

Editor's Introduction

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“You should know that the education of the heart is very important. This will distinguish you from others. Educating oneself is easy, but educating ourselves to help other human beings to help the community is much more difficult.”

—Cesar Chávez

“Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.”

—Maya Angelou

“There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.”

—bell hooks, *killing rage: Ending Racism*

“The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the

profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves.”

—Paulo Freire, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*

A few years ago in 2009 when Steve Parks was editor, *Reflections* came out with a special issue entitled *Democracia, ¿pero para quien?, Democracy, but for whom?*. Many scholars and teachers were inspired to use a number of articles in future research projects. That issue offered much needed research, voices, and hope for Latin@s, especially those with a foci in community engagement and social justice. However, much has transpired with Latin@s since 2009 that jeopardizes the progress of Latin@ issues of education, literacy, immigration, and social justice. This is particularly true in Arizona with the subsequent HB 2281 that threatened culturally relevant ethnic studies programs. A few years before, Proposition 209 dismantled bilingual education. SB 1070 came as another assault with its racial profiling of Latin@s in Arizona. We, as special co-editors at Texas Hispanic Serving Institutions, as well as other members of the Latino Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and Conference of College Composition and Communication (CCCC) listened with great sadness and anger as our Arizona members recounted the dismantling of educational programs validating Mexican American students through culturally relevant literatures and bilingual education. The caucus, along with other identity-based caucuses, had just started the Writing and Working for Change project (see <http://www.ncte.org/centennial/change>) with Samantha Blackmon, Cristina Kirklighter, and Steve Parks. Cristina had interviewed two NCTE Chicanos of Teachers of English founders, Dr. Carlota Cardenas de Dwyer and Dr. Felipe Ortega de Gasca. A third interviewee and early member of the caucus, Dr. Roseann Dueñas Gonzalez from the University of Arizona, played an instrumental role in the NCTE Task Force of Racism and Bias during the 80's. These leaders played a pivotal role in pushing for the inclusion of Chicano/a literature and bilingual education during the 70's and 80's in textbooks and within curricula across the nation.

Honoring those who came before us and respecting these historical contexts are an important part of what many Latin@s value within and outside of academia. As part of this historical collective, we, as special editors, knew that the Arizona affront to Latin@s needed to be told by those like Dr. Roseann Dueñas Gonzalez who began teaching Chicano/a literature to her students in the late 1960's and early 1970's in Tucson high schools and at the University of Arizona. Some of these students became nationally known figures like Mary Carmen Cruz, a subsequent K-12 leader in NCTE and Arizona, and Richard Martinez, J.D., a nationally known attorney representing the two teachers from the Tucson Unified School District who filed suit against the State of Arizona for dismantling the Tucson Mexican American Studies program. Dr. Gonzalez also honors those who came before her, such as her hard working Spanish-speaking parents who encouraged her to excel in school, her English teachers in Arizona, and her NCTE predecessors from many ethnicities and races on the NCTE Task Force of Racism and Bias who helped teachers on national, state, and local levels teach ethnic literature back in the late 60's and early 70's. Her predecessors helped her realize in 1971 as a new Tucson teacher "that the only way to change the outcome for Latino students was to change the pedagogical model and recognize and respect the students' and parents' culture and language and incorporate them into the school culture." With her teaching, scholarly, and administrative career in Arizona devoted to bilingual education, ethnic studies, and the director of the National Center for Interpretation Testing, Research and Policy at U. of A., Dr. Gonzalez, in her interview, makes a compelling case that Arizona's "Proposition 203, S.B. 1070, and H.B. 2218 infringe on persons right to equal opportunity to education and employment." But, she does far more than that in this interview by sharing her story of growing up in the 1940's within a Spanish-speaking only home in Phoenix, her ascent to becoming the only sibling to pursue higher education, her Tucson high school teaching experiences in 1969 and 1970 overhearing teachers' negative comments about students of color, her realization in 1971 that culturally relevant literature spoke to and validated her students' experiences, her reactions to the recent laws that dismantled much of the progress for Mexican American students in Arizona, and much more. We believe that Dr. Gonzalez's credentials in these areas and her sharp memories in tracing the history of Mexican American students in Arizona will demonstrate

what happens when state legislatures jeopardize Latin@ student success and thus the future of this country as the largest growing student population of “minorities” in this country.

