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# Opening Up Spaces: Mobilizing the Multimodal Annotation Affordances of Digital Social Reading for Literacy Development in French as a Foreign Language

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## Résumé

Reading is still often conceptualized as a private act during which the reader individually interprets a text and decides whether to share or not his/her interpretation with others in an open forum. However, the increased availability of web-based reading platforms is not only changing what it means to read but also to annotate texts by extending the centuries-old practice of marginalia as a form of reader engagement with digital texts in the context of meaning creation through tags, linkage of documents, and multimodal commentary. What this is, is a new literacy practice called Digital Social Reading (DSR) (Blyth, 2013, 2014) which makes it possible to discuss texts collaboratively without time and space constraints. Interest in applications of DSR in the foreign language (FL) classroom is growing, yet, little empirical research has been conducted to understand FL learners' interaction with texts and with each other in DSR activities and how these can foster FL literacy development.

Grounded in socio-constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), this qualitative study responds to this need by implementing a weekly DSR activity using Annotation Studio, a Web 2.0 social annotation tool, and investigates the following: 1) How does DSR of literature mediate the development of intermediate French students' literacy? 2) How does DSR of literature contribute to the development of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998)?

Annotation Studio data (e.g. tagging, commentaries, links) generated through interactive on-line reading are triangulated through: a pre-course FL learning autobiography, a pre-course questionnaire on FL reading practices, reflective journals, mid-course questionnaire on DSR practices, and post-course semi-structured interviews. RQ1 data are analyzed through inductive coding guided by Dillenbourg and Schneider (1995) and Pena-Schaff and Nicholls (2004) collaborative learning frameworks. RQ2 data are analyzed through discursive analysis of DSR interactions.

Findings demonstrate that DSR as a mediating tool can foster intermediate French students' literacy development through a community of practice. More specifically, our findings show that DSR with its annotation tool set can better support the learning processes of collaboration, interpretation, reflection, and problem solving as learners engage with textual content.

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