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## THE BOOKS' SPACE SETTING WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

A CONFIGURAÇÃO DO ESPAÇO DOS LIVROS NO  
INTERIOR DA SALA DE AULA<sup>1</sup>

LA CONFIGURACIÓN DEL ESPACIO DE LIBROS  
EN EL INTERIOR DE LA CLASE

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### ABSTRACT

This text assumes for present and understand how the books are arranged in different physical spaces, inside the classroom, and how are they perceived by teachers and students, by regulating actions and performances of the subjects. To this end, a field research, from the collection of different images of the school environments in which the books are exposed. The analysis of the images if the theoretical concepts behind about space to articulate the idea of Rodriguez, schooling culture, the perception of Vidal and school material culture of Viñao Frago and Escolano Benito. Upon reflection, in the design of materiality of the book and, according to Chartier. The observations of the images indicate actions of spreading a school environment of interaction with the book, characterized now by the mobility of physical space, now determined by the need for visibility and demarcation of a normal space, in order to prioritize access to the books and the taming of the reader.

**KEYWORDS:** Books. Physical space. School material culture.

### RESUMO

Este texto assume por objetivo apresentar e compreender o modo como os livros estão dispostos em diferentes espaços físicos, no interior da sala de aula, e como são percebidos pelos docentes e discentes, regulamentando ações e atuações dos sujeitos. Para tanto, realiza-se uma pesquisa de campo, a partir da coleta de diferentes imagens dos ambientes escolares em que os livros estão expostos. A análise das imagens se embasa nas concepções teóricas sobre o “espaço” de Rodríguez, articulada à ideia de cultura escolar, na percepção de Vidal e de cultura material escolar de Viñao Frago e Escolano Benito. A reflexão embasa-se, ainda, na concepção de materialidade do livro e de representação, segundo Chartier. As observações das imagens sinalizam ações de propagação de um ambiente escolar de interação com o livro, caracterizadas ora pela mobilidade do espaço físico, ora determinadas pela necessidade da visibilidade e demarcação de um espaço estável, de modo a priorizar o acesso aos livros e o acomodamento do leitor.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Livros. Espaço físico. Cultura material escolar.

### RESUMEN

Este texto asume por objetivo presentar y comprender el modo de como los libros están dispuestos en diferentes espacios físicos, en el interior de la clase, y como son percibidos por los docentes y discentes, regulamentando acciones y actuaciones de los sujetos. Por lo tanto, se realiza una investigación, a partir de la colecta de diferentes imágenes de los ambientes escolares en que los libros

<sup>1</sup>This paper is na extension of one presented at the IV Internation Congresso of Children’s and Young Adult Literature, organized by CELLIJ, in 2015, which counted with the financial support of FAPEMIG – Research Aide Foundation of Minas Gerais.

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**Filed in:** 22/02/2016 – **Accepted in:** 25/05/2016

están expuestos. El análisis de las imágenes se apoya en las concepciones teóricas sobre espacio de Rodríguez, articula la idea de cultura escolar en la percepción de Vidal y de la cultura material escolar de Viñao Frago y Escolano Benito. La reflexión se basea, aún, en la concepción de la materialidad del libro y de la representación, de acuerdo con Chartier. Las observaciones de las imágenes señalizan acciones de la propagación de un ambiente escolar de integración con el libro, caracterizadas ora por la movilidad del espacio físico, ora determinadas por la necesidad de la visibilidad de un espacio estable, de tal modo a priorizar el acceso a los libros y a la comodidad del lector.

**PALABRAS-CLAVES:** Libros. Espacio físicos. Cultura material escolar.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*Book, to me, is life; since I was very little books gave me  
house and food.  
It went like so: I played builder, the book was brick; standing, it made a  
wall, lying, it was a staircase step; inclined, with  
another, it was the roof.  
And when the little house was ready I fit myself inside to  
play living in a book.  
From house to house I discovered the world (from looking at the  
walls so much). First, looking at pictures; Then, decoding words.  
I grew; and knocked down ceilings with my head.  
But I was getting intimate with the words. The more intimate we  
got, the less I remembered to fix the roof or  
to build new homes. Just because of one reason: the book now  
fed my imagination..  
(BOJUNGA, 2004)*

Whereas the beginner reader approaches a book moved by different interests, be it to manipulate, to feel the texture of the pages between the fingers, letting the eyes delight in the images, performing a thorough reading of every detail, even, as the epigraph to "play living in a book" means the book object configures both a space that incites actions and reading relations between the reader and the materiality of the work, as a physical and substantial space in which reading practices present and articulate themselves, as shown by the studies of Goulart (2009, 2011, 2012).

