



## #StayWoke: The Language and Literacies of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement

*Our Common Future Lecture and Community Literacy Journal launch*

**Dr. Elaine Richardson**, Professor of Literacy Studies  
*Department of Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University*



Dr. Richardson's talk illuminates the language, literacies, communicative, and rhetorical practices of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The work pays attention to the communication practices of the BLM and Hip Hop generation in its extension of Black and African American language traditions and prior liberation movements in their unapologetic performance of Black chants, Black grammar, phonology, vocabulary, Black fashion and music, to die-ins, hands-up, and the technologization of the movement through social media, Black Twitter, hashtags, and memes. The language and literacies of the Black Lives Matter movement represent diverse identities within Black community, vernacular associated with various economic and educational classes, diaspora, culturally rooted, Hip Hop generations, cis-gendered women, men, as well as LGBTQ and gender non-conforming. In this way, the language and literacies of BLM promote the value of ALL Black lives.

**6:30 p.m. — 8 p.m.**  
**Thursday, March 21**  
*Reception will follow lecture*

SASC 100, FIU  
11200 SW 8th St.  
Miami, FL 33199

*The event is free  
and open to the public.*

*Part of the Donald Blechman Memorial Lecture Series*

**Department of English**  
*School of Environment, Arts and Society*  
english.FIU.edu

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## COMMUNITY LITERACY JOURNAL

As the Spring 2019 Our Common Future Lecture, Dr. Richardson's talk will also mark the official launch of the Community Literacy Journal, which is housed at FIU and generously supported by the Department of English and the Writing and Rhetoric Program. The Community Literacy Journal is an interdisciplinary journal that publishes both scholarly work that contributes to theories, methodologies, and research agendas and work by literacy workers, practitioners, and community literacy program staff. Dr. Richardson's article "#StayWoke: The Language and Literacies of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," co-authored with Alice Ragland, was featured in the Spring 2018 issue. Their essay has also been selected for the Best of the Journals in Rhetoric and Composition 2019 collection, to be published by Parlor Press.

## ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Richardson is currently Professor of Literacy Studies in the Department of Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University. Her work in various fields, including Rhetoric and Composition, Literacy Studies, Applied Linguistics, Discourse Studies, and Black Studies has been disseminated through the publication of three single-authored books, four co-edited volumes, twenty nine refereed articles and chapters in edited volumes and such prominent journals as Community Literacy Journal, College Composition and Communication, Discourse and Society, Computers and Composition, Journal of Black Studies, Journal of English Linguistics, and the Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies.

Prof. Richardson's exemplary scholarship is complemented by her professional leadership roles and the spearheading of socially oriented initiatives. She has held prominent roles in several committees established by the National Council of Teachers of English, and she has won numerous grants leading to the implementation of community-oriented literacy initiatives. Among the latter are the OSU Hiphop Literacies Conference, which she had directed since 2011, and the forging of community partnerships between her academic department and local high and middle schools in the greater Columbus, Ohio area.

Grounded in social justice approaches to language and literacy education, the compendium of Prof. Richardson's work illuminates the importance of discourse in the fashioning of culture and identity. Her critical approach to the role of discourse in society seeks to augment traditional structural approaches to linguistic analysis in order to inform our understanding of the relationships between particular modes of discourse, social privilege, and inequitable distributions of power.

In line with her three previous books, Prof. Richardson's current book-length project, entitled *Our Literacies Matter: Reading the World with Black Girls*, gives an account of her work with African-American girls in the afterschool club she established and directed in an under-resourced predominantly Black middle school in Columbus, Ohio. In this work, Prof. Richardson strives to center the girls' stories, incorporating their mothers' voices, those of other women in the community, and those of scholars, to illuminate the girls' aspirations and highlight strategies used to avoid raced and gendered societal pitfalls. In this way, Dr. Richardson invites us to imagine investing in Black girls' literacies for brave new worlds of critical collective consciousness and movement for social justice, as opposed to schooling them to literacy for compliance with larger systems of patriarchal domination, social stratification, and individualism.