



Review

Dialogic literary gatherings: A systematic review of evidence to overcome social and educational inequalities

Laura Ruiz-Eugenio^{a,*}, Marta Soler-Gallart^b, Sandra Racionero-Plaza^b,
 Maria Padrós^c

^a Department of Theory and History of Education, University of Barcelona, Spain

^b Department of Sociology, University of Barcelona, Spain

^c Department of Didactics and School Organization, University of Barcelona, Spain



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ABSTRACT

More than a decade after publications on Dialogic Literary Gatherings in indexed peer-review journals started, a systematic review that gathered the findings was necessary to provide further insight for future educational research, practice, and policymaking. The purpose of the present systematic review was to gather the existing evidence on the social, educational, and learning impact of DLGs on children, adolescents and adults involved in different settings. It has reviewed 46 articles published between 2010 and 2021. The findings of this systematic review provide a better understanding on the DLG as educational and learning action that enables dialogue and exchange, overcoming stereotypes and cultural barriers, self-improvement through education, increasing one's self-esteem, creating a non-violent and supportive environment, bringing the community in, and taking the new learnings out, building new possible worlds in all ages and in very diverse settings such as primary, secondary, high, special, and adult schools, family and community education, foster care centre for minors, and prisons. Implications of the evidence on the impact of DLG for practice and policymaking could be considered for the promotion of educational and learning actions aimed at both the improvement linguistic and reading skills and the enhancement of values that promote social cohesion.

1. Introduction

The Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) are an educational action and learning environment based on the collective construction of meaning and knowledge through reading and dialogue the best universal literary works (R. Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015). DLG originated in the 1979-80 academic year at the La Verneda-Sant Martí School for Adults in Barcelona. The first DLG was created by Ramon Flecha with a small group of people who had just become literate (Aubert, Villarejo, Cabré, & Santos, 2016; R. Flecha, 2000; Giner, 2018; Sanchez-Aroca, 1999). The translation into English of the book *Compartiendo Palabras* (Sharing Words), in which Flecha (1997, 2000) theorizes this educational action after 17 years participating in it, made it possible to spread it to other countries. From adult education, the DLG have also been extended to pre-school, primary, secondary and special education schools (Díez-Palmar,

* Corresponding author. University of Barcelona, Department of Theory and History of Education, Passeig de la Vall d'Hebron, 171, Barcelona, 08035, Spain.

E-mail addresses: lauraruizeugenio@ub.edu (L. Ruiz-Eugenio), marta.soler@ub.edu (M. Soler-Gallart), sandraracionero@ub.edu (S. Racionero-Plaza), maripadros@ub.edu (M. Padrós).

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García-Carrion, Hargreaves, & Vieites, 2020; Fernandez-Villardón, Valls-Carol, Melgar Alcantud, & Tellado, 2021; García-Carrion, 2015; García-Carrion, Villardon-Gallego, Martínez-de-la-Hidalga, & Marauri, 2020; Santiago-Garabieta, García-Carrion, Zubiri-Esnaola, & Lopez de Aguilera, 2021), being one of the main educational actions developed in the network of schools as Learning Communities. In addition to schools, DLG are held in family education (de Botton, Gurbés, Ruiz, & Tellado, 2014; García Yeste, Padros Cuxart, Mondejar, & Villarejo, 2017), in foster-care centre for minors (García Yeste, Gairal, Munte, & Plaja, 2018), and prisons (Alvarez, García-Carrion, Puigvert, Pulido, & Schubert, 2018; R. Flecha, García, & Gomez, 2013; Pulido, 2015).

1.1. Theoretical framework

The DLG are based on dialogic learning (DL) by Ramon Flecha (2000). DL is framed within the theories that focus on intersubjectivity, interactions, and dialogue as learning generators, including theoretical contributions from different fields (Bakhtin, 2010; Bruner, 1996; Freire, 1970; Mead, 1934; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). New knowledge and meanings are created by discussing fragments of great works of universal literature. Development and learning are facilitated within a wealthier cultural environment that allows new possible worlds, using Bruner's (2012) concept. This possibility is not created in a decontextualized way. It is socially constructed and historically situated from the interactions between participants (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), using language as a tool that allows engaging in dialogic interactions that generate critical thinking (Freire, 1970). The creation of knowledge and meaning that occurs in DLG would be like the chain of dialogues that are constructed based on the meanings it has previously created with other people, in what Bakhtin calls dialogical imagination (Bakhtin, 2010).

In the DLG, both educators and students learn since all people construct their interpretations based on the arguments provided, along with Paulo Freire's theory of dialogic action (Freire, 1970) and Habermas' theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1981). The participants establish what can be considered good or true based on an intersubjective dialogue with validity claims to reach an agreement. Language plays a fundamental role in understanding, not separated from action. This statement is Austin's (1975) idea of how to do things with words; as well as incorporate the communicative concept of action derived from the intersubjective dialogue worked by Mead (1934). He analyzed the interaction between people and the influence of context on their reality interpretations; this approach is also taken into account by the ethnomethodology of Garfinkel (1967) and the hermeneutics of Gadamer (1975).

Based on this theoretical framework and his 17-year involvement in a DLG, Flecha defined the seven principles of DL. Egalitarian dialogue is the first. Participants' contributions are considered according to the validity of their arguments instead of their positions of power. The second is cultural intelligence. This criterion goes beyond the limitations of academic intelligence and encompasses the plurality of dimensions of human interaction: academic intelligence, practical intelligence, and communicative intelligence. All people have cultural intelligence regardless of their educational background, language, socioeconomic status, cultural and identity traits. The recognition of cultural intelligence makes it possible to overcome approaches centered on "deficits" and move towards learning at the highest level. The third is transformation. The DLG transforms the relationships between the participants and their environment. The fourth is the instrumental dimension. The DLG are oriented towards overcoming the opposition between the instrumental and humanistic dimensions. It includes instrumental learning of the knowledge and skills that are deemed necessary to know. The fifth is the creation of meaning. The DLG assumes that everyone can dream and feel, give sense to their existence. The sixth is solidarity. The DLG is a place of solidarity. It is open to all kinds of people. Priority gives the floor to those who have not yet participated in the debate or find it more challenging. Finally, the seventh is the equality of differences. The DLG assumes that real equality includes the equal right of every person to live differently (R. Flecha, 2000).

1.2. How a dialogic literary gathering works

DLG starts choosing one of the best literary works to read by the participants. The selected works are primary universal references (Serrano, Mirceva, & Larena, 2010). For example, with adults, some of the works read were *The Plague* by Albert Camus, *Arabian nights*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez, *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, *The Gardener* by Rabindranath Tagore, *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf, among many others. In preschool, primary, and special schools, high-quality adaptations are read from works such as *The Arabian Nights*, the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* by Homer, the *Aeneid* by Virgil, Aesop's *Fables*, and *The Quixote* by Cervantes. DLG is usually carried out weekly for one to 2 h. Participants choose the book to read from a list provided by the educators who run the DLG. They agree on the pages or chapters to read for the DLG session. They read the pages individually or with the help of others at home or school a few days before the DLG. Then they chose the passage(s) that they wanted to share in the DLG. During the DLG session, they share their selected fragments with the rest of the participants explaining why they have chosen it and giving their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing. The floor is open for those who wish to give their opinion for each paragraph shared. The teacher chairs the discussion so that everyone has a chance to speak. The role of the teacher is to make the DLG a learning environment for dialogic reading (Noble et al., 2019), promoting reflection literacy among students (Chan & Lee, 2021).

1.3. The INCLUD-ED project and a decade of published articles in peer-reviewed indexed journals. The need for a systematic review

The European Union's 6th Framework Programme of Research project *INCLUDED: Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion from Education in Europe* lead by Flecha, analyzed the educational and social impact of DLG among others educational actions. This project was the only one selected from the social sciences within the first ten success stories of all EU Framework Programmes of research for all knowledge areas for its added value and innovation (European Commission, 2011). Within the INCLUD-ED research project, DLG

was selected as a successful educational action that had scientifically proven to foster academic achievement, social cohesion, and transferability to various contexts. DLGs are currently being applied in more than 10,000 schools and other educative and social settings in Europe and Latin America in the framework of Schools as Learning Communities (Dialogic Gatherings Latin America, 2020; Support to address school failure and drop out in educational areas of priority intervention (TEIP) in Portugal, 2019; ENLARGE Consortium, 2018; Natura Institute., 2019; SEAs4all Consortium, 2016; Step4Seas Consortium, 2017).

