



TRANSMEDIA NARRATIVES

Their Impact on Social Awareness and the Motivation of Future Teachers

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Education Educational technology Social responsibility Motivation Teaching Childhood Interpersonal relations	<i>This qualitative study with 72 Early Childhood Education undergraduates explores the impact of transmedia practices on teacher training. Results reveal enhanced social responsibility and self-motivation, supported by critical awareness, community engagement, and autonomous learning. Digital narratives facilitated the ethical, creative, and collaborative examination of real social issues. Thus, the transmedia methodology is established as an effective tool for training committed, empathetic, and motivated teachers, equipped to face the educational challenges of the twenty-first century through transformative and purposeful pedagogical practice.</i>

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1. Introduction

In recent years, transmedia practices have emerged as an innovative and effective methodology in initial teacher education, integrating narratives across multiple platforms that actively engage students (Jenkins et al., 2009). This approach not only responds to contemporary digital literacies but also fosters key aspects of learning, including visual culture (Peña-Acuña & Alfonso-Jaramillo, 2024), social responsibility, and self-motivation. Furthermore, their significance is underscored in the narrative and technological dimensions of educational development (Gispert de Chía, 2024; Sepúlveda Cardona & Suárez Quiceno, 2017).

Several studies highlight that transmedia narratives promote the development of socio-emotional and ethical competencies essential for teaching practice (García-Peñalvo et al., 2016; Scolari, 2018). By enabling university students—future teachers—to design, interpret, and share visual content, these practices foster critical media literacy, equipping them to teach through visual means with pedagogical intent (Aguaded & Sánchez Carrero, 2013; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Engagement with images, videos, social media, and infographics also encourages the development of an educational perspective sensitive to diversity, inclusion, and active participation.

Similarly, research has shown that the transmedia approach enhances students' self-motivation by reinforcing autonomy, a sense of achievement, and an emotional connection with learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000; McGonigal, 2011). This immersive experience also promotes self-regulation and strengthens future teachers' commitment to their own learning process (Bandura, 1997; Peña Acuña & Sánchez-Verdejo, 2024). This reveals a connection between narrative ethics and mobile competencies in education (Caldeiro-Pedreira et al., 2018; Tejedor et al., 2019).

1.1. Practices Visual culture in prospective teachers through transmedia practices

The promotion of visual culture among university students (Peña-Acuña & Alfonso-Jaramillo, 2024), future Early Childhood Education teachers, can be effectively achieved through transmedia practices. These practices integrate narratives across multiple platforms, enriching students' visual and media literacy (Jenkins et al., 2009). By engaging with images, videos, infographics, and social media, students not only consume but also create visual content, developing critical and expressive skills (Scolari, 2018). This methodology enhances their ability to interpret and produce visual messages with pedagogical intent, a competence essential for their future teaching practice (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011).

Furthermore, the transmedia approach fosters active participation, meaningful learning, and peer collaboration, key elements for developing critical awareness of contemporary media and visual culture (Aguaded & Sánchez Carrero, 2013). From this perspective, it promotes experiential learning, enabling future teachers to understand how to use visual media as a tool to educate in values, emotions, and inclusive narratives (Rodríguez Estrada & Davis, 2015).

Therefore, integrating transmedia practices into teacher education enables the development of visual competencies that can be transferred to school contexts, fostering innovative, critical education aligned with the communicative languages of the twenty-first century.

1.2. Advancing Social Responsibility through Transmedia Practices.

Transmedia practices have become established as effective educational tools for promoting social engagement in university contexts, particularly within teacher education. By relying on narratives distributed across multiple platforms, these strategies foster critical thinking, empathy, and active student participation (Jenkins et al., 2009). Engaging students in the creation and dissemination of content addressing social issues further enhances their civic commitment and their capacity to act as agents of change (Scolari, 2018).

Initial teacher education requires pedagogical approaches that connect with contemporary media and communication forms. Transmedia practices enable the linking of curricular content

with current social realities, fostering meaningful learning (Aguaded & Sánchez Carrero, 2013). Furthermore, these activities strengthen critical media literacy, which is essential for active citizenship in the digital age (Pérez Tornero & Varis, 2010).

