



# STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE READING IN RURAL CONTEXTS.

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## Abstract.

**T**he promotion of a reading culture in the rural context has a fundamental impact on the motivation and acquisition of skills, knowledge and values, mainly in students because it provides them with tools that allow them to develop skills for work, entrepreneurship and life in society.

This article seeks to identify effective strategies for promoting reading in rural settings, drawing on studies that identify challenges such as a shortage of resources and teaching materials, poor classroom physical conditions, and the need for teacher training and refresher courses—factors that limit educational effectiveness.

They also make it possible to support the need to design innovative strategies based on play, gamification and versatile tools that can be adapted according to needs and ages; that encourage the reading habit from childhood by optimizing its application through the adaptation of educational environments to the cognitive and emotional needs of students, making adequate use of the intrinsic resources of the rural environment and promoting collaboration between the school, families and the community.

It is recommended to train teachers in gamification, create mobile libraries, and connect families and communities in the reading process.

**Keywords:** reading culture, rural context, innovative strategies, versatile tools, educational environments.

## Resumen.

El fomento de una cultura lectora en el contexto rural tiene un impacto fundamental en la motivación y adquisición de capacidades, conocimientos y valores, principalmente en los estudiantes, porque les provee de herramientas que les permiten desarrollar habilidades para el trabajo, el emprendimiento y la vida en sociedad. Este artículo busca identificar estrategias efectivas para fomentar la lectura en contextos rurales, a partir de estudios que permiten identificar desafíos al respecto, como la escasez de recursos y materiales didácticos, dificultades en las condiciones físicas del aula y la necesidad de formación y actualización de los docentes, factores que limitan la efectividad educativa.

## ESTRATEGIAS PARA FOMENTAR LA LECTURA EN CONTEXTOS RURALES.

También posibilitan sustentar la necesidad de diseñar estrategias innovadoras basadas en la lúdica, la gamificación y herramientas versátiles que puedan adaptarse según las necesidades y edades; que incentiven el hábito lector desde la niñez a partir de la optimización de su aplicación a través de la adaptación de los entornos educativos a las necesidades cognitivas y emocionales de los estudiantes, del aprovechamiento adecuado de los recursos intrínsecos del entorno rural y fortaleciendo los vínculos entre la escuela y su entorno social.

Se recomienda capacitar docentes en gamificación, crear bibliotecas móviles y vincular la familia y la comunidad en el proceso lector.

**Palabras Clave:** Cultura lectora, contexto rural, estrategias innovadoras, herramientas versátiles, entornos educativos.

## I. INTRODUCTION.

Reading is a strategy for empowerment and life transformation. In rural environments, it can open new windows to the world and enrich the lives of those who live in the countryside.

This text reflects on the results of studies published in academic databases, which help establish guidelines for designing reading promotion strategies in rural contexts. These strategies are rooted in the principles of meaningful and active learning, adapting initiatives to the customs, traditions, and realities that characterize each community while involving various stakeholders—primarily families. Practical tools and insights are offered for those interested in fostering reading in rural areas. Similarly, the text highlights the challenges involved in implementing strategies aimed at promoting reading in rural settings, with the goal of fostering critical and creative thinking in students.

Reading in rural contexts has a significant impact on community development, acting as an essential driver

of social cohesion. This is reflected in improved access to information, the encouragement of dialogue, and the preservation of cultural identity.

## II. METHODOLOGY.

The methodology used was based on documentary analysis through a systematic review of various publications and research indexed in academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, Redalyc, and Dialnet. Priority was given to studies conducted within the last five years, with a few exceptions for older pedagogical intervention studies on fostering reading in rural areas whose contributions were considered highly relevant. The exploration, analysis, and interpretation—conducted from a qualitative approach—were guided by key terms and expressions such as reading competencies, fostering reading, reading promotion, didactic reading strategies, reading programs and workshops, rural educational challenges, reading in rural environments, reading mediation in rural contexts, and the development of reading habits in rural areas.

Additional inclusion criteria were applied, selecting publications that reflected the educational reality of rural settings and addressed pedagogical strategies for fostering reading, with clear evidence of improvements and the implementation of new practices conducive to well-being and learning. Studies that did not meet the timeframe or were unrelated to the rural context were excluded, as was the case with three studies focused on urban settings, specifically at the university level.