In addition to Dr. Gonzalez, other contributors to this special issue also examine student success and the role of multiliteracies within communities and academia. Together, these contributors advise how we as scholars must be open to thinking and practicing beyond traditional forms of research, scholarship, and communication. We can produce and construct academic knowledge and higher learning via *platicas*, *ensayos*, *dichos y refranes*, poetry, archival collections, artwork, interviews, ethnographies, and public art exhibits. This issue’s contributors explore our Latin@ identities and roots, and they show us how the disconnect and need to bridge higher learning and communities influence and impact our participation, roles, and success in the workforce, education, institutions, and society.

Cruz Medina, in his article, “Nuestros Refranes: Culturally Relevant Writing in Tucson High Schools,” demonstrates how students can fight back in Tucson schools from an oppressive system through writing grounded in *dichos* or proverbs from wise elders who instruct others on how to survive in the midst of struggles. Faced with Arizona legislators’ and the State Superintendent, Tom Horne’s, initiatives to close down the TUSD’s Mexican American Studies (MAS) programs in Tucson, students and teachers fought back with culturally relevant writing through a book entitled *Nuestros Refranes*, where students wrote about, as Karen Rosales, a contributor to the book says, “their dreams, motivations, and struggles” (p 67). This writing serves to name and empower them in the face of oppression by using familiar writing grounded in code-switching and *dichos*. As Cruz Medina states, the code-switching demonstrates their “cultural allegiance and engagement,” and the use of “*dichos*” takes them beyond education and to the cognizance of self-determinism. Such writings markedly contrast, as Medina points out, to the policymakers’ language grounded in “specific ideologies that uphold colonial beliefs about racial supremacy while dismissing the history, knowledge, and culture of non-whites.” Medina also examines how a student fights “linguistic terrorism” through a ‘prove them wrong’ rhetorical strategy by seeking constant tutorial help to make

those around him see he had a great mind. While celebrating the effective rhetorical strategies in writing from these Tucson students, Medina also participates in the historical homage to Arizona teacher leaders that came before him, such as honoring the work of María L. Urquides, Adalberto Guerrero, Henry Oyama, Roseann Duena González, and Mary Carmen Cruz. He describes how Tucson has a rich history of developing culturally relevant programs for ethnic students, which makes *Nuestros Refranes* that much more significant in honoring the teacher elders who laid the foundation for MAS.

The reverberations of the struggles experienced in Arizona are also felt in Southern California as we see in Elias Serna's article "The Eagle Meets the Seagull: the Critical, Kairotic and Public Rhetoric of Raza Studies Now in Los Angeles." Serna focuses on The Raza Studies Now (RSN) group made up of Raza studies activists who support the struggles of MAS in Arizona and advocates for Ethnic Studies in high schools and community colleges in Southern California. We asked Serna to not only focus on RSN and what preceded it with the first Ethnic Studies initiative in Southern California for colleges and universities, the historic 1969 *El Plan de Santa Barbara*, but also to read and respond to Cruz Medina's article to draw connections. Serna focuses on two Raza Studies Now conferences that created spaces "where rhetoric, education, literacy, and the public converge" with a historical presence in drafting another "Plan" called the *Plan de Los Angeles* (PLA) that would center in high schools. Focusing on Logos and Kairos, Serna analyzes a document written with the help of RSN, the Santa Monica Intercultural District Advisory Committee (IDAC) report. The RSN summer of 2012 conference centered on creating a collective document of "El Plan" through seven break out groups thus producing "a profoundly organic, community involved and broad-based Raza document." Serna analyzes how the "Plan de Los Angeles" is filled with plieto rhetoric, an unapologetic and resistance rhetoric that occurs when logos fails to convince. Right after the RSN 2013 conference, it was announced that George Zimmerman was found not guilty. Raza activists took the streets using protest dichos and chants, such as "No Justice! No Peace!" taken from the 1992 L.A. uprisings. Dichos and Kairos focusing on social justice occurred here. After nine undocumented Latino students were placed in Arizona immigrant detention facilities, the Dreamer 9 protest occurred and that Raza Studies Now centers on. Serna demonstrates

how RSN used not only its historical predecessor, El Plan de Santa Monica, but also crossed the state border into Arizona to support and learn from the struggles there. We at *Reflections* encourage contributors to use social media in addition to writing their articles. If readers wish to learn more about Elias Serna, they can go to an interview with Cruz Medina at <http://writerscholarprofessional.blogspot.com/2013/11/q-with-reflections-contributor-elias.html>. Cruz's previous blog addresses the Tucson Ethnic Studies issues and his article.

