



## Reading identity of preservice teachers as component of their teacher identity. A study of their reading autobiographies

### La identidad lectora de los maestros en formación como componente de su identidad docente. Un estudio de sus autobiografías como lectores

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**Received:**  
12/12/2014

**Accepted:**  
29/01/2015

**ISSN:** 1885-446 X  
**ISSNe:** 2254-9099

**Keywords**

Reading; teacher identity; autobiographies; teacher education.

**Palabras clave**

Lectura; identidad docente; autobiografías; formación del profesorado.

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#### Abstract

In order to train teachers, it is necessary to understand how teacher identity of the prospective teachers is built and, accordingly, the impact of the personal biographies of preservice teacher on this process must be analyzed. Reading education presents a few peculiar features as school subject because it deals with the development of skills rather than content knowledge and it is omnipresent in the lives of the teachers from childhood. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze what the impact of the future teachers' reading identity is on their identity and knowledge instruction as trainers of readers. Reading autobiographies written by 88 senior students of Primary Teacher Education bachelor were analyzed with a view to understand their identity as readers. The results allow identifying some factors on which their image as readers is based and checking how this image is grounded in their reading biography. It is concluded that the pre-service teachers, with different reading identities, share a similar representation of reading work in school: this one is based on external reading skills mastery, on reading for efferent purpose and on the lack of opportunities for a personal choice of the readings and for reading for pleasure.

#### Resumen

Para formar profesores es necesario comprender cómo se desarrolla la identidad docente de los futuros enseñantes y, para ello, es fundamental analizar el impacto que sobre este proceso tienen las biografías personales. La lectura, al tratarse de una habilidad cognitiva más que de un conocimiento y ser omnipresente en la vida de los docentes desde su niñez, presenta unas características distintivas como materia de enseñanza. Esto lleva a plantear qué impacto puede tener la identidad lectora de los docentes en la configuración de su identidad y su conocimiento como formadores de lectores. Se han analizado las autobiografías lectoras escritas por 88 estudiantes del último curso del Grado de maestro de Educación Primaria, con el objetivo de comprender su identidad de lectores. Los resultados permiten detectar los factores que se hallan en la base de su visión de sí mismos como lectores y comprobar cómo esta se enraíza en su biografía lectora. Se concluye que los futuros maestros, con identidades lectoras distintas, comparten una representación del trabajo lector en la escuela muy similar, como una tarea centrada en el dominio de las destrezas lectoras más externas, en la lectura de propósito eferente y en la falta de oportunidades para el control personal de lecturas y el placer lector.

Granado, C. & Puig, M. (2014). Reading identity of preservice teachers as component of their teacher identity. A study of their reading autobiographies. *Ocnos*, 13, 41-60.  
doi: 10.18239/ocnos\_2015.13.03



## Introduction

As readers, we started a journey during childhood, the trajectory of which shall be marked by the books we read, the reading assignments performed, the models of readers we knew and the way we felt during our reading experiences. Teachers play a key role in the development of such journey but they have also made their own way as readers.

Over the last two decades, an increasing interest is noted in studying reading stories of future teachers, in analysing their biographical memories of their past and/or present trajectory as readers. If we systemise the content of these papers, four research purposes that have drawn the researchers' attention can be found:

- Detecting influential experiences in their biographies as readers, events that marked them in a positive or negative way regarding reading, teaching and learning thereof ([Draper, Barksdale-Ladd & Radencich, 2000](#); [Morrawki & Brunhuber, 1995](#)).
- Studying the connections between their reading experiences and their beliefs and attitudes towards reading, including their current relationship with reading and the understanding of the reading process or its teaching ([Applegate & Applegate, 2004](#); [Benevides & Peterson, 2010](#); [Clark & Medina, 2000](#); [Gupta, 2004](#); [Munita, 2012, 2013a](#)).
- Understanding future teachers, how those biographical experiences affect the formation of their identity during their training stage ([Assaf, 2005](#); [Duszynski, 2006](#); [Roe & Vukelich, 1998](#); [Phillips & Larson, 2009](#)) or of their personal identity ([Sanjuan, 2011](#)).
- Using telling reading stories on reading as a strategy to train teachers; that is, as a methodological tool to help them improve their understanding of themselves, to modify their beliefs, to become aware of their prior knowledge on reading, to understand the wide range of reading trajectories, to be open to new ideas, etc. ([Daisey, 2009](#); [Boggs & Golden, 2009](#); [Wolf, Ballentine & Hill, 2000](#); [Xu, 2000a, 2000b](#)). These studies

usually analyse the impact of this strategy on the teaching qualification.

These four purposes do not target exclusive subjects of study. On the contrary, they overlap and supplement each other: all of them focus on the personal experiences of future teachers with regard to reading as a basic material on which some elements of their way of being, thinking and acting in connection to reading and its teaching are built. It has progressively focused on the study of the personal biographies of future teachers as the fact that they filter the training received by them becomes more and more obvious. [Trotman & Kerr \(2001\)](#) find a certain level of inflexibility in the way teachers in training think generated by their personal biographies, which block their permeability to those academic programmes that challenge what they learnt from observing their school experiences. In the case of reading, there is growing evidence that personal reading experiences of future teachers have a selective influence on the training received in this field through prior knowledge offered by them, the beliefs they have progressively generated with regard to reading through those experiences or their attitude towards reading formed throughout their lives as readers ([Asselin, 2000](#); [Boggs & Golden, 2009](#); [Gupta, 2004](#); [Phillips & Larson, 2009](#); [Trent, 2011](#)). In a prior study, [Fisher, Fox & Praille \(1996, quoted by Gupta, 2004, p. 68\)](#) pointed out the difficulty in training teachers to use teaching strategies of reading that they have not seen before, both as students or during their training. According to [Gupta \(2004\)](#), in the case of reading, those beliefs generated during their bibliographical experiences are even more resistant to change than other school fields, since this skill is more related to cognition rather than knowledge and is omnipresent during their teaching lives from their childhood.

The study of the teachers' biographical experiences thus is remarkably interesting in connection with training teachers in general and with training teacher training readers in particular. To train teachers, it is necessary to

understand how learning to teach is learnt and how to become a teacher, in other words, how the teachers' knowledge is generated, which is made up of beliefs, representations and expertise (Cambra, Civera, Palou, Ballesteros and Riera, 2000), and how their identity as teachers is developed; to that end, analysing the way their personal and storytelling experiences are built up on them act in the formation of these two processes, which are interdependent in turn.