Thus, this work is based on two premises: one that considers the space, not limited to the demarcation of a physical environment, but as something more comprehensive: as an act of constitution of human existence, since we are a "being space", according Muñoz Rodríguez (2005), the space includes a position of being against the environment by giving it a meaning; and also, as a "kind of taller," according to Escolano Benito (2000), which reflects in the physical structure the ways of conceiving the organization of the teaching-learning process, of displaying elements and practices that make up this system.

Another premise hinges thinking of the book as an object that creates spaces for reflection, delightfulness, imagination, or yet as a space for information, study, tiredness and

frustration. Be it in the most various possibilities, the book allows the reader a universe of interaction and production of senses, also by the materiality.

Faced with this idea that the materiality of the book can promote reading and methods of comprehension, indicating the construction of an imaginary world, this paper works with the conjecture that the layout and decoration of the books in a given physical space can cause the reader a different level of approaching or departure from the act of reading.

The publishing market's wave of interactivity and inventiveness between reader and book creates different spaces so that the reader-reading relationship happens. The fact that the book is perceived as a highly profitable product, the predominant matter which mobilizes this branch of the economy, justifies the concern with the quality of the work's production material, aimed at its reception. This concern becomes evidence that the advertising movement in relation to the propagation of the work ensures a certain visibility, exposure and appreciation of the book in bookstores, in printed catalogs and virtual storefronts.

Noting that the Brazilian code of consumer defense and protection in article 36 describes that "advertising should be conveyed in such a way that the consumer easily and immediately identify it as such" (BRAZIL, 1990), which refers to the idea that identifying the product must be, in addition to providing basic information, also give easy access to the information. In the case of the book-object, it is understood as the possibility of handling, the physical touch of picking up and perusing comprises an identification mode of this writing culture product.

Therefore, the visibility of information such as title and images, and the accessibility to the work show central matters in the arrangement of book-objects for the consumer-reader. Principles that guide the accommodation modes of books in public and private spaces - such as bookstores, libraries, exhibition fairs, among others -, in a meticulous, strategic and judicious look of positioning the book-object, have the goal of attracting the reader's attention.

This movement which forms behaviors and actions in relation to the book-object, installed by the cultural industry in contemporary society, is shown to be in line to Norbert Elias's civilizing process, presented in the studies of Tozzi (2013, p.137), the book-objects are trainers for bringing with it a certain way of "[...] being in the world, presenting children with an order for the spaces of their existence and expression, which function symbolically rearranging the seats occupied by audiences which keep their property ownership or conformal appropriation to certain practices."

The books, according to the author, materialize processes of civility, which reverberates in the educational institutions a series of actions and behavior indicating of sociocultural remodeling. They educate bodies and courses of action, conforming interests, aspirations and needs.

The school environment becomes at the same time a developer of different cultures and constitutor of what can be called schooling culture, through instaurations of hybrid practices, in such a way that the coexistence of different cultures eventually forms a decisive culture, by mixing knowledge of the cultures of family, childhood, teachers, administrations, local, economic, amongst others.

Given the socioeconomic order advertising demarcation, which enhances the physical space as indicator and provocateur of reception and consumption modes of written culture products, it is possible to notice this influence in the formation of a material culture in schools from the observation of images of the physical space for the book-object? What conception of reading action articulates and supports the provision of reading materials, especially books, in the articulation of determined place inside the classroom?

Driven by these questions, this research, with the goal of regulating actions and educational performances, aims to analyze and understand how the physical space is set up inside the classroom where the book is placed in an accentuated position, as well as how it is perceived by teachers and students.

This work evolves from a field research, which performed data collection from images of different school spaces, inside classrooms where books are exposed. For this it is used as theoretical basis, the concepts and studies about the concept of space developed by Muñoz Rodríguez (2005) and Carpenter and Almeida (2008), linked to the idea of schooling culture, in the perspective of Vidal (2001, 2009), Vidal and Faria Filho (2000, 2005) and material schooling culture of Viñao (1995) and Escolano Benito (2000). The study was grounded in the conception of representation and materiality of the book, according to Chartier (2009), among other authors who contribute to the comprehension of the place books take in schools.