After the publication of the first results of the INCLUD-ED project, the impact of DLGs has been covered in several publications in indexed journals. In the last decade, other research projects funded by various European and national research programs have delved into the social, educational, and learning impact of DLG in different settings where they are implemented. For this reason, it has been estimated that after more than ten years of scientific publications closely covering the topic is necessary a systematic review that gathered the findings to provide further insight into DLG's impact on learning, educational and social for future educational research, practice, and policymaking to improve linguistic and reading skills as well as social cohesion in all ages. After this rationale, it was designed and developed this systematic review following the PRISMA standards (Alexander, 2020; Polanin, Maynard, & Dell, 2017; Tricco et al., 2018).

1.4. Objective and review questions

The purpose of the present systematic review was to gather the existing evidence on the learning, educational, and social impact of DLG on children, adolescents and adults involved in different settings. Through a systematic review of the published literature between 2010 and 2021, it sought to address seven review questions:

- RQ 1.** Do DLGs create spaces for dialogue and exchange among participants (type of dialogue, possibilities for sharing experiences and reflections, developing arguments, and listening to others)?
- RQ 2.** Do DLGs provide a learning environment for overcoming stereotypes and other social barriers?
- RQ 3.** Do DLGs promote self-improvement through learning and education (communicative and reading skills, learn to learn, pro-active attitude towards learning and reading)
- RQ 4.** Do DLGs increase one's self-esteem?
- RQ 5.** Do DLGs achieve a non-violent climate of coexistence?
- RQ 6.** Are DLGs a space that includes and impacts the community?
- RQ 7.** Do DLGs improve educational and social expectations?

2. Method

2.1. Eligibility criteria, information sources, and search

The systematic review has been designed according to the PRISMA standards (Tricco et al., 2018). Fig. 1 shows the flow diagram for the search and screening procedures. The search strategy was conducted using the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases because

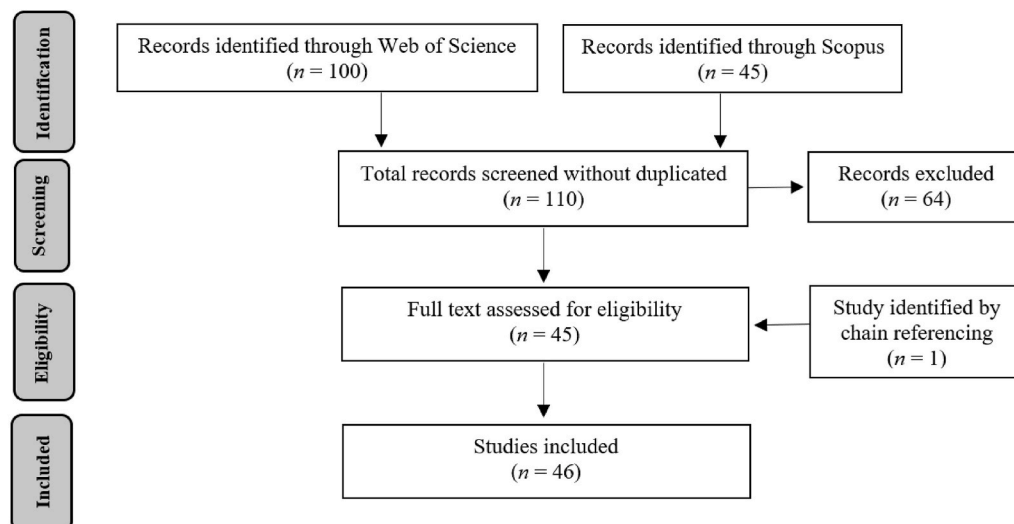


Fig. 1. PRISMA flow diagram for search and screening process.

Table 1
Overview of studies characteristics (continued).

Study	Design	Context		Participants		
		Intervention	Ctry.	Characteristics	Age	ISCED ^a
Aguilera et al. (2015)	Discourse analysis	PS, MS, HS	Spain	$n = 23$ University-students volunteers	AD	L5
Alvarez et al. (2018)	Case study	P	Spain	$n = 8$ Female inmates	AD	NBS
Alvarez-Guerrero et al. (2021)	Case study	ES	Spain	Students of special needs classroom with moderate or severe intellectual disability and/or a pervasive developmental disorder participating in online DLG during COVID-19 lockdown	13–21	L2
Aubert (2015)	Biographical	PS	Spain	$n = 1$ a Roma student with learning difficulties in literacy suffered bullying and social exclusion	12	L1 - LD
Ballesta et al. (2017)	Case study	PS, MS, SO	Spain	Students of 5th-grade classroom at a primary school, secondary education students, schools' principals, teachers, families, and members of 16 SO involved pensioners, women, immigrants, and people with intellectual disabilities	MX	L1, L2, L3, NBS
Bonell and Ríos (2014)	Case study	FE	Spain	Families of primary school students	AD	NBS, L1
de Botton et al. (2014)	Case study	FE	Spain	Moroccan mothers of primary school	AD	NBS, L1
Díez-Palomar et al. (2020)	Quasi-experimental	PS, MS, HS	UK, Italy	$n = 419$	MX	L1, L2, L3
Elboj-Saso et al. (2021)	pre-test and post-test	PS	Spain	$n = 41$ volunteers participating in the pre-test and the post-test, the training and the skills test, and $n = 50$ volunteers who responded to the questionnaire regarding the $n = 620$ families of the children who participated in the experience. The mean age was 39.9 years old, 12.2% were men, 87.8% were women, and 95.1% studied at university.	MX	L3, L4
Elboj (2015)	Biographical	PS	Spain	$n = 1$ Student at a ghetto primary school	13	L1
Fernandez-Villardón et al. (2021)	Case study	SE	Spain	$n = 43$ (20 primary students, 10 secondary students, 7 students transition to adult life course, the school principal, the transition to adult life course teacher, 3 primary education teachers, and 2 secondary education teachers)	6-12/12–16/ 16–21 only students	L1, L2
Flecha, A (2015)	Biographical	AS	Spain	$n = 1$ Adult learner participating for more than 30 years in DLG	AD	L1
Flecha et al. (2013)	Longitudinal study	P	Spain	$n = 9$ male prison inmates, 1 inmate's wife, 1 educator, 1 pedagogical advisor and DLG moderator.	AD	–
Flecha and Soler (2013)	Case study	PS and MS	Spain	Families and students	MX	NBS, L0, L1, L2
Foncillas et al. (2020)	Case study	PS	Spain	$n = 48$ students of 4th grade (25 boys and 23 girls) from one primary school	9–10	L1
García-Carrion et al. (2020)	Case study	PS	Spain	$n = 2$ disadvantaged girls: one immigrant with special educational needs and the one bullied	9	L1
García-Carrion et al. (2018)	Case study	ES	Spain	$n = 36$ students with disabilities, the school principal, and the teaching staff	6 - 14 and AD	L1, L2
García-Carrion (2015)	Biographical	PS	UK	$n = 1$ primary school student	12	L1
García Yeste et al. (2018)	Case study	FC	Spain	$n = 12$ adolescents living at a foster care centre	13–17	L2, L3
García Yeste, Gairal, and Ríos (2017)	Case study	FE	Spain	$n = 8$ Moroccan immigrant mothers of a primary school	26–45	L1, L2, L3, L4, L5
García Yeste, Padrós Cuxart, Mondéjar Torra, and Villarejo Carballido (2017)	Case study	AS	Spain	$n = 4$ older women who had participated in DLG for over 20 years	68–80	NBS
Hargreaves and García-Carrion (2016)	Balance analysis of teacher-pupil talk	PS	UK	$n = 25$ primary school students	10	L1
Khalfaoui et al. (2021)	Discourse analysis	PS	Spain	$n = 126$ 4th-grade students in five primary schools	9–10	L1