Collaborative work in transmedia projects promotes the collective construction of knowledge and fosters a sense of shared responsibility among students (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Moreover, by integrating emotional and ethical dimensions, these practices facilitate the development of a deeper social consciousness (Freire, 1998).

Consequently, transmedia practices not only transform the ways of teaching and learning but also strengthen the role of future teachers as cultural, ethical, and socially engaged mediators.

1.3. Fostering Self-Motivation through Transmedia Practices.

Transmedia practices represent an innovative approach to enhancing self-motivation among university students, particularly in the training of future teachers. These methodologies involve active engagement with narratives distributed across multiple platforms, creating a more meaningful and engaging learning environment (Ryan, 2015). Interaction with diverse content and the opportunity to create original stories further strengthen students' self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In the university context, transmedia narratives stimulate curiosity, a sense of achievement, and an emotional connection with knowledge—key elements for self-motivation (Pink, 2009). Furthermore, by integrating digital and collaborative resources, they promote autonomy and critical thinking, essential competencies in teacher education (McGonigal, 2011).

Transmedia environments also foster “flow” or optimal experience by challenging students with activities that combine creativity and clear objectives, thereby promoting sustained engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This immersion in coherent and diverse narrative worlds allows future teachers to see themselves as active participants in their own learning (Gee, 2003).

Recent studies indicate that transmedia interventions increase students' personal engagement and strengthen their sense of agency, positively impacting self-motivation (Peña Acuña, 2021). Moreover, these experiences help consolidate communicative and self-reflective skills in future teachers (Peña Acuña & Sánchez-Verdejo, 2024). Finally, the transmedia approach reinforces perceived self-efficacy, a fundamental component of intrinsic motivation, by enabling students to demonstrate their achievements through productions shared and valued by the community (Bandura, 1997).

The research questions are as follows:

- What are future teachers' perceptions of transmedia practices in relation to social responsibility and community contribution?
- How do future teachers assess transmedia practices in terms of self-motivation?

2. Methodology

A qualitative methodology using focus groups, that has been utilized in this research, is appropriate for exploring transmedia practices among Early Childhood Education undergraduate students, where women are predominant and men only minimally represented, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of their perceptions, experiences, and discourses regarding social responsibility and self-motivation. This approach facilitates the analysis of shared meanings and the collective construction of understanding.

Fourteen focus groups were conducted with seventy-two participants during the week immediately following the conclusion of the intervention. Focus groups are a qualitative research technique that brings together several participants to discuss a specific topic, allowing the exploration of perceptions, experiences, and shared meanings through group interaction. Indeed, according to Flick (2014), focus groups foster interaction that enriches the interpretation of social phenomena.

2.1. Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To investigate future teachers' perceptions of transmedia practices in relation to social responsibility and their contribution to the community.
- To examine how future teachers evaluate transmedia practices in relation to their professional and academic self-motivation.

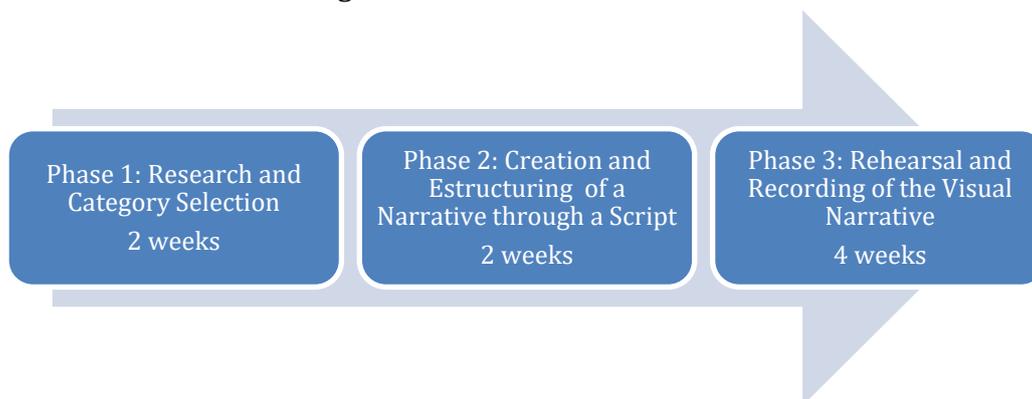
2.2. Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data was conducted through a manual coding procedure carried out independently by two researchers to ensure the reliability and interpretative depth of the results. Each researcher systematically reviewed the transcripts of the 14 focus groups, identifying emerging categories, patterns of meaning, and relevant thematic relationships. Subsequently, the assigned codes were compared and reconciled, following an inductive and constant comparative approach characteristic of qualitative methodology.

