thus, Moreno et al. (2020) and Pekrun (2023) agree that positive emotions directly influence motivation, which in turn impacts emotional development; both elements depend on the methodology employed to achieve educational objectives. This relationship is especially evident in contexts where instructional design incorporates affective-cognitive strategies that enhance self-regulation of learning.

Additionally, Brackett et al. (2024) assert that a teacher's ability to recognize and manage their own emotions is crucial for positively influencing learning and consolidating their professional competence. Solís-Pinilla (2021) adds that the strategic use of verbal and non-verbal communication allows teachers to motivate their students and enjoy teaching, as well as facilitate conflict resolution and strengthen the classroom climate across various educational contexts.

The school climate and structured planning also directly impact the socio-affective development of students. Carrasco et al. (2018) highlight that didactic activities, formative assessment, and proper time management promote comprehensive skills. Complementarily, Cuero et al. (2023) argue that classroom arrangement and interactive methodologies favor cognitive and emotional fluency, especially in multicultural environments.

Finally, the family-community context is a key factor. López et al. (2025) found that parental involvement, academic expectations, and the type of school influence students' self-esteem and learning. In this regard, the Ministerio de Educación (2018) of Ecuador emphasizes that integral human development depends on meaningful interactions and requires policies that connect families, schools, and communities.

Based on the above, this article aims to investigate the state of the art regarding the interaction of emotions in teaching and learning processes across various contexts. In recent decades, it has been recognized that learning is not only a cognitive process but also an emotional one. Numerous studies have demonstrated the crucial role of the emotional dimension in educational planning, execution, and evaluation. Furthermore, teachers' ability to manage their emotions during teaching makes a significant difference in the emotional climate of the classroom.

Methodology

This research conducts a systematic review of existing literature, following the guidelines established by the PRISMA 2020 protocol. The inclusion and exclusion criteria applied in this review are detailed in Table 1, specifying that the study period covers a five-year interval, prioritizing articles related to the thematic area, published in English or Spanish.

Regarding the search sources, recognized databases such as Redalyc, SciELO, Google Scholar, and Scopus were selected. These platforms allow for the application of filters to sift through relevant information, thus facilitating the identification of references aligned with the study's objectives. Similarly, the selection processes,

defined by inclusion and exclusion criteria, determine whether a study meets the established conditions to be part of the review.

For constructing the search strategy, Boolean connectors (AND, OR) were employed to combine specific keywords, ensuring that the selected documents were open-access articles.

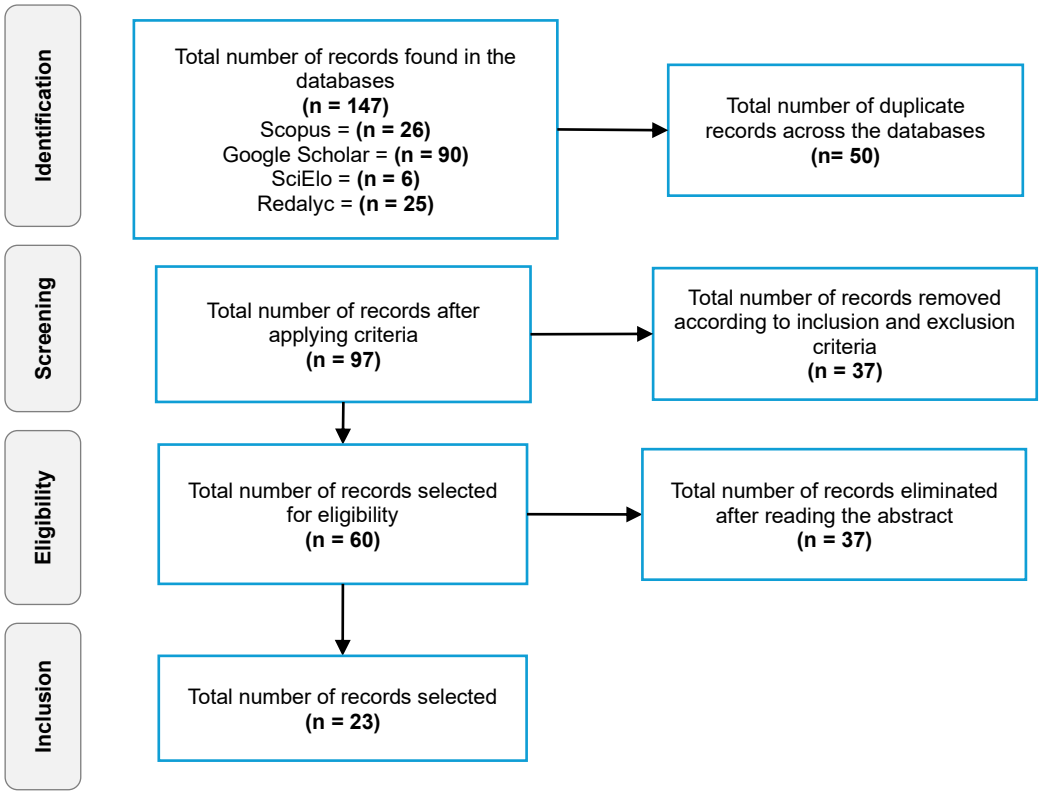
Finally, the collection and recording of information were conducted using a document analysis sheet designed to organize secondary data. In this sheet, each row captures the most relevant aspects of each study that passed the selection process, such as the objective, methodology employed, year of publication, among others.

