

AESTHETIC LITERACY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM: A LITERATURE REVIEW

LETRAMENTO ESTÉTICO NA EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL E NO ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL DA REDE PÚBLICA: UMA REVISÃO DE LITERATURA

ALFABETIZACIÓN ESTÉTICA EN LA EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL Y EN LA EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA DE LA RED PÚBLICA: UNA REVISIÓN DE LA LITERATURA



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ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Education and the early years of Elementary Education constitute foundational stages of human development, in which the bases of language, sensitivity, and children's symbolic constitution are consolidated. In this context, literacy, understood as a social practice, expands toward the notion of aesthetic literacy, integrating language, art, and sensory experience as constitutive dimensions of learning. However, educational policies marked by curricular standardization and large-scale assessments have prioritized measurable outcomes, which may restrict the space for artistic languages and aesthetic experiences in everyday school life. In light of this scenario, the present article aimed to analyze, through a literature review, how aesthetic literacy has been discussed within Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education in the public school system, highlighting its implications for teacher education and pedagogical practices. The research is characterized

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as qualitative, theoretical, and bibliographic in nature, grounded in the deductive-analytical method. The methodological procedure consisted of a systematized literature review guided by the PRISMA protocol and analyzed through Bardin's Content Analysis. The results reveal theoretical consensus regarding the centrality of aesthetic education for integral development, as well as the importance of teacher education for the consolidation of intentional aesthetic practices. However, tensions are identified between the discursive recognition of integral education and the predominance of instrumentalizing approaches. It is concluded that aesthetic literacy constitutes an integrative category capable of articulating literacy, sensitivity, and critical thinking, making it essential to strengthen educational policies that systematically incorporate it into the public education system.

Keywords: Teacher Education. Curriculum Policy. Integral Human Development. Literary Mediation. Educational Accountability.

RESUMO

A Educação Infantil e os anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental constituem etapas estruturantes da formação humana, nas quais se consolidam as bases da linguagem, da sensibilidade e da constituição simbólica das crianças. Nesse contexto, o letramento, compreendido como prática social, amplia-se para a noção de letramento estético, integrando linguagem, arte e experiência sensível como dimensões constitutivas da aprendizagem. Entretanto, políticas educacionais marcadas por padronização curricular e avaliações em larga escala têm priorizado resultados mensuráveis, o que pode restringir o espaço das linguagens artísticas e das experiências estéticas no cotidiano escolar. Diante desse cenário, o presente artigo teve como objetivo analisar, por meio de uma revisão de literatura, como o letramento estético tem sido discutido no âmbito da Educação Infantil e do Ensino Fundamental da rede pública, destacando suas implicações para a formação docente e para as práticas pedagógicas. A pesquisa caracteriza-se como qualitativa, de natureza teórica e bibliográfica, fundamentada no método dedutivo-analítico. O procedimento metodológico consistiu em revisão de literatura sistematizada, orientada pelas diretrizes do protocolo PRISMA e analisada à luz da Análise de Conteúdo de Bardin. Os resultados evidenciam consenso teórico quanto à centralidade da educação estética para o desenvolvimento integral, bem como à importância da formação docente para a consolidação de práticas estéticas intencionais. Contudo, identificam-se tensões entre o reconhecimento discursivo da formação integral e a predominância de abordagens instrumentalizantes. Conclui-se que o letramento estético constitui categoria integradora capaz de articular alfabetização, sensibilidade e criticidade, sendo imprescindível fortalecer políticas formativas que o incorporem de maneira sistemática na rede pública de ensino.

Palavras-chave: Formação Docente. Política Curricular. Desenvolvimento Humano Integral. Mediação Literária. Responsabilização Educacional.