This analytical triangulation helped reduce individual bias, strengthen the study's internal validity, and ensure a rigorous, coherent, and well-grounded interpretation of students' discourses. The choice of manual analysis reflects the intention to preserve the contextual richness and subjectivity expressed by the participants, which are essential for an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, emotions, and experiences associated with the phenomenon under investigation.

The intervention was carried out over two months in groups of 5 to 6 students, composed of both female and male participants. It took place during the 2021–2022 academic year as a practical component of the compulsory course Didactics of Oral and Written Language in Early Childhood Education. During the first two weeks of the first semester, students were required to research a topic related to social responsibility and select the categories they wished to represent. Over the following two weeks, they created a narrative and structured it using either a written script or a visual storyboard. Subsequently, for four weeks, students assigned roles, rehearsed, and recorded the visual narrative with educational and communicative intent in MP4 format, focusing on the initially selected social responsibility topic. The final product could be an audiovisual production or solely a visual one (without sound).

Figure 1. Phases of the Intervention



Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

To prepare for the practical activity, students were provided in advance with an evaluation rubric outlining the criteria they were expected to meet. The rubric is presented below in Table 1. Each item is scored from 0 to 4 points, with a total possible score of 20 points.

Table 1. Evaluation Rubric for the Visual Narrative

Criterion	Excellent (4 pts)	Good (3 pts)	Satisfactory (2 pts)	Insufficient (1-0 pts)
Originality and creativity	The visual narrative presents a highly creative, original, and distinctive proposal. The narrative is unique and engaging.	A creative proposal is evident, with some original elements.	The proposal presents conventional elements with limited innovation.	Work shows little creativity, featuring repetitive ideas or lacking original development.
Integration of the Social Responsibility Theme	The theme is clearly integrated, demonstrating depth, critical insight, and a connection with social values.	The theme is addressed clearly, although with less depth or critical development.	The theme is present in a superficial or tangential manner.	The theme is unclear, barely perceptible, or absent.
Educational Purpose and Application in Teaching	The proposal has a clear pedagogical intent and is applicable in teaching. It promotes values and reflection.	It demonstrates a valid educational intent, although its applicability could be improved.	It has a basic educational intent, but is poorly adapted to the educational context.	No educational purpose is evident, or it is inadequate.
Visual Competence and Design	Excellent use of visual resources (colour, composition, visual narrative). The message is both aesthetic and comprehensible.	Appropriate use of visual resources, with some strengths in the design.	Functional use of visual resources, but with weaknesses in clarity or aesthetics	Poor, disorganised, or visually ineffective design.
Clarity of Narrative Structure	The visual narrative is coherent, follows a logical sequence, and communicates the message effectively.	The structure is clear, although the narrative flow could be improved.	The narrative has a sequence, but it is confusing or unclear.	Lack of narrative coherence or complete disorganisation.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

The sample of Early Childhood Education students came from a university in southern Spain. The intervention group comprised 72 participants, of whom 70% were women and 30% were men. Ages ranged from 18 to 25 years, with a predominant mean age of 20 years in 75% of the cases.

Prior to presenting the specific findings, it is essential to delineate the initial categories that guided the analysis. These categories were developed through a thematic coding process, which identified three principal axes: (a) topics of interest selected by student teams, associated with affective-emotional and social adaptation; (b) perceptions related to social responsibility, encompassing dimensions such as awareness, commitment, critical reflection, transformative education, and pedagogical application; and (c) indicators of self-motivation, organized around interest in learning, autonomy, self-efficacy, emotional engagement, and collaboration. The delineation of these categories provides a framework for understanding how they structured the

analysis and informed the subsequent interpretation of the results, thereby ensuring alignment between the educational objectives and the evidence obtained.

