Title of Project:
Digital Literacy in Academic Settings: Synchronous Collaborative
Writing among Linguistically Diverse Students

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Project Summary:
This longitudinal, classroom-based case study explored how 8th grade students engage in synchronous collaborative writing practices with Google Docs in a school with a high population of bilinguals. Despite the widespread use of newly emerging writing practices using synchronous technology, little has been known about students' extended collaboration practices, as well as their impacts on writing outcomes and perceived learning— particularly in longitudinal, K-12 classroom contexts. Based on a mixed methods approach that combines qualitative, quantitative, and text mining methods, I examined multiple aspects of 8th grade students' (N=102) collaborative writing practices (e.g., patterns, strategies), the resulting characteristics of textual outcomes, students' perceptions, and the group processes of building communities of practice (CoP) over the course of an academic year. The qualitative investigations particularly attend to the learning affordances of synchronous collaborative writing for groups with English language learners to understand how the new writing practices may support these students' writing and learning developments. An in-depth analysis of students' collaborative writing will help researchers and teachers understand the language learning benefits of incorporating the increasingly widespread cloud-based technology in K-12 settings, as well as the benefits for promoting collaborative scaffolding and intercultural understanding among students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.