Higher Order Reading Using Digital Annotations

By Prof. Marie Hulme, English, CAS

How do students learn to uncover what it is they don’t know about a text so that the critical thinking and deep learning can begin?

An overarching goal for me, as a First Year Seminar instructor, is the deepening and application of critical thinking which, in this project, I would identify with:

1. Exploring contradictions and complexities in a text;
2. Discerning patterns and connections;
3. Ability to recognize and fill in gaps in knowledge
4. Ability to defend, through debate, choices and decisions.

Many students arrive at the University ill prepared to do close textual reading. This is fundamental to literary analysis, concise writing and deep understanding so I’ve developed a platform where students will be able to enter into one of my course’s primary texts, James Joyce’s *Dubliners*.

By closely annotating *Dubliners* in a way that brings in art, video, links to scholarship, and historical context, students will deepen their understanding of thematic issues raised by Joyce and become deeply immersed in the complexities of the text.

This project provides for multi-modal paths of inquiry into the text that allow individual students to pursue themes, motifs and allusions that appeal to their own intellectual preferences and enliven the experience of reading it. Each will contribute a unique approach to the text and enrich their peers’ understanding of it.

By identifying what they don’t know or understand about a word, line or passage students unpack what they need to investigate and clarify. They are taking responsibility for addressing the gaps in their own knowledge and that is a transferable and important skill.