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Study	Design	Context		Participants		
		Intervention	Ctry.	Characteristics	Age	ISCED ^a
Lopez de Aguieta G et al. (2020)	Case study	PS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 113 6th-grade students from two public primary schools with low SES	11–13	L1
Lopez de Aguieta G et al. (2019)	Exploratory study	PS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 19 students in a primary school in Spain with over 90% immigrant families	11–13	L1
Llopis et al. (2016)	Discourse analysis	AS	Spain	Working-class men and women	AD	NBS, L0, L1
Malagon and Gonzalez (2018)	Descriptive	PS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 40 (45.0% teachers, 5.0% volunteer-family, 47.5% volunteer-university, 2.5% other profiles external to the school community)	20–65	MX
Melgar (2015)	Biographical method	FE	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 father of a primary school student, from ex-prisoner to neighborhood leader.	AD	L1
Molina-Roldan et al. (2021)	Empirical research	PS, MS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 25 (9 teachers, 2 volunteers, and 14 students from one primary school, one primary and secondary school, and one secondary school that educate students with and without special needs in shared learning environments)		L1, L2
Molina-Roldan (2015)	Biographical method	PS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 moroccan primary school student with special needs	11	L1, LD
Munte (2015)	Narrative	AS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 Roma man community representative	AD	L1
Pulido (2015)	Biographical	P	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 Moroccan woman prison inmate	31	NBS
Pulido and Zepa (2010)	Theoretical	AS	Spain	Adults participating in a DLG	AD	–
Pulido-Rodríguez et al. (2015)	Biographical	AS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 man, who participated in the workers' movement for democracy	75	L1
Racionero-Plaza (2015)	Biographical	AS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 woman in a homeless situation	60	L2
Roca et al. (2020)	Empirical research	PS, MS, HS, ES	Spain	<i>n</i> = 10 (3 Principal, 1 counselor, 6 teachers of 9 schools implementing online DLGs during COVID-19 lockdown)	MX	MX
Rodríguez-Oramas et al. (2021)	Case study	PS	Mexico	<i>n</i> = 689 (400 students, 180 students' relatives, the school principal, 6 teachers, 2 pedagogical advisors)	6-12 and AD	MX
Ruiz-Eugenio et al. (2021)	Case study	AS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 7 (5 women participants and 2 educators in an online DLG during COVID-19 lockdown)	AD (women 56–85; educators: 25–50)	NBS, L0, L1
Ruiz-Eugenio et al. (2020)	Empirical research	PS, HS, SE	Spain	<i>n</i> = 22 (10 teachers, 6 students' relatives, and 6 students in online DLG during COVID-19 lockdown)	MX	MX
Ruiz (2015)	Narrative	AS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 woman educator	AD	L6
Santiago-Garabeta et al. (2021)	Case study	HS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 13 A Basque Language teacher and 12 students (10 girls and 2 boys)	17–18	L3
Serradell (2015)	Biographical	FE	Spain	<i>n</i> = 1 moroccan immigrant mother	28	L3
Serrano et al. (2010)	Theoretical	–	–	–	–	–
Soler (2015)	Theoretical	–	–	–	–	–
Torras-Gomez et al. (2021)	Meta-ethnography	PS, MS, HS, AD, FC, FE, P	Spain and UK	<i>n</i> = 15 participants	MX	NBS, L1, L2
Villardón-Gallego et al. (2018)	Quasi-experimental	PS	Spain	<i>n</i> = 228 4th graders from different schools	9–10	L1

Note. PS = Primary School; MS = Middle School; HS = High School; SE = Special Education; FC = Foster Care; AS = Adult School; FE = Family Education; SO = Social Organization; P = Penitentiary; MX = minors and adults not specified age.

^a ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education (1997); NBS = No basic studies; L0 = Pre-primary education; L1 = Primary Education 1–6; L2 = Lower Secondary Education 1–4; L3 = Upper Secondary Education 1–2; L4 = Post-secondary non-tertiary education; L5 = First stage of tertiary education 1–3/4; L6 = Second stage of tertiary education 1/2.

they include journals indexed in the two most recognised impact factors, the SSCI of Web of Science and the SJR of Scopus. The keywords used in the two databases have been “Dialogic Literary Gatherings,” “Dialogic Gatherings,” and “Literary Gatherings.” The keywords were searched in the title, abstract, and article keywords. In the search, 100 articles were identified in WoS and 45 in Scopus. The inclusion/exclusion criteria were the definition of DLGs made in the INCLUD-ED project (R. Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015). There are many types of literary gatherings and dialogic learning environments. But this review is only focused on evidence from those based on Flecha's principles of dialogic learning. All articles not addressing this definition were discarded. Only one article not in the WoS and Scopus databases has been selected because it was referenced in one of the selected articles (García-Carrion et al., 2020). This one presented the first findings of the University of Cambridge's first study on the impact of DLGs in primary schools in the UK (Hargreaves & García-Carrion, 2016). As a result, 46 articles were selected for final analysis.

2.2. Analysis and data charting process

A systematic process of analysis was conducted while each of the 46 selected articles was read in-depth. First, it has been created [Table 1](#) identifying the methodological design, the country, the context of the intervention, and the participants' profiles.

Although different authors wrote most articles, the majority belong to the same research community, CREA (Community of Research on Excellence for All). This network has had an active role in the dissemination, consolidation, and transferability of DLG. Regarding the date range, the selected articles were published between 2010 and 2021; 13 are from 2015 because of the special issue 'Biographies of 'invisible' people who transform their lives and enhance social transformations through Dialogic Gatherings' (Soler, 2015).

All the articles are published in peer-review journals indexed within the different fields of educational and social research. Most are written in English and a few in Spanish. Regarding the design and methodology, the studies are qualitative, and three are quantitative. Most of them were set as case studies, others as narratives and others used biographical methods. Regarding the data collection tools, most articles used interviews, focus groups, observation, or a combination of different qualitative techniques. Two of the studies used discourse analysis, and another used a balance analysis of teacher-pupil talk. Three of the articles are on the theoretical framework of DLGs, and another is a meta-ethnography.

About the context, the selected articles covered DLG experiences in primary, middle, high, adult, and special education schools, foster-care centre for minors, family education, and prisons. Most of them were set in Spain, but for five, which reported the experience in Mexico, Italy, and the UK. Participants were diverse depending on the studies, regarding SES, educational level, cultural background, and age. Not all the studies had the same detail in describing the participants' It has included precise information about them that was provided in each article. All qualitative studies use pseudonyms to name participants.

The analysis categories and subcategories are presented in [Table 2](#). Based on the dialogical and sociocultural approach to learning (Bakhtin, 2010; Bruner, 1990, 1996, 2012; R. Flecha, 2000; Freire, 1970; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978; Wells, 1999) and the contributions from different fields of psychology and social sciences related to this approach (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994; Chomsky, 2006; Habermas, 1981; Mead, 1934), it has formulated the review questions from which the seven categories have arisen. Then it deductively draws up the subcategories. Triangulation was chosen as a means to ensure rigor in the analysis. The four authors reviewed the selected studies to determine the key subcategories. In this vein, the authors shared their separate analyses and discussed the subcategories identified for each category.

In the evidence collecting process, for each qualitative study, it has been selected verbatim quotes from participants or from researchers' analyses and data from standardized evaluation reports implemented by different governments to measure academic

Table 2
Categories and subcategories on the learning, educational, and social impact of DLG.

Categories	Subcategories
A space for dialogue and exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • egalitarian dialogue • participation • a space to communicate, share and listen • the power of arguments and consensus
Overcoming stereotypes and cultural barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving voice to everyone (equality of differences) • acknowledging other's cultural intelligence • opening minds towards new ways of thinking
Self-improvement through learning and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvement of communicative skills • improvement of reading skills • learning to learn competences • increasing cultural knowledge • proactive attitude towards reading and learning • valuing and seeking training
Increasing one's self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believing in one's competences • getting a voice
Creating a non-violent and supportive environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believing in others • offering help • building trust and support • committing to act towards improvement • promoting non-violence environment
Bringing the community in; taking the new learnings out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledging and welcoming all social agents • making meaning of the reading by connecting ideas of the text with everyone's experience • extending the knowledge created in DLG to other spheres through interaction • activating the senses created to improve the world around • family involvement increases children's motivation
Building new possible worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflecting and reinterpreting their realities through the reading and the interactions • reimagining the future • setting new goals

Table 3
Categories representation by study and in the overall analysis (continued).

