Building Dialogue, Re-discovering writing through *team blogging*

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Building Dialogue, Rediscovering writing (CODIRS in Italian)

Is a network project on dialogue and digital writing
Launched by MIUR with Tony Blair Faith Foundation

The CODIRS project is implemented by a national school network, RETE DIALOGUES, within the framework of a MOU between MIUR and Tony Blair Faith Foundation aimed at developing a global programme on intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

In 2015 1245 students aged 12-17, from 47 schools, in 7 Italian regions participated in teamblogging.

This presentation concerns a case study focusing on a lower secondary school, 'IC Fermi di Romano di Lombardia (BG) where all the 11 classes (230 alunni) participated.

IC Fermi di Romano is a multicultural school (30% non Italian students) situated in Lombardy. It was selected for this study for its high participation rate and its characteristics which make it an interesting context where to study intercultural and multimedia dialogue.
This presentation is about…

- The Italian school network: Rete Dialogues
- The global project: Face to Faith
- The team blogging: how does it work?
- Participants:
  - schools, students, teachers
- Research tools:
  - questionnaires, indexes
- Overview of the data collected
- Students and writing:
  - Entry questionnaire
- Students’ blogs:
  - first analysis on clarity and communication effectiveness
- Students and writing:
  - Exit questionnaires, has something changed?
- Hints for reflection
The school network:

The network includes 30 Italian first and second cycle schools situated in 7 regions. Rete Dialogues is supported by MIUR and coordinated by IC Settembrini. It was created in 2012 with the aim of:

• Promoting, implementing and documenting research, training and classroom activities concerning comparison across cultures and intercultural and interreligious dialogue

• Creating an action research group where the activities undertaken in the domain of dialogue education can be critically analysed and further proposals can be developed.

• Implementing in Italy the Tony Blair Faith Foundation’s Face to Faith programme on intercultural and interreligious dialogue, following the MIUR/ TBFF (21.11.14).

www.retedialogues.it
Face to Faith works across the world delivering a pioneering education programme to help prevent religious conflict and extremism. Students are helped to embrace an open-minded approach to others, to diversity and to difference that can lead to tolerant stable societies.

*Classroom resources, *community engagement events
*Facilitated videoconferences
*Online community with *blogs e *team blogging
for 12-17 years old students in more than 25 countries
Team Blogging: how does it work?

In a period agreed (3-4 wks) 5 or 6 **teams**
Each composed of 3 classes
In different regions
**Blog together**
On a facilitated and monitored platform.

The focus is on **3 topics** proposed by the facilitators.
Each class leads a topic on a rota basis.

**Topics’ objectives:**
Writing about themselves to peers living in other regions in order to:
- improve their self awareness
- learn how to better understand the other and diversity
In the 2015 teamblogging students started their reflections after watching the docu-film “Aspettando il maestro” by Rachid Benhadj, produced by IC Monte San Savino, with the Tuscan Rete Dialogues’ schools, and Contini srl.

www.waiting4maestro.org
### Italian Team Blogging participants

*Teachers took part in a 46 hours professional development course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Lower secondary</th>
<th>Upper secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools</strong></td>
<td>35 (IC)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classes</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1245</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tutor teachers</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating teachers</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observer teachers</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total teachers</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>158*</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Lombardia: 7
Veneto: 6
Piemonte: 3
Toscana: 5
Lazio: 4
Puglia: 13
Sicilia: 9
The research tools

**Baseline questionnaire**

**STRUCTURE**

1. Do you like writing at school? Why?
   (open ended question)
2. Analysis of 4 kind of school writing:
   A. PERSONAL
   A. CURRENT AFFAIR TOPICS
   A. CULTURAL TOPICS
   A. FANTASY
   How much do you like it?
   How do you find it useful to learn how to write?
   How does it allow you to express yourself?
   How much do you feel confident to write about it?
   (closed ended question)
3. Kinds of digital writings used outside the school
   (closed ended question)
4. Differences between academic writing and digital writing
   (open ended question)

**Follow-up questionnaire**

**STRUCTURE**

1. Differences between academic writing and the blog experience
   (open ended question)

   1. After having participating in the blog:
      How much did you like it?
      How did you find it useful to learn how to write?
      How did allow you to express yourself?
      How much did you feel confident to write about it?
      (closed ended question)
2. What would you change in the blog?
   (open ended question)

**Blogs’ analysis indexes**

**Clarity:**

- Text organization: cohesion, consistency, use of punctuation
- Sense of the reader (making themselves understood)

