

## Transcript for Season One, Episode One: Introducing Transforming the College Classroom

**Nana Osei-Kofi 00:00**

Welcome to transforming the college classroom. This is a podcast for anyone who is interested in taking up teaching and learning and higher education from a social justice informed perspective in ways that are centered on a deep commitment to teaching all students. My name is Nana Osei-Kofi, I am Director of the Difference, Power, & Discrimination Program at Oregon State University and I'm also Associate Professor of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.

**Kali Furman 00:33**

I'm Kali Furman, I'm a postdoctoral scholar with the Difference, Power, & Discrimination Program.

**Bradley Boovy 00:39**

And I'm Bradley Boovy, Associate Professor in the School of Language, Culture and Society at Oregon State and co-facilitator with Nana of the DPD Summer Academy, where we work with faculty who are developing and teaching DPD courses.

We're recording this at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, located within the traditional homelands of the Mary's River or Amphinefu Band of Kalapuya. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855 Kalapuya people were forcibly removed to reservations in Western Oregon. Today living descendants of these people are a part of the Confederated tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated tribes of the Siletz Indians.

**Kali Furman 01:16**

Our podcast grows out of our work co-editing a book together, and we're really excited to be using this platform to be in continued conversation with all the fabulous contributors that we've worked with, as well as each other. Our book, which is called *Transformative Approaches to Social Justice Education: Equity and Access in the College Classroom*, which has been published by Routledge, grew out of the Difference, Power, & Discrimination Program (or DPD program as you'll often hear us call it) here at Oregon State University. Our book features a breadth of perspectives on situating issues of difference and power as central to disciplinary knowledge building and teaching through a social justice lens. All of the contributors to the volume, including ourselves, have been engaged in different ways with the DPD program. And so, Nana, would you like to tell us a little bit more about what exactly the DPD Program is?

**Nana Osei-Kofi 02:09**

Absolutely. It is many things really, but I guess the way that I'll describe it, it's a faculty development program and it's been in operation for close to 30 years now. And it actually came into being as a result of student demands that OSU courses take up issues of race and other forms of oppression. So what we have today as a result of that is that students here at OSU can take courses with a DPD designation. These courses are available across all fields and disciplines. And in these courses, they can basically be assured that issues of power, of privilege, discrimination, difference and oppression are matters that are taken up and fully engaged. And so what the faculty development component of this program does is to work with faculty, to develop new courses that fit into this DPD category, that then carry this designation. We also, at times have faculty that want to revise existing courses so that they will meet the criteria for these courses, being the engagement of difference of power of discrimination and so on and so forth.

And as Kali mentioned, the episodes that you will hear over the next year are based on the work that faculty are doing to offer these types of learning experiences to students. And I think from there, maybe Bradley, do you want to say a little bit about OSU because I think that where we are located and the work that we're doing is institutionally dependent. And so I think that's a valuable piece to have in terms of understanding this podcast and the work that we're doing and where it's coming from.

#### **Bradley Boovy 04:04**

Thanks Nana. Well OSU or Oregon State University is a land-grant institution, and there are many land-grant institutions around the United States, but it traces its origin to the first Morrill Act of 1862. The first Morrill Act really established the land-grant system in the United States. And in the context of our conversations here, I think it's really important to note that while the Land-Grant Act was critical in the development of US higher education, its impacts have really been much broader than higher ed and point to the foundations of US public higher education in histories of genocide, dispossession of indigenous people, as well as the enslavement of Africans and their descendants. So there's really this kind of history of injustice that is intertwined with the history of the Morrill Act and land-grant institutions in the US.

The Act was passed during the civil war, a little bit of history just briefly, it was passed during the Civil War and it wasn't only motivated by an interest in providing opportunities for higher education for working class people in this context, right, middle of the 19th century, this is of course understood as white male working class people. So just to be clear on that. The Act was also really passed to ensure that the country would not be without the agricultural and industrial infrastructure that was in place at that point in the event that the Confederacy won the war. So again, it's really tied to the Civil War and to all of the kind of the histories of oppression and racism that surrounds that particular moment and the Civil War more broadly. So race really was foundational in this, in the first Morrill Act, it was a foundational component of the first Morrill Act.