For the analysis, a content matrix was created to organize the findings at local, national, and international levels, including information on author, year, methodology, and results. Categories were established to analyze the studies emerging from the literature review, such as the relevance of reading in rural contexts, learning difficulties in rural areas, strategies to encourage reading in rural settings, resources to promote reading, and challenges in rural education.

## III. RESULTS.

The findings highlight the relevance of reading in rural environments as a key tool for improving academic

performance, as well as for strengthening social cohesion and the personal development of students from early childhood—an aspect that contributes to their holistic development.

The studies mention the teaching of writing at the beginning of school life, noting a tendency to prioritize decontextualized exercises involving the fragmentation of language into isolated units (words and syllables) and dictations with little meaning. These practices limit the development of authentic communication skills by neglecting semantic coherence and the role of reading as a fundamental stage in writing development (Bernal, 2017).

Similarly, they report difficulties among rural students in reading comprehension due to challenges in decoding, identifying main ideas, and constructing arguments, as well as weaknesses in understanding and meaning-making, which affect the development of cognitive and creative potential (Alarcón et al., 2022).

It is considered essential to align reading promotion strategies with the principles of meaningful and active learning, where students do not merely receive knowledge but construct it based on their environment and experiences. Selecting topics and activities that are relevant to students and their communities increases motivation for reading and writing, as well as commitment to these practices, by fostering identification with the content (Gamboa, 2020). This finding confirms the importance of family and community involvement in the process of fostering reading.

In this regard, studies affirm that collaboration between schools, families, and communities not only fosters reading habits but also reinforces the continuity and sustainability of reading programs (Guerrero & Quintero, 2023). They also highlight the need to adapt pedagogical strategies to the sociocultural characteristics of rural communities (Palmera, 2018).

As evidenced by recent studies, the implementation of play-based (Cala Rey et al., 2023), dynamic, and gamified strategies (Aguirre Gaviria et al., 2022) has established itself as an effective practice for fostering student interest and motivation (Barragán et al., 2022). The results indicate that these strategies—such as the creation of reading clubs and reader's theater, introduced at an early age and with active family participation—have a significant impact on the development of reading habits in students (Vera, 2024).

Furthermore, focusing on diverse literary genres contributes to the development of reading comprehension skills and critical thinking, aspects that aid in improving academic performance and fosters the appreciation of literature (Mas Salvador, 2020). On the other hand, reading should be valued as a key tool the goal is for reading to be valued as a key tool for both personal and collective development by connecting people and allowing them to grow together; hence the importance of collaborative work strategies. Reading not only enriches individual knowledge but also strengthens essential social and emotional competencies. Studies have shown that fostering reading in rural educational settings through cooperative work strategies contributes to the development of empathy, effective communication, and teamwork—fundamental skills for the collective growth of a society, as they enable people to better understand one another, respect diverse perspectives, and collaborate on problem-solving (Roldán, 2022). However, despite the clear advantages, implementing these strategies in a rural context faces significant challenges, such as difficulties in using technological resources, insufficient didactic materials or a lack of supplies, and inadequate educational infrastructure. These factors limit the expansion capacity of reading programs in these areas, causing discouragement and disengagement from school, which translates into low academic performance and limited access to future job opportunities (Ribadeneira, 2020). Similarly, the lack of continuous training, professional development, and working conditions for teachers, along with the need to adapt pedagogical resources to local needs, are identified as constraints on the scope and sustainability of long-term reading promotion programs (Silva, 2020). Despite the efforts of many teachers, traditional pedagogical approaches persist, often creating monotonous environments that do not promote creativity or student interest, and are characterized by low family and community participation. Several studies show that many students under the Escuela Nueva pedagogical model present “copying” from.

documents or guidebooks in their written work as a learned behavior. This situation calls for a new approach toward the diverse dimensions of communication in social, educational, and cultural life within the information age. Considering that writing must go beyond a repetitive and mechanical task, children require opportunities to express their creativity and connect their ideas with the world around them, so they can give meaning to their writing and communicate effectively (Bernal, 2017). Structural barriers to accessing teacher training have

been widely noted in the literature, and addressing them is a priority to develop the skills needed to teach using innovative strategies that motivate students to become active and critical readers. In this sense, it is necessary to promote educational policies that provide not only material resources but also continuous training support for rural educators. This support should encourage the exchange of experiences and collaborative work among teachers, enriching their practices through the creation of support networks in often isolated environments. The importance of adapting reading promotion strategies to diverse learning styles and students’ cultural contexts is emphasized, recognizing the fundamental role of the family and community during the process.