Study	A space for dialogue and exchange (RQ1)	Overcoming stereotypes and cultural barriers (RQ2)	Self-improvement through learning and education (RQ3)	Increasing one's self-esteem (RQ4)	Creating a non-violence and supportive environment (RQ5)	Bringing the community in; taking the new learnings out (RQ6)	Building new possible worlds (RQ7)
Aguilera et al. (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alvarez et al. (2018)	X	X	X	X	X	X	–
Alvarez-Guerrero et al. (2021)	X	–	X	–	X	X	–
Aubert (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ballesta et al. (2017)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bonell and Ríos (2014)	X	X	X	X	–	X	X
de Botton et al., 2014	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Díez-Palomar et al., 2020	X	–	X	X	X	–	–
Elboj-Saso et al. (2021)	X	–	X	–	X	X	–
Elboj (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fernandez-Villardón et al. (2021)	X	–	X	X	X	X	–
Flecha A. (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Flecha et al. (2013)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Flecha and Soler (2013)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Foncillas et al. (2020)	X	–	X	–	–	–	X
García-Carrion et al. (2020)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
García-Carrion et al. (2018)	X	–	–	X	X	X	–
García-Carrion (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
García Yeste et al. (2018)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
García Yeste, Gairal, and Ríos (2017)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
García Yeste, Padrós Cuxart, et al. (2017)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hargreaves and García-Carrion (2016)	X	–	–	–	–	–	–
Khalfaoui et al. (2021)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lopez de Aguilera G et al. (2020)	X	–	–	–	X	–	X
Lopez de Aguilera G et al. (2019)	X	–	X	–	–	–	–
Llopis, A (2016)	X	–	–	–	X	–	–
Malagon and Gonzalez (2018)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Melgar (2015)	X	–	X	X	–	X	X
Molina-Roldan et al. (2021)	X	X	X	–	X	–	–
Molina-Roldan (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	–	–
Munte (2015)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Pulido (2015)	X	–	X	X	X	X	X
Pulido and Zepa (2010)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Pulido-Rodriguez et al. (2015)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Racionero-Plaza (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Roca et al., 2020	X	–	–	–	X	–	–
Rodríguez-Oramas et al. (2021)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Ruiz-Eugenio et al. (2021)	X	–	X	X	X	X	X
Ruiz-Eugenio et al. (2020)	X	–	X	X	X	X	–
Ruiz (2015)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Santiago-Garabieta et al. (2021)	X	X	–	–	–	–	–
Serradell (2015)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

(continued on next page)

Table 3 (continued)

Study	A space for dialogue and exchange (RQ1)	Overcoming stereotypes and cultural barriers (RQ2)	Self-improvement through learning and education (RQ3)	Increasing one's self-esteem (RQ4)	Creating a non-violence and supportive environment (RQ5)	Bringing the community in; taking the new learnings out (RQ6)	Building new possible worlds (RQ7)
Serrano et al. (2010)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Soler (2015)	X	X	X	–	–	–	–
Torras-Gomez et al. (2021)	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
Villardón-Gallego et al. (2018)	X	–	X	–	X	–	–
N Studies	46	30	40	26	39	34	30
TOTAL %	100,00	65,22	86,96	56,52	84,78	73,91	65,22

performance in the studies that included them. From the quantitative studies, data supporting each result were selected. This information was entered into an Excel table. Each row corresponded to a study and the columns to the analysis categories. Table 3 identifies the categories related to the review questions and their representation for each article and in the overall analysis.

3. Results

The purpose of the systematic review was to gather the existing evidence on the learning, educational, and social impact of DLGs on children, adolescents and adults involved in different settings. Through a systematic review of 46 articles, it provides the evidence analyzed by answering each of the review questions. Table 3 is an analysis synthesis of the 46 studies. In this section, only some articles are referenced for reasons of space. Most of the evidence comes from stories and narratives that require contextualisation to be understood by the reader.

3.1. RQ 1: Do DLGs create spaces for dialogue and exchange among participants?

In all the articles reviewed, evidence has been identified that the DLGs enable a learning space through dialogue, sharing opinions, reflections, and experiences, reaching agreements based on arguments and not on the position of power of individuals (children, adolescents, and adults).

3.1.1. More than 80% of the talk are pupil interventions

Children from 10 years old, primary school. The balance analysis of teacher-pupil talk that was carried out in a class of 10-year-olds in a UK school during the first DLG session on chapters 1 and 2 of *The Odyssey* found that over 75% of the students participated in the dialogue, contributing over 80% of the talk. Often, extended arguments reveal reasoning and speculation about promises, lies, friendship, rights and violence, war, and its causes (Hargreaves & Garcia-Carrion, 2016).

3.1.2. Egalitarian and respectful dialogue breaking the sense of isolation

Adolescents from 12 to 17 years old, residential centre. DLG carried out with the 14 adolescents of a care foster centre managed by the Directorate General for Child and Adolescent Care of the Government of Catalonia, was studied through the life stories of eight of the participants and the observation of the weekly DLGs during an academic year (Garcia Yeste et al., 2018). In this DLG, they read *Oliver Twist* by Dickens. This activity was voluntary. After introducing what the DLG was and how it worked, they all enrolled in it. In the adolescents' testimonies, it is clear how in the DLG, there is an egalitarian and respectful dialogue linked to doing something together. Some of them stated that after participating in the DLG, they felt like a family in which they were more united, which illustrates how it contributed to overcoming the feeling of isolation that the research has identified in children living in centres (Berens & Nelson, 2015). Alberto (16 years old) expressed this: 'I have never seen before so many people around a table talking about the same topics in the center; it seems we are now more closely united'. Tania (16 years old) told it like this:

It is very cool because we are all of us together; it is not a nonsense book, but you truly realise, you compare what happens to him or to yourself, what you have in common and what is different between the pair of you. It is an afternoon in which we feel as if we are a family, we are together and we can talk (Garcia Yeste et al., 2018, pp. 12–13).

Children and adults at home during COVID-19 pandemic confinement. During the total confinement from March to June 2020 in Spain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many DLG were moved online. It is worth noting the efforts of schools, teachers, families, and the community to ensure that the DLG remained a space for dialogue and exchange in a situation of physical isolation (Roca, Melgar, Gairal-Casadó, & Pulido-Rodríguez, 2020). The commitment of some educators to make the DLG online helped to make them possible with the most challenging groups, such as older adults who did not have developed ICT skills (Ruiz-Eugenio, Toledo Del Cerro, Gomez-Cuevas, & Villarejo-Carballido, 2021), with those children from families that had difficulties in accessing devices with Internet connection (Elboj, Cortes-Pascual, Iniguez-Berrozpe, Lozano-Blasco, & Quílez-Robres, 2021; Roca et al., 2020; Ruiz-Eugenio, Roca-Campos, Leon-Jimenez, & Ramis-Salas, 2020) and with special education students (Alvarez-Guerrero, López de Aguilera, Racionero-Plaza, & Flores-Moncada, 2021). Some teachers noted that the online DLG format involved more students who generally did

not participate much in the face-to-face DLG (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020).

Adults, prison. Qualitative studies show the impact of creating a space for dialogue, such as the DLG in prisons. In the DLG case study developed in a Spanish prison for men, correspondence was collected between 2001 and 2012 and the life stories of five participants (R. Flecha et al., 2013). All of them affirm that DLG was vital in coping with the internment situation. Their reports show how in the DLG, they found their own space for dialogue, to feel free and not to fall. Daniel, who spent two and a half years in the DLG, expressed this:

Having that space is vital there, it is a little piece of freedom [...]; it is a space that is ours [...]. It was like when you had a visitor, nobody could take that away from you, in those four walls, it's the way out [...]. They threw us this float. If you let go of it, you sink if you hold on to it, at least you stay afloat [...], it's like a lifesaver there, having something to hold on to to get afloat (RE2) (R. Flecha et al., 2013, p. 156) [Own translation].