The second Morrill Act then established black land-grant institutions in 1890 and tellingly the black land-grant institutions were not given nearly the same amount of financial support to develop the same kinds of robust research and educational programs that their 1862 counterparts had developed. So there's really kind of also a discrepancy there, that again points back to some of the legacies of racial injustice kind of embedded in the Morrill Acts. And then finally, I think as a final note, it's even, I think more telling that tribal land-grant colleges and universities weren't established until 1994. And that's nearly 150 years after the first land-grant Act in 1862. So as you listen to this podcast, we'd like to really ask you to keep this history in mind as a really important kind of undercurrent of all of the conversations that we will have as we think about the DPD, Difference, Power and Discrimination, Program embedded at Oregon State University and also connecting it to larger histories of higher education in the United States. So Kali, do you want to tell us a little bit about how the book came together?

**Kali Furman 06:51**

Yeah, absolutely. I'd love to. So our book really started as a collaborative project and that really was the guiding sort of principle as we worked through it from start to finish. So the three of us as co-editors approached an interdisciplinary group of faculty across Oregon State University who have experience being engaged with the DPD program, both through teaching DPD courses at Oregon State, as well as helping to be guest facilitators and contributors to the DPD Summer Academy, which is that faculty development arm of the program that supports faculty in developing DPD courses. And so our contributors are all folks who are deeply committed to teaching through a social justice lens and who are engaged in scholar activism and social justice work across campus and in the broader communities in which we live and that we're a part of.

And so we really wanted to, by bringing together this interdisciplinary group of faculty, honor the fact that DPD is interdisciplinary in nature, that these courses are taught across the institution and also really push back against the siloing that so often happens in higher education, where folks from different academic areas don't interact with each other, because you're so sort of engaged and engrossed in your own college and your own work. And so pushing back against that siloing. And so we really sought to put the book together in such a way that we could all collaboratively work together and be really intentional in our work together. And so one of the key ways that we did this was we hosted a three day retreat with all of our contributors where we peer reviewed each other's drafts of our chapters and talked about our collective vision for the project.

And so we paired up folks to sort of really intentionally read each other's drafts and provide meaningful feedback to each other and engage in broader conversations. And so at our retreat, we sort of shared food and beverages and we laughed a lot. It's a very humorous group. Humor was a really important part of our process, I think. And so we also had really at times, intense and engaging conversations about the work of social justice education, not just in the context of our particular chapters and in the specificity of the DPD program, but also more broadly about the work of social justice education in a neoliberal academy and what we see as

possibilities for the future of social justice focused teaching and learning in US higher education more broadly.

And that's what we really hope that everyone can get from this book project is a specific example, really tangibly of how this is done in a specific context at Oregon State, but also how might folks take up this sort of lens and project and apply it in their own context, in their own institutions and engage in this work as well.

**Nana Osei-Kofi 09:38**

Yeah, that's a great description. And so as you probably gathered by now what we are doing in this podcast, the way that we're kicking it off, is going to be engaging the contributors to the book and the title of the book is *Transformative Approaches to Social Justice Education* colon, always got to have a colon [laughter] *Equity and Access in the College Classroom*. So what our contributors will be doing is sharing their key ideas, their approaches to teaching and learning for justice, based on their own experiences in the classroom and with students. It's very much based on trial and error, based on things that they learned along the way.

So it really mirrors our idea, our concept, our vision for the book, which is, what we hope, is that as you're listening to this podcast, you are, it feels as though you're sitting around a table with colleagues, with like-minded people that share these interests and having a conversation around, how do we actually do this? What's worked for you? What hasn't worked? How might we make this better? How can we do this differently? And what you'll notice throughout the podcast series is that our contributors are at different places in their journey when it comes to doing this work. So it's our hope that no matter where you are in the process, that you'll find the information useful to you, that you will find content and ideas, materials, and suggestions that are valuable and useful to your own work, no matter where you are in that process. And so we're just going to tell you a little bit about the different sections, the different chapters and what you will have the opportunity to learn about and to engage with as we move forward.