3. Results

This section presents the topics selected by Early Childhood Education students, working in teams, as well as the perceptions of social responsibility and self-motivation developed through transmedia practices.

3.1. Topics

The analysis of the topics selected by students concerning social responsibility reveals a clear interest in addressing emotionally and socially significant issues in early childhood. Most of the work teams focused on aspects related to affective-emotional adaptation, such as emotion regulation, the impact of parental divorce on children, or coping with grief. These choices demonstrate an increasing sensitivity to children’s internal processes and their emotional well-being within both school and family contexts.

Additionally, there is a notable concern for social integration, reflected in topics such as shyness, diversity, and respect for differences, suggesting a commitment to training inclusive and empathetic teachers. More serious issues, such as child abuse and parental alcoholism, were also addressed, highlighting students’ critical awareness of risk contexts affecting child development. Overall, the selected topics reflect an ethical and pedagogical orientation, with transmedia practices serving as a vehicle for reflection, research, and communication, enabling students to engage with complex educational and social realities in a transformative manner.

The social responsibility topics, or those with a focus on social adaptation, selected by students working in teams were as follows:

Table 2. Social Topics Selected by Students

Category	Code
Affective-Emotional Adaptation	Child’s Emotional and Attitudinal Regulation
	Affective-Emotional Education of Children with Separated or Divorced Parents
	Emotional Regulation and Peaceful Behaviour for Children of Separated or Divorced Parents
	Portrait of a Child’s Affective-Emotional Range Throughout a Day
	Affective Education of the Child with a Proper Approach
Social Adaptation	Grief as an Emotional Response in the Early Childhood Classroom
	How to Cope with Shyness or Fear of Others
	Attachment Across the Life Course, from Childhood to Adulthood
	Respect and Emotional Regulation in the Face of Diversity
Parental Overprotection of the Child	Respect for Diversity as a Positive Experience, Recognising Differences in Others
	Respect for Parental Diversity
	Negative Consequences for the Child Resulting from Parental Overprotection

Child Abuse	Affective-Emotional Consequences of Abuse Experienced During Childhood
Parental Alcoholism	Negative Effects in Households with Minors

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

3.2. Social Responsibility

The focus group question posed was: Why do you think this transmedia practice has improved your social responsibility and your sense of contributing to the community?

The results obtained from the focus group reveal that transmedia practices contributed significantly to the development of social responsibility among students. The findings are summarised in Table 3. Participants reported developing a greater awareness of the impact of their actions on both the educational community and the broader social environment. The digital narrative allowed them to reflect on real-world issues and generate communicative proposals with an ethical dimension. Additionally, there was a noticeable strengthening of the sense of belonging and collective commitment, as students recognised the importance of educating from an open-minded perspective. Several students mentioned that creating content with social objectives made them feel capable of acting as agents of change in their future teaching roles.

Overall, the data indicate that the transmedia approach not only enhances communicative skills but also fosters active and critical engagement with social realities.

Table 3. Perceptions of Social Responsibility

Category	Codes	Indicators
Social Awareness	Responsibility, Sensitivity, Ethics	We have understood the personal impact of our work on the school and social environment
Commitment to the Community	Participation, Collaboration, Service	Desire to contribute actively to collective well-being
Critical Reflection on Reality	Analysis, Problematization, Empathy	We are able to interpret social issues from a critical teaching perspective
Education for Change	Transformation, Agency, Values	We now feel that we are agents of change through education
Pedagogical Application of Learning	Projection, Transferability, Usefulness	We intend to apply what we have learned in our future professional practice

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

3.3. Self-Motivation

The focus group question is: Why do you think, or not, that this transmedia practice has improved your self-motivation for learning?

The majority of students respond emphatically that the practice has positively enhanced their self-motivation for learning in the following aspects, which are detailed in Table 4.

The collected discourses reveal an increased interest in learning, driven by creative freedom, the use of digital tools, and the opportunity to express oneself in a personal and meaningful way. Active participation in constructing transmedia narratives fostered a sense of ownership over their own learning process, which in turn enhanced commitment and emotional engagement. Moreover, it was observed that the collaborative nature of the project strengthened the sense of shared achievement and perseverance. Overall, these practices promoted a motivating environment that fostered both autonomy and the perception of self-efficacy, two essential factors

for sustained, self-regulated learning. The transmedia approach, therefore, establishes itself as an effective strategy for promoting intrinsic motivation in future teachers.

