

## Active Reading and the Teaching of Writing

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### Abstract

*The article focuses on the connection between reading and writing. The use of reading questions being answered in writing can be a powerful tool to support reading understanding, and to make students more aware of the construction of expectations and the selection of reading purposes they do in their reading activity. The author shows some ways to acquire active reading strategies, such as the use of reading questions that respond to different fields of analysis, or the use of both open and close comprehension questions.*

### Introduction

In this essay we will show some ways to acquire active reading strategies, such as the use of reading questions that respond to different fields of analysis or the use of both open and close comprehension questions. With the activities we will propose, we want to make students more aware of the construction of expectations and the selection of reading purposes they do in their reading activity. We will propose to our students the following tasks<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) How do we construct our expectations?
- 2) Active reading vs. passive reading
- 3) Reading purposes
- 4) Open questions vs. close questions

They are both reading and writing tasks. In some phases, the students are required only to reflect upon their reading strategies and to highlight passages of the texts they read, in other cases they are required to write short passages that will be used to compose

their own texts. In this way, the reading activity will be connected to the writing one.

The aim of the summary of exercises we propose is to introduce students in the «writing from sources» field. It means that students will try to make the information their own and are encouraged to «discuss» with the texts they study and they use to write essays, rather than simply recording information. So, the activities proposed in this paper can be considered as an introductory unit of a writing course. As stated by a writing teacher,

*Reading is hard work.* Responding to what you are reading and participating in a mental dialogue between yourself and an author can be challenging but difficult. [...] Active reading seems more rewarding if you have a product to show for your labors. In active reading, this product is *notes*: the result of contact (even friction) between your mind and the author's.<sup>2</sup>

## **Which relationship is there between writing and reading?**

The relationship between writing and reading seems to be a very strong one: Mariolina Salvatori, who mentioned Andrea Lunsford's studies too, stated that «the teacher of writing must automatically and always be a teacher of reading as well».<sup>3</sup> Salvatori mentioned also Ann Berthoff's ideas: Berthoff suggested that when students learn to notice and confront uncertainties in the reading process, they learn to deal with this kind of problems also in the process of writing their own texts.<sup>4</sup>

In this paper we are going to focus on active reading and to propose some exercises for high school and college students, in particular for humanities students. Humanities students usually deal with two kinds of texts: literary works and critical essays. These two categories are not in contraposition: students are always encouraged to apply, in the analysis of literary works, the theories and the techniques they learnt reading critical essays.

Louise Rosenblatt, who first advanced the Reader-Response Theory in 1938, recognized the reader as an active agent, who adopts different approaches to different texts: when he reads a literary work, he is open to unexpected events; for example, every reader welcomes dramatic turns of events in the plot of a story (especially when he's reading a spy story!). On the contrary, when he reads a critical essay (and when he already knows the main subject of the essay), he formulates some hypothesis and tries to find in the essay proofs to confirm his hypothesis.<sup>5</sup>

The teacher of writing can explain these different approaches to his students, in order to make them conscious of mind attitude in reading new texts. Then, the kind of text (literary or critical) can orient the kind of notes to take: for example, if the student reads and summarizes a critical essay, his summary should sum up the thesis of the essay and its implications. We can test it with the following exercise.

### *Exercise 1: How do we construct our expectations?*

In the first activity we propose, every student gets a brief text. The text is not complete, because the teacher cut off the conclusive part. Students are required to read the text and to answer the following questions:

- 1) What will be, in your idea, the conclusion of the text?
- 2) Which elements of the text support your idea? Please underline the key points of the text you read.

The teacher reads the answers of the students, presents and discusses them in the classroom and then gives the students the conclusion of the text.

To complete this exercise, students are supposed to highlight key passages of the text. We can suggest to our students to keep a «reading diary»: it is a diary where they can write down key passages of the books they study, their own thoughts about the essays they read and so on. It's a writing activity and can be use to write texts of progressive difficulty, because the notes from the reading diary can be used to write summaries, textual analysis, commentaries and so on.