For such purpose, we already have some conceptual basis in the field of teacher training. We know teachers have a singular and distinctive way to understand the content taught by them: pedagogical knowledge of content was conceptualised by Shulman (1986) as a peculiar knowledge, of a practical nature, different to knowledge on the subject and general pedagogical knowledge, that requires the teachers' ability to transform the subject taught into experiences that make learning to students easier. As many forms of practical knowledge, this pedagogical knowledge on content has a more narrative nature (Gudmundsdottir, 1991). Bruner (1994) identifies a narrative way to know, which searches for specific connections between events, of the paradigmatic way to know, which searches for true universal conditions. There is a narrative way to know and see the world, ourselves and others. In this author's opinion, narrative order makes specific events understandable, identifying the whole they contribute to build up and the-effect each one has on the other. Human beings need stories to find a meaning to experience, to understand it and to explain it. Building meanings up means building knowledge up and, to the extent these meanings through which human beings interpret each new situation we face are based on experience, that defines us as a distinctive individual, are also part of our identity, that is, of our understanding of who we are and who others are (Danielewicz, 2001).

This connection between identity, knowledge and experience and how autobiographical storytelling contributes to create and support

that way of knowing what we are, believe and know (Leclerc-Olive, 1999; [Duszynski, 2006](#)) are key elements to understand teachers. There are classical papers that belong to research on knowledge of teachers that already led the way. In their study on knowledge of teachers regarding teachers on duty, Connelly & Clandinin (1999) found that they tell stories about their lives to define who they are, what they do and why. These stories have been formed over time and include different experiences and events experienced in different times and contexts. These stories are not static but they flow: they are experienced, told and transformed through memories and other experiences, whilst teachers negotiate their identities through the different contexts in which they are acting. Knowles (2004) intended to understand teachers in training by means of their biographies and came to a similar conclusion: the teachers' biography is made up of those experience that become the basis of their identity as teachers, of the way they think in themselves as teachers and in teaching, and of their subsequent actions inside the classroom. The teachers' identity and knowledge are built upon the stories told from their experienced to the extent they are remembered, forgotten or retold in view of the contexts they were experienced or evoked. In other words, narrative conceptualisation of the teachers' identity and knowledge emphasises their personal stories and the contexts in which they take place, are remembered or reinterpreted, what makes them flow and acquire emotions.

Within the same strand of thinking regarding teachers, [Caspari \(2003, quoted by Ramos Méndez, 2007, p. 28\)](#) also emphasised the connections between the teachers' identity and knowledge in another study on language teachers. In this respect, he defined the teachers' professional identity as the subjective theories they support in connection with their professional activity; it is made up of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and intentions that have been formed in their experienced linked to their occupation and to the assessment

of such experiences by them. But he identifies another dimension to the configuration of the teachers' identity in addition to the biographical and social or contextual ones: the subject taught by them, the value they confer thereto and the didactical convictions and methodological options they promote in connection with teaching. In other words, teaching identity and the subjective theories on which it is built up are significantly defined by the subject they teach, which in turn links it to the content's pedagogical knowledge. This last dimension that affects when configuring the teachers' identity is especially important when it is about reading, to the extent that -as it has already been mentioned- reading is a cognitive ability, of a higher order, which, as a internal mental activity, is difficult to be understood in its processes and constantly present in the teachers' lives from their childhood and multiple experiences are thus linked to it; all the foregoing makes it more difficult to deal with it objectively, to systemise it and to explain what reading means and the way it can be accessed, understood, learnt and enjoyed. All this makes reading a teaching subject different to the others.

Nevertheless, research on the pedagogical knowledge of teachers regarding reading and writing is still at an early stage, although there is evidence that average knowledge on reading by adults is not enough to teach it to children (see review by [Grow, 2011](#)). On the other hand, in the context of the growing interest for the study of the teaching identity, there are several papers focusing on the development of the identity of future teachers of reading and writing ([Assaf, 2005](#); [Duszynski, 2006](#); [Grow, 2011](#); [Phillips & Larson, 2009](#); [Trent, 2011](#)) that analyse the different aspects of that identity. The underlying idea behind these studies is that, in order to learn to train teachers training readers, we need to understand who our students are and what their personal, cultural and professional identity is. Teaching identity is characterised by its complexity and multidimensionality and is made up of sub-identities that work through different contexts and relationships to charac-

terise the teacher ([Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004](#); [Roe & Vukelich, 1998](#)). This way, there are papers that study how certain distinctive features of teachers -culture of origin ([Xu 2000a](#), [Wolf et al., 2000](#)), migrant condition and mother tongue ([Assaf, 2005](#))- mark the discourse through which they define their teaching identity as trainers of readers. Within these sub-identities, we would like to emphasise the importance of their identity as readers. The reading identity of the future trainers of readers is a dimension of their professional identity that they are building up as teachers ([Duszynski, 2006](#)). Teachers in training, who are learning how to develop reading skills and love for reading in their future students, are also readers, have been and are learning to read. In this author's opinion, reading identity is defined by the set of relationships individuals establish with texts (the genealogy of these readings, their reading experiences, their reading preferences, their reading behaviours, their position and self-perception as is, etc.) formed over time in different contexts (family, school, personal). There are several studies that identify these connections between the reading trajectories or lives told by future teachers and the beliefs and representations supported by them regarding reading and reading activities at school ([Draper et al., 2000](#); [Duszynski, 2006](#); [Munita, 2013a](#); [Sanjuán, 2011](#)).

Reading identity, which is thus formed throughout the trajectory of future teachers as readers and as reading learners, configures a way to see and feel themselves as readers, to conceive reading and its teaching and, therefore, shall be the basis of pedagogical knowledge on the subject and their teaching identity as trainers of readers. Given that reading identity has an impact on the definition teachers make of what reading means and how to work on it inside the classroom, it filters the training received as shown by the aforesaid studies, which note how reading trajectories of future teachers generate reluctances to accept approaches on reading and its teaching different to their experiences as valid. But this reading identity

in the configuration of their teaching identity and their pedagogical knowledge on reading shall in turn become stronger if training is insufficient and only based on the knowledge of proposals that do not turn into assumptions, which are often implicit, that have been created by teachers in training during their experiences as teachers. The general profile of teachers of Primary Education contributes to the fact that their teaching identity as trainers of readers is not marked so sharply, on the one hand, because teaching reading is another responsibility among many others and, on the other hand, it involves less intensive training in this field. For this reason, it is possible that the reading identity of future teachers configures their teaching identity as trainers of readers to a greater extent.