**Bradley Boovy 11:28**

Yeah, thanks Nana. The first section of *Transformative Approaches to Social Justice Education* takes us into the archives. I'm quite a fan of archives, so I love talking about these chapters. Here, each of the authors leverages collaborative archival research to challenge dominant understandings of injustice and social justice in higher ed contexts. In the first chapter, which is coincidentally also our first content episode, our first interview, Dr. Kali Furman, situates the book and the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Program within a history of student activism at Oregon State and in higher education more broadly. Drawing on archival research and interviews with students and faculty, Kali opens the notion that institutional transformation is driven primarily by faculty and administrators and repositions student activists at the forefront of struggles for justice in US higher education.

In the second chapter, Natalia Fernández, curator of the Oregon Multicultural Archives in the Oregon State Queer Archives, draws on her experience working with faculty to develop collaborative curricula that focus on teaching students how to conduct archival research and interrogate dominant histories. Through three case studies, Natalia offers detailed examples of how faculty and archivists can work together to center histories of minoritized communities in their classes.

The third and final chapter by Dr. Natchee Barnd builds on and rounds out the first section of the book by offering an overview of the social justice tour of Corvallis that Natchee has been developing with students in his ethnic studies methodology courses over the past several years. Here, Natchee reminds us that we need not look very far to find histories of injustice in the places we live and teach, as well as opportunities to resist oppression by uncovering histories that are yet to be told.

So all three of these chapters, and the interviews that we will have with their authors, conversations that we'll have with their authors, I think will really appeal to anyone who incorporates archival and historical research into their teaching, as well as those who are looking for more collaborative models for teaching about social justice.

I'll also talk a little bit about section two. Section two is titled Frameworks for Transformative Pedagogies and that's really kind of something I want to highlight as we go through just these brief descriptions. The section really focuses on strategies to shift pedagogical practice toward greater justice and equity for all students. In the first chapter in this section, Dr. Stephanie Jenkins and Martha Smith, Director of OSU Disability Access Services, start off with their chapter on Universal Design for Instruction. Here, Stephanie and Martha offer a detailed overview and accounts of various ways to use UDI to improve access for all students.

The next chapter in this section by Dr. Jenny Myers addresses the need to be intentional in online course design where social justice is a primary goal. Jenny observes that although online courses increase access, faculty must also be aware of the ways in which learning can replicate colonizing educational structures, norms, and biases.

In her chapter on Peace Literacy Dr. Sharyn Clough introduces a framework for incorporating Peace Literacy in courses dealing with social justice. Sharyn describes a classroom art exercise that she's also used to great effect with faculty in the DPD Summer Academy, the faculty training that we have every summer, to bring awareness to the ways in which cognitive biases interact with and perpetuate structural injustices. And then closing out the second section Dr. Erich Pitcher and Charlene Martinez focus on the role of healing in social justice education. Drawing on their collaboration in an arts and social justice living, learning community, Erich and Charlene outline pedagogical practices aimed at healing and wholeness, not only for students, but also for faculty.

So the chapters and episodes from this section, the second section of the book, I think will be really most applicable and interesting for anyone who's looking to incorporate transformative

pedagogical frameworks into their teaching. And yeah, I'll turn it over to Kali Furman for the third section.

**Kali Furman 15:15**

Yeah, absolutely. Thanks Bradley. So our third section of the book is centered around the theme of Destabilizing Dominant Narratives. And so in this section, we have chapters that center pedagogical approaches that unsettle what is often taken for granted in traditional narratives about disciplines and about teaching in the college classroom. And so in our first chapter in this section, Dr. H. Rakes and Dr. Qwo-Li Driskill talk about the creation of a Queer studies curriculum and pedagogical approaches that seek to uproot multiple forms of oppression by specifically centering Queer and Trans pedagogies of color and people of color.