RESUMEN

La Educación Infantil y los primeros años de la Educación Primaria constituyen etapas estructurantes de la formación humana, en las que se consolidan las bases del lenguaje, la sensibilidad y la constitución simbólica de los niños. En este contexto, el alfabetismo, entendido como práctica social, se amplía hacia la noción de alfabetización estética, integrando lenguaje, arte y experiencia sensible como dimensiones constitutivas del aprendizaje. Sin embargo, las políticas educativas marcadas por la estandarización curricular y las evaluaciones a gran escala han priorizado resultados medibles, lo que puede restringir el espacio de los lenguajes artísticos y de las experiencias estéticas en la vida cotidiana escolar. Ante este escenario, el presente artículo tuvo como objetivo analizar, mediante una revisión de literatura, cómo la alfabetización estética ha sido discutida en el ámbito de la Educación Infantil y de la Educación Primaria en la red pública, destacando sus

implicaciones para la formación docente y para las prácticas pedagógicas. La investigación se caracteriza como cualitativa, de naturaleza teórica y bibliográfica, fundamentada en el método deductivo-analítico. El procedimiento metodológico consistió en una revisión de literatura sistematizada orientada por las directrices del protocolo PRISMA y analizada a la luz del Análisis de Contenido de Bardin. Los resultados evidencian un consenso teórico en torno a la centralidad de la educación estética para el desarrollo integral, así como la importancia de la formación docente para la consolidación de prácticas estéticas intencionales. No obstante, se identifican tensiones entre el reconocimiento discursivo de la formación integral y el predominio de enfoques instrumentalizadores. Se concluye que la alfabetización estética constituye una categoría integradora capaz de articular alfabetización, sensibilidad y pensamiento crítico, siendo imprescindible fortalecer políticas formativas que la incorporen de manera sistemática en la red pública de enseñanza.

Palabras clave: Formación Docente. Política Curricular. Desarrollo Humano Integral. Mediación Literaria. Responsabilidad Educativa.

1 INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education and the initial years of Elementary School constitute structuring stages of human formation, as they consolidate the bases of language, sensitivity, imagination and the symbolic constitution of children (Silva; Sousa; Days, 2025; Feitosa et al., 2026). It is a period in which the child expands his forms of expression and understanding of the world through play, literature, visual arts, music, movement and other languages that articulate sensitive experience and cognitive construction. In this context, aesthetic experiences assume a central role, since they enable the expansion of the cultural repertoire, the development of perception, the production of meanings and the formation of symbolic links with social and cultural reality.

The concept of literacy, understood as a historically situated social practice, goes beyond the technical dimension of literacy and involves the production of meanings, the critical reading of reality and active cultural participation (Amado; Silva; Melo, 2020). In this sense, in the light of Freire's thought, reading the word implies reading the world, so that the educational process must promote the formation of subjects capable of interpreting, dialoguing and transforming reality (Freire, 1996). When this conception is articulated with the aesthetic dimension, it expands to what is called aesthetic literacy, a concept that integrates language, art, sensibility, and cognition in the formative process (Araújo, 2020). From this perspective, the aesthetic experience is not configured as an accessory element of the curriculum, but as a constitutive dimension of learning and integral formation.

However, the contemporary educational scenario has been marked by the intensification of accountability policies, large-scale evaluations and curriculum standardization, which tend to prioritize measurable results and instrumental skills (Sousa; Alvarenga, 2021). Such a context can restrict the space destined to artistic languages and sensitive experiences, especially in the early stages of schooling, in which learning occurs in an integrated way and mediated by multiple languages. Although normative documents recognize the importance of comprehensive education, in practice there is a tension between the development of evaluable skills and the promotion of meaningful aesthetic experiences (Dias et al., 2025).

It is in this scenario that the problem of how aesthetic literacy has been approached in scientific production on Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education in the public school system emerges, and how does the specialized literature evidence its relationship with teacher training and pedagogical practices? Such problematization becomes relevant in view of the need to understand whether the aesthetic dimension has been treated in a structuring way in educational studies or if it remains secondary to the instrumental demands of teaching.