## **2 THE BOOK AS CONSTITUTOR OBJECT OF A SCHOOL MATERIAL CULTURE**

The school as an educational institution is as much a physical structure, concrete and built, as a human structure, which is formed and built from actions, relationships and interactions between people and between people and knowledge. Viñao Frago (1995), when talking about culture, organization and schools, points out that the latter, being an institution, is not made of only one schooling culture, but schooling cultures, which are defined by him as the set of institutionalized aspects, formed by several elements and different levels:

"Set of institutionalized aspects" - includes practices and behaviors, lifestyles, habits and rituals - the everyday history of the school tasks -, material objects - function, use, distribution in space, physical materiality, symbolism, introduction, transformation, disappearance ... -, and mindsets, as well as meanings and shared ideas. Someone will say: everything. And yes, it is true, schooling culture is the whole school life: facts and ideas, minds and bodies, objects and behaviors, ways of thinking, saying and doing. (VIÑAO FRAGO, 1995, p.68)

The schooling culture is composed not only of practices, actions, behaviors, ideas, ways of doing and thinking, but also of a physical materiality of bodies and objects. In the formation of a schooling culture there is not a predilection or a valuation hierarchy between them; all these elements together, organized and in interaction, is what constitute and define it.

Viñao Frago (1995, p.69) elects three dimensions, or aspects, of the schooling culture, seen as worthy of attention, of further studies and of analyzes; they are: "[...] the space, the time and the language or ways of communication". The physical space is understood as one appropriate place, the prepared and habited territory, considered a social construction, which for being made of human relations is not neutral, but a symbol of the conditions and relations of their inhabitants. The space, according to the author, communicates, and therefore takes part in the education process. Establishes a language through the materiality that is added to the reading from the uses and the distinct ways to engage and employ such an environment; from the interpersonal relationships, rituals and social representations that are there generated or established, such as proximity/distance, communication/muting, contact/conflict; from the disposition of bodies and objects and from the organization and hierarchy.

Another dimension explored by the author is the school time, which as well as time is seen as social and human, multiple and plural, characteristics which give it the name of social construction. This implicit action of building is due to the temporality ratio between the before, the after and the now (present/past/future), of "[...] a determined timing of the experience in relation to an also concrete present". (VIÑAO FRAGO, 1995, p.72).

For the author, time is understood as a relation and not as a stream of hours/days/months, being defined as an act of representation, for being a capacity of synthesis and relationships, which, along with memory, creates and connects the space to experiences and expectations. These experiences are what attach to the temporal consciousness a plural and diverse character, configuring themselves by a social perspective and an individual perception, which bear the marks of the influence of language, of the ways to measure this time and of perceive it, as also a cultural memory of a given society.

A research that integrates a proposed study on the schooling culture will find itself before a wide range of analysis material, for working with images and representations of a certain reality and all that it involves. Like so,

[...] When the historian recuperates a true image of the school tradition, he also seeks an identification of the places in which it was built. Around that bounded territory-institution then articulate other dimensions of formal education: the cronosistemas in which are channeled the duration and rates of schooling, the roles played by actors who cohabited in that space, the program and methods of dissemination of the culture taught there, the tooling used in the implementation of educational activities, the rituals and disciplines that regulated the progress of the class and the rules and ways of examination. All this was staged in a particular place that served as a stage to representation, and is constructed around images that history and memory - reconstructed time, lived time and remembered time - can

recover from these material containers which we call schools. (ESCOLANO BENITO, 2000, p.3).

Escolano Benito (2000) conceives that the reconstruction of reality and the school space image can be done through two ethnographic records, which the author calls "place or setting" and "representation or textuality". The author works with the idea of a place designed for teaching and learning, which appears endowed of representation and meaning; thus, the author analyzes and describes the school environment consisting of architecture and textuality:

The educational architecture, in addition to designing educational spaces from functional budgets arranged to provide support for the series of actions constitute the *mise-en-scène* of the teaching-learning process, constitutes in itself a script, namely a text endowed with meanings. As writing form, the architecture can be examined in this respect, as a type of textuality conformed to certain rules of construction which entail meaning in their own structures, or as an order that transmits through their paths and symbols, a particular semantic, that is, a culture. (ESCOLANO BENITO, 2000, p.5).