Table 4. Perceptions of Self-Motivation

Categories	Codes	Indicators
Interés por aprender	Curiosity, Enthusiasm, Initiative	Our desire to research, explore, and experiment with content independently has increased
Autonomía	Self-Management, Freedom, Responsibility	We have a greater sense of control over the learning process and decision-making
Autoeficacia	Confidence, Achievement, Competence	We have realised that we are capable of completing tasks and achieving good results
Implicación emocional	Identification, Intrinsic Motivation	We have felt a stronger emotional connection with the activity and its educational objectives
Colaboración motivadora	Teamwork, Support, Recognition	Working in a team, sharing tasks, and receiving recognition from others has been stimulating for us

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

3.4. Considerations

The results obtained in this study confirm the relevance of transmedia practices as pedagogical tools, in line with other studies (Dickinson-Delaporte et al., 2020; Prieto et al., 2019), enabling a holistic perspective (Tombleson, 2023).

Transmedia practices have the capacity to transform traditional learning into more participatory, motivating experiences that are connected to students' everyday lives. These practices, which integrate narratives and activities across multiple platforms and media, enable the implementation of pedagogical principles such as constructivism and connectivism, fostering personalised learning and active student engagement (Mamaeva, 2024; Rodrigues & Bidarra, 2014; Sánchez-Caballé & González-Martínez, 2022).

In this case, the main contribution of this study is the confirmation that these transmedia practices foster social responsibility and self-motivation among students in the Early Childhood Education Degree. Regarding the question of whether social responsibility improved, the data show that these practices promoted greater awareness of the impact of personal actions on the social and educational environment, aligning with previous studies that highlight the transformative potential of transmedia narratives in educational contexts (Jenkins et al., 2009; Scolari, 2018; Tárca et al., 2023). This result addresses the first objective initially proposed. Critical reflection and the creation of ethically intentional content strengthened collective engagement and helped students identify themselves as agents of change, in line with Freire's (1998) view of education as a practice of freedom and social transformation.

On the other hand, the results concerning self-motivation show that active and creative participation in transmedia projects increases interest in learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy: key aspects of self-regulated learning (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gil-Quintana & Osuna-Acedo, 2020). The freedom to express oneself and collaborate fosters emotional engagement and a sense of shared achievement, corroborating recent research highlighting intrinsic motivation facilitated by transmedia methodologies (Peña-Acuña, 2021; Sánchez-Caballé

& González-Martínez, 2022). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the second objective of this study has been achieved.

Transmedia narrative formats applied in the educational context have a significant socio-emotional impact, fostering motivation, empathy, autonomy, and the development of collaborative skills among students (Faria-Ferreira et al., 2021; Peña-Acuña & Sánchez-Verdejo, 2024; Perry, 2020).

According to the research of Sánchez-Castillo and Mora-Llabata (2019) and Fleming (2013), these immersive and participatory transmedia experiences enhance emotional engagement and a sense of belonging, allowing students to identify more deeply with the characters and situations, thereby increasing empathy and connection with the educational content.

Furthermore, transmedia narratives facilitate autonomous, student-centred learning, developing 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, self-efficacy, and digital literacy (Faria-Ferreira et al., 2021; Perry, 2020; Rodrigues & Bidarra, 2014).

Teachers also acknowledge that these innovative methodologies enhance motivation and the quality of learning, particularly when integrating digital resources closely connected to young people's everyday lives (Faria-Ferreira et al., 2021; Fleming, 2013).

Therefore, transmedia narratives not only transform the way of teaching and learning but also enhance socio-emotional development, preparing students for the challenges of today's digital society (Faria-Ferreira et al., 2021; Fleming, 2013; Peña-Acuña & Sánchez-Verdejo, 2024; Perry, 2020; Rodrigues & Bidarra, 2014; Sánchez-Castillo & Mora-Llabata, 2019). Moreover, these practices can be particularly valuable for engaging less motivated students and for revitalising traditionally less technology-oriented areas, such as the humanities (González-Martínez et al., 2019; Palioura & Dimoulas, 2022).

