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## Development of Literary Competence Through the Reading of Short Stories as a Strategy to Promote Creative Writing

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### Abstract

*This scientific article aims to promote the development of literary competencies in secondary and high school students, with greater emphasis on textual production, given its long-term significance for the situational factors that arise throughout a student's life. These skills are essential for encouraging the formation of learners who feel interest and motivation for what they read and, in turn, are attracted to creative writing supported by short stories. It is important to highlight that strengthening these skills enables students to develop their own concepts as well as critical thinking and personal identity. This article was developed under a qualitative, documentary research approach, addressing the topic of literature teaching by considering previous research and analyses conducted in various documents, projects, and scientific articles related to this theme. Likewise, within the sources consulted, a clear distinction is made regarding the research line categorized within the field of pedagogies and/or didactics, oriented toward the sub-line of pedagogical models. Regarding the results obtained by different authors, the overall objective, the appropriate development of literary competencies, was achieved, as evidenced by the assessments conducted. Moreover, the strengthening of the skills encompassed by literary competence, such as comprehension, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of texts, was accomplished.*

**Keywords:** *Literary competence, short story genre, short story, works, teaching, learning, literature.*

### Introduction

The guidance of competencies inherent to the subject of literature by the teaching staff is considered an essential aspect of the learning process and the holistic education of students, particularly given that this area includes a variety of skills belonging to the Spanish language and the literary field. These skills range from reading comprehension and the development of critical thinking to the formation of creative writing, all of which contribute to the promotion and strengthening of literary knowledge in alignment with meaningful language learning. The teacher's role serves as a guide and support throughout this instructional process aimed at forming readers and writers.

In this same sense, establishing clear training in literary competencies has become crucial within the educational field, as they emerge and play a significant role in the learning process. School curricula often tend to emphasize Spanish language instruction from a predominantly

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grammatical and orthographic perspective, which leads students to focus on achieving goals limited to proper writing and correct spelling. Consequently, the teaching of critical thinking and creative writing is often detached or relegated, addressed with less depth than desired in the classroom. Teachers typically follow the guidelines established by the institution regarding curricular planning, instructional areas, and didactic units, making it necessary for educators to exercise their professional autonomy to highlight and strengthen additional competencies that are equally essential for students' literary development.

Since teachers rely on institutional curriculum guidelines, it is imperative that they themselves identify the educational needs related to literary components that influence the learning process. The ultimate purpose is to strengthen their autonomy in selecting teaching strategies that effectively develop literary competencies, enhancing students' reading and writing abilities.

The literary resources commonly used in classrooms for teaching literature and Spanish language are often limited to classic literary works, such as old novels and traditional short stories characteristic of regional literature. Over time, these materials may become repetitive throughout students' school years. For this reason, the use of short stories aligned with students' preferences and interests is proposed, allowing them to better demonstrate the competencies expected of them.

In conclusion, this article seeks to promote literary competencies with a greater emphasis on textual production, given their long-term impact on the student's life. These skills are key to fostering the development of learners who feel interest and motivation toward what they read and who, in turn, develop an attraction for creative writing supported by the use of short stories.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This article was developed using a qualitative, documentary-based methodology, employing the technique of document analysis in order to contribute to the state of the art on the topic of emotional intelligence and oral expression in the development of classroom practices. These were addressed through various sources, including master theses, scientific articles, and doctoral dissertations found in different university repositories and indexed scientific journals.

For the review, both international and national sources related to the topic were considered, dating from 2015 to the present. The documents consulted underwent a thorough review, with the goal of selecting the works most relevant to the reality of the research. In the literature review process, 110 sources were initially consulted, from which 25 were ultimately selected for the development of this article.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This article presents the bibliographic references that support the development of this research project and provide a broader understanding of the object of study. The central focus lies in identifying the most effective strategies to develop in students the literary competencies necessary to cultivate an interest in creative writing through the reading of literary short stories. Such competencies contribute to forming autonomous readers who are capable of generating reflections and critical thinking about the literary works they encounter.

The references consulted are presented and discussed according to the following thematic areas:

## **Literary Competence**

The development of literary competence is essential for achieving the aims of this research, as it enables students to experience literature meaningfully and supports the implementation of effective teaching strategies. Literary competence involves not only the literal comprehension of texts but also the ability to infer and interpret meaning.

