

## ABSTRACT

J. R. MARTIN

### **Exploring content: building knowledge in school discourse**

One of the central themes in genre-based literacy programs is the importance of field – the content of texts that students are learning to read and write. So alongside genre, teachers and students need to address the knowledge students are reading and writing about. In this talk I'll introduce a practical model for managing the specialised knowledge students encounter in schools, focusing on the power words that characterize different subjects, the power grammar that relates the concepts encoded in these words to one another and the power composition that organizes this knowledge in texts. The emphasis here is on embedded literacy programs, which position genres in subjects across the curriculum and explicitly address the distinctive content of each subject area. I'll introduce examples from science and history subjects in particular, interpreting the semantic waves that bridge between students' personal experience and the uncommon sense knowledge they are building in school.