### **From passive reading to active reading**

In the first exercise we proposed above, our students tried to apply active reading strategies to a brief text and were required to select key passages. But a specific reading purpose can influence the selection of key passages; so, in order to highlight the difference between active and passive reading, we can propose another activity to our pupils. In the following exercise, we will focus on the way active reading improves text comprehension and helps to solve open-answer questions about the text.

### *Exercise 2: Active reading vs. passive reading*

Every student receives a text (it can be a literary excerpt or a brief critical essay) and some comprehension questions about it.

In the first phase of the exercise, every student reads the text once on his own, without underlining it, and immediately answers the comprehension questions.

In the second phase, everyone is encouraged to apply active reading strategies before answering the questions.

Then, students can report their findings to the class and discuss how active reading influenced their comprehension of the text; they can also write a paragraph in their reading diary about differences between active reading and passive reading.

### **The structure of the text**

We can now focus on text structure, because if the student can identify it before starting to read a chapter or an article, he can immediately decide the most effective active reading strategies for that kind of text. In fact, the ideas that compose a text are not all at the same level of relevance. In every text, especially in argumentative, we can identify a hierarchical idea

organization. Bonnie Meyer noticed that students who follow what is called «the organizational structure of text» can determine what is important to remember and achieve a better comprehension of the whole text<sup>6</sup>.

Meyer presents five fundamental kinds of relationship between ideas in a text:

- 1) Cause-effect relationship
- 2) Problem-solution or Question-answer relationship
- 3) Comparison relationship (affinities or differences between elements)
- 4) List (elements that share the same features)
- 5) Description (a description develops a topic).<sup>7</sup>

#### *Analysis of the table of contents of a book*

How can we proceed to analyze text structure?

First of all, we can examine the table of contents of a book. In every book we can recognize a hierarchical structure: chapters, sections, paragraphs, and so on. If we have an e-book, we can analyze its structure using a tool available in the well-known text editor software Microsoft Word: open the menu «View» and select the option «Outline». If the text has been well formatted, we can immediately view its structure.

After this preliminary analysis, the reader can find the fundamental idea of every single paragraph and then of every section and of every chapter. The main idea of every paragraph is useful to find the main idea of the section and then of the chapter and of the whole book: the ideas will form a concept tree.

Meyer proposes some hints to highlight the main concepts in texts:

- Brief summaries at the end of a section or a chapter;
- Words used to show the author's point of view (e.g. «unfortunately», «hopefully»...);
- Elements that anticipate an important idea of the text (e.g. «a key problem is represented by...»);
- Elements that anticipate some information of the text (e.g.: «in this chapter we are going to solve two problems, *a* and *b*...»)<sup>8</sup>.

The student can use these hints to learn to highlight important facts and evidence from the text.

#### **Reading purposes**

It is very important to explain to our students that highlighting – like reading and writing – is never a neutral activity, but depends upon our reading purposes. Many students consider underlining as a boring and time-wasting activity. Let's read the experience of a

teacher:

Before class began, I happened to walk around the room and I glanced at some of the books lying open on the desks. Not one book had a mark in it! Not one underlining! Every page was absolutely clean! These twenty-five students all owned the book, and they'd all read it. They all knew that there'd be an exam at the end of the week; and yet not one of them had had the sense to make a marginal note!<sup>9</sup>

In the following exercise, students are encouraged not only to underline, but before highlighting, to answer this question: why am I reading this text (article, chapter, book)? Which information am I looking for?

In order to show the relationship between reading purposes and the highlighting activity, we can propose to our students the following exercise.

#### *Exercise 3: Reading purposes*

Every student (or every little group of students) gets the same text; each student (or each group) receives a different reading purpose. For example, we can propose to read the same chapter of the famous Italian novel by Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873) *I promessi sposi* (*The betrothed*), that is usually read in every Italian high school and often also at the University.<sup>10</sup>

A group is required to highlight important elements to understand the development of the plot; another group tries to examine Manzoni's literary style; another group has to find interesting elements to understand the story of the XVII century. The teacher can also give to another group the task to highlight the text without a specific purpose.

