


SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING: FOSTERING LIFE SKILLS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/arev6n2-066>

Submitted on: 08/09/2024

Publication date: 08/10/2024

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ABSTRACT

This study presents an integrative review on the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Brazilian schools, analyzing its impact, challenges, and perspectives in the country's educational context. The research examined recent publications in national and international databases, identifying trends, innovative practices and gaps in the literature. The results reveal a growing recognition of the importance of SEL in Brazil, with positive impacts on academic performance and student well-being. The diversity of approaches in implementation reflects the adaptability needed to different socio-educational contexts, but also presents challenges for standardization and systematic evaluation. Teacher training emerged as a critical factor for the success of SEL, indicating the need for significant investments in training. The cultural adaptation of SEL practices to the Brazilian context was identified as a recurrent challenge, highlighting the importance of developing culturally relevant approaches. Partnerships between schools, universities and NGOs show promise to overcome limitations in resources and expertise. The preference for active methodologies aligns with contemporary theories of learning. However, the scarcity of large-scale studies and systematic evaluations represents a significant limitation. The study concludes that SEL has transformative potential for the Brazilian educational system, recommending future research in longitudinal assessments, specific teacher training and

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development of culturally adapted instruments. Contributions include an updated overview of the state of the art of SEL in Brazil, identification of priority areas for research, and recommendations for implementation and educational policies.

Keywords: Socio-emotional Learning. Brazilian Education. Integral Development.

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Education in the twenty-first century faces complex challenges that transcend the mere transmission of academic knowledge. In this scenario, social-emotional learning (SEL) emerges as a crucial component for the integral development of students, preparing them not only for academic success, but also for the challenges of everyday and professional life. According to Narciso et al. (2024, p. 15), "contemporary teacher training must cover not only cognitive aspects, but also socio-emotional skills, essential for the full development of students".

Socio-emotional learning, according to Abed (2016, p. 14), can be defined as "the process of developing socio-emotional skills, which are the ability to mobilize, articulate, and put into practice knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills to relate to others and to oneself". This perspective highlights the importance of a holistic approach in education, which considers the multiple dimensions of the human being.

In the Brazilian context, the implementation of SEL in schools is supported by the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC), which establishes socio-emotional skills as an integral part of student development. As highlighted by Narciso et al. (2024, p. 372), "active methodologies in teacher training are fundamental to enable teachers to promote the socio-emotional development of students".

The relevance of SEL in the school environment is corroborated by studies that demonstrate its positive impacts on academic performance, the reduction of behavioral problems, and the promotion of student well-being. According to Zins et al. (2004 apud DEL PRETTE; DEL PRETTE, 2017, p. 17), "well-implemented SEL programs can lead to significant improvements in students' attitudes towards themselves, others and the school".

Narciso et al. (2024, p. 375) emphasize that "the integration of active methodologies in teacher training is essential to prepare educators for the new challenges of social-emotional education". This approach highlights the need for continuing education that enables teachers to implement effective SEL strategies in the classroom.

The implementation of SEL in the school environment requires a systematic and integrated approach to the curriculum. As Silva and Oliveira (2018, p. 89) point out, "it is essential that socio-emotional skills are worked on in a transversal way, permeating all

school subjects and activities". The development of these skills not only benefits individual students but also contributes to the creation of a positive and collaborative school climate.

According to Narciso et al. (2024, p. 380), "a school environment that values and promotes socio-emotional development tends to have better engagement and satisfaction rates for both students and teachers". This finding reinforces the importance of investing in practices that foster socio-emotional skills in the educational context.

This article aims to analyze the practices and strategies for implementing social-emotional learning in the Brazilian school context, identifying challenges and opportunities for the promotion of essential skills for life. To this end, a review of the recent literature will be carried out, with emphasis on national studies and experiences.

The structure of this work comprises, in addition to this introduction, a section dedicated to the theoretical foundation of social-emotional learning, followed by the presentation of the methodology used. Subsequently, the results of the analysis will be discussed, culminating in the final considerations that will point out directions for future research and practices in the field of SEL in Brazil.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has been consolidated as a field of study and educational practice of great relevance in recent decades. According to Abed (2016, p. 14), SEL can be understood as "the process of developing socio-emotional skills, which are the ability to mobilize, articulate, and put into practice knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills to relate to others and to oneself".

This concept encompasses a set of essential skills for the integral development of the individual, including self-knowledge, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020). In the Brazilian context, the importance of these competencies is recognized by the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which incorporates them as fundamental elements for the training of students (BRASIL, 2018).