Despite the advance of discussions on literacy as a social practice and the expansion of debates on aesthetic education, a gap is identified in the literature regarding the theoretical systematization that articulates, in an integrated way, aesthetic literacy, teacher training and pedagogical practices in the initial stages of Basic Education (Zulusuwan; Chansirisira, 2025). Many studies approach literacy from a linguistic or sociocultural perspective, while others discuss aesthetic education in isolation, without establishing consistent connections with the processes of literacy and literacy. Likewise, there is a lack of reviews that critically analyze how these dimensions have been treated in the public school system, especially in contexts that show advances in literacy indicators, but lack qualitative analyses on the sensitive formation of children.

Thus, this article aimed to analyze, through a literature review, how aesthetic literacy has been discussed in the context of Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education in the public network, highlighting its implications for teacher training and pedagogical practices.

2 METHODOLOGY

The present research is characterized as a study with a qualitative approach, of theoretical and bibliographic nature, based on the method of deductive-analytical argumentation. Such an approach made it possible to start from assumptions consolidated in the scientific literature about literacy as a social practice, aesthetic education and aesthetic literacy, for the construction of interpretative inferences aimed at understanding its pedagogical implications in Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary Education in the public network. The option for the deductive method proved to be pertinent because it allowed the articulation between broad theoretical references and the critical analysis of the contemporary conditions of implementation of these conceptions in the educational context.

The central methodological procedure consisted of a systematized literature review, guided by the PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*) guidelines, adapted to the qualitative and interpretative nature of the study (Page et al., 2022).

The bibliographic survey was carried out in the Google Scholar, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), CAPES Journal Portal and ScienceDirect databases, selected for their academic relevance and international coverage. Descriptors in Portuguese and English were used, combined through Boolean operators (AND/OR), such as "aesthetic literacy", "early childhood education", "teacher training", "art", "*aesthetic literacy*", "*early childhood*

aesthetic education" and *"literacy and arts education"*. The detailed report by database showed 142 records in Google Scholar for the descriptors *"aesthetic literacy"* AND *"early childhood aesthetic education"*; 18 records in SciELO for *"aesthetic literacy"* AND *"early childhood education"*; 34 records in the CAPES Journal Portal from the intersection between *"teacher training"* AND *"art"*; and 22 registrations in ScienceDirect for related terms in English. The gross total identified in the identification stage corresponded to 216 records.

In the screening phase, duplicates were removed and initial filters were applied, including document type, language, publication period, and reading of titles and abstracts, resulting in 85 studies potentially adhering to the research object. Then, in the eligibility stage, 42 texts were analyzed in full to verify alignment with the previously established inclusion criteria, which are: focus on the public school system, centrality in the initial stages of Basic Education (Early Childhood Education and early years of Elementary School), articulation between literacy, aesthetics and pedagogical practices, and theoretical-methodological consistency. At the end of this process, 24 studies composed the definitive corpus of the review.

Literature review is widely recognized as an effective method for understanding complex and interdisciplinary phenomena (Marconi; Lakatos, 2017). Considering the exponential growth of scientific production and the expanded access to digital databases, it has become essential to adopt rigorous selection criteria, in order to ensure validity, reliability, and academic relevance to the findings. In this sense, we sought to balance recent empirical productions with classical theoretical references, ensuring conceptual density and analytical timeliness.

For the treatment and interpretation of the selected sources, Content Analysis was adopted, according to the systematization proposed by Bardin (2016). This technique proved to be adequate because it enables a systematic and interpretative analysis of the texts, allowing the identification of thematic recurrences, conceptual convergences, theoretical tensions and investigative gaps. Content Analysis was developed in three stages: a) pre-analysis, with floating reading and delimitation of the corpus; b) exploration of the material, with coding and thematic categorization of the units of meaning; and c) treatment of the results, inference and interpretation, articulating the categorized data to the theoretical framework adopted, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the studies included in this study.

