

# Effecting epistemological access using a multimodal approach

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Non-mother tongue English speaking tertiary (L2) students in South Africa, who engage with English academic material in and outside the classroom, struggle to conceptually make 'head or tail' of it and ultimately perpetuate a high failure and low throughput rate across the sector. The institutionalisation of English as the language of teaching, learning and assessment at most higher education institutions contributes to this pedagogical marginalisation of these students by ignoring their linguistic and literacy rights, and subsequently deflating the principles of social justice, equity and redress. This study highlights the linguistic hybridity of L2-students studying at a South African university of technology to improve their epistemological access and ultimately their academic success by employing a language ecology perspective within a Cognitive Semiotic framework. The rationale of this study was to investigate the effect of a multimodal approach to improve academic literacies of L2-students using a blog in the language and learning style they prefer. A qualitative research design was used. Data was collected by means of observations and focus group discussions focused on conceptual understanding of context-specific academic concepts which was then analysed. This study sets out to describe the current teaching and learning practices and advocate mediating teaching and learning strategies that would promote conceptual understanding of course material in bi/multilingual students at a university of technology. Furthermore, it contributes to the debate in finding viable solutions for suitable teaching and learning practices to promote learner-centeredness.