



**Title of Project:**

Systemic Functional Linguistics and the New Knowledge  
Base of Teaching: Preparing Secondary Educators in the  
Context of Globalization

**Researcher:**

Kathryn Accurso  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
[kathryn.accurso@gmail.com](mailto:kathryn.accurso@gmail.com)



Kathryn Accurso

**Research Supervisor:**

Dr. Meg Gebhard  
University of Massachusetts Amherst

---

**Project Summary:**

This longitudinal mixed methods study explores the impact of a language education course on mainstream secondary pre-service teachers. As contemporary forces of globalization change the landscape of U.S. classrooms, many teachers struggle to equitably support diverse students' knowledge production and disciplinary literacy development. This issue disproportionately affects language-minoritized students, including those institutionally designated as English language learners (e.g., Lee, Quinn, & Valdés, 2013), and is exacerbated by the implicit promotion of monolingual English identities and interests associated with disciplinary literacies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; García & Menken, 2015). Given this context, all teachers need knowledge about language (e.g., Villegas & Lucas, 2011), yet most teacher education programs do not include specific coursework in language learning, disciplinary literacy development, or language ideologies (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Zeichner, 2005). Increasingly, U.S. teacher educators are using theoretical and pedagogical tools from systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to address this need. This study begins in an SFL-based course for secondary pre-service teachers, and uses discourse analysis and survey methods to trace participants' development and practice over two years to better understand how language education interacts with their existing discourses and comes out in their teaching. Findings will contribute to the reconceptualization of teachers' work in the context of globalization; models of teacher education that support teachers' ability to recognize the complexity of their work, more consciously navigate uneven semiotic terrain in schools, and better support all students' disciplinary literacy development; and the design of future professional development courses.