In this special *Reflections* issue, Steven Alvarez, Romeo Garcia, and Isabel Baca use poetry to connect to the reader and show how literacies can be acquired and identities be constructed via *la familia*, languages and dialects, and life on the U.S.-Mexico border. As Medina does in his article, Steve Alvarez also recognizes the value of code switching. In his poem, "Fieldnote," Alvarez shows the beauty of code switching, of using both English and Spanish to help students with the diverse literacies co-existing in Latin@ communities. Through his use of English and Spanish, he shares how language brings the familia and education together, builds relationships, and educates individuals seeking a brighter future. Romeo Garcia, in his poem "She Used to Say," gives tribute to his *abuela*, his grandmother, by recognizing her wisdom and advice: Be proud of who you are, your roots, your accent, your language, and your culture. Always be a fighter and never give up. Garcia carries his grandmother's words as he pursues higher education and honors his grandmother by being proud of his Latin@ heritage. In "Una Mujer Partida," Isabel Baca describes a Latina's loyalty to her country, her roots, and her family. Recognizing that *la familia y la sangre* (family and blood) are of utmost importance to her, Baca, though recognizing the existence of both a physical and a metaphorical river and border, encourages Latin@s to seek opportunities and a better life for themselves and their loved ones. Baca identifies the Latin@ love and loyalty to *la familia*, and she urges others to never give up, continue to fight, and never let go of those ties with which they are born.

Lance Langdon, in his article “A Clear Path”: Teaching Police Discourse in Barrio After-School Center,” takes us to a study he conducted at an after-school center in a working class Mexican neighborhood of Orange County, California, one of the most conservative counties in the nation. Through the theoretical lens of James Paul Gee’s theories of discourse and identity, Langdon studies a Criminal Justice Club at an after-school center run by Mike, a Mexican American police officer in training, who came from a similar neighborhood filled with gang activity. Mike works with at-risk youths to steer them away from drugs and gangs and encouraged them to see themselves as embodying identities tied to law enforcement. These new identities create conflicts, not unlike what their mentor Mike experiences, as they attempt to negotiate between their identities as potent “future cops” and “at-risk” youth. As a demonstration of these complexities that ties to Elias Serna’s article regarding the protests demanding racial justice in L.A. after the George Zimmerman verdict, one of Mike’s students, Katie, proceeds to research and present on the Zimmerman verdict using a Fox News story as part of her research and the detective work she learned from Mike. Langdon realizes the problems of this police discourse that promotes law-abiding students, but perhaps at the expense of devaluing the identities and subordinate positions of their neighbors.

In their article, “Public Art, Service-learning, and Critical Reflection: *Nuestra Casa* as a Case Study of Tuberculosis Awareness on the U.S.-Mexico Border,” Eva M. Moya and Guillermina “Gina” Nuñez encourage us to explore multiple venues, literacies, and forms of public engagement and higher learning to bring about public health education and structural social change. Through student engagement, the *Nuestra Casa Initiative*, in addition to creating Tuberculosis awareness, serves as a venue that can lead to advocacy, social change, and better health conditions for the communities impacted by this disease. This initiative serves as an example of how scholarship through other means, such as public art, can cross disciplinary boundaries, reach diverse populations, engage students, faculty, and community members, and create health and social awareness. As a traveling exhibit, the project reached different geographical locations, from El Paso, Texas, Atlanta, Georgia, and various cities in Mexico. The *Nuestra Casa* allowed diverse populations to give testimonies and become engaged. Using a tendadero (a clothesline)

and *trapitos* (pieces of cloth), the exhibit's visitors' thoughts and opinions were expressed, capturing these individuals' emotions and reflections. Nuñez and Moya not only promote service-learning and critical reflection as ways of engaging students and communities, but they also advise us to engage our communities with our scholarship by means that the majority of the people, *la gente*, have access to, such as public art exhibits, not so much books and scholarly journal articles. For a description and video of the *Nuestra Casa* project, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2KcXbrjHbg>.