Table 1

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
1. **Study period**: Research published between 2021 and 2025. 2. **Thematic area**: Studies related to the impact of emotions on the learning process of primary education students. 3. **Language**: Publications in English and Spanish to encompass a broader diversity of sources. 4. **Study area**: The review focused on research linked to education and educational research. 5. **Methodology**: The systematic review was conducted following PRISMA 2020 guidelines.	1. Articles not available as open access. 2. Research published more than five years ago. 3. Documents that do not correspond to scientific articles. 4. Publications in languages other than English or Spanish. 5. Studies that do not align with the proposed research focus.

Figure 1
PRISMA flow diagram



In Figure 1, the sequence followed for selecting articles in this systematic review is illustrated, conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 methodology, which includes three fundamental stages: identification, screening, and inclusion. Initially, 147 records were retrieved from the four selected databases (Scopus, SciELO, Google Scholar, and Redalyc). However, after applying filters related to the publication period, open access, and the removal of duplicates, the sample was reduced to 97 articles. Subsequently, additional duplicate studies were discarded, as well as those that did not meet the required document type (scientific articles) or lacked relevance and affinity with the study area. Finally, as a result of this rigorous process, 23 articles were selected to be included in the systematic review for evaluation and analysis, with the aim of examining the influence of emotions in teaching and learning processes.

Results

Table 2
Matrix of relationships of selected articles

No.	Author and Year	Objective	Methodology	Journal	Country
1	Salcedo de la Fuente et al. (2024)	Recurring emotions in students' daily lives are relevant factors to consider in the educational process due to their influence on behavior and academic and social performance.	Systematic Review PRISMA For qualitative analysis, 17 articles published between 2017 and 2022 were considered.	REXE	Chile

2	Tenorio Molina (2022)	To understand the theoretical and methodological perspectives present in studies on emotions in online teaching-learning processes in recent years.	Systematic Review PRISMA The results were based on the analysis of 20 scientific articles employing experimental, non-experimental, mixed, and qualitative designs.	Alpha Centauri	Peru
3	Cremades et al. (2022)	To review contemporary theoretical models of emotional regulation, seeking agreements and divergences among authors.	Systematic Review PRISMA 10 selected articles	Interacciones	Argentina
4	Mutlu-Bayraktar (2024)	Impact of emotional design on learning outcomes, emotional states, motivation, and cognitive load.	Systematic Review PRISMA 51 articles met the inclusion criteria.	Educ Inf Technol	Turkey
5	Machado Ávila (2023)	To analyze the effectiveness of art-based and emotion-based interventions in the teaching and learning of mathematics.	Systematic Review PRISMA 22 studies met the inclusion criteria.	Prohominum	Venezuela
6	Ahdab Najib Hijazi & Hanif Baharin (2023)	How joyful emotional interface design influenced cognitive processes, emotional valences, learning outcomes, and students' subjective experience.	Systematic Review PRISMA 47 articles for analysis.	International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies	Malaysia
7	Del Mar Vera et al. (2021)	Establishing goals and teaching strategies that help create better interaction mechanisms with students.	Systematic Review PRISMA The final number of documents used for data analysis was 7 articles.	Alpha Centauri	Peru
8	Mardones Soto (2023)	To identify the factors of school climate that influence students' learning, verifying the relevance of a positive climate.	Systematic Review PRISMA The final number of documents used for data analysis was 22 articles.	Realidad Educativa	Chile
9	Fuentes Vilugrón et al. (2023)	To analyze and synthesize the scientific productivity found between 2010 and 2022 regarding emotion and culture in school contexts.	Systematic Review PRISMA 17 articles met the inclusion criteria.	European Journal of Education and Psychology	Chile