*Score: 1 to 5*

**Communication effectiveness:**

- Sense of the interlocutor: asking questions, expecting opinions or acknowledgment
- Expressivity (tone, freshness)

*Score: 1 to 5*
## Data overview spring 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS (Rete Dialogues)</th>
<th>STUDENTS (IC Fermi Romano)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Baseline Questionnaire</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>930 (n.)</td>
<td>221 (n.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.93 (% resp.)</td>
<td>93.6 (% resp.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Follow-up Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Follow-up Questionnaire</strong></td>
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<td>566 (n.)</td>
<td>156 (n.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.99% (% resp.)</td>
<td>66.1% (% resp.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL TOPICS</strong></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL TOPICS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1399</td>
<td>230</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POSTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL POSTS</strong></td>
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<td>13445</td>
<td>2309</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHERS (Nazionale)</th>
<th>TEACHERS (IC Fermi Romano)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Baseline Questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121 (n.)</td>
<td>16 (n.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>75.63 (% resp.)</td>
<td>100 (% resp.)</td>
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<td><strong>Follow-up Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Follow-up Questionnaire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 (n.)</td>
<td>16 (n.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>56.88 (% resp.)</td>
<td>100 (% resp)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POSTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL POSTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>523</td>
<td>46</td>
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**Do you like writing at school? Why?**
*(baseline questionnaire, open ended question)*

**IC FERMI ROMANO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'm afraid to make mistakes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cannot express my feelings and emotions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel oppressed by the tasks assigned by my teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I get bored</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I get tired</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not always I have the time I would like</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on the topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only some kinds of writing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only digital writing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to listen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBASTANZA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a pleasure. I enjoy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring, discovering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with my schoolmates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing myself, fantasizing, saying my opinions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RETE DIALOGUES**

- 72% **YES**
- 20% **NO**
- 8% **SOMETHAT**

Valid cases n. 929

**IC FERMI ROMANO**

- 62% **YES**
- 17% **NO**
- 21% **SOMETHAT**

Valid cases n. 219
Do you like writing at school? Why? (2)

Some examples
(baseline questionnaire, open ended question)

Yes I like writing at school, because it allows me to travel with my imagination and to express myself in a different way rather than talking. I like to write stories of all kinds. The important thing is that I can write. (Riccardo, LS 1, grade 6)

Yes, I like writing because I want the others to understand my way of being through my school texts. Let's say that I prefer to write freely at home with no one correcting me and commenting if I have a beautiful writing or make spelling mistake, they're. I prefer to write or generate fantasy adventures because I already know now what to write before starting (Gloria, LS 1, grade 6)

Yes, I like writing at school because I can immerse myself in the characters I describe and indirectly I can express my emotions, feelings, dreams, experiences I have had and that maybe I could not put in act ... (Marilisa, LS2 grade 7)

Mainly I like to write at school because, for me, writing is a way to test our skills in any field. In some areas, however, the writing is boring, it depends on the contexts. (Irene, LS 1, grade 6)

I am not crazy for writing at school because I am not good at expressing my feelings and my emotions. (Dejanira, LS 2 grade 7)

Not too much, because I am not very fast and I am always imposed what I have to write, but if I like the subject, I become very keen on writing. (Nicolo Megal, LS grade 8)

No, because I like writing with my pen, I find it boring writing with a pc (Elisa, LS 2, grade 7)

No. Because you have a track and you have to follow it and expand the content. The style you have to write is imposed and you can not express yourself in your own words and personal ways, but only sticking to a formal style (Flavio, LS 3, grade 8).
What kind of digital writing are you using outside school?

IC Romano di Lombardia and Rete Dialogues (Italy)
Baseline Questionnaire, open ended question

Never – Rarely – Quite often - Often

| Kinds of digital writing used (nazionale) | Social network | 61.50% |
| Kinds of digital writing used (IC Fermi Romano) | Social network | 68.60% |
| Chat | 85.80% | Chat | 86.80% |
| Texts | 60.00% | Texts | 67.30% |
| Blog | 19.30% | Blog | 16.80% |

Kinds of digital writing used (nazionale)
Sum of responses “often”+ “quite often”

Kinds of digital writing used (IC Fermi Romano)
Sum of responses “often”+”quite often”

[Graph showing the percentage of responses for each type of digital writing.]