At the end of the highlighting activity, different results from different reading purposes are compared in a discussion with the whole class.

#### *From book to hypertext*

For some years, students have been required to read not only books, but also hypertexts. An important difference between hypertext and book is represented by their structure: hypertexts have not a linear structure, but every user can create his own navigation path.

Diane Dee-Lucas showed the usefulness of overview structure on study strategies for instructional hypertext; for example, we can provide a navigation map of the hypertext to students that are going to examine it.<sup>11</sup> Dee-Lucas's study confirmed the importance of preliminary analysis to improve text (and hypertext)

comprehension.

If students learn to recognize text structure, they become more able to write texts that are well organized and with ideas hierarchically disposed in them.

### **The use of reading questions**

In the previous exercises we guided our student to recognize the structure of the texts they study and to orient their reading activity towards specific purposes. Now we are going to propose some reading questions in order to show that the same text can be analyzed from different points of view, and so can be a source for different writing tasks in different disciplines.

Some years ago, Filippo Boschi proposed a test, called «five ways of the mind» or 5WM (in Italian, «5VM», «5 vie della mente»). This test is made by five different groups of reading questions. Every group of questions is related to a particular field of analysis: linguistic, inferential, logical, moral evaluation, aesthetic.<sup>12</sup> For every field of analysis there is an exercise, composed by a brief text and some questions.

In this way, students are always supposed to analyze the whole text and not only single words, also when, as it happens in the test on linguistic competence, they are required to explain the meaning of a single word or a single phrase.

This choice was made to mark the distinction between the capability to understand words without context and the capability to reflect upon the role of words in a text.<sup>13</sup>

With a test like the 5WM, teachers can provide effective support in order to solve particular problems of their students (and to enhance students' attitude) in every field of analysis.<sup>14</sup> We can propose some hints to organize different activities for each field, as shown below. With the five fields of analysis described below, we want to show the importance of learning by doing. To solve the proposed exercises, students are required to collaborate with their colleagues and with the teacher; they will learn to use texts not only to take information, but also to acquire new skills, that they will use to analyze other texts in other situations.

#### *Language Comprehension Skills*

With the expression «Language Comprehension Skills» we mean the capability to understand the structure and meaning of sentences as well as the relationships among sentences. In this field, we can propose paraphrases exercises, in order to teach our students to restate, using their own words and their own sentence

structures, single expressions, phrases and entire paragraphs. In this way, students are encouraged to note the difference between the general meaning of a word (for example, the meaning they can find using a dictionary) and the specific meaning a word can assume in a particular context. We can also propose different possible paraphrases of the same text and ask our student to choose the best one.

#### *Inferential Skills*

By this expression, we mean the ability to connect pieces of information within and across sentences, using knowledge of discourse and logical reasoning, and to draw appropriate text-based inferences. We can propose different kinds of exercises: first, we can guide our students to identify which elements of the text can be connected. Then, we can guide them to draw inferences. We can distinguish two categories of inferences: text-based inferences that are based only on the text students are reading; and inferences that require students to use also their knowledge of the world (social rules, biological laws and so on...)<sup>15</sup>

#### *Logical abilities*

In this article, we focus our attention on reading texts. So we are not interested in logical abilities in general (for example, logical abilities in math), but in the role of logical abilities in text comprehension. So, we can propose to our students to analyze texts in order to detect significant quantification words and expressions (e. g. «everyone», «none», «some»...) and connectors (e. g. «and», «if...then»...). Then, students are guided to understand the role of quantification words and connectors in texts.

#### *Moral evaluation skills*

By this expression, we mean the capability to analyze literary texts with particular attention to characters' psychological attitudes and behaviours. Students are progressively guided to reconstruct characters' behaviours, to evaluate them and to find in the text significant reasons to confirm their theory.