In this same perspective, Vidal (2009) points out that the schooling culture has become an important tool for understanding the relationship between school and culture, which enables to highlight it as a producer of a specific culture and as a coexistence space of other cultures, whether they be: children, youth, family, religious, or others. Peering the school culture aims an approach to the interpersonal relationships built there; these are studies which, through the "[...] perception of tensions and conflicts in the school environment, and in the ways through which the school externalizes in society, comes tinting the homogenizing vision of the school as a social production." (VIDAL, 2009, p.26).

From this argument the author points out, according to her perception, three issues of the academic research on the work of teachers inside the classroom: one that reflects on the conservation and innovation in education; one that deals with attention to material culture as a constitutive element of school practices and, finally, one describing the appreciation of the subjects as social agents.

Regarding the conservation and innovation of practices in education, utilizing pictures of the interior of classrooms, Vidal (2001, 2009) and Vidal and Faria Filho (2000, 2005) highlight various changes in the physical, material and behavioral structure deeming necessary to recognize the power of school structural elements in its training and consolidation as a social institution, as well as the changes that were inserted in the school's daily routine, either by determination of public policy or by the actions of school subjects, these changes that need to be valued.

According to Vidal (2009), the school practices are considered hybrid practices such as actions arising from the miscegenation of diverse cultures, which are "established as a means of cultural circuits and as a form of affirmation of their social identities." Understanding these cultural practices as hybridization allows us to highlight the productivity

and innovativeness of intercultural mixtures, which arise, according to the author, from the individual and collective creativity of cultural heritage conversion.

The school environment becomes, at the same time, developer of different cultures and constitutor of a schooling culture through the instaurations of hybrid practices; of the coexistence with different cultures eventually a decisive culture is formed, adding knowledge of the cultures of family, childhood, teachers, administrative, local, etc.

The material schooling culture, according to the author, encompasses all writing materials and products, which occupy a significant position in the school's administrative and educational practices, and "[...] taken in its materiality, the writing tools allow not only the realization of the taught content, but the understanding of the set of tasks activated inside the school." (VIDAL, 2009, p.31).

Starting from this perspective that the writing tools bring in its materiality their own use which takes place from them, this research will seek to observe the spaces of reading objects in the setting of a material schooling culture.

Taking into consideration what Chartier (2009) stresses is important to identify how the discourses on such practices are built in each historical moment, be

[...] in and for the works, or at least some of them which take possession of objects and practices of the written culture of its time to transform them into aesthetic resources driven by poetic, dramatic or narrative means. The processes that give life to writing in its many forms, public or private, ephemeral or lasting, also become the very material of literary invention.

Produced in a specific order, the works are beyond them and acquire presence as they receive the meanings that its audiences attribute them, sometimes for very long. (CHARTIER 2009, p.42)

The book gets its materiality from the book-object and from writing's cultural practices, which gives it a specific way of use and significance. The physical place where that book object is placed, specifically in the school environment, may represent the meanings that the public gives it.

To Muñoz Rodriguez (2005) if the space where actions' productions, planning and its effectuation take place, measure and explain the interdependence between subject and spaces, so that "[...] its knowledge and handling could provide us with an optimization of the processes that take place there. The space, from this perspective, is not only a particular physical environment, a stage for our behaviors, but also an active agent in the educational process" (MUÑOS Rodriguez, 2005, p.215).

If as says Munos Rodriguez (2005, p.2015) book-object is an active agent in the educational process, thinking about the space articulation in which this is allocated, adds a sense, the way it was planned, organized, reflects meaning, symbolic and emotional, "[...]

because displays a series of communicational, social and cultural behaviors, based on the interdependence that is kept with the subjects."

### **3 THE BOOK IN THE CLASSROOM: BETWEEN MOBILITY AND THE DEMARICATION OF ACCESSIBILITY**

This field research was carried out by the gathering of images of different classrooms, located in the southern region of Minas Gerais, courtesy of the teachers and students of a Literacy Lacto Sensus Specialization course, conducted by the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of the South of Minas Gerais, during the years 2013 and 2014, as an activity of the subject of children's literature and literacy, conducted by the author herself.