LEAD AUTHORS	YEAR	DOCUMENT TYPE	MAIN FOCUS
Freire	1996	Book	Reading the world, language as an emancipatory practice and critical formation.
Beloved; Silva; Melo	2020	Scientific Article	Literacy as a social practice and formation of literary readers.
Araújo	2020	Book	Foundations of aesthetic literacy and articulation between language and art.
Rabbit	2021	Scientific Article	Aesthetic education and integral human formation.
Sousa; Alvarenga	2021	Scientific Article	Curricular policies and impacts of standardization on the teaching of Art.
Silva; Sousa; Days	2025	Scientific Article	Integral development and multiple languages in childhood.
Tian; Isa	2024	Scientific Article	Aesthetic education practices in Early Childhood Education.
Zulusuwan; Chansirisira	2025	Scientific Article	Aesthetic skills in teacher training.
Dias et al.	2026	Scientific Article	Expanded literacy and formative dimensions in basic education.
Feitosa et al.	2026	Scientific Article	Aesthetic awareness and socio-environmental training in childhood.

Source: The authors (2026).

The analytical categories were delineated from an inductive-deductive movement, articulating, on the one hand, the theoretical assumptions previously established in the conceptual framework and, on the other hand, the thematic recurrences identified in the selected corpus. This procedure allowed the categories not to be imposed exclusively a priori, nor derived only empirically, but constructed in dialogue between theory and analyzed material. From this process, five structuring axes emerged: a) literacy as a social practice; b) aesthetic education and integral human formation; c) aesthetic literacy as an articulation between sensitive and cognitive; d) curricular tensions and accountability policies; and e) teacher training and aesthetic practices. These categories guided the organization of the analysis and supported the interpretative stage of the results.

The articulation between the PRISMA protocol and Content Analysis, as systematized by Bardin (2016), gave methodological consistency to the study, ensuring traceability in the selection of sources and coherence in the interpretation of data. While PRISMA ensured transparency and rigor in the stages of identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion of studies, Content Analysis enabled interpretative deepening, evidencing convergences, gaps and tensions in the scientific production examined.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 LITERACY AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

The concept of literacy has been consolidated in contemporary educational literature as an analytical category that shifts the focus of learning to write from the merely technical domain to its sociocultural dimension. Unlike literacy, traditionally understood as the appropriation of the alphabetic-orthographic system and coding and decoding skills, literacy refers to the insertion of the subject in social practices that involve reading and writing in historically situated contexts (Amado; Silva; Melo, 2020). Thus, literacy is not reduced to knowing how to read and write, but implies understanding what one reads for, why one writes, in what situations, with what purposes and under what power relations.

This perspective broadens the understanding of language as a social practice that mediates human relations, forms of cultural participation, and the production of meanings (Araújo, 2020). By considering that reading and writing practices are culturally organized and socially regulated, literacy comes to be understood as a plural phenomenon, situated and crossed by ideological, political and identity dimensions. In this sense, talking about literacy means recognizing that subjects are constituted in the interaction with different textual genres, supports, languages and social spheres, building symbolic repertoires that guide their performance in the world.

Paulo Freire's contribution is fundamental to this conception. By stating that the reading of the word is inextricably linked to the reading of the world, Freire emphasized the political and emancipatory character of language (Freire, 1996). For the author, teaching requires understanding that knowledge is built in the dialogical relationship between historical subjects, and that literacy, and, by extension, literacy, should enable the problematization of reality and the construction of critical autonomy. From this perspective, language is not neutral, but an instrument of social participation and transformation of the concrete conditions of existence.

Literacy, therefore, implies critical participation in written culture, production of meanings and exercise of citizenship. It is a process that involves the ability to interpret texts, position oneself in front of them, dialogue with different discourses and produce utterances that circulate socially. This conception shifts the center of the educational process from the mere acquisition of technical skills to the formation of subjects capable of acting reflexively in different contexts.