#### *Aesthetic judgment skills*

In his famous novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde stated that «Books are well written, or badly written. That is all». In this field of text analysis we are obviously not going to make our students a group of aesthetes, but we want to make them more conscious about rhetorical elements and writing techniques. So,

we can draw our attention to rhetorical figures (figures of speech), and we can guide our students not only to detect figures, tropes, and wordplays but also (and above all) to understand the relationship between text content and the use of stylistic effects. We can also teach our students to «unveil the author's secrets» and to understand how an author can create a particular atmosphere and a particular effect on his readers using colour names or talking about sounds, smells (and so on) and using synesthesias. This kind of analysis offers also the opportunity to think about the difference between denotative and connotative meaning.

### **Developing adult reading strategies**

In *The psychology of written composition*, Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia highlighted many differences between adult (expert) and young (inexpert) readers. We mentioned above Bonnie Meyer's studies about text structure. Bereiter and Scardamalia mentioned Chuck Rieger's researches too. In his studies Rieger noticed that in a text some words can have a special effect on readers because, for example, they open a problem or make the reader curious about something. When a reader finds such a «key» word, his attention remains active until he, continuing to read, can find the answer he is looking for.<sup>16</sup> Further studies confirmed that an active reader raises problems and formulates thesis during his reading activity and, analyzing the text, he looks for answers to problems and for confirmations to his thesis.

Moreover, when an active reader finds an unknown word in the text (especially if it is a keyword of the text), he looks for an explanation of the word's meaning in the following parts of the text; or, when he notices that the author makes a general statement in the text, he waits for examples and further explanations in the following parts of the text.<sup>17</sup>

In their researches, Walter Kintsch and Teun Van Dijk affirmed the expert reader uses to construct a «macrostructure» of the text he is reading:

Whole lists of propositions may be given arbitrary names, and these names can likewise be linked by the symbol &. Each name can be expanded as a list of other names and eventually propositions. Thus, the macrostructure of a text can be recursively defined simply by combining propositions into ordered lists and then constructing lists of lists, until the desired level of organization has been achieved. [...] The macrostructure is something

like an outline, using propositions or groups of propositions with an arbitrary name as the elements of the outline.<sup>18</sup>

### *Reading problems and writing skills*

Other studies are important to understand what expert readers do when they find a difficult passage of the text. In particular, Bereiter and Bird found that both young and adult readers read again the passage when they found it hard to understand, but adult readers can highlight difficult points in a faster way than young ones.<sup>19</sup> Bereiter and Scardamalia affirmed that expert readers are more able than young ones to explain where and why they encountered difficulties in text comprehension and so they can faster find the solution to their comprehension problems.<sup>20</sup> In fact, every teacher can experience that if a student can say which is the hard-to-understand point of the text (e. g., a difficult keyword, or lack of examples to illustrate a difficult concept); the solution of the problem can be found in an easier way than when the student says that «in general» the text is hard to understand.

Lee Odell, in a research about academic writing, highlighted the relationship between reader's attitude towards comprehension problems and writing skills:

I would argue that the ability to read and write sensitively, thoughtfully, and independently presupposes the ability to formulate and solve problems. [...] Problems arise when an individual becomes aware of some dissonance and [...] one's ability to solve a problem depends in large part upon his ability to explore and revise his internal world, to examine data thoroughly, and to reformulate the questions he poses.<sup>21</sup>

### **The use of comprehension questions**

In order to help our students to isolate difficult points of the texts they study, we can propose comprehension questions that can be used in high school and in academic activity. Comprehension questions are useful not only to highlight significant information in a text, but can be used also to encourage students to draw inferences or to distinguish different author's intentions in the same text. The effect of every question depends not only on its content, but on its position as well (we can propose pre-reading questions or post-reading ones) and on their frequency.