The collection of images of the place the book occupied or the way its exposure within the classrooms was customized generated the need to observe if the images of this book space would be linked in other spaces, such as the cyberspace. Thus, this research also presents a series of images advertising physical spaces directed to display and view books in virtual spaces, collected from different websites.

The observations of the images allowed to list two ways in which the books appear arranged inside the classroom: one was characterized by the "mobility" of the physical space, the other by the need of "visibility" and "demarcation" of the reading space.

#### *3.1 Mobility of the physical space*

The observation of the images indicates at first, a setting of a carefree place with no concerns over a physical boundary, meaning, more flexible, providing some "mobility of the physical space" in which the books are showcased. The setting of this environment appears articulated to a sense of motion of the reading space and body, shaped by flexibility and practicality, allowing comfort and spontaneity of body positioning.

Although the place of books is restricted to the inside of a classroom, the environment can be modified, such as in Figure 1, the mat provides the possibility of changing the space, allowing versatility, rotation and mobility, which would not prevent this reading space to exist in different locations inside the classroom or outside of it, or even outside of the school. Thus, some variation and interdependence of the physical book space is identified and can occur in unrestricted mobility inside the room, articulating an interaction between the reader and reading materials in different school and non-school settings.





**IMAGE 1** – The mobility of the books within the classroom: books in mats

**Source:** author's archive, image courtesy of the students of the Literacy specialization course of the Federal Institute of Southern Minas Gerais-Campus Muzambinho.

The organization and articulation of this space seems to facilitate student mobility, and also enables an individualized reading method, in which the reader body expresses their wills and freedom, either sitting or lying down, triggers the spontaneity of the reader-book-object relation in the act of reading. It is this interaction process between reader/book, this relationship between a real subject, historically dated and situated, and a concrete reading material, that makes the construction of meaning possible. A physical relationship that is affected by the body posture - sitting, lying down - imposing different ways to read, as Goulemot (2001) shows.



**IMAGE 2** – The mobility of the books within the classroom: books in EVA rugs.

**Source:** [<http://blogdaebi.blogspot.com.br/2013/03/cantinho-da-leitura-iii.html>]

The need to recognize other spaces where the book could be exposed brings forward the need for a search of virtual environments. It is noted the existence of many blogs, mostly created by teachers, with the goal of propagation and sharing of activities and ideas of preparation and organization of the physical book space. This exposure of the book in the cyberspace seems to also be articulated by the idea of mobility, acceptance, expressiveness, interaction, not only with the materiality of the book-object and the reader, but mediated by the physical space in which these artifacts will be stored.

In different shapes, colors and sizes, the preference for the boxes appears to be linked to the idea of a physical storage space which offers organization and mobility to books, enabling the circulation of the books inside the classroom.



**IMAGE 3** – Books in boxes.

**Source:** author's files, image courtesy of the Literacy Specialization Course of the Federal Institute of southern Minas Gerais-Campus Muzambinho.

The books in the boxes provide a reading activity, buoyed not so much for its visibility, but for the action of selectivity of the book, generating the need for support for the exhibition of the works. Thus, reading can happen in different places, with actions which may require a more elongated process by the reader for the screening of the book. The act of handling promotes a reader's route both between different works, allowing for interaction with the materiality of the book-object to the choice imbued by preference, interests and taste of the reader, as a circulation for the place where the boxes are exposed. Between the coming and going between the desk, or the table in which the books are exposed, the reader observes how, in what way the others are reading.



**IMAGE 4** – Box decorated for books.

**Source:** <http://decorarteatelie.blogspot.com.br/2013/05/caixas-decoradas.html>

The cyberspace also displays a variety of models of boxes as props to reading books in the classroom, with the aim of disseminating options of book storage. The decorative boxes are shown in a refinement color scenario, shapes of a purely artisan work.

Another feature of mobility was not seen only in identifying a fixing space and storage of the book-object, limited to the inner edge of the classroom, but also an investment in the joint reading practices that go beyond the material educational boundary.

