Statement:

I truly believe teaching chose me. I was thirteen years old when I started teaching English at a franchise language school just around the corner from home in São Paulo. Times were harsh. It was dictatorship in Brazil. Now, you do the math! My parents, retirantes nordestinos, were doomed to fail from the stigma of the big city. You see, this sounds like some lyrics, but I was not born with the silver spoon in my mouth. My mom started cleaning houses when she was six years old, and my dad worked all his way up to Law School. He hid inside the luggage compartment of a bus for two days to make to the city. So, when they needed to cut down our household expenses, of course my English classes were the first ones to go, ‘They could say extra knowledge and classes are subversive or that girls do not need to learn another language.’ I was devastated, so they talked to the principal who offered me groups to teach English in exchange for my own tuition. The rest is history, I never stopped! She was a visionary with technology-enhanced classes, hybrid groups, senior audience accommodation, but most importantly, at an inclusive safe place to social outcast before anyone in town. I was taken by diversity from day one. Shaping my core values of social justice, service, and integrity at an early age provided the compass that has guided me in my discovery, professional and academic journeys.

I have been confronting inequalities to others and around me as an educator ever since. As a privileged white cisgender teacher, I must acknowledge the existing inequality to be able to remediate it. I can only succeed in empowering my students when I use my classroom as the ultimate safe setting to deconstruct myself and others, as a civil exercise of humanity. In other words, I can only succeed when I exercise my humility and make sure my Portuguese Pluricentric classroom is always uniquely suited to challenge, confront, and disrupt structural misconceptions and stereotypes. Thus, I regularly draw on my students’ talents and strengths to promote social change through critical thinking and agency. I have had the opportunity to teach Portuguese, English, French and Italian in Brazil, the U.S., and countries in Europe, and one thing has remained the same: my will to incite the love for learning about the new world a foreign language brings along to me and to students. I am moved by the opportunity to promote meaningfulness experiences of desestrangeirização (Almeida Filho, 2008), the gradual process of bringing as much of Pluricentric Portuguese Language and Lusophone Culture and cultures to a closer, less strange stance by searching mobilizing experiences of interaction.
Biography:

Silvia Ramos-Sollai has a Master’s Degree in Applied Linguistics from Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie and a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from Florida State University. In her thesis, *Identidade Brasileira Tipo Exportação*, Silvia approaches cultural stereotypes and collective identity issues in Portuguese as Foreign Language textbooks. Her dissertation, *Reading the World beyond the Word*, comprehends the initial phases of reading acquisition among an English-Portuguese biliterate kindergartners population sample. In addition to authoring several innovative methodological articles on authentic material design and marginal sources, Silvia has also trained teachers and developed curriculum for Startalk San Diego State University and for the Portuguese Acquisition Linkages, a sister grant of the Portuguese Flagship Program at University of Georgia. Currently as Adjunct Professor at University of Florida, Silvia is in charge of the next edition of the e-book, *Connecting World Languages to Workplace Skills: Doing Business with the Portuguese Speaking World – Volume III*. Silvia is also the translator as well as a curriculum consultant and CEFR aligner of the English course to speakers of Brazilian Portuguese at Duolingo®.