Rete Dialogues (Italy)  Romano di Lombardia
Perceptions of *Interest, utility, self-realization, self-efficacy* (Eccles & Wigfield) of writing. A comparison between four kinds of school writing

Average scores. *Students of IC Fermi Romano* (left) and *total students CODIRS* (right)

*Baseline Questionnaire, open ended question*

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**Do you like it?**

**Do you find it useful?**

**Does it allow you to express yourself?**

**Do you feel you’re good at it?**
Students’ appreciation of the 4 kind of topics: personal topics, current affairs topics, cultural topics, fantasy topics (Punteggi medi di interest, utility, realization, selfefficacy) Baseline questionnaire, closed ended question
The blogs: analysis of 138 topics written by Is 2° and 3° year (grade 7 and 8), IC Fermi, Romano Lomb.

LENGTH OF THE TOPIC (STARTING MESSAGE)
(N OF TOPICS PER RANGE OF CONTENT UNITS)
The blogs: analysis of 138 topics written by Is 2° and 3° year (grade 7 and 8), IC Fermi, Romano

**CLARITY**

**TEXT ORGANISATION**
- Cohesion, Consistency, Punctuation (1-5)
  - Bar chart showing distribution of scores:
    - Score 1: 2
    - Score 2: 22
    - Score 3: 56
    - Score 4: 37
    - Score 5: 21

**COMMUNICATION**

**SENSE OF THE READER**
- Making themselves understood (1-5)
  - Bar chart showing distribution of scores:
    - Score 1: 4
    - Score 2: 22
    - Score 3: 51
    - Score 4: 46
    - Score 5: 15

**EFFECTIVENESS**

**SENSE OF THE INTERLOCUTOR**
- Asking questions, asking opinions, expecting answers (1-5)
  - Bar chart showing distribution of scores:
    - Score 1: 69
    - Score 2: 24
    - Score 3: 28
    - Score 4: 7
    - Score 5: 10

**ESPRESSIVITY**
- Tone, freshness (1-5)
  - Bar chart showing distribution of scores:
    - Score 1: 21
    - Score 2: 27
    - Score 3: 44
    - Score 4: 27
    - Score 5: 19
The blogs: analysis by gender, native language, grade the blogs: analysis of 138 topics written by Is 2° and 3° year (grade 7 and 8), IC Fermi, Romano Lomb.
the blogs: analysis of the average scores 136 topics written by IS 2° and 3° year (grade 7 and 8), IC Fermi, Romano Lomb. By final assessment in Italian (from 6 to 9)
What differences do you see/did you notice between digital and academic writing?

Analysis of responses provided **before** the team blogging and **after** the team blogging. Baseline questionnaire IC Fermi Romano (n. 212) and follow-up questionnaire (n.161), Open ended question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before team blogging</th>
<th>After team blogging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the blog you discuss with your peers and you feel more deeply understood</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the blog I felt at ease because time was more flexible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the blog I could express myself better</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the blog you’re not assessed, in the academic writing you feel better looked after</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the digital writing I'm not assessed and I feel freer, in the academic writing I write in order to be assessed</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With digital writing I better communicate, I explore, I make new friends</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital writing has automatisms which create constraints</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital writing is faster, modern, automatic (in a positive sense)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital writing doesn't follow any rule, academic writing is more formal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's the same, I don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What differences have you noticed between the school and the blog writing?
IC Fermi Romano di Lombardia, some examples

Follow-up questionnaire, open-ended question

When I write at school I want to tell about my feelings and the emotions I feel in certain situations. By doing this I express myself, but my essays are only read by my teachers - unless the teacher decides to read them in front of the class. Yet I would like to make myself known by many people. This opportunity has been offered by the blog. I find it so nice not to have pressures of assessment, so I can really write what I want (Vanessa, LS 1, grade 6)

Writing at school means that sometimes what we write is not read by anyone, while in the blog I have the chance to be read by all of Italy. The second difference was that in the blog I have no fear of judgment, because I know that the other guys will not give me a mark. (Greta, LS 2, grade 7)

When I write at school I always feel constrained, although I would like to express myself much more in the essays we do at school. I have to respect the strict rules imposed by the teacher and stick to the time allowed and the subject to be developed. With the blog I feel free to write when I want, how I want (although within the rules given) and developing the topic that I like best: myself. I feel I can talk about myself without limits: stories about what I love to do in my life, what I do in my spare time, my greatest interest. (Michela, LS 2, Grade 7)

The main difference is that when you write the blog, there is someone on the other end who reads with their heart. I also felt free and I have met people who have the same problems as I have. (Maddalena, LS 2, grade 7)

In school you have to write for the lesson, and I do not like it, instead on the blog you must write with the computer to people who also write blogs and this is something that I really like a lot (Make Isuf, LS 1, gr 6)

Writing at school is more complicated because you can make many grammatical mistakes that then the teacher must correct. While in digital writing there is an automatic spellchecker that corrects you and no one blames you. (Matthew, LS 2, gr 7 cl)