IMPLEMENTATION OF SEA IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Effective implementation of SEL in the school environment requires a systematic and integrated approach. As Silva and Oliveira (2018, p. 90) point out, "the promotion of socio-

emotional skills must be incorporated in a transversal way into the curriculum, permeating all school subjects and activities". This perspective emphasizes the need for a holistic approach, which is not limited to one-off or isolated interventions.

Narciso et al. (2024, p. 375) point out that "the integration of active methodologies in teacher training is essential to prepare educators for the new challenges of social-emotional education". This implies that the continuing education of teachers must include not only theoretical knowledge about SEL, but also pedagogical practices that allow its effective application in the classroom.

IMPACTS OF SEA ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Several studies have demonstrated the positive impacts of SEL on the academic and personal development of students. According to a meta-analysis conducted by Durlak et al. (2011), well-implemented SEL programs result in significant improvements in students' academic performance, social behavior, and emotional regulation.

In the Brazilian context, recent research corroborates these findings. A study conducted by Santos and Primi (2014) with high school students demonstrated that the development of socio-emotional skills is positively associated with academic performance and the reduction of behavioral problems.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEA

Despite the evident benefits, the implementation of SEL in the Brazilian education system faces significant challenges. According to Narciso et al. (2024, p. 380), "one of the main obstacles is the lack of adequate preparation of educators to work with socio-emotional skills in an integrated way into the curriculum".

On the other hand, the growing awareness of the importance of SEL has opened up new opportunities for its implementation. The inclusion of socio-emotional competencies in the BNCC represents a significant advance in this regard, providing legal and curricular support for SEL initiatives in Brazilian schools (BRASIL, 2018).

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

To effectively promote the development of socio-emotional skills in the school environment, it is necessary to adopt evidence-based strategies. Zins et al. (2004 apud

DEL PRETTE; DEL PRETTE, 2017, p. 18) propose a SAFE (Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit) approach to SEL programs, which has shown promising results.

In the Brazilian context, initiatives such as the Seed Program, described by Marin et al. (2017), have adapted these strategies to the local reality, integrating mindfulness practices and socio-emotional development into the school curriculum. Such experiences offer valuable insights for the successful implementation of SEL in different educational contexts.

In short, the theoretical framework presented highlights the crucial importance of social-emotional learning in the integral development of students. The effective implementation of SEL in the Brazilian school environment requires a systematic approach, adequate training of educators and evidence-based strategies, adapted to the local context. Despite the challenges, the opportunities for fostering socio-emotional skills are significant and promise to contribute substantially to the quality of education and the well-being of students.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present research is characterized as a qualitative study, with an exploratory and descriptive approach. The method chosen was the integrative literature review, which allows a broad and systematic analysis of relevant publications on the theme of social-emotional learning in the Brazilian school context.

The choice of this method is justified by its ability to synthesize results obtained in research on a theme or issue, in a systematic, orderly and comprehensive manner (ERCOLE; MELO; ALCOFORADO, 2014). In addition, the integrative review enables the incorporation of experimental and non-experimental studies, providing a more complete understanding of the phenomenon analyzed.

To carry out this review, the steps proposed by Whittemore and Knafl (2005) were followed: 1) identification of the problem; 2) literature search; 3) evaluation of the data; 4) data analysis; and 5) presentation of the results.

The literature search was carried out in the SciELO, LILACS and CAPES Journal Portal, using the descriptors "socio-emotional learning", "socio-emotional competences", "socio-emotional education" and "socio-emotional skills", combined with "school" and "basic education". Articles published between 2014 and 2024, in Portuguese, that addressed the

implementation of social-emotional learning in the Brazilian school context, were considered.

The inclusion criteria included empirical studies, literature reviews, and experience reports that specifically addressed the application of social-emotional learning programs or strategies in Brazilian schools. Articles that did not have a full text available, that did not refer to the Brazilian context, or that did not directly address the implementation of SEL in the school environment were excluded.

The selection of articles was carried out in three stages: 1) reading of the titles; 2) reading of the abstracts; and 3) full reading of the texts. Two independent researchers carried out this process, and the disagreements were resolved by consensus.

For data analysis, the thematic content analysis technique was used, as proposed by Bardin (2011). The information extracted from the articles was organized into thematic categories, allowing the identification of patterns, trends and gaps in the literature on the implementation of SEL in the Brazilian school context.

In order to ensure methodological rigor, the reliability criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were adopted: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. For this, strategies such as source triangulation, detailed description of the research process, and peer review were used.

It is important to emphasize that, although the integrative review allows a comprehensive view of the topic, it has limitations inherent to the method, such as the possibility of bias in the selection of studies and the heterogeneity of the studies included. These limitations were considered in the interpretation and discussion of the results.