This paper generally aimed at seeking a greater understanding of the reading identity of 88 future teachers of Primary Education in their last year of training, by means of their autobiographies as readers. As trainers of teachers, we need to understand -and make our students understand- how reading identity is built up, what memories support it, what experiences are evoked to tell one's story as a reader and to argue the relationship we have with reading at present, and its representation and that of reading activities at school. This understanding may address our work as trainers on providing learning experiences that implement changes in the concept of reading and its teaching built up by these future teachers throughout their trajectory as readers.

## Methodology

This paper aims at exploring their reading identity through the autobiographical stories written by future teachers of Primary Education. To that end, biographical experiences that evoke their trajectory as readers and the contexts they experienced are analysed, as well as their view of themselves as such and their representation of reading and reading activities at school through their discourses. It in turn aims at detecting those factors that

made up the basis of this identity. To that end, an analysis of the content of the textual data collected from their autobiographies was performed and several variables enabling to numerically recode textual data were defined, in order to perform a multivariate analysis of the data to detect the features of the reading identities obtained.

## Participants

The subjects of study that acted as informants were 88 last year students of the Degree of Teacher of Primary Education of the University of Seville who agreed to write their autobiographies as readers. This activity was performed within the framework of a proposal to participate voluntarily in a seminar on reading education as a supplement to the training received during their studies. This proposal was sent to a total of 186 students registered in three of the eight existing groups of year 4, chosen by ease of access. The limitation of the number of students that could attend the seminar and the complexity of analysing large quantities of textual data made unadvisable sending this proposal to all the students completing their studies to become teachers. On the other hand, those studies on the identity of teachers reviewed have an exploratory nature, as well as that described herein, and we thus have potential explicative variables that shall address the selection of one sample.

87.4% of the 88 future teachers who wrote their autobiographies as teachers were women. Regarding age, we find that 82.8% of our subjects of study are aged between 20 and 24, 12.5% is aged between 25 and 29 and 4.7% are over 30 years of age.

They were asked to which extent they feel prepared in their last year to become teachers, to confront the Challenger to train readers and the valuation of the training received in that sense, aiming at knowing how intensely the participants of this study see the training they received in terms of training readers. We found that only 17.4% feels fairly prepared to confront the Challenger of training readers; 71% feels

a bit prepared and 11.6% feels not prepared at all. Not a single participant feels very well prepared. As far as the valuation of the training on reading education received during their university studies is concerned, the average valuation is 4.2 in a 10-point scale, the average and the median being 4.

### Instrument

Autobiographies and storytelling of themselves were used to collect the stories of teachers in training regarding their reading trajectories. The development of studies on the teachers' knowledge has been strongly linked to the emergence and consolidation of narrative research (see review by Elbaz-Luwisch & Orland-Barak, 2013). The study of teaching identity has also used stories, since stories that are told convey that kind of awareness each individual has of the events that made up personal stories, the meaning and sense given to it; that way, the teachers' personal and professional identity is captured through that recomposition of their stories (Duszynski, 2006). According to Varghese, Morgan, Johnson & Johnson (2005), teaching identity can be captured through practices -in which identity is operated- and their discourse; biographical discourse is underlined as support and driving force of the teachers' identity (Larson, 2006). In order to gain access to that autobiographical discourse of memories and experiences in their reading lives told by teachers, the studies reviewed in this paper have mainly been under the form of interviews or open-ended question surveys and, eventually, of informal conversation or e-mails. Written autobiographies have also been used to that end (see papers by Boggs & Golden, 2009; Duszynski, 2006; Munita, 2012, 2013a), although not very frequently in the studies reviewed. This way was chosen since reading involves a reflective process of a great potential when studying

identity: what people write about themselves is an important part of how they identified themselves (Fairclough, 2003 quoted by Trent, 2011, p. 532). Upon reviewing the studies on the use of reading biographies as research and training tool when teaching literature, Munita (2013b) concludes that written stories are often used when it is intended to get a panoramic view of the individual's reading trajectory and of his/her past and present as a reader, which is also an objective of this study. On the other hand, these biographical stories are also an instrument to raise the awareness of their representations on reading and the schoolwork related to it (Boggs y Golden 2009; Sanjuan, 2011); according to the review by Risko et al. (2008), the use of written stories on their personal development as readers is one of the training strategies having an impact on future teachers; in our case, written autobiographies are requested within the framework of a seminar on training in reading education as a training strategy.

A small outline (Table 1) was sent to them so that they could write their autobiographies, to help them think, insisting on the fact that it only was an outline.

**Table 1.** Outline to prepare the reading autobiography.

<p><b>YOUR READING AUTOBIOGRAPHY</b></p> <p>In order to learn to work on reading with our students, we must first reflect on our trajectory as readers. To that end, we are introducing this activity so that you can freely express in writing your opinion on these two questions: your biography as a reader and as a reading learner and your view of yourself as a reader nowadays. We will be asking more specific questions to help you think, but you do not have to answer. Please feel free to describe and tell your trajectory as a reader and a reading learner in the way that best reflects your biography.</p> <p><b>1. YOUR STORY AS A READER AND AS A READING LEARNER:</b> How was your reading experience during childhood and adolescence? How was your experience of learning to read? How did you feel about reading in those days? How was your reading trajectory as years went by? Which reading experiences did you have? What did you read?</p> <p><b>2. YOUR VIEW OF YOURSELF AS A READER NOWADAYS:</b> What kind of reader are you nowadays? What is your relationship with reading at present? What do you normally read? What do you like to read? What are you looking for when you are reading? How do you select the texts you read? How often do you read?</p>
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### Proceeding

As far as this instrument's management is concerned, this outline was sent by e-mail together with information on the seminar on reading education to the students of three groups of year four of the Degree of Teacher of Primary Education to whom access had been granted. As an activity prior to the seminar, it was proposed to them to remember their own stories as readers and reading learners and to send their autobiographies by the same means. They were informed that a prior analysis of them would be performed to use them as teaching materials, as subject of reflection and comprehension of the different reading trajectories and of the experiences that mark relationships with reading.

