**Abstract:** This paper reports on a three-year development project to use the metalanguage of systemic functional linguistics to support children's disciplinary learning in the language arts classroom. The work is situated in a high poverty urban school district with a majority population of English language learners. Following professional development, teachers engaged children in using the metalanguage to make language-meaning connections in reading and writing instruction. Discourse analysis of classroom events demonstrates the affordances of the metalanguage and suggests directions for further research.

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