Dr. Marta Maldonado also takes up sort of the issue of multiple roots of oppression in her chapter, which focuses on teaching about Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Labor in the Latinx Studies Classroom.

Dr. Allison Hurst chapter takes up pedagogical tools to break the silence about social class, particularly in the context of social justice classrooms where other issues are often at the fore, but issues of social class are not directly engaged. And she talks about her own experiences as a working class academic.

And then finally in this section, we have our power duo of Dr. Nana Osei-Kofi and Dr. Bradley Boovy [background laughter] who talk about teaching race in historically and predominantly white classrooms through their different social locations and what they've learned through that process and their collaborations together.

And so these chapters offer us all insight into not only ways of teaching topic-specific content, such as issues of race, gender, and class, but also the importance of a context informed place based approach to knowing yourself and knowing your students when you're engaging in a social justice lens of teaching. Nana would you like to tell us about our fourth and final section?

**Nana Osei-Kofi 16:56**

Sure, sounds like that brings us to section four. In section four we focus on Rethinking Approaches to Disciplinary Content, and we have four chapters in that section.

The first chapter is by Dr. Amy Koehlinger and Kryn Freehling-Burton, and it's on Religious Bias, Christian Privilege, and Anti-Muslimism in the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Classroom. And what they do here is they basically challenge commonly held beliefs about Christianity, especially and religion generally, in the US.

This is followed a chapter by Dr. Ronald Mize it's titled, "¡Sí, se puede! Teaching Farmworker Justice in the Land Grant University". And in this chapter, Ron recounts his experiences with

teaching farmworker justice courses, shares his process for implementing experimental learning approaches developed by Ethnic Studies scholars in these courses. And so part of it is his own experience, but he also engages with the ways in which Ethnic Studies scholars across the country also take up farmworker justice in their courses and in their coursework.

From there, we have a chapter that looks at STEM, and this is by Dr. Glencora Borradaile it's titled, "Listen up, STEM: We Don't Just Teach Facts". And this is a chapter where what Glencora does is compared two teaching experiences, both in STEM classrooms, an engineering classroom and a computer science classroom. And the focus is on her efforts to support both undergraduate and graduate students in understanding individual, institutional, and structural discrimination. And this is actually the only chapter in the book that deals with graduate education; however, what we found in looking at and engaging with it, I think we're confident that it speaks to the undergraduate classroom as well.

And then this section concludes with a chapter by Dr. Linda Richards and Dr. Marisa Chappell, "Show, Don't Tell: Teaching Social Justice at the Source". And this is about using primary sources in classrooms. So as a pedagogical approach, using these primary sources to allow students to discover important historical lessons for themselves. So it's an approach that rather than telling students, they're actually working with the content and working with the material to figure these things out. And it's focused on deepening their understanding of unequal power relations in different ways that address Difference, Power, and Discrimination and so they also have very much a focus on the idea of developing, or the notion I should probably say, of developing historical empathy.

So our hope is that as you can see from the variety of topics covered, this is a podcast and a book for anyone teaching in higher education with an interest in justice issues and issues of social and economic justice. And one of our hopes is actually that faculty at our institution as well as faculty at other institutions across the nation will come together and read and discuss this material as part of learning communities. Our hope is in some ways that it will replicate the way that we worked in creating the text. The way that we worked with our colleagues, we found it to be such a powerful approach and such a rich learning experience.

So in the next episode, as Bradley shared earlier, we will be talking with Dr. Kali Furman about her chapter on the history of the DPD program and the role of student activism in creating curricular change. Despite the fact that the history of the program goes back almost 30 years, what Kali will discuss continues to be very, very current. And so don't miss out on what she has to share.

**Bradley Boovy 21:04**

We'd like to thank Orange Media Network and their podcast director, Jen Dirstine.

**Kali Furman 21:09**

This podcast is sponsored by the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Program. More information on the DPD program, our book, and the transcripts for this podcast are available at <https://dpd.oregonstate.edu>.

**Nana Osei-Kofi 21:22**

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