### Data analysis

In order to analyse the textual data generated, a structured system of categories was implemented in two dimensions corresponding to the two issues raised in the instrument, "Experiences as a learning reader" and "Current view of himself/herself as a reader". The categories inside each dimension were established inductively; upon analysing them, common meaning patterns in the stories collected were detected. In order to unify the decisions adopted during the categorisation process, the categories were defined (Table 2) and a checking of the codification carried out by each researcher was performed, unifying criteria to interpret the textual data in the same way under the coordi-

**Table 2.** System of categories used to analyse textual data.

<b>DIMENSION I. EXPERIENCES AS A READING LEARNER</b>	
INTRODUCTION TO READING EXPERIENCES	References describing methods, didactical strategies, assignments, activities performed or materials used by the individual when learning to read, whether at school or in his/her family context.
READING IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES	References describing methods, didactical strategies, assignments, activities performed or materials used by the individual to continue learning to read, upon being introduced to reading.
AFFECTIVE REACTION TO HIS/HER EXPERIENCES AS A READING LEARNER	References to emotions and feelings experienced during his/her trajectories as reading learners.
READING SELF-EFFICIENCY	References to the fact of feeling as a competent or incompetent reader during his/her school life.
EXPERIENCES RELATED TO MOTIVATION IN READING:	References to experiences of his/her reading trajectory defined as motivating or demotivating in reading practice. This category is divided into the following subcategories:
Books I read (or that were read to me)	Motivating or demotivating experiences on reading specific books or kinds of texts.
Compulsory and/or supervised reading	Motivating or demotivating experiences due to compulsory reading situations and/or based on the students' performance.
Reading freely	Motivating or demotivating experiences related to reading arising from free-choice texts or unsupervised reading situations, without specific times or paces.
Motivating reading experiences in the family context	Motivating or demotivating experiences related to reading in the family context or with people close to the individual.
Motivating reading experiences due to a teacher	Motivating or demotivating experiences related to reading provoked by a specific teacher of any time of his/her school life.
Motivating reading experiences for other reasons	Motivating or demotivating experiences related to reading for other reasons that are not included in preceding categories.
<b>DIMENSION II: VIEW OF THEMSELVES AS READERS (READING PROFILE)</b>	
READING SELF-PERCEPTION	Adjectives or descriptions made by individuals of their own reading profile.

SELF-ESTIMATED READING FREQUENCY	References to how often they read; it reflects their perception on how often they read.
OBSTACLES THAT PREVENT HIM/HER FROM READING	References to situations they believe that constrain or impede their reading practices.
KINDS OF TEXTS THAT THEY NORMALLY READ OR PREFER	References to the kind of texts they normally read or prefer for their reading practices.
PERSONAL CONTROL ON WHAT THEY READ	References to whether the texts they read are chosen freely or are compulsory.
MOTIVATION IN READING NOWADAYS	References to the interests or reasons that mark their reading practices nowadays.

nated defined for each category, reformulating their definition sometimes and deciding jointly on the most misleading part until attaining coherence for codification.

Upon codifying reading autobiographies and using the Atlas.ti v.6 program, an analysis of the content of the textual references collected from each one was performed, searching for convergences and divergences. This content

whether the individual evokes any positive experience regarding reading or not (“Positive experience”) or whether the individual evokes any negative experience or not (“Negative experience”). Regarding the second dimension, recodification was performed following the data reduction matrix shown on Table 3 with the systematisation of the answers from individuals and extracted from the content analysis.

**Table 3.** Data reduction matrix for the “Current view of themselves as readers”.

PER	FRE	OBS	CON	TYP	MAL
Does not read	Low	Refers	Control: yes	Compulsory reading	Obligation
Barely reads	Moderate	Does not refer	Control: no	Non literary reading	Learning-Getting information
Reads quite often	High			Literary reading	
				Literary and non literary reading	Pleasure

Note: PER: Reading self-perception; FRE: Self-estimated reading frequency; OBS: Refers to obstacles that prevent him/her from reading; CON: Personal control on what he/she reads; TIP: Type of reading or texts; MAL: Motivation in reading nowadays.

analysis enabled a second recodification process to make the transformation of textual data into numbers possible. The possible choices to answer issues regarding the categories of the first dimension, excepting the two first of them, were three: the individual does not evoke the content of the category in his discourse, evokes it positively or evokes it negatively. Two dichotomous categories were obtained from the answers collected for the multivariate analysis:

Given that current motivation in reading could be multiple, we selected the most intense one from each individual (being reading for pleasure the most intense one); as it may not cover the variability of individuals having that motivation, another variable was created to classify individuals depending on how often they read for pleasure; to that end, the classification of reading profiles of future teachers proposed by Munita (2012) was used, on depen-



ding on how often they read for pleasure. Although this author reduces his analysis to literary reading, in our case we have considered the statement by individuals that they read any kind of text for pleasure, whether literary or not. This way, we obtain a variable that we called "Reading for pleasure frequency", which is made up of three modalities: weak readers, who never or hardly ever read for pleasure; average readers, who occasionally read for pleasure (for example, on holidays) and strong readers, who normally read for pleasure. In addition, throughout the two dimensions of autobiographies, one more variable could be extracted, "Evolution of motivation in reading" throughout their trajectories as readers, which is made up of four modalities of answers (always motivated, never motivated, lost motivation as he/she grew up and discovered motivation being an adult).

With this set of variables, a multiple analysis of correlations was performed given the nature of the variables studied by using the HOMALS proceeding of the SPSS v.22 program, to study what factors explain to a greater extent the variety of answers from individuals and to obtain types of reading identities from their trajectories as readers and their views of themselves as such. The contrast test of the squared  $\chi^2$  hypothesis has also been used to analyse the association between certain variables, considering a level of significance  $p < \alpha = 0.05$ , and valuating the association's intensity through the contingent coefficient (C). This study, together with the content analysis of the textual data, enables to draw conclusions on their representations about reading and reading activities in the classroom.

## Results

Given the extension of the results obtained, only those that are more relevant to attain the objectives of the study are collected. Regarding the first dimension, different reading trajectories were found, which nevertheless have many points in common. One noteworthy thing is that 73% are references to situations expe-

rienced in the school context -from childhood education to university-, 20% to family context and 7% to personal context, from the set of references obtained in this dimension. All the "Reading introduction experiences" told in their autobiographies as readers point out that all the individuals started reading with a synthetic way. Future readers remember how they started learning to identify graphemes, to associate each grapheme with its corresponding phoneme, to form syllables and words in last place; some of them referred to reading sentences, but most of them refer to reading words. Nearly not one single individual mentioned gaining access to text reading in the process of learning to read. In other words, the description of this process only covers identifying words or reading sentences. 12 individuals learnt to read in their family context. The descriptions collected show memories of a mechanical learning, marked by the pace defined by teachers, focusing basically on the development of those reading skills that are more easily observable (pronunciation, pace).