## IV. DISCUSSION.

Based on the findings, it is pertinent to question the role of the teacher in rural contexts in guiding processes that foster reading. Since Escuela Nueva is an active and participatory educational model—a transformative education (Palmera, 2018) mediated by interests of coverage, quality, access, retention, and equity—it requires grounding curricular proposals and articulating the educational quality benchmarks set by the Ministry of National Education (MEN) with the cultural richness of rural areas (Rodríguez, 2023), linking theoretical knowledge with the direct experience of nature and agricultural work. Consequently, as suggested by several studies including Gutiérrez (2020), it is necessary to consider strategies to strengthen “learning to entrepreneur.” Integrating educational innovation to transform and adapt learning strategies to the specific needs of each community and educational level generates a positive social impact. Relevant curricular proposals are required that adapt to the needs and characteristics of rural communities, integrating the educational quality standards stipulated by the MEN and valuing cultural identity. Reading should be considered within the programming across three moments: planning, execution, and feedback (Rodríguez, 2023). Likewise, it is necessary to create educational contexts that foster the physical, emotional, and social growth of students (Cruz Alpízar et al., 2024). Therefore, social intelligence should be integrated into strategy designs, considering the specific characteristics and needs of rural areas (Loterio Franco et al., 2020). Thus, a contextualized approach is fundamental to ensuring that pedagogical interventions are effective and sustainable in the long term (Silva, 2020). The educational and

assessment practices of teachers working in multi-grade settings must be consistent with a non-fragmented and non-static curriculum, without restrictions on formative assessment during the learning process (Gutiérrez, 2020). These practices, especially in rural settings, must promote reading as a foundation of the teaching process from the earliest grades (Bernal, 2017), using active pedagogical proposals, parent or guardian involvement, and community interaction, along with the design of learning materials organized into didactic sequences. Finally, as noted by Guataquirá Bernal & Castellanos Ortiz (2020), the Escuela Nueva pedagogical model is not the cause of the difficulties presented; the problem lies in teaching practices that require precise and significant adjustments to rethink the teaching of writing and reading. Ultimately, issues such as those raised by Beltrán (2023) support the need for this study, providing strategies aimed at fostering reading in rural environments where lack of access to digital resources and socioeconomic inequality negatively impact the development of children in these settings.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS.

The analysis of various sources allowed for the identification of determining factors to consider for fostering reading in rural contexts, such as:

The capacity of teachers to adapt strategies to available resources, student characteristics, and the sociocultural particularities of each rural community, as well as to implement innovative approaches for fostering reading habits based on the principles of Escuela Nueva and other alternative educational models (Palmera, 2018). For this reason, it is necessary to prioritize continuous training and professional development for teachers to design flexible and contextualized pedagogical strategies. This not only ensures better reception of initiatives but also enables all students, regardless of where they live, to access quality education and have the opportunity to develop their potential through reading.

- The development of long-term reading habits can be enhanced through active, play-based, and gamified strategies accompanied by narrative media such as comics—where storytelling is not solely based on written text. These approaches have proven in increasing interest and improving reading skills among rural students. The study by Calderón et al. (2022) analyzes the benefits of such strategies for reading comprehension.

Close collaboration between the family and the social environment is essential when applying various strategies, especially in rural settings where schools often lack sufficient resources. In this regard it is important to consider training parents, rural teachers, and other community members as reading mediators through the knowledge, design, and execution of innovative strategies to foster reading habits. The study by Garzón et al. (2022) supports the impact of these stakeholders' participation in strengthening reading comprehension. This analysis also revealed several challenges that may limit the successful implementation of reading strategies in rural contexts and contribute to educational inequality compared to urban settings. These include challenges related to resource scarcity, inadequate school infrastructure, the geographical dispersion of students, and the need to link content with students' experiences and environment. Finally, reading—beyond being considered an academic activity—should be valued as a transformative medium that contributes to the integral formation of students capable of positively impacting their social context.

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23