

This is a transcript of the video clip “Literacy Narratives of Black Columbus Class” from the interview with Dr. Cynthia Selfe in Samuel Head, “A Scholarly Legacy: Professor Cynthia Selfe and the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives” published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 22(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/22.1/interviews/head>.

**Sam:**

So do you have any stories about experiences where you see the DALN has made an impact?

**Dr. Selfe:**

Yeah I have a story of the class I'm teaching this term that you're in, because every time we teach the Literacy Narratives of Black Columbus class here at Ohio State, what we do is get undergraduate students, graduate students, and community members together on teams. And they go into black Columbus communities, and they provide an opportunity for citizens to tell stories about their literacy, and how literacy has impacted their life, and how their lives have impacted their literacy skills and understandings and values.

And the teams get to choose an area of interest. We've done black churches in Columbus, and it's given congregations and pastors and citizens, individual citizens, an opportunity to think about how the black church has encouraged, sustained, and supported literacy in the United States going forward in history. That's a big opportunity, and I think it makes a big change in the lives of individuals to understand just those connections. In the class that we're teaching right now, for instance, we have a team going out to the LGBTQ community, and providing an opportunity for citizens to tell their stories about literacy and sexual orientation, the intersection of those formations. And we have your team going out into the Somali community and talking to Somali immigrants about how literacy and the challenges of acquiring literacy and a new language, a new culture, a new environment has shaped their lives and their understandings and their values over time from generation to generation, and within the very complex context of a brand new cultural setting at a time in history when they have experienced all the turmoil and violence of a war in their homeland, bringing that experience to the United States.

We can learn a lot from that experience, and so I think that makes a big difference too, just providing people the opportunity to tell their stories, and to tell a story that might run counter to some of the more accepted narratives that we get through the media. These are individual people's experiences and values, and sometimes they adhere to the larger stores and sometimes they depart from it, but they always are instructive in so many ways....

It's funny, the DALN, the presence of the DALN as a resource, changed my teaching because it led to the course on the Literacy Narratives of Black Columbus. Without the DALN I would not have done the course, and I think that course for me is probably the most important course that I teach because it takes me outside the university and into places that I don't know well enough. And so it's through the DALN that it was possible for me to do what I consider my best teaching, and that's another thing I'm very happy with in that regard. And I hope that class continues here at OSU as well.