

Transcript for Season One, Episode Eight: Building Peace Literacy Skillsets

Nana Osei-Kofi 00:08

Welcome to Transforming the College Classroom. This is a podcast for anyone who is interested in taking up teaching and learning in 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'm Director of the Difference, Power, and Discrimination program at Oregon State University. And I'm also Associate Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Kali Furman 00:32

I'm Kali Furman, I'm a postdoctoral scholar with the Difference, Power, and 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.

Bradley Boovy 01:15

Nana and I are here today with our guest, Dr. Sharyn Clough. Shari, can you introduce yourself to our listeners and tell them a little bit about the work you do?

Sharyn Clough 01:23

Thanks, Bradley. And first of all, I just want to say Bradley and Nana, it's such a privilege to be here and be part of this project and thank you for the invite, both for the podcast and to be part of this book. I've been looking through the work of my colleagues and I'm just amazed at what we've all put together. It's just great. So, who am I? So, I'm a full professor at Oregon State University. I'm originally from Canada. I'm now a dual citizen, the US doesn't recognize my dual citizenship, but Canada does. [laughter]

Nana Osei-Kofi 01:56

Yay. Oh Canada. [laughter]

Sharyn Clough 01:59

Well, of course, Canada is not immune from all kinds of global issues as we've seen recently. And of course, historically with issues of indigeneity and injustice, those are unfortunately across all kinds of borders. So, in fact, I've learned more about the residential school system in Canada since I've been in the US than I ever did growing up, which is of course how those narratives go.

So, let's see. I'm a professor at Oregon State University, said that. Okay. Right. Yeah. And I'm a professor of philosophy. And I came to philosophy mostly as an undergraduate through interest in science. And the kinds of questions that I was interested in once I saw how they cashed out in terms of the scientific apparatus, brought to bear on answering them. There seemed to be such a disconnect between the questions that were so cool and the reductive answers that came out of the science. And so someone told me, you know what you're really interested in is philosophy of science, which I didn't even know there was such a thing. So, that kind of got me into philosophy of science and interested in method and objectivity.

And then there was a brief moment where it looked like feminist theory might have something to say about a connection between masculine thinking and objectivity, which I thought was kind of cool for about a week. And then I thought, nah, I really think us feminists need to keep objectivity as one of our tools. That's an important tool for us to keep. And so anyway, worked on trying to think about how could we talk about objectivity in science, even though we know that almost every scientific endeavor, in so far as is done by humans, is these humans bring with them all the kinds of biases that normal humans do. And there's something about different kinds of notions of scientific method that should filter those biases out. But not always. And so I'm now not even calling those failure modes anymore. Now it's just, okay. So, we have humans doing science and humans are flawed in fairly consistent patterned ways that if we live in a socially unjust world, those patterns will reproduce in science.

So, what remains of objectivity? Because some of that science works really well. So, are there other kinds of ways to think about biases and values and politics and worldviews and all of that mess? Are there other ways to think about that not just as interrupting objectivity, but increasing objectivity? How and under what circumstances? And so that was like a 20-year project of how can we think about, say feminist politics, sometimes under very specific circumstances that I don't have time to spell out here and it's going to completely be relevant to particular projects.

It seems bringing a feminist, a very well-defined feminist worldview, to a particular science project actually might make it more objective by helping see different kinds of racist and sexist and homophobic and ageist biases. Just name those as examples. So, the science might be

better under certain circumstances when there's more values involved or more explicit values involved. And what do those values look like? And what do those circumstances? It's very counterintuitive in some ways. So, 20 years arguing that with about 20 people in my field. [laughter] This is foreshadowing to different moves in my life. One is that leading up to the presidential election in 2016, which was the first one I could vote in as an American Citizen. So, that's part of why I told you about my Canadian origins. I had been bringing to my social justice work and my interest in feminism and anti-racist work.

I was thinking what tools had I brought leading up to the election, which just for readers, it didn't go my way, the election and readers, listeners. That's interesting, right? I'm just so used to, you all have been reading this. And so ran into this guy, Paul K. Chappelle, a colleague of mine who I think you're already interviewing in another context, Linda Richards, who'd been interested in peace work forever. And I love her work and I love what she does, and she's all into peace. I'm like, oh peace. Oh. I was the one on the front lines every time at every march, no justice, no peace. And I'm like, well, peace is a great aspiration. Of course, we all want a peaceful world. But I had no sense of what that would look like or how you would get there and just focus social justice.

We must fix the structures that undergird in such unequal ways, the society we live in and make the world a really difficult place unnecessarily so for all kinds of people for no good reason. That's what we got to work on. And for the listeners out there I'm clenching my fist and [grrr] ... Okay, so Chappelle comes into town at Linda's invitation and he's got this idea that peace is actually a literacy. Or not actually, it's another cool way to think about peace that's maybe more helpful as not just as a goal, but maybe as a skill set. And like scales fell from my eyes. And I started to thinking what skills did I bring to my social justice work, period? Okay. So, as a philosopher, analytic skills of taking dense ideas and making them more dense. [laughter] But primarily the two skills I had, some of you heard me tell the story before. Two main skills I brought to this were moral outrage and sarcasm. That's what I had. [laughter]

Nana Osei-Kofi 07:54

[laughter] This is true.

Sharyn Clough 07:55

Yeah. And it makes you laugh when I say that. So, bringing humor to tense situations, especially when you're teaching this material, as I often had been for 25 years at that point, that's one helpful place for the sarcasm. But sarcasm is a kind of passive aggression. As I researched peace literacy a little more, we think about aggression when people are behaving aggressively, myself, for example, that I'm in distress of some kind and never once for a second thought about what distress I might have been in that had evoked the sarcasm. And most of the students would laugh when I would make a sarcastic comment. So, that was a lot of reinforcement. But if it was directed at a particular student, they usually weren't laughing or they were laughing kind of haha but inside dying.