The implementation of transmedia practices in education presents challenges, such as the need for teacher training, adaptation to varying levels of digital competence, and effective integration into curricula (Dickinson-Delaporte et al., 2020; Sánchez-Caballé & González-Martínez, 2022).

From a practical perspective, the findings of this research suggest that integrating transmedia practices into the training of future teachers can enhance not only communicative and digital competencies but also social and emotional values essential for educational practice. The ability to construct narratives with social impact and to sustain motivation in learning is fundamental for the comprehensive training of professionals committed to their community.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the composition of the student body, predominantly female, may have influenced the results, introducing a gender bias that limits the generalizability of perceptions regarding social responsibility and self-motivation to contexts with greater gender balance. Additionally, the sample size—72 participants distributed across 14 focus groups—while adequate for in-depth qualitative analysis, restricts representativeness and the generalization of findings to other educational programs or university contexts. These limitations underscore the need for future studies incorporating larger, more gender-balanced samples, as well as complementary methodological approaches, such as quantitative surveys or individual interviews, to enable data triangulation and enhance the internal validity of the study.

4. Conclusions

The topics selected by the students reveal a pronounced awareness of the emotional and social challenges of childhood, reflecting an ethical and pedagogical commitment to inclusion and empathy. Moreover, the transmedia approach fosters critical and creative analysis of real-world problems, enhancing the social sensitivity of prospective teachers and their capacity to engage meaningfully in diverse educational contexts.

Thus, the results indicate that transmedia practices significantly strengthen social responsibility among Early Childhood Education students. The students developed a greater critical awareness of their role as future teachers, recognising the ethical and transformative impact of their practice. The students demonstrated commitment to their surroundings, a desire to act as agents of change, and a willingness to apply what they had learned, thereby establishing

the transmedia narrative as an effective tool for socially conscious education oriented toward pedagogical action.

At the same time, the results indicate that transmedia practices markedly enhance the self-motivation of university students in teacher training. The narrative and participatory approach stimulated interest in learning, fostering autonomy, emotional engagement, and self-efficacy. The creation of meaningful content and collaborative work reinforced commitment and a sense of accomplishment, leading students to perceive themselves as active agents in their learning and fostering intrinsic motivation.

Overall, it is confirmed that the transmedia methodology generates active and sustained learning environments, which are fundamental in the training of future education professionals.

Transmedia narrative formats also demonstrate a significant socio-emotional impact, fostering not only motivation and autonomy but also empathy and the development of collaborative skills among students. This socio-emotional dimension strengthens emotional engagement and a sense of belonging, key aspects for educational commitment and comprehensive training. In this way, transmedia practices contribute to preparing future teachers to face the challenges of contemporary digital society with a holistic and critical perspective.

Furthermore, the integration of transmedia narratives facilitates the cultivation of essential 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, digital literacy, and self-efficacy, which are pivotal for innovative education responsive to contemporary demands. However, challenges remain in teacher preparation, adaptation to varying levels of digital competence, and effective curricular integration.

These findings carry significant practical implications: the adoption of transmedia methodologies promotes a critical, engaged, and autonomous stance among students, fostering the development of future educators capable of designing meaningful pedagogical interventions with social awareness and sustained motivation. Consequently, this approach advances active learning that is closely aligned with 21st-century educational priorities and oriented toward nurturing reflective, socially responsible citizens.

This study, based on a qualitative inquiry with 72 students using focus groups, presents limitations that must be acknowledged. Given its interpretative and contextualised approach, the results are not generalisable to other populations or educational contexts. Additionally, the inherent subjectivity of qualitative analysis and the predominantly female composition of the group may have influenced the perceptions collected. Caution is recommended when generalizing the findings, and future research should be conducted with larger samples and mixed-methods approaches to further explore the impact of transmedia practices.

Going forward, it will be crucial to expand the sample and combine methodologies to validate and enrich the findings. The integration of transmedia practices in teacher education represents a promising strategy for fostering critical, motivating, and socially engaged education in real-world school contexts.

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