Letizia Guglielmo and Sergio Figueiredo

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In his essay, “Family Values: Literacy, Technology, and Uncle Sam,” Joe Amato traces his Italian-American history and argues, “These experiences and memories, these histories and associations, these material comforts and discomforts in many ways constitute, though they do not cause, my values. And my values have all to do with my sense of language, of what’s possible with words, or should be possible. That is, my values have all to do with what needs saying.” Exploring this connection between personal history and sense of language, we invite proposals for an edited collection on the experiences of immigrant and first generation US American scholars in rhetoric, composition, and communication. We identify first generation scholars broadly to include those teaching within and theorizing the field of rhetoric and composition who are US immigrants, children of immigrants, and immigrant children. In the tradition of collections such as In Our Own Voice: Graduate Students Teach Writing and Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and Troubadours: Writing Program Administrators Tell Their Stores, we seek narratives grounded by scholarship in rhetoric and composition studies, broadly defined

Essays may explore, but are not limited to, the following topics:

• Experiences shaping the teaching of writing and rhetoric

• Experiences shaping academic identity

• Experiences shaping scholarship in writing and rhetoric

• Scholars navigating multiple identities

• Scholars navigating liminal spaces and insider/outsider status

• Experiences shaping literacy and/or an understanding of literacy

• Experiences at the intersections of gender, race, class

• Motivations for pursuing an academic career in rhetoric, composition, and/or communication

Please submit proposals of 300-500 words with a brief biographical statement and contact information via email attachment to Letizia Guglielmo, Associate Professor of English, Kennesaw State University (lgugliel@kennesaw.edu) and Sergio Figueiredo, Assistant Professor of English, Kennesaw State University (sfigueir@kennesaw.edu) no later than May 30, 2015. Invitations to submit chapters for review will be sent by June 15, with full chapters (15-20 pages) due by September 30.

Lizbett Tinoco, University of Texas at El Paso

Jennifer Falcon, University of Texas at El Paso

Tenemos que hacer la lucha: Reflections of Latinas in Rhetoric and Writing Studies

Latin@s have been entering community colleges and universities at higher rates in recent years. Although the number of Latin@ students has increased, a study conducted by the National Education Association (2011) claims Latin@ faculty in higher education is an alarming four percent. At the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), about 80% of the students are Latin@s. UTEP has a high number of Latin@ faculty, but our Rhetoric and Composition Department does not reflect our student population. Currently, our department comprises of all women tenured professors, but only one of these professors is Latina. In this chapter, we explore our personal experiences as two first generation Latina PhD students and analyze our experiences in the composition classroom. Our narratives address the fissures and gaps regarding language ideologies hardly addressed in Rhetoric and Composition Studies.

This chapter draws from Yosso’s work, which complicates Bourdieu’s idea of cultural capital, by addressing the cultural capital people of color have. The first section of the chapter discusses language ideologies inculcated in us by our families, and how these differed from ideologies we learned at school at a young age. These ideologies and experiences drive our positions as young Latina scholars in Rhetoric and Composition Studies. It is important for the two of us to share how our experiences are somewhat similar to those of our students. The second section of the chapter uses Yosso et al. (2009) idea of racial microaggressions in undergraduate campuses to analyze how our experiences as first generation undergraduate students, at universities in different regions of the country with very different academic cultures, also shaped our language experiences. The third portion of our chapter discusses how we found ourselves very much outside Rhetoric and Composition when we began PhD coursework. Not only were we outsiders to the field of Rhetoric and Composition, but we also joined a discipline where there are not many minority scholars, especially Latinas. In this respect, despite our academic success, we find ourselves feeling very much outside of our academic field. The last section of the chapter discusses how UTEP serves as a contact zone. Through our PhD coursework and the linguistically diverse student body population at UTEP, we begin to close the gap between theory and practice. A considerable amount of our coursework addressed issues of Standard Language Ideologies (SLI). This forced us to consciously come to terms with the ways in which SLI has shaped our own language practices in the classroom, but more importantly, it affords us the time to work through how we, as Latin@ instructors, can challenge and change some of these SLI practices in our classrooms.

Like many of our Latin@ students at UTEP, we know what it is like to navigate through unfamiliar territory when entering college, and a discipline with few Latin@s. The experiences discussed in this chapter will add to the limited narratives of first generation Latin@ scholars in Rhetoric and Composition and open up a space for conversations to begin.