I learnt to read using the *Micho* method; I first learnt to read the vowels and then the different consonants and syllables, giving special emphasis to the pronunciation of sounds by placing the tongue and the lips (Individual no. 16).

I really do not understand the ways to teach how to read and how harmful it was to the kids who did not have the pace or level that teachers deemed to be convenient (Individual no. 18).

Regarding "Reading improvement and development experiences", the reiteration of descriptions by individuals of their reading training should be emphasised. Reading aloud is noteworthy, referred to as situations of attention control and reading comprehension activities such as mechanical activities where questions were raised and where answers were extracted literally from the text. Many individuals insisted on the fact that they are not aware that they were taught to understand; the focus was on orthography, grammar or studying literature, instead of being on the development of reading skills and the pleasure

of reading. Primary Education is dominated by compulsory reading, although free reading experiences also appear, generally associated to the existence of libraries in the classroom or in the school; to be more specific, 20 individuals evoke reading experiences in libraries that are described as positive in all cases. In Secondary Education, compulsory reading is even accentuated, as well as the control thereof by means of tests or activities in which they had to prove they had read the text.

I do not remember being taught reading comprehension; if there were questions about the texts, they were generally used to find data (...). We normally read aloud and the teacher corrected the mistakes we made; I do not remember being asked to see if we had understood properly or anything like that (Individual no. 15).

“Affective reactions” to experiences as reading learners are very different. 28 individuals associate learning to read to positive feelings such as excitement, fascination or enthusiasm, linked to the power of reading, whilst 18 future teachers associate reading to feelings of shame, boredom or even hate, linked to the pressure they felt due to the teaching methods or the neglect of their learning difficulties; 9 out of the 19 individuals who show a negative reading self-efficiency during their reading development linked it to negative feelings. The two examples that best describe these two poles of emotional reaction are the following:

I was fascinated by my notebook and I was attracted by anything related to reading. I then had a feeling of power and communications with the world (Individual no. 60).

(...) my experience as a reader was not positive; daily reading consisted on reading the textbook at the teacher's request (...), we followed the reading, with fear that the teacher said my name and hoping not to be lost (Individual no. 14).

With regard to reading experiences describing as sources of motivation or demotivation in reading, we found six categories:

– Motivation experiences related to reading certain books: a total of 28 individuals

points out the pleasure for reading certain books has milestones in their trajectory; some books were compulsory books by their teachers but most of them were read freely (in the library, gifts). On the other hand, 13 individuals pointed out very demotivating experiences of reading compulsory books at school.

– Motivating experiences related to compulsory and/or supervised reading: of the 61 references collected in this category, only 6 describe compulsory reading in a positive way, since it made them discover certain texts that fascinated them. The rest describes this practice as a clearly demotivating reading experience. Many of them state that compulsory reading prevented them from reading voluntarily, making them lose interest in reading and reducing their reading practice to compulsory text or reading only on holidays.

Due to compulsory reading, there was a time in my life in which I did not read anything just for myself, voluntarily, maybe for lack of time or desire. Therefore, I kept reading only compulsory texts (Individual no. 20).

During primary and secondary education, I only read the compulsory books I was instructed to read. They were so many that I hardly had time to read for pleasure, reading thus turned into some kind of nightmare (Individual no. 21).

– Motivation experiences related to reading freely: there are 20 references to the pleasure of choosing what they want to read as a motivating experience *per se*, regardless of the result thereof. 9 of them are associated to reading in libraries.

In those days, I only enjoyed the books I could choose, which only happened in summertime. (Individual no. 42)

– Motivating reading experiences in the family context: 30 told reading experiences in their family context, clearly emphasising their motivating effects. Listening to stories at night or sharing reading activities with relatives are rewarding reading experiences etched in their memories. Only two indivi-

duals see these experiences in a negative way due to the comparisons established between brothers and sisters.

- Motivating reading experiences due to a teacher: 25 individuals emphasised the influence of certain teachers in their development as readers. 17 of them do it in a positive way, emphasising aspects such as the enthusiasm for books those teachers conveyed to them, the effort they made to connect reading with the students' interests, the freedom to choose books and the possibility to talk about the books and their concern at the learning difficulties of reading shown by their students. The rest are memories of negative experiences.

In grade 4 we had a teacher who tried to convey that reading habit (...), he was the first person who talked about books so enthusiastically that it was then when I really started thinking in books not as part of my work as a student, but as objects containing wonderful stories (Individual no. 63).

- Motivating reading experiences for other reasons: 15 individuals described experiences related to getting rewards (points, grades) and to competition (the student reading more books within a specific time-frame wins) as sources of motivation. Eight of them feel these situations are a source of motivation and the rest feel they are a threat; it could be due to a more or less competitive attitude.

Out of the total of experiences told, 63.6% had at least had one positive experience related to reading, whilst 65.9% evoked negative experiences. 39.8% evoked both kinds of experiences.

As far as their views of themselves as Readers are concerned, we find that 45.5% perceive themselves as "regular readers", whilst 25% state quite openly that they are not. In contrast to those data, 46.6% believe they barely read whilst only 26.1% assure they read quite often; the rest have a moderate perception. 59.1% of individuals refer to obstacles such as lack of time and work overload to justify that they do not read as often as they would like.

Regarding the kind of reading, we found that future teachers usually read five kinds of texts: compulsory reading for training (68.2%), literature (61.4%), voluntary reading for training (20.5%), press (15.9%) and other kinds of texts (dissemination, essay) (19.3%). Since each subject could specify one or more kinds of reading, we divided answers into four categories: individuals who state that only read what they are obliged to (26.1%), those who only read non literary texts (20.5%), those who only read literature (31.8%) and those who read both literary and non literary texts (21.6%); the subcategory "non literary texts" does not include compulsory reading.

Benevides & Peterson (2010) emphasise personal control on the selection of the readings as an explicative variable of the reading behaviour of future teachers; 73.9% of the individuals of our study assure that they have that control at present.

We find three main reasons that make them read: obligation, learning-getting information and pleasure. Given that in this case answers can be multiple-choice, the obligation category covers those individuals stating that they read for this reason (26.1%); learning-getting information covers the desire to know and understand although they also mention obligation (11.4%); and pleasure covers individuals making this reason explicit although they also mention prior reasons (62.5%). However, as far as frequency is concerned, we find 43.2% of weak readers, that is, who never or hardly ever read for this reason, 22.7% of average readers who reserve pleasant reading to holidays and 34.1% of strong readers who normally read for pleasure.