Such an understanding takes on even greater relevance in the initial stages of schooling. In Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary School, language learning occurs in an integrated way with bodily, playful, sensory, and imaginative

experiences. The child interacts with oral, written and multimodal texts even before formal literacy, appropriating social practices that involve narratives, songs, stories, drawings, dramatizations and other forms of symbolic expression. In this context, literacy is manifested in active participation in significant communicative situations, in which language is articulated with play, imagination and aesthetic experience (Tian; Isa, 2024).

Understanding literacy as a social practice in the early stages implies recognizing that the child's linguistic formation is not restricted to the acquisition of codes, but involves the construction of meanings in interaction with the other and with the world (Dias et al., 2026). The school, in this sense, assumes a decisive role in creating literate environments that favor the circulation of different texts, sensitive listening, dialogue and authorship. Thus, literacy becomes the foundation for the constitution of critical, creative and culturally situated subjects, preparing the ground for broader discussions, such as the articulation between language and aesthetic experience, the central axis of this study.

3.2 AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN FORMATION

Aesthetic education is a structuring dimension of integral human formation, as it involves the development of sensitivity, perception, imagination, creativity and the ability to attribute meanings to the world. Far from being restricted to the appreciation of beauty or the formal teaching of artistic content, aesthetic education refers to the formation of the ability to experience, interpret, produce and resignify cultural manifestations in their multiple languages. It is, therefore, a formative process that integrates emotion and thought, sensitivity and rationality, experience and reflection (Coelho, 2021).

In the context of Early Childhood Education and the early years of Elementary School, this dimension takes on an even more decisive character. It is during this period that the child builds his first symbolic relationships with the world, appropriating narratives, images, sounds, gestures and movements that structure his perception of reality (Silva; Sousa; Dias, 2025). Systematic contact with children's literature, visual arts, music, dramatizations, bodily experiences and playful practices expands the cultural repertoire of children, favoring the constitution of identities, the expression of feelings and the development of language in its multiple forms.

From this perspective, the aesthetic experience cannot be understood as a complementary or peripheral element of the curriculum, but as a constitutive dimension of the educational process. As discussed by Araújo (2020), the articulation between language and aesthetic experience enhances pedagogical practices that promote authorship, imagination, and criticality. By experiencing mediated aesthetic experiences, the child learns

to perceive nuances, establish symbolic relationships, elaborate narratives and produce meanings about himself and the world. Aesthetics, in this sense, expands the field of literacy by incorporating expressive forms that go beyond verbal text, including visual, sound and body languages.

Recent studies reinforce the relevance of aesthetic education for integral development, highlighting that practices that integrate art and sensibility favor not only cognitive skills, but also socio-emotional skills, empathy, and cultural awareness (Tian; Isa, 2024). This understanding dialogues with the notion of integral education present in normative documents, although its implementation depends on the institutional conditions and pedagogical conceptions that guide the teaching work.

However, the contemporary educational scenario presents significant tensions. Policies based on accountability, curriculum standardization, and large-scale evaluations tend to prioritize skills that can be measured, which can result in a reduction in the time and space allocated to artistic languages (Sousa; Alvarenga, 2021). In this logic, the arts are often subordinated to instrumental objectives or treated as auxiliary resources for the teaching of content considered central, emptying their formative power (Coelho, 2021). Such a movement can weaken the consolidation of meaningful aesthetic experiences, especially in the public school system, where the demands for academic performance are usually intensified (Santos, Franqueira, Viana, 2025).

This tension highlights the need to reaffirm aesthetic education as an inseparable component of human formation. By recognizing that children learn through sensitive experience and symbolic interaction with the world, the school expands its commitment to an education that is not limited to the transmission of content, but that promotes the development of critical, creative, and culturally situated subjects (Coelho, 2021). Thus, aesthetic education is configured as an indispensable theoretical basis for the understanding of aesthetic literacy, the central theme of this review, as it evidences that the process of literacy and literacy must intentionally incorporate the sensitive dimension as a constitutive element of learning.