### *Exercise 4. Open questions vs. Close questions*

We can make a fundamental distinction between open questions and close ones. With «close questions» we mean questions whose answer is already known to the teacher or to the interviewer; these questions are useful to monitor students' ability to extract significant information from the text. Instead, with «open questions» we can monitor the ability to rise new problems, to propose original opinions and to analyze a text looking for proofs to support a thesis.

In order to highlight that knowledge can be reached together thanks to collaborative work in the class, every student gets a text and proposes an open question. Every answer must be supported by a selection of significant passages from the text.

For example, we can propose to read the famous episode of Paolo and Francesca in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy (Inferno, V, that means «fifth section of the Hell»)*.<sup>22</sup>

Some examples of close question are:

- Who is Francesca?
- How is lust punished in Dante's opinion?

Instead, some examples of open questions are:

- Which are the most interesting elements of the text to describe Dante's attitude towards Paolo and Francesca's story?
- Why does Dante faint so often in the first sections of the Hell?<sup>23</sup>

#### *Questions' position*

We stated above the effect of every comprehension question depends also on its position. In fact, if we put comprehension questions before the text we assign to our students, we encourage them to read in an intentional way: they will read the text looking for answers to the questions we proposed. Instead, if we put comprehension questions at the end of the text, students are required to answer basing on the incidental learning they achieved reading the text in an unintentional way.

These considerations can make us think that putting comprehension questions before the text is better because it gives an orientation in reading. It is true, but it can increase the risk that students give their attention only to those pieces of information that are useful to answer the comprehension questions we proposed and so they are not open to find new interesting elements in the text.

There is a comprehension question that every student is encouraged to answer before reading a text for study purposes (school or college): why am I reading this

text? What am I supposed to learn from this text?

The teacher can help students to answer these questions making clear the reasons that guided him to choose those texts, and not others, for school or college exam program.

#### **From reading to writing**

We showed above that students, using active reading strategies, learn to select significant parts of the texts they study. In order to use the selected information to write new texts, students are required to process this knowledge.

Students can start this activity writing a summary. In this way, they learn to create relationships between the relevant text passages they selected. On this subject, Domenico Parisi noticed that, writing a summary, students understand the different pieces of information they extracted are not all on the same level of importance, but can be hierarchically ordered.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Information relevance*

What do we mean by information «importance» or «relevance»?

Parisi proposed two main criterias to evaluate information importance: first, he proposed to consider the way a new knowledge is connected to the others: information relevance depends on the problems that this information solves<sup>25</sup>; then, information relevance is connected to the communicative intentions of the author: when the reader understands these intentions (and when he can make a distinction between primary and secondary intentions), he becomes more able to understand which are the most important parts of the text.

Students can use some reading questions to evaluate information relevance: why does the author give this information? How is this information connected to the others in the same text? Which inferences can be drawn between these information?

These criteria focus on the author of the text: the author chooses the problems to solve in the text; the author chooses his communicative intentions.

But if we focus on the reader, we can notice that information relevance is strongly connected to reading purposes. For example, if some students read the same novel, but one of them is interested in the plot of the novel, another is interested in the language of the author, and another focuses on the social context of the book, they will select different parts of the same text (cfr. Exercise 3, «Reading purposes», proposed

above). Depending on his reading purposes, a reader can consider important some parts of the text that the author put there by chance.

In order to understand this process, we can consider a passage from the *Annals* (Latin original title «*Annales*»), a history book by the Latin author Tacitus (56–117).

In this work, Tacitus covers the history of the four Roman Emperors after Caesar Augustus. In the XV book, that covers the history of Nero – the emperor who «fiddled while Rome burned» and an early persecutor of Christians – Tacitus wrote:

Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. *Christus*, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.<sup>26</sup>

In this passage, Tacitus was not focusing on the history of Christ, but we can collect important information about early Christians and about the historical Jesus. In fact, this passage of Tacitus is one of the most ancient non-Christian and non-Jewish sources about the historical Jesus. Could Tacitus imagine it?