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10	Anzelin et al. (2020)	To analyze the relationship between emotion and teaching-learning processes.	Qualitative study with documentary analysis and theoretical review.	Sofía	Colombia
11	Santoyo Manzanilla et al. (2025)	To explore the influence of human emotions on learning through a literature review.	Bibliographic review.	Perspectivas Docentes	Mexico
12	Barreto Rivas et al. (2021)	To identify the importance of emotional education in the educational field.	Descriptive study with documentary focus.	Revista Cognosis	Ecuador
13	Burgos Acosta (2024)	To explore the role of emotions in learning from an integrative perspective.	Theoretical-analytical study.	European Public & Social Innovation Review	Spain
14	Maldonado Cañizares et al. (2023)	To analyze the impact of emotions in higher education.	Qualitative research with case analysis.	Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Económicas	Ecuador
15	López Espinoza (2023)	To review the role of emotions in learning from a theoretical approach.	Theoretical-documentary study.	Polo del Conocimiento	Ecuador
16	Bracamontes Ceballos et al. (2024)	To review the advances and challenges of emotional education in higher education.	Documentary review.	IE Revista De Investigación Educativa De La REDIECH	Mexico
17	Romero et al. (2024)	To study the consolidation of research on emotions in the didactics of sciences.	Critical literature review and thematic analysis.	Revista Eureka	Spain
18	Ramírez Hurtado (2021)	To analyze the relationship between positive emotions and meaningful learning in graduate education.	Qualitative study with phenomenological approach.	Educación Superior	Bolivia
19	Mendoza Laz et al. (2025)	To explore the importance of motivation in meaningful learning.	Review study and theoretical analysis.	Revista InveCom	Ecuador
20	Amaya Claudio et al. (2024)	To analyze the impact of motivation on learning in education.	Descriptive quantitative research.	Horizontes	Bolivia
21	Vásquez Villanueva et al. (2022)	To examine strategies for developing pedagogical motivation.	Documentary and theoretical study.	Paidagogo	Peru
22	Salas Díaz & Baque Pibaque (2025)	To investigate motivational strategies for educators in higher education.	Descriptive quantitative research.	Sapiens in Higher Education	Ecuador

23	Abad Zarate et al. (2025)	To diagnose motivation in learning in high school PCEI.	Diagnostic study with a mixed approach.	Sapiens in Education	Ecuador

Source. Authors' own elaboration

This review highlights that emotions exert a decisive influence on motivation, learning strategies, and academic culture. Thus, it is essential for classrooms to incorporate pedagogical strategies that facilitate emotional regulation, foster a positive school climate, and promote the use of technological tools to address emotional difficulties. The systematic review confirms that emotional management is a crucial aspect that demands new strategies aimed at integrating emotional intelligence in both teachers and students (Salcedo de la Fuente et al., 2024). Furthermore, as students interact with digital platforms, they experience various emotions that impact their academic outcomes, supporting cognitive and emotional intelligence models (Tenorio Molina, 2022).

Emotional regulation strategies enable students to adapt, achieve their goals, and improve their quality of life; their application strengthens resilience and academic performance (Cremades et al., 2022; Mutlu-Bayraktar, 2024). For instance, activities that integrate art and emotions create motivating environments, reduce anxiety, and promote a deeper understanding of content (Machado Ávila, 2023). Additionally, incorporating emotional elements into instructional design increases cognitive engagement, while their absence can diminish intrinsic motivation (Ahdab & Hanif, 2023).

Motivation is closely linked to soft skills such as empathy and emotional management, which are essential for strengthening the relationship between teachers and students and consequently enhancing learning (Del Mar Vera et al., 2021; Amaya Claudio et al., 2024). In this regard, Mardones (2023) and Salas and Baque (2025) point out that the classroom climate, whether positive or negative, directly influences student emotions and, therefore, their academic performance.

On the other hand, Fuentes et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of educating about emotions from a cultural perspective, considering the emotional regulation strategies specific to each environment. They highlight that this work must go beyond mental health benefits, encompassing social and educational dimensions. Similarly, Mendoza et al. (2025) indicate that cultural aspects mediate emotional regulation, which is closely linked to individual, social, and educational development.

The emotional development of minors can be affected by adverse judicial conditions. In this context, a safe emotional environment is fundamental for their learning and well-being (Anzelin et al., 2020). The lack of adequate child support undermines this stability, negatively affecting academic performance and social integration (Bracamontes Ceballos et al., 2024; Ramírez Hurtado, 2021). Emotions are deeply connected to cognition, and neglecting them compromises essential functions such as memory and attention (López Espinoza, 2023).

