



**Title of Project:**

Making Meaning across Modes: English Language  
Learners and their Academic Writing within a Digital Space

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**Project Summary:**

In today's era of high-stakes tests, content area literacy skills are highly valued and have become a focus of instruction in many schools. Despite the many ways in which people communicate their ideas, share knowledge and represent themselves, schools rely heavily on written tests as a primary means of evaluating their students. What is often forgotten in the school context is that literacy is a communicative act, one that involves a variety of social roles and functions and one that invariably will involve other non-linguistic modes of meaning making.

This proposal examines data collected from an innovative project that seeks to integrate content area literacy practices in an interactive, multimodal web-based system. Using multimodal discourse analysis (Kress, 2010; Jewitt, 2009), an emerging analytical approach, the proposal seeks to uncover the many ways that English Language Learners make sense of information to construct written and oral texts across *multiple* modes of representation. The proposed research will emphasize a close examination of student-produced text as both a product and process of learning. In doing so the research seeks a rich understanding of how students construct meaning in a digital writing environment. Findings of this proposed study will have important implications for improving the education and assessment of English Language Learners through and with the use of technology.