

## Informational books and virtual epitexts: proposals for the classroom

### ARTICLE

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### Abstract

The changes introduced by the post-internet era are apt for a gaseous society (Scolari, 2021) where ephemeral predominance, trends and virality, and that context originate in a new paradigm of reading. Nesse cenário, a reading characterizes the hybridization of literate and digital culture where the public virtual epitexts are presented as a clear example of transmídia products that expand and complement the original text of two editors. Using a qualitative methodology, this work aims to analyze the content and digital epitexts of publishers with publications specialized in non-fiction readings for their inclusion in learning situations. The results show its presence as an alternative to educational books for the promotion of reading and the training of critical readers, once it generates the curiosity of new readers as prosumers who naturally belong to the RRSS.

**Keywords:** Non-fictional readings. Virtual epitexts. Reader training. Learning situations.

### Libros informacionales y epitextos virtuales: propuestas para el aula

### Resumo

Los cambios que introduce la era posinternet apuntan a una sociedad gaseosa (Scolari, 2021) donde lo efímero, las tendencias y lo viral predominan, y este contexto ha dado lugar a un nuevo paradigma de lectura. En este escenario, la lectura se caracteriza por la hibridación de la cultura letrada y digital donde los epitextos virtuales públicos se presentan como un claro ejemplo de productos transmedia que amplían y complementan el texto original de las editoriales. Desde una metodología de corte cualitativo, este trabajo pretende analizar el contenido y los epitextos digitales de las editoriales con publicaciones especializadas en lecturas no ficcionales para su inclusión en situaciones de aprendizaje. Los resultados evidencian su presencia como alternativa a los libros de texto para la promoción de la lectura y la formación de lectores críticos, pues generan la curiosidad de los nuevos lectores como prosumidores que se desenvuelven de forma natural en las RRSS.

**Palabras clave:** Lecturas no ficcionales. Epitextos virtuales. Formación de lectores. Situaciones de Aprendizaje.

## 1 Introduction

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We are immersed in the Information Society, also known as the gaseous society, a concept coined by Scolari (2021) to describe the environment in which Generation Z (Álvarez *et al.*, 2019), or digital natives (Prensky, 2001) naturally develop. These students have grown up surrounded by digital technology, with social networks being their comfort zone, where they move fluidly and spontaneously. This context is marked by what is called snack culture (Scolari, 2021) characterized by the rapid consumption of brief and fragmented content, which reflects the accelerated and fleeting dynamics of interaction in these digital spaces. Liquid modernity, as defined by Bauman (2004), is intertwined with this reality, where volatility and constant evolution are the norm.

This digital society has undergone a transformation in reading practices, posing an educational and social challenge in the training of readers, since we are, according to Taberero (2022), facing a paradigm shift characterized by the hybridization of analog and digital culture. Although today's young people skillfully handle technology, several studies (Cruces, 2017; Kovac; Van Der Weel, 2020) warn that, although digital formats tend to promote superficial reading, evidenced in practices such as screen capture and fragmented consumption, they hinder deep reflection. In contrast, reading on paper is still valuable, as it allows a physical interaction with the text that improves comprehension and memorization. In this sense, Cordón-García (2018, p. 471) states that:

Devices and digital reading, far from supplanting or displacing the printed environment, have reinforced it. There is a retrofitting of two systems that [...] have explored their differential features to submit them to a previously non-existent optimization.

Accordingly, Maryanne Wolf (2020) proposes the development of a “bi-literate brain,” which emphasizes the need for balanced training in print and digital reading. This approach enables learners to cultivate deep and reflective reading, taking advantage of the benefits of each medium to enhance their comprehension and learning. It therefore suggests starting with print reading to establish a solid foundation and, gradually,

integrating digital media; which will allow young people to develop reading skills and critical thinking in any format. In this context, the development of an informational competence (Area; Guarro, 2012) is crucial for 21st century readers to be able to select, analyze and transform information into useful and meaningful knowledge.

These premises have driven the publishing market to update and adapt to current demands, giving rise to a great diversity of books, among them the books under study in this paper, i.e., nonfiction picture books (hereafter, LINF), also known as informational books (Duke, 2004). In addition to the characteristics attributed to this type of books (Table 1), highlight the influence of public virtual epitexts -booktrailers, reviews, blogs...- (Lluch *et al.*, 2015) not only as instruments to promote a book, but also to create meaning and orient in the content of the text, arousing the curiosity of a reader who wants to know more.