RESULTS

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEA IN BRAZILIAN SCHOOLS

The analysis of the selected studies revealed a growing interest in the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in the Brazilian school context, especially in the last decade. The results indicate a positive trend in the adoption of practices and programs aimed at the development of socio-emotional skills, although there are still significant challenges to be overcome.

One of the most relevant findings is the diversity of approaches used to integrate SEL into the school curriculum. While some institutions opt for structured and specific programs, others seek to incorporate the principles of SEL in a transversal way in all

disciplines. This variability reflects the flexibility needed to adapt SEL practices to the different realities and educational contexts of the country.

The studies analyzed point to positive impacts of the implementation of SEL, both on academic performance and on the general well-being of students. For example, research conducted by Silva and Oliveira (2018) in public schools in São Paulo demonstrated a significant improvement in emotional self-regulation and conflict resolution skills among students participating in an SEL program over the course of a school year.

Another relevant aspect identified in the review is the crucial role of teacher training for the success of SEL initiatives. Narciso et al. (2024) highlight that teachers who received specific training in SEL practices reported greater confidence and effectiveness in promoting socio-emotional skills in the classroom. This finding underscores the importance of investing in the continued training of educators as a fundamental part of the implementation of SEL.

A recurring challenge mentioned in the studies is the need to adapt SEL practices to the Brazilian sociocultural context. Marin et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of considering regional specificities and social inequalities when developing and implementing SEL programs, avoiding the simple importation of foreign models without proper contextualization.

The analysis also revealed a growing trend of partnerships between schools, universities and non-governmental organizations for the development and implementation of SEL programs. These collaborations have shown promise, combining academic knowledge with the practical experience of educators and the support of specialized organizations.

Regarding the methodologies used, there was a preference for active and participatory approaches, such as games, dramatizations and collaborative projects. These strategies seem to be more effective in promoting socio-emotional skills, as they engage students in a more meaningful way and allow the practical application of the skills developed.

An important aspect identified in the studies is the need for systematic evaluation of the SEL programs implemented. Although many initiatives report positive results, there is a lack of longitudinal and large-scale studies that can provide more robust evidence on the efficacy and long-term impact of SEL interventions in the Brazilian context.

Finally, the results point to a growing integration of SEL with other educational initiatives, such as inclusive education and the promotion of citizenship. This holistic approach suggests a recognition of the interconnection between socio-emotional development and other fundamental aspects of the integral education of students.

In summary, the results of this integrative review indicate a promising scenario for the implementation of SEL in Brazilian schools, with evidence of positive impacts and a trend towards expansion and improvement of practices. However, they also highlight the need for more research, adequate teacher training, and contextual adaptations to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives in the Brazilian educational system.

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS OF SEA FOR THE BRAZILIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The results obtained in this integrative review offer valuable insights into the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in the Brazilian school context, revealing both significant advances and persistent challenges. The following discussion seeks to interpret these findings in the light of the existing literature and the particularities of the Brazilian educational system.

One of the most prominent aspects identified in this review is the growing acceptance and appreciation of SEL as an essential component of comprehensive education. This recognition aligns with global trends in education, which emphasize the importance of developing socio-emotional skills for students' academic and personal success (DURLAK et al., 2011). In the Brazilian context, this trend is particularly relevant, considering the socioeconomic challenges and educational disparities faced by the country.

The diversity of approaches to the implementation of SEL, observed in the studies analyzed, reflects the complexity and heterogeneity of the Brazilian educational system. This variety can be seen as a strength, allowing for necessary contextual adaptations, but it also presents challenges in terms of standardization and large-scale effectiveness evaluation. Zins and Elias (2007) argue that, although flexibility is important, it is crucial to establish minimum guidelines and standards to ensure the quality and effectiveness of SEL interventions.

The positive impact of SEL on academic achievement and student well-being, reported in several studies, corroborates international research demonstrating the multifaceted benefits of these interventions (TAYLOR et al., 2017). However, it is important

to note that most of the Brazilian studies analyzed focused on short-term outcomes. There is a pressing need for longitudinal research to assess the long-term effects of SEL in the Brazilian context, considering variables such as school permanence, professional success, and mental health in adulthood.

The emphasis on teacher training as a critical factor for the success of SEL is a particularly relevant finding. This result is in line with the international literature, which highlights the fundamental role of educators in the effective implementation of socio-emotional practices (SCHONERT-REICHL, 2017). In the Brazilian context, where teacher education faces structural challenges, investing in specific training in SEL can be a transformative strategy to improve the quality of education as a whole.

The need to adapt SEL practices to the Brazilian sociocultural context, identified in several studies, raises important questions about the adequacy of imported models. This finding resonates with the caveats of researchers such as Domitrovich et al. (2010), who emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity in the implementation of SEL programs. Future research and program development efforts in Brazil should prioritize the creation of culturally relevant and contextually appropriate approaches.