If we take their autobiographies as a whole, we can analyse the evolution of the motivation in reading of these individuals. We thus find 36.4% stating that they have always been motivated compared to 25% stating they have never been motivated; in addition, 21.6% state that they discovered the enjoyment of reading as an adult, once they were able to choose what

to read freely, being it no longer schoolwork, and 10.2% state that they were motivated being a child but progressively lost that motivation throughout the school years.

A multiple analysis of correlations was performed to detect the most influential factors that configure the teachers' reading identity, using those variables that were recodified numerically, since they are categorical variables. Regarding those variables related to the reading trajectory, reading self-efficiency, affective reactions to learning to read and evocation of negative reading experiences did not explain the existing variation; regarding those variables related to their current view of themselves, reference to obstacles not to read did not explain the existing variation. As far as these variables are concerned, the discrimination measures obtained for each dimension of the model extracted from the analysis are closet o zero, and therefore we exclude the final analysis.

A homogeneity analysis was performed with the other variables, and the test value for convergence was attained at roaming 28, the self-value for the first dimension being 16.7 and 7.9 for the second one. The first dimension explains 69.7% of the variation, which is quite a high value, whilst the second explains 29.5%, and therefore explains the dispersion of data to a lesser extent.

The discrimination measures obtained for each variable used in the homogeneity analysis can be seen in Table 4. All the variables have very high discrimination measures in the first dimension of the model, excepting "Positive experience"; therefore, they have a greater weight to define this dimension. It can be noted that the variable that tops the ranking of variables explaining the homogenising model is that related to the kind of text preferred

by the teachers, because it has a higher discrimination measure in the dimension with a higher self-value. It is also the variable that has a higher discriminating value with regard to the second axis. This means that the variable that discriminates these individuals in terms of their reading identity more clearly is precisely the kind of text they read, which, in turn, differentiates them with regard to the two axis of the model.

In second place, the variable "Evolution of motivation" had a higher discriminating value in the first dimension, although the discrimination measure is lower here in the second axis, therefore the difference shall be to a greater extent related to the X-axis. With very high discriminating values in the first dimension, we also find the variables "Motivation in reading", "Personal control" y "Reading for pleasure frequency"; the latter has a higher second value in the second dimension and this fact explains the greater data variability in comparison to the two axes. The variable with the lowest discriminating value is that related to evoking positive experiences during the teacher's reading trajectory, which marks differences between individuals that are not very substantial; in this case, the factor coordinates of each category of answers show that not evoking those experiences marks greater differences that evoking them: there are no pleasant memories related to reading to evoke.

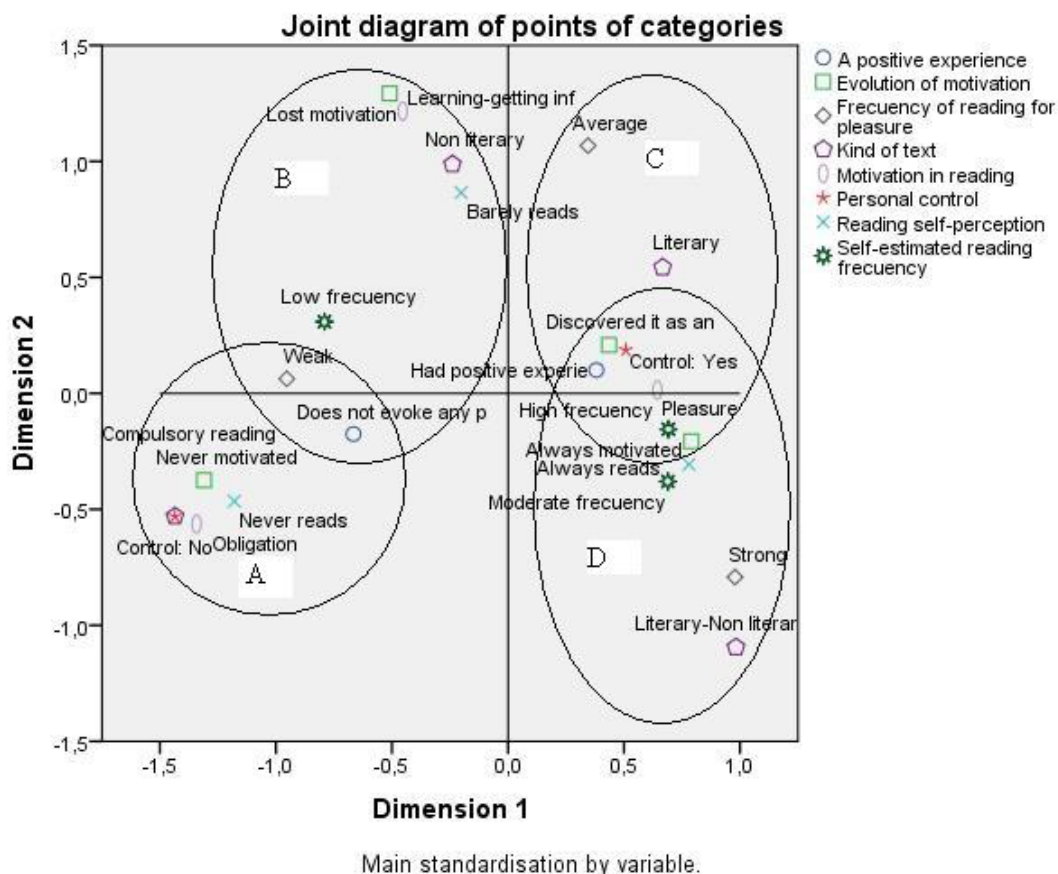
**Table 4.** Discrimination measures

	Dimension	
	1	2
Reading self-perception	.636	.318
Self-estimated reading frequency	.546	.090
Personal control	.729	.099
Evolution of motivation	.781	.236
Kind of text	.900	.626
Frequency of reading for pleasure	.746	.475
A positive experience	.253	.018
Motivation in reading	.753	.251
% of variation	69.711	29.510

The quantifications of the categories or modalities of answers of each variable, labelled with their value tabs, are shown in Figure 1. The closer these modalities are in the spatial

configuration formed by the two factor axes, the more closely related they are; the distance to the origin is also marked by a lower marginal frequency of the relevant category. In this case, it can be found that motivation in pleasure, which does not discriminate in the Y-axis, is positioned as common denominator. It should be emphasised that evoking positive reading experiences

**Figure1.** Figure of quantifications labelled by values.



configuration formed by the two factor axes, the more closely related they are; the distance to the origin is also marked by a lower marginal frequency of the relevant category.

