

Abstracts

Verbal text and iconic text. Towards a metacomprehension

Emma Nardi

Illiteracy is a concrete presence in our society and a real threat for democracy. Educational research is consequently bound to study appropriate means of contrast, in order to allow a deep acquisition of the processes for verbal text decoding. A research project, carried out at Roma Tre University and addressed to first-year university students, considers image reading in a way that is parallel to verbal text reading, with the purpose of building a common metacomprehension framework. A quasi-experimental research was carried out, following the causal-comparative method (pre-test/post-test, experimental and comparison group), in order to verify the hypothesis that the introduction of an image comprehension method improves students' reading ability. The article presents the theoretical background for the experiment, and details instruments and methods used, offering a proposal to envisage a common assessment and teaching framework in understanding texts and images.

Keywords

Reading comprehension, museum education, illiteracy, higher education, images

Images as tools for reading comprehension development: the results of an experiment

Gabriella Agrusti

It is widely recognized that prior knowledge plays a fundamental role in reading comprehension and in meaning construction. Generally, readers who are

able to identify the typical structure of a text in a genre or to locate its content within the appropriate domain are said to better recall the ideas conveyed by the text. The text itself is a *textus*, a complex texture that includes rhetorical patterns on different directories (spatial, temporal, figurative), a network structure that offers several ways of integrating information based on relationships among its components. Poor readers are unlikely to make inferences to link these pieces of information into a coherent representation.

Would the introduction of an image comprehension strategy improve students' reading comprehension of verbal texts? In this article the results of a research project carried out in Italy on adult readers, with particular reference to inferential processes in narrative anachronies, will be presented.

Keywords

Reading comprehension, images, undergraduate students, assessment, narrative texts

From the label to the narrative text: written texts at the exhibitions, towards new paradigms in museums

Martine Dubreuil

From 19th century archival tags, exhibition texts in museums have become labels of various shapes and forms reflecting curators' imperious desire to add information to the displayed object. The information collected for this study stems from reading over 100 publications, dating from 1916 to 2009, written for the most part in French and in English and published in France, England, the United States, Australia and Canada.

The present article examines the changes of paradigms at work within the institution visible through the revue of two literatures chronologically presented. The literature review on museum labels shows the changes in the perception of the text itself and its significance for the institution. The literature review on the reception by the public of the labels illustrates the evolution concerning visitor behaviors and that of the different departments within the museum.

When both literature reviews are confronted, synergies appear that point towards actual museum preoccupation. The comparison of both reviews raises important questions concerning the power of the word, the need to add thoughts of the moment to 'museumed' objects, the hierarchy initiated by the sharing of the exhibition space, the place and needs of visitors within the institution.

Keywords

Labels, visitors, behavior, change, museums

Empowering metacognition through group activities

Cinzia Angelini

The present article focuses on two main issues, metacognition and group work, and on the relationship between them in adult learning and presents the results of a research activity conducted with 14 adult students enrolled in the Faculty of Education at Roma Tre University. It represents the second phase of a wider research that hypothesized a positive relation between metacognition (or second-level skills) and reading comprehension. This hypothesis was tested out in two subsequent steps, the first one devoted to solving individual reading comprehension exercises, the second one to thinking-aloud interviews (Angelini, 2010). The results showed that the best readers were aware of their meta-cognitive knowledge and able to manage their metacognitive control processes, some of which seem to be totally absent in the weak readers.

Afterwards, the same respondents were involved in a further activity aiming at verifying if cooperative learning could have an empowering effect especially on the weak readers. The results of this second phase are discussed in relation with those obtained in the previous phase.

Keywords

Adult education, reading comprehension, metacognition, cooperative learning, thinking aloud

Performance in Timss mathematics test: the influence of self-concept and socio-economic background

Elisa Caponera, Paolo M. Russo

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the influence of students' attitudes towards mathematics, mathematics self-concept and socio-economic status on their performance in Timss mathematics test. It also examined the relevance of the different schools' characteristics for the prediction of students' performance. We analyzed data related to 3997 Italian students of 170 schools, a representative sample of students in eight grade school, that participated to the Timss 2007. A multilevel analysis was conducted to distinguish how much of the variability of performance was due to student characteristics and/or to characteristics of schools and of the territorial context in which schools are located. The results showed that self-concept in mathematics helps to explain the differences in performance in mathematics. Further, the socio-economic status, at school level, contributed to the prediction of the performance in mathematics. Furthermore, in the Italian

context, significant differences in performance depending on geographic area were evidenced.

Keywords

Mathematics achievement, mathematics self-concept, socio-economic status, multilevel regression analysis, Timss