3.3 AESTHETIC LITERACY: ARTICULATION BETWEEN SENSITIVE AND COGNITIVE

Aesthetic literacy emerges, in contemporary literature, as an integrating concept that articulates language, art and sensitive experience within the social practices of knowledge production. By recognizing artistic and expressive languages as legitimate ways of reading and interpreting the world, aesthetic literacy broadens the conception of literacy as a social practice (Amado; Silva; Melo, 2020), incorporating the aesthetic dimension as a constitutive component of human formation. From this perspective, aesthetics is not configured as a

curricular ornament or complementary activity, but as an epistemological axis that sustains processes of signification, authorship, and criticality (Araújo, 2020).

By dialoguing with Freire's conception that the reading of the word is intrinsically linked to the reading of the world, aesthetic literacy reaffirms that learning involves not only the decoding of linguistic signs, but the ability to interpret cultural symbols, images, narratives and bodily expressions that structure the human experience (Freire, 1996). Thus, reading aesthetically implies perceiving nuances, establishing symbolic relationships and positioning oneself critically in the face of cultural manifestations that circulate socially.

This understanding broadens the understanding of literacy by incorporating literary fruition, imagination, ethical sensitivity and creative production of meanings. Literacy is no longer conceived as a mere technical acquisition of the alphabetic system and becomes part of broader processes of symbolic and cultural construction (Araújo, 2020). In Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary School, this articulation becomes even more evident, since the child learns through the interaction between verbal language, images, sounds, gestures and movements (Silva; Sousa; Dias, 2025). Aesthetic literacy, therefore, articulates the sensitive and the cognitive, overcoming dichotomies that have historically separated emotion and reason in the educational field.

Children's literature is a privileged example of this integration. By providing contact with symbolic narratives, complex characters and imaginative universes, literature not only favors linguistic development, but also expands children's cultural and ethical sensitivity (Amado; Silva; Melo, 2020). Through literary fruition, the child exercises empathy, understands conflicts, elaborates emotions and builds identity references. Such a process contributes to the formation of critical and culturally situated subjects, in line with the perspective of integral education discussed by Coelho (2021).

Recent studies reinforce that pedagogical practices that integrate aesthetic education and literacy promote cognitive development articulated with socio-emotional and cultural skills (Tian; Isa, 2024). In addition, international research on aesthetic literacy highlights that aesthetic competence involves critical perception, cultural sensitivity, and expanded interpretive capacity (Zulusuwan; Chansirisira, 2025). These findings converge to the understanding that aesthetic literacy is not limited to the teaching of artistic content, but constitutes a formative process that integrates experience, language and reflection.

In this sense, aesthetic literacy is consolidated as a fundamental theoretical category to understand the articulation between aesthetic education and human formation in the initial stages of schooling. By integrating multiple languages in the educational process, the horizon of literacy is broadened beyond the verbal dimension, incorporating experiences that favor

the production of meanings, creativity and critical participation in culture. This approach reaffirms the commitment of public schools to an education that articulates literacy, literacy and sensitivity, consolidating pedagogical practices consistent with the integral education defended throughout this review.

3.4 TEACHER TRAINING AND AESTHETIC PRACTICES

Teacher training is a structuring axis for the consolidation of pedagogical practices aimed at aesthetic literacy, since the conceptions of teaching, language, childhood and learning are directly influenced by the formative paths experienced by teachers. It is not only about the acquisition of specific techniques or methodologies, but also about the construction of theoretical and ethical references that guide pedagogical intentionality in everyday school life. In this sense, the way in which the teacher understands art, literature, the body, play, and multiple languages directly impacts the quality and depth of the aesthetic experiences offered to children (Araújo, 2020; Dias et al., 2026).

Training paths that value the integration between language, art, and culture tend to favor more dialogical, creative, and sensitive pedagogical practices, in which literacy is not limited to the instrumental dimension, but is articulated with the production of meanings and critical training (Araújo, 2020). By recognizing aesthetics as a constitutive dimension of learning, the teacher expands the repertoire of pedagogical mediations, incorporating children's literature, oral narratives, visual arts, music, body expression and interdisciplinary practices as structuring components of the formative process (Amado; Silva; Melo, 2020).