You can see that there is a very clear profile in zone A of subjects who never were motivated in reading and who nowadays only read training texts of compulsory reading, they only read when obliged for the purposes of study and never choose what they read; these subjects do not see themselves as readers and do not evoke any positive experiences in their autobiographies. Those subjects who lost moti-

never read literature. The profile of weak reader hardly discriminates in the second dimension, although it does in the horizontal axis; for this reason, it is an attribute inherent to readers of these two areas.

There is a series of categories that are very close among them and to the X-axis that mark a common area between the two other profiles on the right side of the figure. In this case, it can be found that motivation in pleasure, which does not discriminate in the Y-axis, is positioned as common denominator. It should be emphasised that evoking positive reading experiences

during their trajectories as readers is strongly associated to reading for pleasure, as well as exercising personal control on reading, perceiving that they read quite often and always being motivated in reading. That said, two subgroups with certain different aspects can be found in that common profile. Therefore, in zone D, it can be noted that individuals who were always motivated in reading believe that they read very often, although that view does not mark any differences in comparison to the two higher categories of self-estimated frequency. This view is associated to strong, omnivorous readers to a greater extent, that is, readers who normally read for pleasure both literary and non literary texts. A profile of individuals who discovered motivation as adults can be found in zone C, which is also marked by reading for pleasure; these individuals -as it can be clearly seen in the figure- associate it with personal control to choose what they read and the evocation of positive experiences; in this profile, identity is more marked by reading literature only and reading for pleasure on holidays.

As far as the variables of reading self-efficiency and affective reaction to reading are concerned, it should be noted that despite they did not produce discriminating measures that could be taken into account in the homogenising model, basically because around 50% of individuals did not refer to these categories in their autobiographies; they are variables associated to the fact of evoking positive reading experiences or not and to the evolution of motivation as follows: with a level of significance of  $p = 0,000$  for the squared  $\chi^2$  test, we find that affective reaction of individuals to learning to read is linked to the evocation of positive reading experiences, where the contingency coefficient (C) has a value of 0.44 and the evolution of motivation  $C = 0.52$ ; in other words, this association is substantially intense. The corrected residuals specified show that there are more individuals who evoke positive experiences (+4.4) and more individuals who were always motivated (+ 4.2) among those subjects who evoke positive reactions to learning to read,

whilst there are more individuals who never evoke positive experiences (+3.0), who never were motivated (+ 2.7) and fewer individuals who have always been motivated (- 3.0) among those individuals who show negative feelings. Self-efficiency is associated to the evolution of motivation ( $C = 0.40$ ) but not to the evocation of positive experiences, although it can be assured less confidently that in the previous variable ( $p = 0.03$ ), notwithstanding the fact that it is statistically significant; we thus find that there are more individuals who were never motivated (+3.7) and fewer individuals who have always been interested in reading (-2.1) among those who felt incompetent in their initial reading development.

## Discussion

Teaching identity is formed on the basis of three dimensions: a biographical dimension, a contextual dimension and another one that is linked to the subject taught or that is to be taught, reading in this case. We have assumed that reading identity is one of the subidentities that make up the teachers' identity in their capacity as trainers of readers. The study shows how reading identity or the way future teachers see themselves as readers today lies on their biographical reading experiences. Many experiences fall within school context (from childhood education to university studies), a context that had an impact on the relationship they established with reading and on the way teachers conceive it and during this stage, they acquired a way to represent reading work at school; this concept of reading and reading practices at school is linked to teaching identity related to this subject. In other words, the reading identity of future teachers is made up by a biographical and a contextual dimension, being the school context very important therein, and configures to a certain extent their view of reading and reading work at school, which shall in turn have an impact on their teaching identity in general and on their pedagogical knowledge on reading in particu-

lar. This general conclusion is broken down and filled with content below.

By means of the analysis of multiple correlations, a set of factors that appears to be in the basis of the reading identity of future teachers is identified. These factors show a strong relationship between their trajectories as readers, regarding the way their motivation in reading has evolved by means of their reading experiences throughout their lives and the fact of evoking positive reading experiences or not -not evoking them, especially-, and regarding their view of themselves as readers, regarding the kind of texts they usually read, their motivation in reading nowadays, how often they read for pleasure, personal control on what they read and reading self-perception; self-estimated frequency discriminates between those who barely read and those who believe that they read moderately or very often, but not between these two. Their reading identity, the way they see and perceive themselves, is therefore deeply rooted in their life history as readers. We have also noted that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables related to the beginning of their trajectory as readers -their emotional reaction to learning to read and their view of reading self-efficiency- and the way their motivation in reading has evolved throughout their trajectories; they are also associated to the fact of having and evoking memories related to pleasant reading experiences. These two variables, despite the fact that they have an indirect impact on the model, prove the emotional component of identity, of reading identity in this case. The study of Sanjuán (2013) with future teachers also shows the incidence of emotional factors such as the lack of motivation, feelings of inefficiency (negative self-efficiency) and negative emotions derived from literary work at school in the behaviour of those individuals who believe that they barely or never read.

On the other hand, the results of this study make us conclude that future teachers describe their reading experiences at school quite similarly and negatively, although they

have different reading identities; this fact has previously been pointed out in the paper produced by Pascual Díez (2007, quoted by Munita, 2013a, p. 73) in Spain. Reading at school offered them a very uniform context shared by most of them despite being about individual experiences, which, following the training model of teaching identity articulated by Beijaard et al. (2004), generates personal practical knowledge in teachers both private and collective that is fairly common and often unarticulated or has a tacit nature. The study participants agree in remembering reading work at school as a routine practice that focused on the most mechanical reading skills (de-codification and codification, reading pace and fluency, superficial comprehension) -which may configure their view of reading efficiency-, on the students' performance (exams, files, summaries) and on the absence of personal control on what students read by themselves, the latter also being a negative memory of those future teachers who participated in the study of Bogg & Golden (2009) and [Benevides & Peterson \(2010\)](#). In fact, personal control on what teachers read in current practices arises as one of the factors that explain the variability of reading identities found in this paper. We have also found a lower number of individuals who evoke pleasant reading experiences in their school context, some being linked to specific teachers, to free reading experiences such as reading in libraries or reading specific books they were offered the opportunity to read at school. Nevertheless, pleasure for reading is the motivation that marks two of the identities detected in this paper and is associated to evoking positive reading experiences during their trajectories as readers. In his study, [Daisey \(2009\)](#) found that all teachers seeing themselves as usual readers had the opportunity to discover pleasure for reading sometime. In our case, it is noted that some individuals were always motivated in reading for pleasure, some were in spite of the inflexible nature of many school practices that stole that pleasure from them and others were motivated by the search of situations where school allowed them to read

