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Teaching and Researching ELLs' Disciplinary Literacies: Systemic Functional Linguistics in Action in the Context of U.S. School Reform

Meg Gebhard. New York, NY: Routledge, 2019. Pp. xvi + 281.

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This important new contribution to teacher education offers preservice and in-service teachers a language- and meaning-focused approach to multilingual K-12 learners across subjects. At the same time, the book engages its readers in critical inquiry in their own school contexts, supporting them to develop a qualitative case study as they work through each chapter. Gebhard shows the book's range and perspective in the title: *Teaching and Researching* highlights the focus on both pedagogy and research; *ELLs' Disciplinary Literacies* points to the learning that *Systemic Functional Linguistics in Action* supports, and *the Context of U.S. School Reform* reminds us of the larger policy framework in which the pedagogical work occurs. Gebhard, an expert in both policy and pedagogy, reminds us that the students who benefit from this approach are creative multilingual and multimodal learners whose right to a rigorous education should be our main focus, and whose creativity has the potential to contribute to reform and innovation in educational practice. Teachers who develop such perspectives have the potential to reframe practice for English learners across K-12 contexts.

Gebhard supports readers to develop linguistic tools for offering learners a rich literacy context across subject areas, at the same time keeping a focus on larger contexts—of classroom, school, and society. She makes creative new contributions to systemic functional linguistics (SFL), reconceptualizing this socially contextualized and meaning-focused theory and pedagogy for U.S. schools by situating attention to language in the broader context of immigration policy and school reform. Throughout, the chapters are rich with teachers' voices and the work of multilingual learners, offering practical supports for teacher education, including genre descriptions, example rubrics, and analyses of student work.

The book introduces tools for analyzing variation in purpose and meaning across genres as well as in grammatical choices at the sentence level in curriculum materials and students' spoken and written productions. At the same time, it shows how language development in classrooms is embedded in institutional contexts shaped by history, economics, and policy. Chapters on these issues reveal how shifting perspectives on equity and immigration have shaped and continue to shape the ways multilingual learners are positioned in U.S. classrooms.

The organization of the book creates a coherent learning process through which the linguistic pedagogy can be considered and developed in readers' specific teaching contexts. Every chapter includes a *praxis* section with activities that cumulatively provide data for curriculum development and a qualitative case study of the teacher-reader's own classroom context. Readers are encouraged to work in groups to write their literacy autobiographies, engage in classroom discourse analysis, and develop units of study and analyze texts relevant to their subject areas. They also analyze the access and support provided to ELLs at their schools, considering how multilingual learners' rights to an equitable education can be protected; assess the consequences of standardization and accountability movements for the choices available to teachers in their contexts; and collect and analyze data on the historic, economic, and political contexts of their school communities. This *praxis* is supported by chapters that build up theory and background through examples and case studies.

Gebhard introduces a 10-stage cycle of teaching and learning that guides readers' planning of their own curriculum units, and draws on SFL's perspective on *register* to help teachers build on the language students bring to the classroom and engage them in critical analysis of disciplinary discourses. As readers engage with and practice using the linguistic tools, Gebhard moves on to review current policies and practices through a perspective that asks how students' civil rights are supported in different program types and assessments. She presents shifting conceptions of equity as she critically assesses recent reform

efforts, and offers an insightful historical overview of the ways multilingual learners have been educated in U.S. schools.

The final chapter offers a case study of the approach in action, as students with limited or interrupted formal education are supported over two years to develop critical language awareness in mathematics, social studies, science, and English language arts. Readers then draft their own qualitative case studies, using the data they have gathered as they read the chapters.

Gebhard's thoughtful and carefully structured book can engage pre-service and in-service teachers, teacher educators, and literacy researchers in collaborative interdisciplinary design of rigorous curriculum that enhances their efficacy in supporting multilingual students' literacy development. This rich and insightful book points to exciting future possibilities for English learners in K-12 contexts.

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