Table 1. Intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of reading.

Intrinsic purposes	Extrinsic purposes
Curiosity: to arouse curiosity and promote inquiry.	ANL Inclusion: developing and critical reading skills and strategies, while expanding content area knowledge.
Experiential: provide students with authentic reading experiences that connect to their lives	Academic literacy: build vocabulary by introducing readers to content terms and academic language
Motivation: motivate reluctant readers by engaging them with visual supports and appealing formats	Hierarchical information literacy: providing readers with exposure to a variety of text structures and features
Formative: combining reading for pleasure with reading for information	Information literacy: preparing for the future by contributing to academic literacy development

Source: Young *et al.* (2007).

In addition, these spaces allow them to connect, share experiences and become influential voices within the reading community, for as Romero *et al.* (2020, p. 19-20) state:

Not only issues intrinsic to these young people and their own reading identity (tastes, preferences, formats, leisure...) are involved, but also extrinsic agents, both institutional mediators (school, school libraries, educational administrations...) and

non-institutional mediators (families, peers, bookstores, publishers, conventional and alternative media, such as Youtube, booktubers, watsapp, instagramers, etc.).

Although international research has shown a gradual increase in the reading of non-fiction picture books among young people (Garraón, 2013), schools still do not seem to have fully recognized their importance. In response to this need, the R&D&I project PID2021-126392OB-I00 “Nonfictional readings for the integration of critical citizens in the new cultural ecosystem” (Lenficec) works, from different Spanish universities such as Zaragoza, Vigo, Granada and Cadiz, to make these books visible. Therefore, the general objective of this study is to provide teachers with examples of learning situations that have non-fictional readings and public virtual epitexts as a central axis for the promotion of reading in line with this new cultural ecosystem. As a consequence, this is concretized in a specific objective: to analyze LINFs taking as a reference a documentary analysis grid for a correct selection of works and curricular inclusion in the classroom, in this case, with attention to the presence and promotion on digital platforms.

## 2 Methodology

The research is developed within a non-interactive qualitative approach (McMillan; Schumacher, 2005), using documentary analysis as the main method. According to Del Rincón (1995), this type of analysis is a “systematic and planned activity that consists of examining written documents to obtain useful and necessary information that responds to the research objectives”. Thus, it coincides with the objective of the study in that it aims to offer a critical selection of LINF and public virtual epitexts for their inclusion in classroom intervention proposals and as an alternative to textbooks.

For this purpose, the Spanish-speaking publishers that stand out in the publication of LINF (Campos; Colón, 2022) were taken as a reference, selecting Media Vaca, Amanuta, Combel, Lóquez, Maeva Young, Juventud and SM. Once selected, we proceeded to the content analysis (Nieto, 1992) based on the analysis grid proposed by Romero *et al.* (2021) to characterize a LINF from four study dimensions: *book fact sheet* -

book biographical data-; *book object* -external and internal physical aspects-; *book content* -analysis of genre, language, paratexts (iconic and verbal) and recipients-; and *book and school* -relationship with the school curriculum-.

### 3 Results and Discussion

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Below are the 12 Learning Situations (“SdA”) that make up the Didactic Programming of the 4th grade of Primary Education in a school in Chipiona (Cádiz) (Table 2). These situations have been designed taking into account the specific characteristics of the environment, the school and the group of students to whom they are addressed. For their development, the guidelines included in Annex IV of the Order of May 30, 2023 have been taken as a reference. The elements analyzed in each of them are the following:

- **Title:** name of each Learning Situation related to the activities and the proposed final challenge.

- **Challenge or final product:** considering the age and level of development of the students, which requires the integrated mobilization of basic knowledge with the idea of assuming individual responsibilities and collaborating in teams, fostering a cooperative attitude and the development of skills to solve problems and conflicts in an effective way, applying what has been learned to everyday life.

- **LINF and brief technical data sheet:** includes the title of the book; virtual epitexts or link to the blog, review, booktrailer... that help the reader to go deeper into the work and get into the reading; name of the author, illustrator and publisher; year of publication; ISBN number; approximate price and synopsis of the book's content. It should be noted that the LINF has been integrated according to the different reading moments (before, during and after) proposed in the Instructions of July 21, 2023.