The setting of the place assigned to the book in the classroom seems to expand itself on the creation of a space of transience of the book-object. It detaches itself from its stable characteristic when it gets the chance to move into non-school spaces, driven by the idea of delightful and shared reading practices, which allows the child to take the book home and carry the reading in a familiar environment along with people close to them, creating similarities between reading actions and human relations. All these various relations between

a reader and his book-object which enables the construction of a meaning, and this is only possible through the reader's attitudes (GOULEMOT, 1996).



**IMAGE 5** – Book case and book bag

Source: [http://alfabetizacaocefafroponteselacerda.blogspot.com.br/2013/01/blog-post\\_13.html](http://alfabetizacaocefafroponteselacerda.blogspot.com.br/2013/01/blog-post_13.html)

Similarly, the cyberspace in different blogs is structured in order to give the book mobility, from the presentation of various models for making tools, such as folders, bags, cases, among others, accompanied by a handmade refinement to enrich such cultural product.

### 3.1 *Visibility and demarcation of the physical space*

The visibility category and demarcation of the physical space is characterized by offering a certain form of stable space organization, in order to outline it, name it and determine it, assuring to the reader its identification and the possibility of the reading achievement in a unique and defined location.



**IMAGE 6** – Books exposed in wood support.

Source: author's archive, image courtesy of the Literacy Specialization Course of the Federal Institute of southern Minas Gerais-Campus Muzambinho.

Among the physical structure of the classroom, a space named "reading corner" is reserved. According to the Notebook 1 of the teacher training program, the National Pact for Literacy in the Age One (PNAIC, 2013), 249 titles intended for Early Childhood Education were distributed in 2010, the beginning years of elementary education and Youth and Adult Education. The literacy teachers linked to the training program, received the collection of works which contemplated different themes, genres and extensions, which generated the need to create a physical space that aimed to allow movement and interaction of children with the books within the classrooms.



**IMAGE 7** – Reading corner book space.

**Source:** author's archive, image courtesy of the Literacy Specialization Course of the Federal Institute of southern Minas Gerais-Campus Muzambinho.



**IMAGE 8** – Booklines space

**Source:** <http://eusoudonademim.blogspot.com.br/2013/03/sala-de-aula-cantinho-da-leitura.html> and <http://diariovirtual4ano.blogspot.com.br/2011/03/nosso-cantinho-da-leitura.html>

The cyberspace provides different setups of the area named reading corner available in blogs, which seem to be provided with the aim of propagating ways in which the book may be presented in the classroom. Arranged on clotheslines, in envelopes made of fabric, plastic and EVA, or wood shelves, there was a variety of possibilities of the setup of the space in which books were displayed in the classroom.

## 4 CONCLUSION

This research aimed to present and understand how were constituted different physical spaces within the classroom where children's literature books are arranged, and also the way they are perceived by teachers and students, with the aim of regulating actions and pedagogic actions.

The observation of different images in which the books were on display, generated curiosity and the need to find images of other places of exposure of books, such as the cyberspace, by way of comparison with the analyzed reality. Allowing the research to highlight that the virtual environment acquires the role of placement and dissemination of physical spaces, directed to the organization, exhibition and use of the book in different blogs.

The image analysis indicates that the place that the literature book occupies in classrooms does not seem neutral or characterized by educational indifference, but appears surrounded by actions and performances of reading practices, concerned with the articulation

of the school environment to provide interaction with literary works. The observations suggest a place at times characterized by the "mobility of the physical space" of books, and at others determined by the "visibility and demarcation" of a permanent physical space for the exhibition of children's literature books. Both articulate reader action and integration between the reader and the materiality of the work.

In this sense, it is understood that the book space goes beyond the setting of a physical structure, seeing as it is constituted of human actions and relations, and so it is not neutral, but it becomes a symbol of the conditions and the interrelations of those it cohabits. The school is composed of human veins, as stated Fernandes (2005, p.24), "[...] it is not only a universe of objects. It is also a world of people and a fabric of interpersonal relations. "

What can be observed in the space created for the book, whatever may the form of decoration or organization be, is that the ambience triggers interpersonal relationships, rites and representations of reading practices that are generated there, beyond the school environment. A dialogue space between reader and book is created, and between different readers, as Viñao Frago (1995) states and, therefore takes part in the educational process. It becomes an environment, which articulates a dialogic relationship permeated by the materiality that sets the reading, from the uses and the different ways of performing reading activities, setting up a determined material schooling culture.

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