On the other hand, training marked by technicist approaches or excessively focused on quantitative results can restrict teaching work to evaluative goals and performance indicators, reducing the space for meaningful aesthetic experiences. In contexts crossed by accountability policies and large-scale evaluations, there is a risk that continuing education prioritizes strategies aimed at achieving indices and goals, relegating the sensitive dimension of learning to the background (Sousa; Alvarenga, 2021). This tension has a direct impact on the organization of pedagogical planning, influencing the selection of contents, methodologies and school times.

In the context of the public network, initiatives such as the Program for Continuing Education in Reading and Writing in Early Childhood Education (LEEI), carried out in the city of Araguaína-TO, show institutional investment in literacy and in the strengthening of language practices. Such policies demonstrate a commitment to the qualification of teaching work and to the improvement of educational indicators. However, in the light of the discussion on aesthetic literacy, the need emerges to problematize the extent to which these formations

incorporate, in an intentional and systematic way, the aesthetic dimension of literacy or whether they remain predominantly guided by quantitative goals and measurable results (Amado; Silva; Melo, 2020).

Recent literature points out that educational excellence requires the development of aesthetic skills in educators, understood as the capacity for critical perception, cultural sensitivity and creative mediation of languages (Zulusuwan; Chansirisira, 2025). In this sense, teacher training focused on aesthetic literacy is not limited to the offer of specific artistic workshops, but presupposes a continuous reflective process that articulates theory and practice, curriculum and experience, evaluation and sensitivity. It is about training teachers capable of recognizing aesthetics as an epistemological dimension of learning, and not just as an auxiliary didactic resource.

Thus, discussing teacher training in the context of aesthetic literacy implies understanding that the qualification of pedagogical practices depends on the articulation between public policies, curricular conceptions and critical professional development. By investing in training that integrates language, art and sensibility, public schools strengthen their capacity to promote an integral education, in which literacy, literacy and aesthetic experience are inseparable dimensions of the training process. This articulation proves to be fundamental to overcome dichotomies between content and expression, cognition and emotion, performance and sensitivity, reaffirming the commitment of basic education to full human formation.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the literature evidenced significant theoretical convergences around the understanding of literacy as a social practice and aesthetic education as a constitutive dimension of human formation, while revealing structural tensions related to contemporary educational policies and the concrete conditions of implementation of these conceptions in the public school system.

Initially, there is a consensus among the authors regarding the overcoming of the instrumental perspective of literacy. At first, authors such as Amado, Silva and Melo (2020) argue that literacy should be understood as a cultural practice mediated by language, involving the production of meanings and social insertion. This conception dialogues directly with Freire (1996), for whom the reading of the word is intrinsically linked to the reading of the world, emphasizing the political and emancipatory character of the act of reading and writing. In this sense, literacy is not reduced to the technical mastery of the written code, but implies critical participation in culture, construction of autonomy and reflective positioning in

the face of reality. By articulating this understanding to the aesthetic dimension, it is inferred that the debate holds that aesthetic literacy integrates language, art, and sensitive experience as legitimate modes of knowledge production (Araújo, 2020).

Furthermore, it is evident that literacy, when conceived in an expanded way, requires pedagogical practices that integrate multiple languages and symbolic experiences. This requirement becomes even more evident in Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary School, stages in which learning occurs inseparably from playing, imagination, the body and sensory experiences (Silva; Sousa; Dias, 2025). In this context, the child interacts with narratives, images, sounds and movements that structure his understanding of the world, so that verbal language cannot be dissociated from other forms of expression. Thus, aesthetic literacy emerges as a theoretical category capable of explaining this integration between sensible and cognitive, overcoming historically established dichotomies between reason and emotion.