Writing school is more tiring than digital, it's nice to move your fingers on the keys. As for the content, writing on the blog comes easier than writing on the paper, because I feel more free. (Luke LS 2, grade 7)

In writing at school you can make spelling mistakes, you can make erasures and so you may have difficulty in some kind of writing. While writing on the blog this does not happen, or perhaps at all. Also thanks to the blog we have been able to communicate easily with peers who live elsewhere in Italy (Jacopo, LS 3, grade 8)
The team blogging experience perceptions of interest, utility, realization and self-efficacy

IC Fermi Romano di Lombardia

Follow up Questionnaire (closed ended question)

**DID YOU LIKE IT?**
- A lot: 29%
- Quite: 63%
- Not too much: 6%
- Not at all: 2%

**DID IT ALLOW YOU TO EXPRESS YOURSELF?**
- A lot: 30%
- Quite: 61%
- Not too much: 6%
- Not at all: 3%

**DID YOU FIND IT USEFUL?**
- A lot: 42%
- Quite: 42%
- Not too much: 4%
- Not at all: 9%

**DID YOU FEEL CONFIDENT TO USE IT?**
- A lot: 56%
- Quite: 37%
- Not too much: 5%
- Not at all: 2%
The team blogging experience in each of the 11 classes of IC Fermi Romano: interest, realization, utility, self-efficacy

Follow up questionnaire (closed ended question) N. 159
What would you change in the Team Blogging?
IC Fermi Romano di Lombardia
Follow up questionnaire (open ended question) n. 155
(multiple answers are considered)

- Nothing, I like it as it is: 23 responses
- Expanding time of blogging experience: 72 responses
- Further develop the links we have created with our peers in other regions: 5 responses
- Posting photos and videos: 5 responses
- More open questions, targeting youngsters: music, sport, current affair topics: 27 responses
- More and faster comments to our blogs: 18 responses
- A chat to really write what we want: 10 responses
- Dialoguing with other countries: 12 responses
- Getting rid of useless comments: 5 responses
The MIUR-TBFF CODIRS project creates an interesting scenario where to explore the challenges that education to dialogue faces when written dialogues are at stake. Students’ written voices make clear that:

• if we want to develop dialogue skills we cannot disregard the technicalities and the atmospheres of school writing and the new literacies that underpin digital writing.

• dialogue and written dialogue may offer powerful contributions to the curricular teaching of writing.
Some thoughts (1)

What kind of assessments for writing? And when?
Many students report discomfort about their writing at school "for being assessed". Students show how the perspective of assessment impose limitations upon their expression. Writing at school "does not leave me free and I am always assessed" says Martina. Listening to the students, the writing seems to become somewhat a victim of its own assessments. At the same time, however, some students also express a desire to have support, supervision, they feel reassured by the judgment of teachers, they are confident that they can learn more and their teachers can help a lot..

Some important questions about how to assess writing arise from this data. They must be tackled if we want to accommodate the digital writing and the written dialogue in classroom practice.
Some thoughts (2)

"And you …? Write me, I am prepared to read?"
Writing as a tool for dialogue

In the school students’ use of writing does not target a real audience, the main recipient is the teacher. The team blogging experience and the MIUR TBFF CODIRS research has highlighted a wide range of potential intervention on interactive writing. School days frequently lack "horizontal" opportunities, where children can read, write together, so - as many kids observe - writing suffers from a dangerous loss of sense. You write and write but there is no one "reading with their heart," says Maddalena (grade 7). Students appear thirsty for comments and peer acknowledgement. If there is one negative aspect in the blog experience, this is the fear of not receiving feedback, not to be seen and read - "I do not want to end up on the second page so that no one sees me" someone complains.
And students themselves become sophisticated assessors of the comments they receive., as becomes clear from the reading of their posts. However, as shown by the topics’ analysis, they do not seem to have a clear idea of how to talk to their interlocutors. This data shows that there is indeed a long way ahead if we really want to teach dialogue and how to use writing for dialogue. Many students are full of hope in being taught by their teachers, but for the time being they do not seem familiar with the question “and you? Write me, I am prepared to read you”
Some thoughts (3)

Themes and topics. What to write?
The topics on which they are invited to write appear to have a significant impact on students’ pleasure of writing: this is not an original consideration, but it is never enough taken into consideration. Several students clearly describe their anguish against unpopular topics, and effectively explain how being confronted with an exciting topic can turn their involvement into new skills. The issue of the popular/unpopular or pleasant/unpleasant topics of writing emerges from many sources: from the answers to the question "do you like writing at school?", from the analysis of the topics proposed, from the comparison blog / academic writing. One wonders whether teachers adopt conscious strategies to address students’ variability of interests, making appropriate strategical decisions and letting their actions be fairly inspired by students preferences.
Some thoughts (4)