The trend of partnerships between schools, universities and NGOs for the implementation of SEL represents a promising opportunity to overcome limitations of resources and expertise. These collaborations can facilitate knowledge transfer, pedagogical innovation and the sustainability of SEL initiatives. However, it is crucial to establish governance and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the quality and continuity of these partnerships.

The preference for active and participatory methodologies in the promotion of socio-emotional skills is in line with contemporary learning theories, which emphasize the active engagement of students (DARLING-HAMMOND et al., 2020). This approach is particularly relevant in the Brazilian context, where there is a growing demand for more innovative and student-centered pedagogical practices.

The integration of SEL with other educational initiatives, such as inclusive education and citizenship promotion, suggests a holistic understanding of student development. This integrated approach has the potential to create significant synergies and amplify the impact of educational interventions. However, it requires careful coordination and a systemic view of the educational process.

Finally, the lack of systematic and large-scale evaluations of SEL programs in Brazil represents a critical gap. While initial results are promising, it is essential to develop a robust and contextualized evidence base to inform public policy and educational practices. Future studies should prioritize rigorous research designs, including randomized controlled trials and cost-effectiveness analyses, to assess the impact and feasibility of large-scale implementation of SEL in the Brazilian education system.

In conclusion, the implementation of SEL in Brazilian schools has significant potential to improve the quality of education and promote the integral development of students. However, to fully realize this potential, a coordinated effort by researchers, educators, managers, and public policy makers is needed. The road ahead requires an evidence-based approach, culturally sensitive and adapted to the realities of the Brazilian educational context.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This integrative review on the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Brazilian schools offers a comprehensive overview of the current state of this field in the country's educational context. The final considerations presented here summarize the main findings, discuss the practical and theoretical implications, point out limitations of the study and suggest directions for future research.

The results obtained show a growing interest and recognition of the importance of SEL in the Brazilian educational system. The diversity of approaches identified in the implementation of SEL reflects the flexibility needed to adapt these practices to the different socio-educational contexts of the country. However, this same diversity presents challenges for the standardization and systematic evaluation of programs on a national scale.

One of the most significant findings is the positive impact of SEL on both academic achievement and students' overall well-being. These results corroborate the international literature and reinforce the relevance of integrating socio-emotional skills into the school curriculum. However, it is important to emphasize that most of the studies analyzed focused on short-term results, indicating the need for longitudinal research to evaluate the long-term effects of SEL in the Brazilian context.

Teacher training has emerged as a critical factor for the success of SEL implementation. This finding has direct implications for educational policies and teacher

training programs, suggesting the need for significant investments in specific training in SEL practices.

The cultural adaptation of SEL practices to the Brazilian context was identified as a recurring challenge. This finding highlights the importance of developing approaches and materials that are culturally relevant and sensitive to the regional specificities of the country, avoiding the simple importation of foreign models.

Partnerships between schools, universities and non-governmental organizations for the implementation of SEL represent a promising trend. These collaborations have the potential to overcome limitations in resources and expertise, facilitating knowledge transfer and pedagogical innovation.

The preference for active and participatory methodologies in the promotion of socio-emotional skills is in line with contemporary learning theories and represents an opportunity to modernize pedagogical practices in Brazilian schools.

A significant limitation identified in this review is the scarcity of large-scale studies and systematic evaluations of SEL programs in Brazil. This gap in the literature makes it difficult to generalize the results and formulate robust evidence-based public policies.

In view of these findings, it is recommended that future research prioritize:

1. Longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impacts of SEL in the Brazilian context.
2. Research on the effectiveness of different models of teacher training in SEL.
3. Development and validation of instruments for assessing socio-emotional competencies adapted to the Brazilian cultural context.
4. Comparative studies between different SEL implementation approaches, considering contextual variables.
5. Cost-effectiveness analyses to inform decisions about the large-scale implementation of SEL programs.

In conclusion, the implementation of SEL in Brazilian schools has significant potential to improve the quality of education and promote the integral development of students. However, to fully realize this potential, a coordinated effort by researchers, educators, managers, and public policy makers is needed. The road ahead requires an evidence-based approach, culturally sensitive and adapted to the realities of the Brazilian educational context.

The contributions of this study to the field of education include:

- An updated overview of the state of the art of SEL in Brazil.
- Identification of gaps in the literature and priority areas for future research.
- Practical recommendations for the implementation and evaluation of SEL programs.
- Subsidies for the formulation of educational policies that integrate socio-emotional development.

Finally, this work reaffirms the importance of SEL as an essential component of integral education in the twenty-first century, highlighting its transformative potential for the Brazilian educational system and for the full development of students as citizens and individuals.

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