As an example of how in addition to the printed text, the visual text contributes to literacy and engagement, we have included artwork that represents the Latin@ value and honor of *la familia*. Adam Webb, in his artwork, speaks to literacies and the role *la familia* plays in acquiring and practicing different forms of literacy in life today. Webb provides examples of visual literacy and with it as a tool, he shows how seeing the *familia* and making connections are valued in Latin@ life. Webb's different sketches illustrate how papi, mami, and the community can be literacy resources. *La familia* takes center stage in promoting multiliteracies.

La familia speaks to the root of *plática* as discussed in Dr. Francisco Guajardo and Dr. Miguel Guajardo's essay or, in Spanish, ensayo, "The Power of *Plática*. As editors of this special issue, we (Isabel Baca and Cristina Kirklighter) were privileged to participate in a virtual audio *plática* with both Francisco and Miguel Guajardo this past October that will be uploaded to our featured articles page. These brothers grew up in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. *Plática*, as they define it, in the essay is "an expressive cultural form shaped by listening, inquiry, storytelling, and story that is akin to a nuanced, multi-dimensional conversation." They learned this form through their parents, Angel and Julia, and dedicate this essay to them. Their essay is divided into four sections (1) *plática* as etymology (2) *plática* as inquiry (3) *plática* as pedagogy, and (4) *plática* for community building and development. *Plática* as etymology discusses the way their *plática* historically developed first with their parents' daily *plática* around coffee, and the Guajardo brothers saw how they extended this *plática* within the community. They demonstrate later that when they entered academia, they saw how the "Socratic method and critical conversations" resembled the *plática*. What they learned

through injecting *plática* into academia was how their experiences growing up shaped their perceptions of these historical characters through storytelling and to bring “relationships and issues to life.” *Plática* as inquiry becomes a method of collecting data based on establishing relationships and trust in the communities they study. They demonstrate this through an oral history project on *braceros*. Angel, the lead community-based researcher, taught students how to access *braceros* through *plática*. He shared his own stories to engage the *braceros* in *plática*. *Plática* as pedagogy discusses how their parents were teachers: Julia with her teachings of *la biblia* (bible), and Angel with *la universidad de la vida* (university of life). These literacies “shaped their curriculum and instructional approaches,” and the Guajardo brothers saw them as teachers even though Julia had no schooling and Angel went to the 4th grade. *Plática* for community building and development focuses on their parents’ question on the utility of these brothers’ educations. What good is an education unless it serves purposes of community building through *plática* and developing respectful relationships? This is what their parents and community instilled in them, “a practice to guide organizations, lead public information campaigns, shape school curriculum, and even push higher education institutions to behave more humanely.”

In “Chicanas Making Change: Institutional Rhetoric and the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional,” Kendall Leon addresses change in institutional and public spaces and examines how Chicanas (Mexicanas or Latinas) use experience to “make” or “construct” things, such as organizations, histories, and practices. Leon analyzes Chicanas’ strategies for inciting change and Chicanas’ rhetoric in constructing and bringing about change. By presenting an archival case study of the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (CFMN), one of the first Chicana feminist organizations, Leon examines Chicanas’ coalition building strategies and practices. She shows us how Chicanas bring about change by writing, theorizing, and making an identity, an identity she refers to as *la hermandad*, the Chicana sisterhood. Sharing personal experiences as well, Leon addresses how working in the university can further distance us from our home communities and our commitment to the public good. Citing Miguel and Francisco Guajardo’s research and work, Leon discusses how it can be difficult to maintain our responsibilities to our home communities while meeting the expectations set for us as academics.

Leon advises us to practice, create, and pursue connective works that enable us to build bridges and make change. It is by making connections, often within institutions, that we learn and grow. Leon describes CFMN's work in addressing employment training for Chicanas, and it is through this organization that Leon teaches us how by turning to the work of community organizations, we learn about institutions, and we learn to make connections within these institutions.