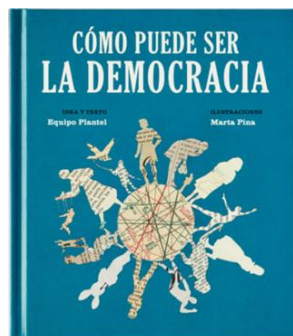
Table 2. 12 SdA integrating LINF and virtual epitexts

Learning Situation No. 1: Living together for survival
Final challenges/products:

- Elaboration, through democratic participation, of a decalogue of coexistence where the class rules are collected, as well as the possible consequences that may result from non-compliance.
- Creation of a lapbook of the basic emotions for its later workshop of emotional self-awareness sponsoring the students of 5 years for an *education with “co-reason”*.

LINF: Cómo puede ser la democracia

Virtual Epitext: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6G7iYgHKT4>



Author: Equipo Plantel

Illustrator: Marta Pina

Publisher: Media Vaca

Year: 2016

ISBN: 978-84-943625-0-7

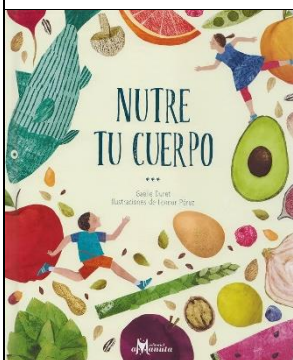
Price: 14,00 €

Synopsis: This book that we publish now, with new illustrations by Marta Pina, was thought and written almost forty years ago. However, in spite of the time that has passed, everything it says (in the clearest and simplest way possible) continues to be perfectly valid. For younger readers it will provide clues to ask interesting questions, and for older readers it will serve to refresh ideas and to reaffirm their democratic convictions, which is no small thing.

## Learning Situation No. 2: Feed Yourself

Final challenges/products:

Elaboration of an advertising brochure on healthy lifestyle habits including different discursive genres - cooking recipe, survey, graphics and decalogue- for its subsequent presentation at the Centro de Salud *Doctor Tolosa Latour* in Chipiona.



LINF: Nutre tu cuerpo

Virtual Epitext: <https://acortar.link/tYVcsS>

Author: Gaëlle Duret

Illustrator: Leonor Pérez

Publisher: Amanuta

Year: 2020

ISBN: 9789563640878

Price: 25,00 €

Synopsis: Eating is a basic need without which human beings could not think, move or study. We eat every day, several times a day and many times we eat without thinking, out of habit, without realizing how important these small decisions are. We forget that what we eat allows our cells to function, and

that each bite plays a fundamental role in our health. This book contains information and tips to help you eat the foods your body and mind need. This book explains basic concepts of healthy eating, from the digestive process, bacteria, vitamins, minerals to the importance of physical activity and tips that allow you to organize breakfasts, lunches and dinners in a healthy, entertaining and balanced way.

### Learning Situation No. 3: Flamenco and Olé

Final challenges/products:

Creation of a Flamenco Museum in which each grade of EP participates with different contributions and will be presented to the entire educational community on Flamenco Day. The contributions of 4th EP will be:

- Creation of a poster about the biography of an Andalusian flamenco artist accompanied by a reproduction of his coplas that will be presented through a QR code.
- Elaboration of a photocall on the characteristic clothing of flamenco artists (male and female).



LINF: Cómo se llaman las niñas flamencas

Virtual Epitext: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqAnWN6yTG8>

Author: Montserrat Ganges

Illustrator: Susana Subirana

Publisher: Combel

Year: 2013

ISBN: 8498258537

Price: 5,90 €

Synopsis: Flamenco Girls have names that sound like clapping, secrets, waves, thunder, heels, bells, laughter, whispers, rain, party... Flamenco Girls are called what they are. What about you? Get to know them and invent your own flamenco name!

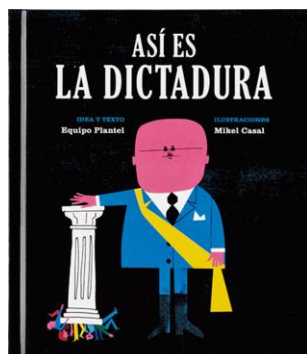
### Learning Situation No. 4: Chipiona Design

Final challenges/products:

Participation in the Municipal Children's Plenary "For a better Chipiona" in which the 4th grade students of the different educational centers of Chipiona present proposals focused on improving the life of the town, these should revolve around one or more SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and represented by means of models. The contributions of our center are related to road safety education and, in this way, SDG 3, health and well-being, will be worked on.

