

Supporting ELLs' disciplinary literacies in schools: Methodological considerations in genre-based research

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This presentation will introduce an action-oriented approach to designing, implementing, and researching K-12 students' disciplinary literacy development using systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and related pedagogical practices to L2 writing scholars (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Halliday, 1993; Hasan, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012; Unsworth, 2008; see Gebhard, 2019). This presentation will have three parts: First, I will outline a social semiotic conceptual framework for analyzing text/context dynamics in classrooms. This perspective takes into account the historical, political, and institutional contexts in which teachers work and their students attempt to expand their multilingual/multimodal resources through the development of genre knowledge and awareness of the register choices writers make in producing texts for specific purposes and audiences.

Second, I will describe how this framework informs a comprehensive methodology for collecting data and analyzing student writing development as well as a pedagogical approach to designing curriculum, instruction, and assessments. This approach builds on students' linguistic repertoires and apprentices them to read, discuss, and write disciplinary texts for authentic purposes and audiences. This praxis-oriented methodology expands on SFL's Teaching and Learning Cycle in key ways that are intended to support students' academic development, facilitate teachers' professional development, and inform L2 writing research and educational policies (Gebhard, 2019).

Third, I will provide an example of this social semiotic conceptual framework, methodology for researching L2 writing development, and approach to designing instruction by presenting data from longitudinal case studies of changes in the disciplinary literacy practices of refugee youth attending an under-resourced urban high school in the United States (Accurso, Gebhard, Harris, & Schuetz, in press). This study demonstrates the potential of SFL action research to enhance students' disciplinary literacies and teachers' professional development as well as to inform L2 writing research from an action research perspective.