freely and personally, normally on holidays; other individuals had this opportunity as adults, when reading was no longer schoolwork and they could choose what to read having no objective other than to enjoy. Both situations are also associated to those two identities shown by the most usual readers. On the other hand, they are those who do not see themselves as Readers, those who only read because they are obliged for the purposes of study, those who do not evoke any positive reading memories either during their school or personal trajectories. Therefore, the impact of the contexts -the personal context and the school context more especially- where reading has been experienced can be noted in the current reading practices of these individuals: future teachers often explain their reading behaviours as a reaction to their worries at school.

All the foregoing leads us to affirm that, in the opinion of many of our future teachers, reading work at school is just schoolwork and it is not related to reading for pleasure, because pleasure is associated to leisure; reading for pleasure is an “out-of-school” activity. In fact, almost all family and personal experiences evoked by them are positive. Many of our future teachers find through their stories that they have acquired the pleasure of reading out of school, a fact that is also corroborated in the paper by [Duszynski \(2006\)](#), or that they maintain that pleasure in spite of school. Others link reading activities at school to the fact that they have no relationship with reading nowadays.

The autobiographies of future teachers show a conception of reading that arises from the representation they make of reading at school. More common reading practices with an efferent purpose can be noted in the description they make of reading work at school, although the text were literary (comprehension of literal answers on the texts, files and exams about the books read, etc.), and few experiences aesthetically committed to literary reading (discussions on books, listening to books read by the teacher, reading according to their own

interests as readers). [Asselin \(2000\)](#) assures that this common practice at school leads to a limited view of what reading really is. In our study, as we mentioned before, future teachers have an academic view of reading carried out at school; few of them describe recreational reading experiences in their school context and those we have compiled are associated to early ages with little exceptions.

But reading behaviour at present of future teachers is associated to their view of reading and this may affect their representation of reading work in the classroom. This way, regarding the kind of text they read more often nowadays and which has turned to be the factor that gives a better explanation of their reading identities, it is found that training and press readers under personal control do not see them as recreational reading, something that is also evidenced by [Draper et al. \(2000\)](#). Reading for pleasure is associated to literary reading and reading of other kind of texts such as essays or dissemination to a greater extent. The study by [Munita \(2012\)](#) shows that, in the opinion of teachers in training, reading for pleasure means reading literature, although there are some individuals in this paper who affirm to enjoy reading that other kind of texts; it is also true that only those individuals reading this kind of texts do not read literature. According to [Duszynski \(2006\)](#), readers of informative and training texts, whether freely or compulsorily, have an exclusively utilitarian view of reading. Having a utilitarian view of reading, representing it as a work that only has an efferent not an aesthetical purpose or limiting reading to training and informative texts in the school context may become coordinates that mark the future reading practices at school. In this sense, [Daisey \(2009\)](#) assures that those teachers lacking aesthetical reading experiences or having negative experiences in this respect avoid recreational reading activities because they make them feel awkward.

According to the results obtained, it can also be concluded that, as far as the representation of introduction to reading works at school are



concerned, the individuals' experiences make them describe the process of learning to read as a linear process in which different pieces are accumulated and which ends by identifying words and more complex sentences in some cases. There are just a few subjects referring to the texts' place in the process of learning to read. Reading words or sentences only seems to be enough to get to understand texts. In their descriptions, they only use a few terms belonging to the field of teaching and learning to read, excepting terms such as synthetic approach to learning to read, reading pace or fluidity. Their descriptions are not very different from those of other adult people totally alien to schools and who read. This absence of own concepts of reading dialectics to tell their own experiences could be due to poor training in reading, a fact that is admitted by 82% of them, or to the fact that we trainers have not been able to help them integrate that knowledge in the building process of their teaching identity.

This study aimed at establishing connections between the reading identity of the future teachers and their teaching identity in their capacity as trainers of readers. Given its exploratory nature, its results cannot be conclusive but they show evidence of that link and of the potential connecting elements. There is an obvious problem when it comes to interpreting its results, and which consists on untying the way they assure they see themselves as readers, their personal experiences, the representation of reading at school and their view of what reading is; this is logical since, after all, those aspects make up their teaching identity as future trainers of readers, which is still under construction. Another constraint of this paper is that the selection of participants is associated to the participation in a voluntary seminar on reading education, which makes us assume that there could be thus some bias in the sample obtained, because those future teachers more interested in reading and in reading education at school or those more concerned about their lack of proper preparation in this field may be more likely to participate at said seminar. In

any case, detecting the representative reading identities of future teachers was not the objective of this study, but instead analysing the components on which their reading identities are articulated as told in their own discourses.

Studying the identity has several epistemological and methodological conditions that makes generalisation of results more difficult. But if the objective is having a better understanding of future teachers to address the work of their trainers, these studies allow to bring the private personal practical knowledge to the surface, both individual and collective, of these individuals to make it public and share it, creating a database of their preconceptions or reading and reading work at school that should be used in the reconstruction thereof from a sound knowledge on teaching and learning to read. To that end, further research on the formation of teaching identity of teachers as trainers of readers would be necessary. Papers on teaching identity usually pay more attention to the personal dimension instead of the contextual dimension and they way it is seen from one's context (Beijaard et al., 2004). For this reason, in the field of training teachers, it is necessary to explore the way other socialisation contexts of future readers can interact in their reading identity and in their identity as trainers of readers (training periods in educational establishments, training contexts of reading education as university classrooms) or elements that configure those contexts, such as internship advisors or trainers of teachers, who also have both a reading and a teaching identity. It would also be necessary to study the impact of different training practices on the construction process of their teaching identities, such as the use of reading autobiographies. In any case, further research is needed on how contributions can be made to future teachers, from the initial stage of their training, so that they have teaching identity and build pedagogical knowledge on reading that turns them into true trainers of readers.

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