LINF: Así es la dictadura

Virtual Epitext: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b57MgNb405U>



Author: Equipo Plantel  
Illustrator: Mikel Casal  
Publisher: Media Vaca  
Year: 2016  
ISBN: 978-84-943625-1-4  
Price: 14,00 €

Synopsis: If we lived in a dictatorship, a book like this, which we may read with a smile, would not be possible. However, we should not be complacent: authoritarian and totalitarian governments are a reality in many countries. Now published with new illustrations, this book was thought and written forty years ago, and it remains valid.

### Learning Situation No. 5: Environmentalists in action

Final challenges/products:

- Development of a decalogue: good shopping and recycling habits for the “Recapacicla” contest.
- Simulation of an ecological/solidarity market in order to raise money for the Christmas Campaign: “No girl, no boy without toys” organized by the Asociación Acción Solidaria de Chipiona.

LINF: Basura: todo sobre la cosa más molesta del mundo

Virtual Epitext: <https://issuu.com/loguezediciones/docs/basura>



Author: Gerda Raidt  
Illustrator: Gerda Raidt  
Publisher: Lóguez  
Year: 2019  
ISBN: 9788412052138  
Price: 14,90 €

Synopsis: Soon we will be buried in the garbage, why? Uncover the bucket, throw the garbage inside and there is no more garbage! Children know very well that things are not that simple. They have heard about giant mountains of waste and plastic islands in the sea. They are concerned. And they want to do something about it. Gerda Raidt encourages children to take an active part. With lots of pictures and text, the author describes where waste goes when it is picked up by



garbage trucks, why it travels around the world and even speeds through space, why we produce tons of waste and how we can change things starting with ourselves.

### Learning Situation No. 6: I take on less consumption

Final challenges/products:

- Creation of a comic book reflecting a situation about energy saving at home or at school.
- Creation of an advertising spot that promotes energy saving in order to participate in the inter-school contest organized by Endesa Educa Digital.

LINF: Un mundo por descubrir: 30 inventos que cambiaron nuestra forma de vivir

Virtual Epitext: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEdUk8F0CGw&t=372s>



Author: Richard Platt

Illustrator: James Brown

Publisher: Maeva Young

Year: 2018

ISBN: 97884171108724

Price: 29,90 €

Synopsis: Open this book to discover an impressive collection that includes the most important discoveries in history. A journey through the past and present, where we discover incredible advances in science and technology that have changed our lives forever.

### Learning Situation No. 7: A Treasure Called Andalusia

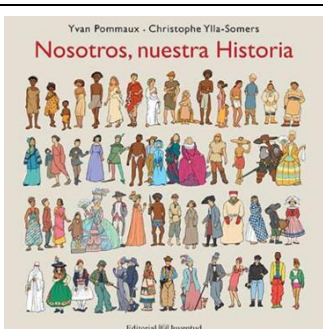
Final challenges/products:

Celebration of Andalusian Cultural Week (February 21-25) in which each grade of EP exhibits their work on different elements of Andalusian culture. The contributions of 4th grade will be:

- Elaboration of a poetic map of Andalusia in which each province includes a flap with a photograph of Andalusian poets in which a brief biography and a poem of these poets is hidden.
- Creation of a timeline in which images/drawings of the archaeological points of the Roman Empire in Andalusia are included, placing them in their corresponding stage, accompanied by an explanation of its history through a QR code.

LINF: Nosotros, nuestra Historia

Virtual Epitext: <https://acortar.link/qEyxox>



Author: Yvan Pommaux, Christophe Ylla-Somers

Illustrator: Yvan Pommaux

Publisher: Juventud

Year: 2016

ISBN: 978842614355-6

Price: 25,00 €

Synopsis: In textbooks, encyclopedias or classic documentaries, we usually discover the history of mankind through its great men, its main dates and spectacular events. That is why this album is special, in which its authors have chosen not to talk about the king, the empress or any other leader, but to create a fresco of the history of mankind with a humanist will, without hierarchies. A picture about the facts that have made us into a big family: we humans.