Students can use the selected passages to develop a network of knowledge. At high school, it can involve an entire book; at college, it can involve an entire exam program that is often composed by several books. We can highlight the importance of finding relationships between different books that compose an exam program at college. In many cases, in fact, students do not understand this relationship and consider every book of the same program as a separate universe.

We highlighted above the importance of a personal elaboration phase between reading (when students acquire information) and writing (when they create a new text). A very useful instrument to help students to elaborate knowledge is represented by the summary. Writing a summary, students are required not only to collect information, but also to process knowledge:

If reading, then, is a process of responding to cues in the text and in the reader's context to

build a complex, multi-faceted representation of meaning, it should be no surprise that different readers might construct radically different representations of the same text and might use very different strategies to do so.<sup>27</sup>

### **Text, context, and genre**

College students are usually required to read texts that belong to a specific genre. During college years, students learn to understand and to use the specific language of their field of specialization and also to use shared convention not only of language itself but also the more complex expectations of <genre> (context, type of communication, and so on). For example, a psychology essay has a specific structure that students can use both in the reading phase and in the writing process.

#### *Sample exercise for college students*

Pietro Boscolo proposed an analysis exercise for psychology students, based on the conventions of the American Psychological Association (APA) style rules and guidelines. We can distinguish four main parts in an essay:

1. An introduction/ abstract: it gives a general idea of the topic, presents significant studies, the controversy and the author's hypothesis.
2. Development of the argument: accurate description of the research, of its methods, participants, procedures.
3. Data analysis (quantity and quality).
4. Final discussion and conclusions.<sup>28</sup>

When students become able to recognize essay structure, they can use it as an analysis schema to organize the significant parts of the text they selected.

This schema can be used also to solve comprehension problems and in particular it can be used to understand in which parts of the main structure of the essay the reader encounters problems.

#### *Main comprehension problems in scientific texts*

Lucia Lumbelli proposed some criteria to identify comprehension problems in scientific texts.<sup>29</sup> In particular, she noticed that problems are usually represented by:

- Difficult examples: it happens when the example is too difficult to understand and so it does not help readers to understand the text, but creates further problems.

- Use of difficult-to-understand words: the author must choose the proper words and linguistic register for his audience. Why use a difficult or rare word if there is a simpler one to express the same concept?

Syntax problems: in particular, Lumbelli analyzed the proper and improper use of common conjunctions like «but» or «then».

Then, students can use the schema we proposed above also to produce new essays and to learn to take part in a scientific community.

## Conclusion

With all the activities we proposed above, we want students to think about the structure of the text and the selection of key passages from the texts they study, highlighting that selection is never a neutral activity.

At last, students are encouraged to develop their critical spirit and to apply it not only to the texts they read and study, but also to the texts they will write in their school and academic career.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The exercises employed in this article are part of a project developed in the author's PhD thesis (M. Lizza, *La didattica della scrittura nell'Università*, Università di Pisa, 2006) and presented in Italy at the University of Pisa in the academic year 2006–2007. It has been not possible yet to provide real examples, because the applications of this project are still in progress.
- <sup>2</sup> B. Spatt, *Writing from sources*, Boston, Bedford/St.Martin's, 2003 (sixth edition), pag. 3.
- <sup>3</sup> M. Salvatori, *Reading and Writing a Text: correlations between Reading and Writing Patterns*, «College English», 45, 7, pp. 657–666, 1983, p. 659.
- <sup>4</sup> Cfr. Ivi, p. 662.
- <sup>5</sup> Cfr. L. Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, (1938) New York, Modern Language Association, 1995; *Toward a cultural approach to literature*, «College English», 7, 459–466, 1946. *Towards a transactional theory of reading*, «Journal of Reading Behavior», 1(1), 31–51, 1969. *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*, (1978), Carbondale, IL, Southern Illinois Press.
- <sup>6</sup> Cfr. B. J. F. Meyer, *The organization of prose and its effects on memory*, Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1975.
- <sup>7</sup> Cfr. Ivi.
- <sup>8</sup> Cfr. Ivi.
- <sup>9</sup> Quoted in B. Spatt, *Writing from sources*, cit., pag. 3.
- <sup>10</sup> Set in Lombardy in the years 1628–30, *The Betrothed* tells the story of two young lovers, Renzo and Lucia, in a time of war, famine, and plague. The novel, which is considered the first modern Italian novel, displays great richness of characterization and a profound insight into the workings of history and the politics of the time.