Two studies have been developed on the DLG impact in a women's prison in Catalonia. The first focused on one of the participants (Pulido, 2015). The second conducted participant observation of the DLG for one year and collected testimonials from eight of the participants (Alvarez et al., 2018). Their testimonies illustrate they decided to participate voluntarily in the DLG not only because they had the opportunity to do so but also because of the climate of dialogue and respect created in this activity, which is unusual in an institution such as a prison. Maria, a woman inmate, appreciates that in DLG, all opinions are respected, even if they are different: 'even if you disagree, you have to respect it because we all are human beings' (Alvarez et al., 2018, p. 1053), as well as she values the climate of freedom to express one's opinion without being judged by anyone: 'It also makes it possible for each of us to freely think and say what we believe, without the feeling of being judged, without the sense of being considered strange or incomprehension' (Alvarez et al., 2018, p. 1054).

3.1.3. Overcoming barriers to dialogue in a special education school

Children and adolescents from 6–16 years old, primary and secondary special education school. A case study conducted in the first experience implementing DLGs in a public special school identified, through interviews with the school principal and teachers, the various strategies that teachers had developed to make this space for dialogue possible (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021). This special school provides primary and secondary education. Among the strategies identified, the teachers chose adapted versions of universal literature books that incorporated a wealth of vocabulary and best met their students' needs. Works such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Odyssey*, the *Arabian Nights*, and *The Metamorphosis* by Kafka have been read in secondary education, and *The Jungle Book*, *Peter Pan*, and *Pinocchio*, in primary education. Other strategies developed to respond to the students' educational needs included adapting the books using pictograms, laminating the pages to prevent them from tearing, tying the book with a string to the table to prevent it from being thrown, previously preparing with each student the intervention to be performed in the DLG so that they had more fluency when presenting it and were less dependent, as well as using more direct questions by the teacher to motivate participation. In the cases of students with more limitations, such as behavioral problems, a person acting as a role model was included near them to help regulate their behavior, as well as the teacher explicitly worked on the internalization and practice of the principles of dialogic learning converted into rules, also using visual material accessible as pictograms, reminding them these principles before starting as well as during each DLG (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021).

3.2. RQ 2: Do DLGs provide a learning environment for overcoming stereotypes and other social barriers?

3.2.1. Overcoming the prejudice that people without a basic education cannot enjoy universal classical literature

Adults without basic education, adult school, and primary school. Some of the articles reviewed have collected narratives and life stories of people without basic education who participate in DLGs in adult schools or in family education in their children's schools. These stories show how these people enjoy reading and discussing great works of world literature (Bonell & Ríos, 2014; de Botton et al., 2014; A. Flecha, 2015; García Yeste, Padrós Cuxart, Mondéjar Torra, & Villarejo Carballido, 2017; Llopis, Villarejo, Soler, & Alvarez, 2016; Pulido-Rodríguez, Amador, & Alonso, 2015). One of the stories is that of Manuel (Pulido-Rodríguez et al., 2015). He was one participant of the first DLG created in 1979–1980 at La Verneda-Sant Martí Adult School. Without basic educational qualifications, he was a worker who participated for 10 years in this DLG. His family had immigrated from southern Spain to Barcelona in 1947 when he was 8 years old. In his narrative, he explains how the DLG moderator promoted an environment in which no one felt above anyone else because all opinions were respected and valued. In this DLG, the prejudice that people without academic degrees could not read and appreciate the best literary creations was overcome. Manuel relates how they read and debated the poetry of Spanish poets such as Federico García Lorca, Miguel Hernández and Rafael Alberti (Pulido-Rodríguez et al., 2015).

3.2.2. Overcoming racist prejudices about Roma people

Adults and 11–12 children, adult school, and primary school. Two of the studies have provided evidence of how the type of dialogue that takes place in DLGs, based on the equal right of all people to live differently, has promoted a climate among participants that contributed to overcoming racist prejudices towards the Roma people (Aubert, 2015; Munte, 2015). In the biographical study by Aubert (2015) tells the story of Amaya, a 12-year-old Romani girl who was bullied at school. The DLG in her class contributed to the other students valuing Amaya and her culture. Munte (2015) analyses the narrative of Antonio, a Roma man who participated in the first DLG created at the adult school in Barcelona. His contributions to the dialogue by reading Lorca's *Romancero Gitano*, helped to overcome deeply rooted racist views in society. He became an activist and sociologist contributing with his own life experiences to transform the social and educational institutions that had segregated the Roma community for centuries in Spain, even publishing an

article in the *Harvard Educational Review* (Munte, 2015; Vargas & Gomez, 2003).

3.2.3. Overcoming racist prejudices about Muslim immigrant women

Mothers, primary school. The study carried out during two academic years with mothers from an urban public elementary school located in a socially disadvantaged neighborhood in the city of Tarragona has shown how the DLG has contributed to overcoming stereotypes about Muslim women wearing hijab among the other participating mothers. In the dialogues that took place while discussing *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Lorca, Muslim mothers wearing hijab demystified stereotypes such as women being dependent on their husbands and do not have their own criteria. One of the speeches at the DLG that had the greatest impact on the participants was the one by Ghaliya, a 27-year-old. She said about the hijab that it covers our body but not our mind (García Yeste, Gairal, & Rios, 2017).

3.2.4. Overcoming discrimination towards a Latin American girl with special needs

Children 9 years old, primary school. A case study in an elementary school to study the impact of DLG on students' relationships, carried out observations during the three months of a DLG on *The Odyssey*, as well as dialogues between the researchers with the teacher and the children. The reading of *The Odyssey* and the dialogues derived from it in the DLG among 9-year-old students broke down racist prejudices toward Carmen, an immigrant girl of Latin American origin with special educational needs (García-Carrion et al., 2020). Two months after starting the DLG, the children discussed the passage in which Ulysses decides to dress like a beggar instead of a king when he arrives in Ithaca after 20 years of absence, so some mistreat him, not recognizing him. Carmen intervened in the discussion of that paragraph and said:

Imagine that you are a Mexican who goes into this city, and then they would kill you. I would feel very, very sad. If I were that person, I would not see my family anymore. At the beginning when I arrived [in Spain], I thought they were people who would hurt me, but in the end, when I am here with them [classmates], I think they are nice (García-Carrion et al., 2020, p. 999).

That intervention changed the way her peers viewed her. The DLG allowed Carmen to express herself and encouraged her peers to change their attitudes towards her. Some, like Manuel, began to help her with her learning difficulties. Here is how this child explained it: 'I have learned that Carmen has some difficulties saying the words, and whenever I can, I will try to help her' (García-Carrion et al., 2020, p. 1000).

3.3. RQ 3: Do DLGs promote self-improvement through learning and education (communicative and reading skills, learn to learn, proactive attitude towards learning and reading)?

Several studies have demonstrated the impact of DLG on the improvement of language skills such as reading, communication, and acquisition of new vocabulary, as well as on the attitude and motivation towards reading in primary school students (Díez-Palomar et al., 2020; García-Carrion et al., 2020), high schools (Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2021), special education schools (Alvarez-Guerrero et al., 2021; Fernández-Villardón et al., 2021; Molina-Roldán, 2015), a care centre for minors (García Yeste et al., 2018), adult schools (A. Flecha, 2015; García Yeste, Padros Cuxart, et al., 2017), and family education (de Botton et al., 2014).

3.3.1. Promoting a positive self-image as a learner, reader and self-confident. Increasing language skills

Children 7–11 years old, primary schools. Díez-Palomar et al. (2020) analyzed the impact of DLGs and another educational intervention, Interactive Groups, on the attitudes towards learning of 418 students (7 and 11 years old), 251 of whom participated in DLGs, in two schools in the UK and one in Italy. One of the UK schools is located where families have a high economic status and high cultural capital (Cambridge). In contrast, the other English school is in a neighborhood considered medium SES level (Norwich). The Italian school is situated in Naples with a low socioeconomic status. The results of the impact of the DLG on the attitude test showed that self-image and self-confidence are the two attitudes more valued in the DLG. In these DLG is promoted a positive self-image as learner and self-confident, which facilitates participation and learning, as shown by the following indicators which the participants agreed the most: #2 'We can learn more when we can express our own ideas' and #10 'I am more confident about learning in school than I used to be'. 78.3% of the students also responded that they could learn more when they listen to the ideas of others (Díez-Palomar et al., 2020).