### Learning Situation No. 8: KNOW, everything is better with science

Final Challenges/Products:

Implementation of the *STEAM Project: Aerospace Research* applied to the classroom through:

- Construction and launching of a space rocket explaining the instructions to follow through a video tutorial.
- Making a flipbook about women scientists indicating names, biography and their contributions in order to reduce the gender gap in access to STEAM disciplines.

LINF: Tu estás aquí

Virtual Epitext: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOQIXvrtUa8>



Authors/illustrators: Aleksandra Mizielska y Daniel Mizielski

Publisher: Maeva Young

Year: 2019

ISBN: 8417708049

Price: 23,65 €

Synopsis: Space travel, missions and experiments. Rockets, probes and telescopes. Messages sent into space, a trip to Mars and the search for life on other planets. And many more ideas to discover a huge and mysterious universe, in which our planet is just a tiny dot. All that can be found in this book.

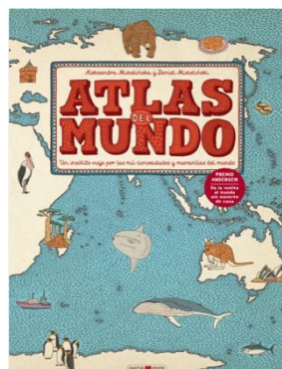
### Learning Situation No. 9: We became booktubers!

Final challenge/product:

Creation of a booktrailer based on the illustrated non-fiction book "*Atlas del mundo: un insólito viaje por las mil curiosidades y maravillas del mundo*" for participation in a contest to be held on Book Day at the Municipal Public Library of Chipiona.

LINF: *Atlas del mundo: un insólito viaje por las mil curiosidades y maravillas del mundo*

Virtual Epitext: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwpVqJIW4ic>



Authors/illustrators: Aleksandra Mizielska y Daniel Mizielski

Publisher: Maeva Young

Year: 2015

ISBN: 978-84-16363-46-9

Price: 32,90 €

Synopsis: This book will take you on an incredible journey around the world. You will see the Icelandic geysers, the caravans of the Sahara desert and the Mayan cities of Mexico. In England you'll play cricket and in China you'll taste centuries-old eggs. In Australia you will see a platypus, in Finland the arctic night and in Fiji you will swim in one of its 200 islands. Discover with us the most surprising corners of the Earth and enjoy its diversity. 55 double-page maps of 46 countries and 6 continents. More than 4,000 detailed miniatures, from the highest mountains to the smallest insects. A wonderful picture book for restless and curious readers, with more than ten international awards. Bon voyage!

### Learning Situation No. 10: Chipioneros/as around the World

Final challenges/products:

- Design of a tourist guide based on the non-fiction illustrated book *Guía de ciudades: un viaje por 30 maravillas del mundo* for a shared family adventure including information about the selected destination: country, language, population, brief historical review, emblematic monuments/buildings, typical food, famous people, how to get around the city, as well as weather forecast.
- Audiovisual production selecting the most relevant information of the city using the chroma technique in order to give the sensation of being in situ for later presentation to the families.

LINF: *Guía de ciudades: un viaje por 30 maravillas del mundo*

Virtual epitext: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uw3yVpaULsM>



Author: Georgia Cherry  
 Illustrator: Martín Haake  
 Publisher: SM  
 Year: 2016  
 ISBN: 9788467583595  
 Price: 16,95 €

Synopsis: Who does not dream of going around the world? With this beautiful atlas the reader will be immersed in a magnificent journey through 30 cities difficult to forget. Emblematic buildings, famous people, historical monuments, surprising places and a thousand hours of fun in an illustrated book for children and not so children.

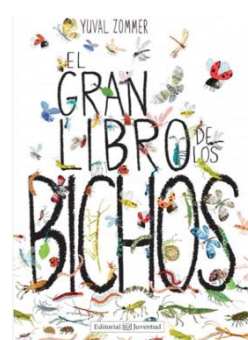
### Learning Situation No. 11: In Search of the Lost Chameleon

Final challenges/products:

- Making of a triptych about *the common Chameleon* for its subsequent exhibition to visitors of the Nature and Coastal Interpretation Center “El Camaleón” in Chipiona.
- Making of a diorama about nature: representation of the Chameleon and its natural environment.