- <sup>11</sup> Cfr. D. Dee-Lucas, *Effects of Overview Structure on Study Strategies and Text Representations for Instructional Hypertext*, in J. J. Levonen, J.-F. Rouet, A. Dillon, R. J. Sprio, (eds.), *Hypertext and Cognition*, New York, Erlbaum, 1996, pp. 73–107.
- <sup>12</sup> Cfr. F. Boschi, *La valutazione degli allievi: aspetti pratici*, «Psicologia e scuola», XVI, n. 80, june – july 1996, p. 248.
- <sup>13</sup> Cfr. Ivi, p. 244.
- <sup>14</sup> Cfr. F. Boschi, A. Di Fabio, *Apprendimento e nuove teorie della mente*, «Continuità e scuola», XI, n. 5, 1999, p. 85.
- <sup>15</sup> Cfr. M. C. Levorato, *Racconti, storie, narrazioni. I processi di comprensione dei testi*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1988.
- <sup>16</sup> Cfr. C. Rieger, *Conceptual memory and inference*, in *Conceptual Information Processing*, Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1975 e cfr. C. Bereiter, M. Scardamalia, *The psychology of written composition*, Hillsdale, N.J., L.E.A., 1987.
- <sup>17</sup> Cfr. C. Bereiter e M. Scardamalia, *Ivi*.
- <sup>18</sup> W. Kintsch. *The Representation of Meaning in Memory*, Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1974, pp. 16–21. Cfr. W. Kintsch, T. Van Dijk, *Toward a model of text comprehension and production*, «Psychological Review», 85 (5), pp. 363–394 e T. Van Dijk, W. Kintsch, *Strategies of discourse comprehension*, New York, Academic Press, 1983. Cfr. also C. Bereiter e M. Scardamalia (*Ivi*).
- <sup>19</sup> Cfr. C. Bereiter, M. Bird, *Use of thinking aloud in identification and teaching of reading comprehension strategies*, «Cognition and Instruction», 2(2), pp. 131–156, 1985.
- <sup>20</sup> C. Bereiter e M. Scardamalia, *The psychology of written composition*, cit..
- <sup>21</sup> L. Odell, *Piaget, problem solving and Freshman Composition*, «College Composition and Communication», 24, 3, 1973, pp. 283–290.
- <sup>22</sup> In this section, Dante talks about the punishment of lust; in particular he meets the soul of Francesca da Rimini, a young woman who committed adultery with her husband's brother, Paolo, and died a violent death at the hands of her husband. These souls are blown by a violent storm, that symbolizes the power of lust.
- <sup>23</sup> At the end of the third section of the *Hell*, Dante, terrified by some chaotic rumblings, faints away and then, moved by pity and sadness, he faints again at the end of the meeting with Paolo and Francesca.
- <sup>24</sup> Cfr. D. Parisi, (ed.), *Per una educazione linguistica razionale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1979.
- <sup>25</sup> Cfr. *Ivi*, p. 151.
- <sup>26</sup> Tacitus, *Annales*, XV, 44.
- <sup>27</sup> C. Haas, L. Flower, *Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning*, «College Composition and Communication», 39, 2, pp. 167–183, 1988, p. 169. Cfr. also A. R. Petrosky, *From Story to Essay: Reading and Writing*, «College Composition and Communication», 33, 1, pp. 19–36, 1982.
- <sup>28</sup> P. Boscolo, *Scrivere testi*, in C. Pontecorvo, (ed.), *Manuale di psicologia dell'educazione*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999, p. 214.
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