Children 6–12 years old, primary school. Implementation of the DLG and the involvement of families in them and in other educational activities in a Mexican primary school in a highly underprivileged urban area resulted in a drastic increase in academic performance in language. In the DLG, families participated with students by contributing their ideas and opinions, moderating the discussion, or supporting students who needed extra help to read their paragraphs aloud, following Brunauer's notion of scaffolding. In the 2015–2016 academic year before the implementation of the DLG, only 17% of the school's students reached the basic proficiency level in reading and 10% in writing according to the SiSAT national indicators (system of early alert) that each year the teachers evaluate in all elementary school grades. After two academic years of implementing DLG, the percentage of students who acquired basic competencies in language was 55% and in writing 19%. The improvement was confirmed by the PLANEA national standardized test results, implemented every three years for all 6th-grade (12-year-old) students. In 2018, 23% (6% before DLG) of students obtained satisfactory or excellent results in language and communication, exceeding the national average by five points. The percentage of students who did not pass decreased to 29% (66% before DLG).

Adults with basic education and immigrant mothers, adult school, and primary school. Different narratives from adults with basic levels of education have reported improvements that transform their self-concept as readers and learners enjoying reading

quality literary creations, improvements in learning new vocabulary, in the ability to argue and to express their ideas (A. Flecha, 2015; Pulido-Rodriguez et al., 2015). Stories from Moroccan immigrant mothers in Spain who participate in DLG as a family education activity in their children's primary schools report that through DLG they have improved their Spanish language skills, which in turn helps them to assist their children with school homework (de Botton et al., 2014; Garcia Yeste, Gairal, & Rios, 2017).

3.3.2. Changes in attitude towards reading

Adolescents 11–17 years old, residential centre. Changes in attitude toward reading were also reported in the stories of adolescents participating in the DLG at the residential foster care centre. From being boys and girls who did not read books before, they developed a motivation to read good literature. Here is how three of them explained it after participating in the weekly DLG of *Oliver Twist*:

The book is interesting. When a chapter ends, I look forward to the next one; each time I feel more involved and desire to read the book. Every day I want to know more about the book (Quilian, 14 years old) (...) Yes, I would like to continue with another book, but only because of the gathering; otherwise, I would not have the habit of reading (Manuel, 14 years old) (...) It's good to talk about a book, reading, talk about something that is not rubbish, on the contrary, to talk about something good. Apart from that, we have also fostered reading (Alan, 15 years old) (Garcia Yeste et al., 2018, p. 68).

3.4. Increasing one's self-esteem

The narratives collected in different case studies on the impact of DLG have identified an improvement in believing in one's competencies and consequently an increase in self-esteem in students in primary schools, special education, and adult education (Aubert, 2015; Garcia-Carrion, 2015; Molina-Roldan, 2015; Pulido, 2015).

Children 11–12 years old, primary school. This is the case of Amaya, the 12-year-old Romani girl it has already mentioned. She had suffered bullying from her classmates. However, in the DLGs, the girl found a place to enjoy reading books such as *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare or *Tom Sawyer* by Twain. This pleasure brought about a radical transformation in her peers' perception and her self-perception about her abilities, improving her self-esteem (Aubert, 2015). Likewise, DLG on *Arabian nights* changed the self-concept of Connor, an 11-year-old boy from a rural community in the UK, helping him succeed at a critical time of school transition between primary and secondary education (Garcia-Carrion, 2015).

Children (6–12), adolescents (13–17) and young (18–21), special education school. In the study on the DLGs in a special education school, all the teachers of primary and secondary grades and the teachers of the transition course to the world of work perceived an improvement in the self-esteem of their students. These teachers emphasized that in the DLG, everyone participates in contributing their reflections because a climate of trust is created that guarantees that no one will laugh at them and that all opinions are valued (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021).

Women, prison. In the narrative of Amina, an improvement in her self-esteem is also identified. She was a Moroccan inmate who participated in the DLG at a prison in Catalonia for two years. As an immigrant woman without basic education, she encountered many obstacles that led her to social exclusion, drug addiction, and criminal activities. However, the exchange of ideas with the participant inmates on the works such as *Mother Courage* by Bertolt Brecht and *The Metamorphosis* by Kafka had an impact on believing in her abilities starting to pursue secondary education in prison (Pulido, 2015).

Muslim immigrant mothers, family education. Similar empowerment processes such as belief in one's capabilities and increased self-esteem have been identified in the stories of Moroccan immigrant mothers such as Marwa and Haris. They participate in a DLG as a family education activity at their children's school (Garcia Yeste, Gairal, & Rios, 2017).

3.5. RQ 5: Do DLGs achieve a non-violent climate of coexistence?

3.5.1. Collaborative and supportive interactions

Adults without university degrees, adult school. A study analyzed the dialogic and power interactions in recording four sessions (320 minutes) of a DLG on *The Metamorphosis*. Men and women without university degrees participated, which took place in an adult school in Barcelona. It was identified that collaborative speech usually appears to encourage the participation of others, as well as the participants often are open to argumentation and acceptance of others' opinions, both dialogic characteristics that promote politeness. Furthermore, the study finds that in DLG, dialogic principles are the most influential factor in politeness in speech acts rather than cultural capital or other social variables (Llopis et al., 2016).

Young people from 17 to 18 years old, high school. Another study recorded and analyzed nine DLG sessions in Basque in which 12 high school students (17–18-year-old) participated. Basque was a second language (L2) for most of the students. From a total of 109 interventions analyzed, 25 from the teacher and 84 from the students, showed how the DLG created possibilities for the development of collaborative interactions that contributed to the inclusion of all students, regardless of whether or not Basque was a native language, by promoting dialogues in which students supported each other through communication for the correct use of the L2 (Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2021).

3.5.2. Achieving a supportive and non-violent school climate

Children, primary schools. A qualitative study delves into the cases of two 9-year-old girls, Carmen and Celia, participants in the DLG on *The Odyssey* in their class for a trimester. The first is the aforementioned immigrant girl with special educational needs. The

second is a girl who was also being bullied at school. The transformative interactions that took place in the DLG contributed to the early involvement of these girls in the discussions. Celia was still suffering the consequences of bullying when DLG began. Although these children had never talked about it; this topic entered the debate by relating *The Odyssey* to their life experiences. The first time that Celia spoke at DLG impacted the other children. In the interview with one of the girl's classmates, she recalled this: 'at DLG, we discussed bullying, and Celia started crying' (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2020, p. 1000). The moderator facilitated that moment to talk and reflect with the whole class about bullying. In the interview with Ander, another of the DLG students, he also remembered the day when Celia spoke for the first time, being one of the sessions that impacted him the most. In that interview, Ander acknowledged with regret that he was one of the children who bullied Celia and reflected that the dialogues in the DLGs made him aware and encouraged him to change. In a joint interview with Celia and her friend Susana, they recalled how Athena helped Odysseus return home. They related those dialogues to a change in their attitudes towards helping others (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2020). Regarding Carmen, other students pointed out that listening to her opinions in the DLG has improved their relationship with her. Some children even referred to her as having become best friends; other children stated that they now wanted to sit next to and help her in the DLG sessions, as well as several children asked for forgiveness during the DLG dialogues for behaviors such as having discriminated against her or having laughed at her because of the way she dressed (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2020).

A case study involving 113 students of 6th grade (11–13 years old) from two public primary schools with low SES in two cities in the province of Barcelona explored the possibilities in DLG of articulating the language of desire (LoD) and the language of ethics (LoE) towards non-violent relationships. LoD is understood as having the ability to arouse attraction and desire about what is referred to, while LoE describes what is considered good. A total of 28 observations were conducted in two DLGs. In the DLG of school 1, they read an adapted Spanish version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In DLG school 2, they read Homer's adapted Catalan version of *The Iliad*. The analysis of the DLG discussion and focus groups with students shows the presence of LoD and LoE towards non-violent relationships in 132 expressions in the dialogues about relationships of both works. These expressions were classified into three categories, romantic love based on equality and feelings (35%), consider a non-violent person or relationship attractive (46%), or consider it attractive because, in addition to being non-violent, it has a courageous attitude (19%) (Lopez de Aguieta, Torras-Gomez, Garcia-Carrion, & Flecha, 2020).

Children and adolescents, special school. The findings related to reducing conflict and promoting a non-violent environment are similar to the case study developed in the DLG of the special education school (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021). Although a special education school is a segregated learning environment, the implementation of the DLG, according to the teachers and the students' interviews, has developed in the students a greater capacity for introspection to identify and admit their inadequate behaviors, reducing conflict, increasing supportive attitudes, as well as acquiring dialogic and argumentative skills (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021).