Additionally, a lack of resources generates negative emotions that impact motivation and willingness to learn (Santoyo Manzanilla et al., 2025). Without appropriate emotional support, children struggle to connect their personal experiences with academic content (Romero et al., 2024). Therefore, efficient child support is key to ensuring educational equity, as positive emotions and motivation are fundamental from early stages of life.

In higher education, emotional stability fosters complex thinking and self-regulated learning (Barreto Rivas et al., 2021; Maldonado Cañizares et al., 2023). While important for adults, it is even more crucial for minors exposed to judicial inequalities. Self-esteem and the willingness to learn can be severely affected by unjust structures (Abad Zarate et al., 2025), while emotions play a key role in processes such as metacognition (Vásquez Villanueva et al., 2022).

Ultimately, learning does not thrive in contexts of inequality. As Burgos Acosta (2024) states, emotions are a structural part of the educational process. Therefore, judicial policies must adopt a more human perspective that recognizes this dimension (Bracamontes Ceballos et al., 2024). Acknowledging the affective dimension is essential for forming critical citizenship (López Espinoza, 2023), and strengthening motivation significantly contributes to student well-being (Mendoza Laz et al., 2025). In summary, genuine educational inclusion requires the integration of social justice and emotional education.

Discussion

The findings obtained from this systematic review demonstrate the close interrelation between emotions, teaching, and learning. Consequently, it can be asserted that emotions not only influence the affective dimension of the student but also directly impact their academic performance, motivation, the quality of interaction with the educational environment, and the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies. Therefore, this review emphasizes the

importance of both teachers and educational systems integrating emotional approaches into instructional design, recognizing emotions as an essential component of the educational process.

As noted by Salcedo et al. (2024) and Tenorio (2022), emotions play a central role in learning, as they affect students' ability to engage with content, participate actively, and develop complex cognitive skills. This link is reinforced by the research of Cremades et al. (2022) and Mutlu (2024), who emphasize the need to teach emotional regulation strategies to foster resilience, self-control, and adaptation to different academic contexts. Thus, emotional teaching emerges as an indispensable transversal competence for a comprehensive and meaningful education.

On the other hand, the reviewed studies agree that the use of visual resources, digital platforms, and artistic activities contributes to creating an emotionally positive classroom climate, as evidenced by Machado (2023) and Ahdab and Hanif (2023). These elements help reduce anxiety, increase intrinsic motivation, and foster a more favorable perception of academic content, transforming the educational experience into something more engaging and accessible. In this sense, the utility of positive emotional design as a pedagogical tool with proven cognitive effects is highlighted.

Moreover, the review underscores the fundamental role that the sociocultural context plays in emotional management. According to Fuentes et al. (2023), educating about emotions from a cultural perspective allows for the adaptation of strategies to the particular needs of students, acknowledging that emotions and their regulation are mediated by the social environment. This perspective expands the approach to emotional education by linking it to educational justice, inclusion, and equity.

Another key aspect identified is the role of motivation as a connecting axis between emotion and learning. Del Mar Vera et al. (2021) and Mardones (2023) demonstrate that factors such as empathy, perception of classroom climate, and soft skills are determinants in students' willingness to learn. Therefore, it is essential for educational policies to promote safe and emotionally healthy environments that strengthen the connection between teachers and students.

In summary, the analyzed studies agree that integrating emotions into teaching should not be considered an optional complement but rather an essential pillar for achieving meaningful learning. This review, based on the PRISMA methodology, evidences that emotionally conscious pedagogical approaches not only improve academic performance but also strengthen social skills, autonomy, and the overall well-being of students. Thus, it is necessary for educational systems to incorporate training programs in emotional intelligence for teachers, as well as policies that recognize the emotional and cultural diversity of students, thereby promoting a more humane, inclusive, and transformative education.

Conclusions

The results highlight the fundamental role that emotions play in cognitive processes such as learning. When classroom work is approached from a motivational perspective, implementing teaching strategies that enrich the educational experience in an integral and holistic way, significant improvements in students' academic performance are observed.

Emotions facilitate engagement and connection for both teachers and students with the goal of learning. In this process, positive emotions are associated with clear and well-developed content, promoting meaningful learning. Conversely, negative emotions, such as frustration and boredom, are often linked to science subjects that are more complex or less appealing to students.

Moreover, the importance of adequate emotional management by teachers has been evidenced, as it positively influences the classroom climate and effective classroom management.

In conclusion, teaching and learning processes are complex situations where multiple factors interact; thus, it is essential for research to address the student as a whole individual, considering all their dimensions.

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All authors contributed equally to the development of this research. They participated in planning, literature search, critical analysis of sources, discussion of results, writing, and the final review of the manuscript.