Literary competence is understood as a component of communicative competence that includes the ability to read, understand, interpret, and evaluate different types of literary texts; to enjoy listening to or reading them; to develop imagination, creativity, and aesthetic sensitivity; and to create, recreate, and produce literary texts both orally and in writing (Prado, 2004, as cited in Álvarez, 2017).

It is crucial that, at the beginning of the process of developing literary competence, students are able to clearly identify the specific skills being strengthened through the reading of short stories. This allows them to progress gradually from basic to more complex levels of competence.

The continuous development of literary competence enhances students' reading skills and fosters reading habits that encourage them to read and produce literary texts more frequently.

Developing literary competence is a complex activity because it requires understanding, integrating, and interpreting the components of literary discourse. Training students in literary competence means shaping autonomous readers who enjoy texts and are capable of making interpretations and critical judgments (Cantero & Mendoza, 2003, as cited in Álvarez, 2017).

Given the complexity involved in acquiring the literary competencies required at each educational level, the teacher's role as guide and support becomes essential. Students must feel interest and enjoyment in what they read, as this satisfaction facilitates their ability to interpret and reflect upon ideas and personal thoughts.

By fostering such engagement, the proposed objectives can be met creating spaces within the school environment that encourage students to read meaningful literature aligned with their interests. To achieve this, teachers must identify students' preferences regarding genres, themes, styles, and authors, and select readings that resonate with their motivations. This alignment allows students to engage more meaningfully with literary tasks and supports substantial progress in literary competence.

## **Reading Comprehension Skills**

Reading comprehension skills are indispensable for developing any specific literary competence. Without these skills, effective learning cannot occur. These abilities help students understand and interpret the content of the texts they read, which is essential for meaningful literary engagement.

### **Literal Level**

At this level, students focus on what the text explicitly states. It is a fundamental skill generally developed early in schooling and serves as the basis for more advanced forms of comprehension. Primary literal reading involves recognizing information explicitly stated in the text, understanding sequences of events, and identifying key details (Catalá et al., 2001). Teachers guide students to:

- ✓ Identify details.
- ✓ Recognize setting, time, and characters.
- ✓ Sequence events.

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- ✓ Understand word and sentence meanings.
- ✓ Recall passages and details.
- ✓ Identify multiple-meaning words.
- ✓ Recognize synonyms, antonyms, and homophones.
- ✓ Understand common prefixes and suffixes.

Mastery of literal comprehension facilitates the learning of higher-level reading skills. When taught with adequate depth, this foundational level enables cognitive progression toward more complex reading abilities.

Deep literal reading goes beyond basic identification and requires students to analyze textual details, determine main ideas, and identify central themes with clarity.

### **Inferential Level**

The inferential level is crucial in the reading process, as it marks the beginning of true cognitive engagement with texts. At this stage, the student becomes an analytical and critical thinker.

This level goes beyond superficial reading. Students must connect textual information with their own reasoning (Atoc, n.d.). Instruction at this level should guide students to:

- ✓ Predict outcomes.
- ✓ Infer lessons or messages.
- ✓ Suggest titles.
- ✓ Identify key ideas.
- ✓ Rewrite texts by altering events or settings.
- ✓ Infer word meanings.
- ✓ Determine themes.
- ✓ Summarize content.
- ✓ Predict alternative endings.
- ✓ Identify logical sequences.

Here, students move from literal understanding to deeper analysis, employing deduction, interpretation, and critical reflection. The ultimate purpose of this level is the construction of sound conclusions based on textual evidence.

Through argumentation, inference, and analytical thinking, students begin to form a strong connection with the text and prepare for the next, more complex level.

### **Critical Level**

At the critical level, students must think beyond the text, relate it to their daily lives, and connect it to personal experiences. This enables them to form independent judgments and viewpoints, contributing to their development as integral members of society.

Critical reading involves value judgments based on textual content and prior knowledge. Students articulate subjective responses regarding characters, authors, themes, and literary images. Teachers must promote a dialogic and democratic classroom environment (Consuelo, 2007, as cited in Atoc, n.d.). Students at this level learn to:

- ✓ Evaluate a text's content.
- ✓ Distinguish fact from opinion.
- ✓ Identify implicit meanings.
- ✓ Judge characters' actions.
- ✓ Analyze the author's intention.