3.6. RQ 6: Are DLGs a space that includes and impacts the community?

Psychology students, university. A case study analyzed the content final report made by 23 trainee psychology students at the end of their involvement in the DLG in two primary schools in a city in southern Spain during two academic years. From the 83 contributions identified in these reports, 90.36% referred to the positive impact of DLG on their professional development, such as learning to relate reading to life, understanding more about the minds of others, knowing more about children and their communities in a context of cultural diversity, to overcome prejudices, to listen to and learn from others (Aguilera, Prados, & Gomez del Castillo, 2015).

Muslim immigrant mothers, primary school. Another case study on the DLG for mothers in an elementary school in a low SES neighborhood city near Barcelona has collected testimonies from Moroccan migrant mothers. The DLG is one of the activities that this school proposes to promote language skills and the participation of these mothers in the school. The mothers reported that after their involvement at the DLG, they started to read with their children at home. These new reading interactions have improved the children's reading skills and attitude toward learning (de Botton et al., 2014).

Women without basic education, adult school. Studies that have collected narratives on the impact of DLGs on women without a basic education in an adult school in Barcelona, show that participation in discussions on values derived from the readings encourages them to engage with their community as agents of social change (A. Flecha, 2015; Garcia Yeste, Padros Cuxart, et al., 2017). Isabel's narrative is an example of how the DLG empowered her to later participate in a social movement for the rights of all women. After literacy in the adult school, she begins to participate in a DLG. Through the confidence in her abilities gained in the DLG, she became involved in women's organizations in her community, advocating for more inclusive feminism and even sharing discussion spaces with international feminist academics such as Judith Butler and Lidia Puigvert (A. Flecha, 2015).

3.7. RQ 7: Do DLGs improve educational and social expectations?

Several of the narratives collected in the different studies have identified the impact that the DLG has had on the participants' ability to build new possible worlds, using Bruner's term (2012). In these narratives, through the reading of universal literature and the dialogues shared in the DLG, they have reflected and reinterpreted their realities, reimagining the future and establishing new objectives to go beyond the established limitations (Aubert, 2015; R. Flecha & Soler, 2013; Garcia-Carrion, 2015; Melgar, 2015; Munte, 2015; Pulido, 2015; Ruiz-Eugenio, 2015; Serrano et al., 2010).

Adults, prison. Amina, the Moroccan woman who returned to high school in prison because of participating in the DLG, decided to continue her studies until she reached university to become a social worker. Now she dreams of a better life for her daughter and

herself (Pulido, 2015). In another of the studies of DLG in prison, all the inmates' stories that of the educator and the pedagogical advisor of the men's prison relate the low recidivism rate detected in the participants to the impact of the DLGs. Out of about 150 men who participated in the DLG over 10 years, only three recidivated. It is 2% compared to more than 90% recidivism among the rest of the inmates in this prison (R. Flecha et al., 2013).

Children and adults, primary school. Amaya, the 12-year-old Romani girl who had suffered bullying and whose family was in extreme social and educational exclusion, explained that the DLG helped her think that she wanted to continue studying and go to university to become a medical doctor (Aubert, 2015). Luis, a father of children in an elementary school in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Spain, had the opportunity to participate in the DLGs when he began to be released from prison. The dialogues in the DLG allowed Luis to analyze and reinterpret his own life, imagining another possible future for him and his family. As a result, he became involved in a social and educational transformation project in his neighborhood and became a leader for his community (Melgar, 2015).

Other stories of children and adults who have imagined and made real other possible worlds after engaging in DLGs have been collected in the studies reviewed (Elboj, 2015; Khalifaoui, Alvarez, Gutierrez-Esteban, & Flecha, 2021; Molina-Roldan, 2015; Racionero-Plaza, 2015; Ruiz-Eugenio, 2015; Serradell, 2015).

4. Discussion

The purpose of the systematic review was to gather the existing evidence on the learning, educational, and social impact of DLG on children, adolescents and adults involved in different settings, regarding the creation of spaces for dialogue and exchange among participants (RQ1), providing a learning environment for overcoming stereotypes and other social barriers (RQ2), self-improvement through learning and education (RQ3), increase one's self-esteem (RQ4), achieve a supportive and non-violent climate of coexistence (Q5), bringing the community in; taking the new learning out (RQ6), and improving educational and social expectations (building new possible worlds) (RQ7).

Creating spaces for dialogue and exchange among participants (RQ1).

From the 46 studies reviewed, 100% provide evidence on DLGs as a space for dialogue and exchange in primary, secondary, special education, in a residential care centre for minors, with adults in different contexts such as schools and prisons (see Table 3). Because of the principle of egalitarian dialogue on which DLGs are based (opinions are valued for their arguments and not for the position of power of the speaker), it makes possible a space for sharing experiences and reflections, contributing to the development of argumentation, and listening skills. In primary education, there is evidence of 75% of students in a classroom made contributions to the dialogue in a DLG, and 80% of the talk during the DLG are pupil interventions. Often in these interventions, because of the quality of the books they read, students develop arguments that reveal deep reasoning on relevant issues such as promises, lies, friendship, rights and violence, war and its causes. (Hargreaves & Garcia-Carrion, 2016). There is also evidence on how DLGs, in primary and secondary education in a special education school, have contributed to overcoming barriers to dialogue through the adaptations that educators have developed to address the needs of students, as well as the DLG have helping students to develop more communicative competences (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021).

Evidence has been gathered on how DLG through the type of egalitarian and respectful dialogue has contributed to breaking the feeling of isolation that occurs in institutions such as residential foster care centre for minors (García Yeste et al., 2018) and prisons (Alvarez et al., 2018; R. Flecha et al., 2013; Pulido, 2015). Evidence has also been collected on how online DLG contributed to overcoming feelings of isolation in the total confinement of the COVID-19 pandemic with primary, secondary and special education children (Alvarez-Guerrero et al., 2021; Elboj et al., 2021; Roca et al., 2020; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020), as well as in older women who lived alone (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021).

4.1. Overcoming stereotypes and other social barriers (RQ2)

65% of the studies reviewed ($n = 30$) provide evidence of overcoming stereotypes and cultural barriers (see Table 3). Among these, the narratives of DLG participants either from an adult school or as part of family education in their children's schools report that people without basic education read and enjoy classical world literature (Bonell & Ríos, 2014; de Botton et al., 2014; A. Flecha, 2015; García Yeste, Padrós Cuxart, et al., 2017; Llopis et al., 2016; Pulido-Rodríguez et al., 2015).

Regarding the contribution of DLG as a learning space that overcomes racism, a narrative of a Romani girl (Aubert, 2015) and a Roma man has been collected (Munte, 2015). The authors identify that because of the criterion of equality of differences on which the DLG are based (respect for the equal right of all people to live differently), they agree that the interventions in the DLG of the girl child and the man have contributed to dismantling racist visions towards the Roma people among the other participants. The same happened in a DLG between immigrant Muslim mothers and local mothers, where the Moroccan mothers' interventions contributed to overcoming the racist view about women wearing hijab held by the other mothers (García Yeste, Gairal, & Rios, 2017). Similar examples have been collected in the DLG in a class of 9-year-olds when a Latin American girl with special educational needs intervened (García-Carrion et al., 2020).

4.2. Self-improvement through learning and education (RQ3)

The 87% of the reviewed studies ($n = 40$) have collected various kinds of evidence on self-improvement through learning and education that arises out of the DLG (see Table 3). Several studies have demonstrated the impact of DLG on the improvement of

language skills such as reading, communication, and acquisition of new vocabulary, as well as on the attitude and motivation towards reading in primary school students in Spain, Italy, the UK, and Mexico (Díez-Palomar et al., 2020; Garcia-Carrion et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Oramas, Morla-Folch, Vieites Casado, & Ruiz-Eugenio, 2021), in a high school (Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2021), in a special education school or in students with special needs (Alvarez-Guerrero et al., 2021; Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021; Molina-Roldán, 2015), in a care centre for minors (García Yeste et al., 2018), in an adult school (A. Flecha, 2015; García Yeste, Padros Cuxart, et al., 2017; Pulido-Rodríguez et al., 2015), and in DLG as a family education activity with immigrant and local mothers within two primary schools (de Botton et al., 2014; García Yeste, Gairal, & Rios, 2017).