The key and pen: the "new world" and the "old"

The keyboard seems to embody the enthusiasm for the new, for the speed, for a new beauty in everyday practice. "It is nice to move your fingers on the keys" Luca writes. To the contrary, the traditional instruments of writing – the pen, the page, the correction fluid and the ink, as metaphorically someone even mentions – become instead the emblems of a wasted effort, something which makes your hand stiff and gets you tired and bored. For most of the guys - though not for all - the "handmade" writing is far from having the charm of homemade pasta, rather it smacks of old, musty. It is almost perceived as an obstacle to the progress towards further skills.

Meanwhile digital writing tools are entrusted with "magic" powers to decide and do for themselves things which earlier everyone had to commit themselves to do (eg the magic of the spellchecker!). However, despite their enthusiasm, the students do not seem fully aware of these processes and their real implications. There is a clear need to investigate and reflect on the emerging new-old dichotomy, in order to tackle it in teaching with appropriate proposals.
Some thoughts (5)

Between the longing for an harbour, and the aspiration for "freedom": new literacies and new differences

Students’ words portray the worlds of writing – the academic and the digital - as different and sometimes thick of real oppositions. Different are the worlds, but also very different are the ways in which students position themselves in these worlds. The students participating in the MIUR-TBFF CODIRS research seem to be particularly determined in the descriptions of their approaches. It seems that the digital scenario makes sharper the shades of some differences. There are those who "love" the keyboard - its modernity, its speed, its - and those who are not willing to bow at it and claim the right to use their pen, without being considered obsolete. There are those who feel overwhelmed by the assessment of teachers and those who feel reassured, because they can get support, advice, correction.

The list of dichotomies could be long and allow for interesting typologies. One wonders to what extent teachers can work with constructive awareness with the "new" technological differences and gaps that the digital scenario is making even more dichotomous. Are teachers committed to design didactic architectures that can cope with these differences and make the students themselves aware? Or - like some CODIRS guys suggest - class life is still made of unbreakable paces of “a priori” established proposals? What kind of support and teacher training would be needed to make sure that classroom life approaches effectively the challengeges and the opportunities of student participation and dialogue education within a context of multiple differences.
Some thoughts (6)

The blog as a bridge between two “writing worlds”? Among the students who completed the baseline questionnaire few claim to have the opportunity to use blogs as tools of expression. Less than 20% use blogs, against 80% of those using chats. The latter are seen as the paradise of that "freedom of expression" which emerges as a greatest aspiration for most students, highlighted by multiple evidences in the MIUR-TBFF CODIRS research. This aspiration, the way students formulate it and attempt to achieve it, deserve further reflections which goes beyond the aims of this research. The blog - with its alternations of topics and dialogic post - could be an important bridge between "old" and "new" world. It could be the place for a renewal of reading and writing, where the motivation to write is fed by the lively suggestions provided by healthy contexts of dialogue. Here the questions: "Why do I write?", "To whom do I write?", "What do I write?" could find true recipients even if in a virtual arena. In fact, in the team blogging you do not write only "for the lesson, you must write with the computer, to the people who also write blogs" Ysuf comments in his sharp simplicity, (grade 6) and he adds "and this is something that I really like a lot."
Some thoughts (7)

Game rules, constraints & opportunities in the blog’s organisation

What to do? How to do? The experience of the MIUR-TBFF CODIRS project - and the observations conducted jointly by researchers and teachers working with students - are showing us how in organising student blogs the architectures of rules and time are crucial. There can be many and varied ways, but the 'attention to the variables involved, to the monitoring and feedback, to the strategic use of the differences is essential. A convincing blog experience would be difficult to achieve for single teachers alone with their classes. The blog may become an instrument of real communication when it is based on an intense exchange which is possible in a network of schools, in different locations.

"Blogging" could then be a very useful way for:

• Let students discover the most productive ways to use writing for dialogue
• Help build an idea of writing as a flexible tool, useful for many purposes.

We could think of blended workshops for teachers, where different kinds of blogs, can be designed and tested in order to explore new instruments of knowledge building that allow students to achieve new participative identities inspired by intercultural and interreligious dialogues.
Which “new literacies” for dialogue?
Thank you to the teachers and headteachers participating in the MIUR TBFF CODIRS project and in particular to the teachers and the headteacher of IC Fermi di Romano

GRAZIE!!!

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