- ✓ Form judgments about behaviors.
- ✓ Assess text structure.

This is considered the ideal level of literary competence because it centers on the reader's individual judgment, prior knowledge, and ability to argue perspectives based on the text. Students connect their experiences with literary content, fostering profound critical reflection. Completing this level contributes significantly to forming citizens capable of independent thought, able not only to read critically but also to produce texts reflecting argumentative and evaluative thinking.

### **Creative Writing**

It is essential for students to acquire the ability to write and produce texts. However, this process must not be imposed; instead, it must invite students to engage voluntarily and joyfully. Creative writing allows learners to express themselves freely through literature, drawing on personal interests, contexts, and experiences.

Creative writing involves crafting stories using formats and structures that differ from conventional academic, technical, or journalistic writing. It relies on originality, imagination, innovation, and creativity (UNIR, 2021).

Engaging in creative writing not only activates cognitive skills but also enhances students' self-esteem, enjoyment, and personal fulfillment, making the learning experience meaningful and enriching.

Through creative writing, students explore their imagination and creativity. They engage with various genres like fiction, drama, comedy, tragedy and forms such as essays, poems, letters, and novels. Their personal style becomes an integral part of the final text, supported by exposure to diverse literary models.

Techniques for developing creative writing include extensive reading, immersion in multiple genres, and continuous writing practice. Regular writing fosters fluency and strengthens reading habits, ultimately contributing to the development of literary competence.

### **The Short Story Genre**

The short story is one of the literary genres established in the institutional curriculum and plays a significant role in students' education. As a core component of the language area, short-story writing contributes to the development of literary competence and forms critically reflective readers and writers.

Short stories have a long tradition in oral storytelling and continue to be an influential genre worldwide. Despite their brevity, they possess the power to convey complete narratives and intense emotions in a limited space, making them effective for teaching values and transmitting cultural knowledge (Somnia, 2023).

Short stories also facilitate the development of coherence, cohesion, and creativity key components of literary competence. Their structure, typically centered on a single event, allows for focused, meaningful analysis that strengthens comprehension and linguistic expression.

### **Short Stories**

Short stories often reflect the cultural context from which they emerge. This cultural dimension enriches students' interpretative processes, allowing them to draw connections between the narrative and their own experiences.

Short stories incorporate symbolic elements of the cultures they represent, enabling readers to

connect emotionally with the text and stimulating imagination, creativity, and personal growth. “Stories show the symbols of each culture, allowing children to recognize and interpret them. They stimulate imagination and help explain human relationships and the functioning of the world. Stories teach children to identify and manage emotions and foster meaningful bonds between the reader and listener” (Paula, 2021).

Using short stories as a pedagogical tool offers significant benefits for the development of literary competence. Aligning story selection with students’ interests encourages engagement with reading and writing, enriches vocabulary, and enhances both oral and written expression.

Evidence shows that short stories increase students’ motivation for reading and facilitate their transition into writing, as they allow learners to immerse themselves in narrative settings that expand their worldview and contribute to meaningful learning.

## **Conclusion**

In accordance with the promotion of literary competencies among secondary school students, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of developing such competencies, both academically and personally, as they contribute to the comprehensive formation associated with the fundamental qualities of literature. Throughout this article, it is possible to distinguish the significant contribution made through the use and implementation of short stories as a strategy to foster communicative skills related to the reading and writing process. This process is deeply embedded in today’s educational context; with which we must remain constantly engaged in order to promote meaningful learning.

However, it is also necessary to recognize that implementing an innovative learning strategy should not occur in an isolated or detached manner. On the contrary, it is crucial to understand that the demonstration and evidence of meaningful progress in the development of these skills constitute a continuous process, one that must remain in motion despite the frustrations or setbacks that may arise. Such challenges are entirely normal, considering that the approach is directed toward a relatively new methodology.

In conclusion, the use of short stories as a means for the appropriate development and strengthening of literary competencies demonstrates significant progress, as reflected in the reading and writing processes exhibited by students. Additionally, students’ own experiences and the ways in which they express their learning further support the effectiveness of this approach, which encompasses multiple dimensions and requires dedication in order to achieve the intended goals.

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