It is these institutions and their treatment of women faculty of color that encouraged Iris D. Ruiz to review the book *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*, edited by Gabriella Gutierrez y Muhs, Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. Gonzalez and Angela P. Harris (Utah State Press, 2012). In addition to summarizing the book content, Ruiz examines the issues, concerns, and challenges expressed in this collection of essays and narratives. Ruiz identifies the central claim of the book: Racism and sexism are still very much present in our educational institutions. By briefly addressing some of the stories in the book, Ruiz shares the voices of these women by describing their silence in academia and its scholarship and the fear of academic corporatization. These stories relate to Kendall Leon's concept of *la hermandad*, the Chicana sisterhood, where recognizing the importance, need, and value of such sisterhood is important to women faculty of color. Discrimination in academia will continue to exist, Ruiz argues, as long as unequal treatment, unequal opportunity, and unequal status are given to women faculty of color. Ruiz concludes her review by recognizing the value of *Presumed Incompetent* as holding the potential to transform the academy.

As we see in Ruiz's review, stories of silencing and injustices can empower faculty and students. Conducting oral history projects to discover the lost voices of injustices are another form of empowerment. When students conduct these projects in the communities surrounding the university as part of civic work, students often discover the many important lost voices of the past that preceded their interviewees. As Lisa Roy Davis points out in her review, sometimes students need mentor texts like Esmeralda Santiago's 2011 novel *Conquistadora*. This book is Santiago's first

book centering on historical fiction based on Ana, a mistress of the owner of Hacienda Los Gemelos, a mid-19th century Puerto Rican plantation. Unlike *Gone with the Wind's* Scarlett O'Hara, this novel is shaped through the lives of the slaves, such as Siña Damita, the midwife of the plantation. Davis describes how Santiago creates these slave characters in their "full potential as artists, healers, and caregivers in their capacities on the plantation." As Davis rightly points out and as we also see with the Guajardo brothers, oral histories and memoir aid students in envisioning experiences different from their own. Historical fiction brings other insights in "imagining lost and untold stories."

Our review essay for this issue written by Amy Rupiper Taggart focuses on *Texts of Consequence: Composing Social Activism for the Classroom and Community* (2012) and *Unsustainable: Re-imagining Community Literacy, Public Writing, Service-Learning, and the University* (2013). Taggart begins her review essay by sharing her experiences ten years ago with teaching a graduate seminar on community-engagement in composition studies. Where were the stories of failures and mistakes students asked within this scholarship? Inspired by her students, she later co-edited with Brooke Hessler a journal issue focusing on those mistakes and failures. Here then she focuses on two books that extend these conversations. Mathieu's book, *Tactics of Hope*, is a springboard for *Unsustainable* that furthers "a certain genre of failure and challenge story" and enhances the definition of sustainability. Taggart thoroughly reviews the different sections (1) Short-Lived Projects, Long-Lived Value; (2) Community Literacy: Personal Contexts; (3) Pedagogy, and (4) Calls for Transnational Sustainability. What Taggart says can be gained from this book is that failure provides an opportunity to learn. While *Unsustainable* asks the question "how can we resee programs through the lens of tactical rhetorical sustainability," *Texts of Consequence* is focused on making "activism through literacy" key to composition studies while also focusing on "success" in this area. This book particularly speaks to the activism we see in this journal issue. Again, Taggart carefully reviews the various sections of this edited collection: (1) Composition Studies Taking on the Establishment; (2) Composition Studies Institutionalizing Rhetoric and Writing for Social Change; and (3) Composition Studies and Community Activism. As Taggart states, both books provide us with guidance in activism and both books help

us “understand our field through its continuum of successes and failures, and if we learn one thing from these books, it should be that no one method or model will suffice for rhetorical intervention in social problems.”

As editors of this special issue, we feel honored to present contributions of such high caliber, contributions that speak to our Latin@ culture, language, roots, rights, and multiliteracies. We recognize the challenges we face as Latin@s both in and outside academia, and we welcome opportunities to address these challenges and our efforts to overcome them. Education, literacy, immigration, civic engagement, and social justice are issues central in Latin@ life. As editors, we invite you, the reader, to explore the possibilities that come from the diverse genres and forms of scholarship presented in this special issue. Multiliteracies are valued throughout this issue, and the contributors, as do we, recognize the beauty and treasure found in *la familia* and in *our gente* as sources of knowledge, rhetoric, social justice, and wisdom. It is because of our *buena gente* spirit and the *luchador* (the fighter) in all of us, that we proclaim, “*Adelante! Juntos lo podemos todo!*”