LINF: El gran libro de los bichos

Virtual epitext: <https://acortar.link/Y2Tnd0>

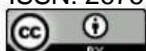


Author/illustrator: Yuval Zommer  
 Publisher: Juventud  
 Year: 2016  
 ISBN: 978842614345-7  
 Price: 18,00 €

Synopsis: From moths to beetles, worms to spiders, the world is full of fascinating bugs! El gran libro de los bichos is packed with facts to get kids started exploring the wide range of insects that populate our Earth. In the first few pages, children learn that insects live almost everywhere on the planet and are taught a few tricks to become bug watchers. As the book progresses, the main groups of insects are shown, as well as some of their peculiarities: insects that come out at night, baby insects, life cycles, insects that hide or what home is like for some of them. With a fun text full of contrasting facts and colorful illustrations, this book will amaze both children and adults.

### Learning Situation No. 12: Under the Sea

Challenge/final product:



Creation of a poster including the characteristics of the assigned ocean family and the animals it includes through text and illustration for the making of our own classroom book and subsequent reader sponsorship with the 5-year-old student body.

LINF: El gran libro del mar

Epitexto virtual: <https://acortar.link/qmjVu8>



Author/illustrator: Yuval Zommer

Publisher: Juventud

Year: 2018

ISBN: 978842614492-8

Price: 19,00 €

Synopsis: Why does the crab walk sideways? Why don't penguins freeze? Is the starfish a fish? In this book you will find the answers to these and many other questions about marine fauna. You will also be able to play at searching for and finding special fish in the pictures. Discover all kinds of slippery, shiny, strong and amazing sea creatures in this first book about the sea, and be amazed by the curiosities of the underwater world.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

## 4 Conclusions

After a certain period of oblivion or displacement of non-fiction books due to the irruption of the Internet and the massive use of Information and Communication Technologies, there has been a renewal of the genre that is constantly evolving within the publishing sphere (Garralón, 2013). This change has been evidenced through the public digital epitexts that have been included in the different learning situations, since the platforms of the selected publishers have adopted new languages that reflect the evolution of society and the way in which the literate practices of adolescent readers as prosumers are carried out, taking advantage of the brief and fragmented moments of the snack culture of the 21st century (Scolari, 2021) for the promotion of reading.

In addition, the integration of virtual epitexts into classroom dynamics will offer teachers, the main target of this study, valuable tools to address diversity in the classroom

in a more inclusive and effective way. By complementing word, image and sound (Colman, 2007; Taberero *et al.*, 2022), characteristic of informational books, it contributes to the principle of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocates providing multiple forms of information representation. In this way, the varied needs of students will be better served, allowing each one to access educational content in a way that suits their individual learning styles and specific abilities.

Likewise, following the Order of May 30, 2023, the creative resolution of the challenges or final products of learning situations requires mobilizing basic knowledge (knowledge, skills and attitudes) in an integrated manner. In this sense, nonfiction school books are presented as resources that encompass content from different curricular areas, both linguistic and non-linguistic areas (Romero; Trigo, 2018), thus satisfying the innate curiosity of students to explore and understand various aspects of the world. This approach, by promoting relevant and meaningful learning for them, plays a crucial role not only in achieving academic success, but also in applying and valuing knowledge in their daily lives.

Finally, as a prospective of this research, it is proposed to train future teachers of the Degrees in Early Childhood and Primary Education of the University of Cadiz to integrate this non-fictional genre and the SDGs in their didactic proposals for their subsequent dynamization in educational centers during the internship period. To this end, cartographies have been designed (Gutiérrez, 2023; Romero *et al.*, 2023; Romero-Claudio *et al.*, 2024) that can serve as a reference to guide and enrich these implementations, thus facilitating the creation of a third educational space (Zeichner, 2010) where theoretical knowledge and practical experiences are effectively combined, since, in short, as Trigo (2016, p. 82) indicates:

Given that teachers are an important element in the success of teaching and learning processes and that adequate training -both initial and ongoing- can be a determining factor in the success of an educational system, we take advantage of the two professional fronts we are currently working on to show -and demonstrate- that at least the institutions in charge of teacher training are beginning to coordinate efforts and navigate in the same direction.

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