4.3. Increasing one's self-esteem (RQ4)

57% ($n = 26$) of the studies reviewed reported that participation in DLG increased self-esteem (see Table 3). The narratives collected in different case studies on the impact of DLG have identified an improvement in believing in one's competencies and consequently an increase in self-esteem in students in primary schools (Aubert, 2015; Garcia-Carrion, 2015; Molina-Roldán, 2015), special education (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021), family education (García Yeste, Gairal, & Rios, 2017), adult education (A. Flecha, 2015), and prisons (Pulido, 2015).

4.4. Achieving a supportive and non-violent climate of coexistence (Q5)

85% of the reviewed studies ($n = 39$) provide evidence of how the DLG enabled the creation bonds of solidarity, friendships, and a non-violent, collaborative, and supportive environment (see Table 3). The discourse of adults in a DLG has been analyzed and it has been identified how many of the interventions encourage the participation of others, as well as being open to argumentation and acceptance of others' opinions (Llopis et al., 2016). The same happened in a Basque DLG in a high school where Basque was not the mother tongue for some students. Those who had Basque as their mother tongue supported the others by helping them to formulate correct sentences in Basque and providing new vocabulary (Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2021). Stories have also been reported in primary education about how interventions in the DLGs of children who had been bullied because they had special educational needs or were from a cultural minority, have promoted reflection in the other children who then want to help them and be their friends (García-Carrion et al., 2020). Discourse analyses of children's dialogues in two primary schools have identified that almost half of all interventions value and consider non-violent people and relationships as attractive, contributing to overcoming the dominant coercive discourse that portrays violent people and relationships as attractive (Lopez de Aguilera et al., 2020). In the case study of the special education school, teachers report that DLG has contributed to their students becoming more introspective, acknowledging their own inappropriate behaviors, reducing conflict, and increasing helpful attitudes towards each other (Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021).

4.5. Bringing the community in and taking the new learnings out (RQ6)

The 74% of the reviewed studies ($n = 34$) provide evidence of how the diversity of people in the community who participate in DLG, as well as the knowledge and skills they gain from the dialogues that take place in them, have an impact on the community itself and beyond (see Table 3). Some examples are the analyses of the reports from psychology students who were involved during two academic courses in a DLG with children and families from a culturally diverse and disadvantaged neighborhood, reported how the dialogue with these people in the DLG had contributed to developing basic competencies as psychology professionals, such as listening and learning to understand more about the lives and cultures of these people, overcoming prejudices and understanding more about the minds of others. (Aguilera et al., 2015). Immigrant mothers who have improved their Spanish language skills through DLG now feel able to read with their children at home (de Botton et al., 2014). Women who have become literate and have acquired a basic education qualification at the adult school, because of the social justice issues they reflect in the DLG dialogues because of the kind of books they read, are now leaders in their communities in the movement for the rights of all women. (A. Flecha, 2015; García Yeste, Padros Cuxart, et al., 2017).

4.6. Building new possible worlds (improve educational and social expectations) (RQ7)

The 65% of the reviewed articles ($n = 30$) collected narratives about the impact that the DLG have had on the participants' ability to building new possible worlds, using Brunauer's term (2012) (see Table 3). These stories explain how through the readings of the universal classics the DLG participants have reflected and reinterpreted their lives, creating new educational and social goals, among these, the girl whose family is in extreme social exclusion begins to dream of going to university to become a doctor (Aubert, 2015); the woman who starts secondary education in prison and wants to go to university and become a social worker when she is released (Pulido, 2015); low recidivism among prisoners who have participated in prison DLG (R. Flecha et al., 2013); the father who upon leaving prison participates in various activities at his child's school, including DLG, and becomes a leader in improving his community (Melgar, 2015), or other adults and children who dreamed and have gone far beyond the educational and social future that deterministic conceptions establish for the children of immigrant, Roma or lower class families. (Elboj, 2015; Khalfaoui et al., 2021; Munte, 2015; Racionero-Plaza, 2015; Ruiz-Eugenio, 2015; Serradell, 2015).

4.7. Implications for research and practices

Responding to the purpose of the systematic review, the studies provide evidence of the learning, educational, and social impact of DLGs on children, youth, and adults in different social and educational settings. DLG create a learning environment that has proven to be effective both in enhancing language skills and improving values, emotions, and feelings with people of all ages and in a wide range of contexts. This review synthesises the evidence so that it will be of much use to educators or policymakers wishing to promote DLG in adult education (Elboj, 2015; A. Flecha, 2015; Garcia Yeste, Padros Cuxart, et al., 2017; Llopis et al., 2016; Munte, 2015; Pulido & Zepa, 2010; Pulido-Rodriguez et al., 2015; Racionero-Plaza, 2015; Ruiz-Eugenio, 2015), prisons (Alvarez et al., 2018; R. Flecha et al., 2013; Pulido, 2015), social organizations and community education (Ballesta, Amiama, & Castillo, 2017), primary, middle, and high schools (Aguilera et al., 2015; Aubert, 2015; Díez-Palomar et al., 2020; Elboj et al., 2021; R. Flecha & Soler, 2013; Foncillas, Santiago, & Tellado, 2020; Garcia-Carrion, 2015; Garcia-Carrion et al., 2020; Hargreaves & Garcia-Carrion, 2016; Khalfaoui et al., 2021; Lopez de Aguilera, 2019; Lopez de Aguilera et al., 2020; Malagon & Gonzalez, 2018; Molina-Roldan, 2015; Molina-Roldan, Marauri, Aubert, & Flecha, 2021; Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2021; Torras-Gomez, Ruiz-Eugenio, Sorde-Marti, & Duque, 2021; Villardon-Gallego, Garcia-Carrion, Yañez-Marquina, & Estevez, 2018), special education (Alvarez-Guerrero et al., 2021; Fernandez-Villardón et al., 2021; Garcia-Carrion, Molina-Roldan, & Roca-Campos, 2018), foster care centre for minors (Garcia Yeste et al., 2018), family education (Bonell & Ríos, 2014; de Botton et al., 2014; Garcia Yeste, Gairal, & Rios, 2017; Melgar, 2015; Serradell, 2015) and online DLG with children and adults (Alvarez-Guerrero et al., 2021; Elboj et al., 2021; Roca et al., 2020; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020, 2021).

Because of the involvement of the authors of this review in research on the impact of DLGs, and the magnitude of the extensive international network of schools and organizations involved, it is known that there is a large amount of evidence in very diverse age groups and contexts that have not yet been collected. Some of this evidence refers to ongoing studies on the impact of DLG as a learning environment in Primary, secondary, and adult schools in the seven countries that make up the Latin American Dialogic Gatherings network; cognitive, social, and emotional development in preschool in the European context; improving learning and academic achievement in a group of adolescent girls living in a foster care centre; women without basic educational qualifications who have become leaders for sustainable development of their communities; and in the mental health of adults before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Future lines of research could also focus on the impact of DLG regarding the transition from secondary education to university, and the promotion of non-violent environments to overcome racist and sexist attitudes.

One limitation in the interpretation of the results is that the studies of Díez-Palomar et al. (2020), Flecha and Soler (2013), Garcia-Carrion et al. (2018), Molina-Roldan et al. (2021), Rodríguez-Oramas et al. (2021), and Villardon-Gallego et al. (2018), DLG were implemented simultaneously with Interactive Groups, another of the successful educational actions identified in the INCLUD-ED project as a dialogic learning environment (R. Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015). These qualitative and quantitative studies relate learning improvements to both, DLG and Interactive Groups because it has been explained by teachers, families, and students in interviews and focus groups or corroborated by the data.

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Author statement

All certify that we have participated in the work to take public responsibility for the content, including participation in the concept, design, analysis, writing, or revision of the manuscript. Furthermore, each author certifies that this material or similar material has not been and will not be submitted to or published in any other publication before its appearance in the Educational Research Review. **Laura Ruiz-Eugenio:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Writing - original draft. **Marta Soler-Gallart:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing - review & editing. **Sandra Racionero-Plaza:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Writing - review & editing. **Maria Padrós:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing - review & editing.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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