With regard to aesthetic education, studies converge in recognizing its centrality for integral development. In this sense, it is verified that human education cannot be understood only under the logic of content transmission, but must integrate sensitivity, creativity, and critical reflection (Coelho, 2021). In addition, studies show that aesthetic practices in childhood favor not only cognitive development, but also socio-emotional and cultural skills (Tian; Isa, 2024). Children's literature, in this sense, is an emblematic example of the articulation between language and aesthetic experience, as it expands the symbolic repertoire of children and favors the construction of identities, empathy and cultural awareness (Amado; Silva; Melo, 2020).

However, the analysis also revealed significant tensions between the theoretical recognition of aesthetic education and its effectiveness in school practices. It was found that curriculum standardization policies and large-scale evaluations tend to prioritize skills that can be measured, which can reduce the space allocated to artistic languages (Sousa; Alvarenga, 2021). This logic is reinforced by institutional contexts that intensify the search for quantitative results, producing a scenario in which the aesthetic dimension can be subordinated to instrumental objectives (Santos, Franqueira and Viana, 2025). Thus, although normative documents defend integral education, there is a tension between academic performance and significant aesthetic experiences in practice (Dias et al., 2025).

In this scenario, teacher training plays a decisive role. In this sense, it can be said that the incorporation of aesthetic literacy in pedagogical practices depends on formative references that intentionally integrate language, art, and culture (Araújo, 2020). In a convergent way, Zulusuwan and Chansirisira (2025) argue that educational excellence

requires the development of aesthetic skills in educators, understood as the capacity for critical perception, cultural sensitivity and creative mediation of languages. The literature analyzed indicates that, without an education that recognizes aesthetics as an epistemological dimension of learning, practices tend to be limited to specific or complementary actions, without effective integration into the curriculum.

Thus, the results of this review demonstrate that aesthetic literacy is consolidated as an integrative category capable of articulating literacy, aesthetic education and teacher training, especially in the initial stages of Basic Education. By integrating multiple languages and sensitive experiences to the literacy process, the formative horizon of the public school is broadened, reaffirming its commitment to the constitution of critical, creative and culturally situated subjects. However, the effectiveness of this perspective depends on overcoming instrumentalized approaches and strengthening teacher training policies that value aesthetics as a constitutive dimension of learning.

Thus, the authors demonstrated that the contemporary challenge does not lie in the absence of a theoretical foundation on the importance of aesthetic literacy, but in the need for its practical consolidation in the daily life of public schools. The articulation between language, art and criticality is, therefore, an indispensable path for an education that integrates literacy, literacy and full human formation.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is concluded that scientific production recognizes aesthetic literacy as an integrating dimension between language, art and sensitive experience, overcoming restricted conceptions of literacy centered only on technique. Literature converges in understanding that integral human formation, especially in the initial stages of schooling, requires the articulation between sensible and cognitive, reading the word and reading the world, aesthetic fruition and critical production of meanings.

Among the main findings, the theoretical consensus about the centrality of aesthetic education for the integral development of children stands out, favoring not only linguistic skills, but also creativity, empathy, cultural awareness and authorship. However, the review evidenced structural tensions in the context of the public network, marked by the predominance of educational policies guided by goals and large-scale evaluations, which can restrict the space of artistic languages and sensitive experiences. It was also observed that teacher training is a determining factor for the consolidation of intentional aesthetic practices integrated into the curriculum, and that training approaches that treat aesthetics only as a complementary didactic resource are insufficient.

Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen initial and continuing education policies that systematically integrate the foundations of aesthetic literacy, articulating theory, practice and critical reflection. In addition, it is suggested the expansion of empirical research that investigates how public schools have been operationalizing this dimension in the pedagogical routine, contributing to overcoming the dichotomy between academic performance and sensitive education.

Finally, it reaffirms the need for curricula and educational policies to recognize aesthetics as an epistemological dimension of learning, consolidating practices that integrate literacy, literacy and aesthetic experience as inseparable expressions of full human formation.

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