

What is the function and future of the DALN project? How do you see it being carried on?

Selfe: Here's what I think – I think that these recordings are little bits of our time. I just finished a project down in the Near Eastside of Columbus where students and community members went out into black churches and asked people to comment on the relationship between the black church and literacy practices and black families and how the black church has sustained, encouraged, and supported the literacy practices of black families. When students went out and asked those questions of individuals, they had some people who were 86-years-old and they had some people who were 15-years-old and it seems to me that those stories are reflections of our time. I don't know that we can say that these stories are...we can't, we can't say that they're truths, we can't say that they accurately reflect the way things are, we can say that they are what people choose to tell us at a particular time and place and embedded in these stories are all sorts of information about culture, about values, about socioeconomic information, they're just laden with culture, laden with culture, and laden with history, and laden with economic information that sometimes even the tellers don't know is being represented and sometimes they do know.

Selfe: But there are all sorts of things the DALN narratives could be, they could be citizen journalism, they could be oral histories, they could be life histories, they could be ethnography, they could be nonfiction writing, they could be folklore, they could be any of these things and they have aspects of all of those things, so being open to the complex nature of the stories and people's reasons for contributing, motives for contributing, and reasons for telling stories, I think is part of why the DALN is so fascinating.

Ulman: For better or worse, that's what we want. We want that diversity and undecidability about what it is.

Selfe: I guess there is one more thing that I would say too and it's something we haven't talked about and I don't even think Lewy and I have talked about this directly, but that's the importance of graduate students in this effort and students in general...

Ulman:...because we aren't going to be around forever, somebody has to take over.

Selfe: Yeah, absolutely. Graduate students have been... there's something immediately engaging about this project to some graduate students who love the intimacy of people telling stories and who see the value and the meaning inherent in stories. And graduate students have all the way along this DALN project have been people who have invested in it, who loved to go out and make it possible for people to tell these stories, who have their own agenda for encouraging stories from certain populations, who love to look at these stories, enjoy the captioning of them. So for me, I think young scholars are an important future of the DALN and I think the DALN stories are engaging to them in ways that I didn't understand when we started the project so it was one of the reasons why when you came in here, if I find out you're going to the Four C's I'm going to ask you to sit at the DALN table and get other people to tell their stories and I know from that experience that you'll maybe take this into your class, maybe take it into your writing center, maybe take it into your dissertation work, and that's how the DALN keeps renewing its own importance within the profession.