And I hadn't really thought about how aggressive that can sometimes be and what sort of distress was I in that elicited that. So, I came to my projects with moral outrage and sarcasm and I was done with those. Like by the time of the election, I mean, maybe all of us just run against a wall and just exhausted. And so I was looking for something new and peace literacy was a new frame. It just hit me at the right time. And there were lots of other things going on in my life. Lots of midlife stuff that is looking for ways in which patterns of behavior that I'd been using that I probably adopted when I was four as survival skills in a pretty terrible family. When those keep coming up as your go to when you're 40, that gets a little embarrassing.

And then now I look around at so many 40-year-olds and you can see when they're in times of crisis. Oh, there's a four-year-old in there. Oh. So, where am I? Sarcasm. Sarcasm and moral outrage. So, what are some other skills? So, I started to work with Paul on, if we think of peace as literacy, then that means there's a whole set of skills that we like. If the metaphor of literacy is really helpful here, think about literacy and reading and writing. We teach that for kids from preschool, all the way up to all of us at university and people still struggle. It's really difficult. But it opens up all kinds of worlds for you if you can read and write. And this is despite the fact that most kids have a capacity for language anyway, most of them.

That's going to come and develop on its own, but we still, we put in tons of time. What if we put in tons of time on peace skills as well and understood in fairly specific and technical ways. All right. So, that then became, oh, so here I have been for 25 years talking about how all we need to do in our science, especially around science that has controversial policy implications like mandated vaccines or changes to the economy as a result of concerns about climate science, climate change. All we have to do is understand the values at stake. Check what kind of empirical evidence is being brought to bear in the case of each set of values and decide among them, which values we're going to go with. And that's all, that's all we have to do. That turns out that's one thing we have to do.

And then given that there's so much debate about these and it's getting so polarized, you probably ... It's one thing to say that, it's another thing to get down in the trenches to use a military metaphor and do the work. And I had no idea how to do that at all. So, then if you are going to have conversations about changing massive social structures, there is a set of skills that will probably make you more effective at it, then you would otherwise be. And so just wanting to change the structures, knowing something about how those structures are contingent and could have been otherwise, but here we are and we have to undo them. The first thing you're going to have to do is call up someone who disagrees with you, right? And increasingly we're giving ourselves permission to think of that person as a moral enemy and as someone maybe not even worth talking to. So, that's limited effectiveness. So, here I am.

Nana Osei-Kofi 12:24

Yeah, yeah, no. So, I mean, what I'm hearing is this is the work of peace literacy. I mean, it sounds like. And so you wrote this chapter, it's titled "Peace Literacy, Cognitive Bias, and

Structural Injustice.” And I was thinking about what you were saying earlier about flawed humans. It seems like in some ways it's, maybe this is part of how we address the fact that we're all flawed humans and what that might lead to. So, I'm actually thinking about, because you were talking about different historical moments and politically thinking about the present moment. And Russia invading Ukraine, of course, and all the complexities around that. And then I think there are conversations in social justice communities around the ways in which the Western world is responding to that and how that looks different from the ways in which the response to citizens of Afghanistan, for example, and those types of things. So, maybe a place to start since we're talking about teaching peace literacy, what can peace literacy offer us in helping us or helping students and actually all of us, I think we're all students really, understand current conditions and help shift them?

Sharyn Clough 13:46

Right. Uh [laughs]

Nana Osei-Kofi 13:47

It's a big question. [laughs]

Sharyn Clough 13:50

I was going to say [laughs]. How can peace literacy fix the problems in Ukraine? Okay. And I knew this question was going to come up. [laughter] Well, thank you for the question.

Nana Osei-Kofi 13:59

Welcome.

Sharyn Clough 14:00

I do want to back up just a little, because I want to acknowledge another shift in my career that I think also is exemplified by the conversation we're having. And I'm so pleased is that moved from 25 years of trying to make these particular technical arguments about objectivity and philosophy of science, so, for complicated social policy, to an audience of about 20 people. The move to public philosophy, which thankfully is also being recognized, not just by me, but by other folks in the discipline of philosophy, that there are other ways of doing philosophy. That philosophers have some skills that they ought to bring to bear in the larger public debates, which changes how you think of yourself and that changes your skillset.

So, the peace literacy shift was accompanied also by a recognition that, for myself anyway, and lot of other folks, that philosophy ought to have at least if not its main focus, a good sideline of having conversations in the public. And so I'm so pleased with you two, for incorporating these kind of conversations into the book project. So, that said, Ukraine. One of the reasons why I

never took peace seriously. Although of course I was for it, let's be clear. Who's against it? [laughs] Oh my goodness, anyway, anyway. One of the reasons I didn't really take it seriously was because I did, in my head, it was filed very closely to civility, understood as kind of a passive acquiescence to, and making nice. And anyone who's grown up in a family of alcoholics and violent abuse, as I have, knows that those kids are very good at papering over and making nice.

And I certainly didn't think, and very few people do, that that's the adequate response to some kind of massive military action, like what's going on. So, and I had never really read much about Gandhi or King in the ways ... And I mean, here's two guys filled with moral outrage. I mean, they were not, not angry. They had this other kind of way of framing that. So, if peace isn't acquiescing and it's not passive, or if it's best not thought of that way, then what moves does it allow or countenance. And I've just been thinking about all the different ways that if folks on, I was going to say either side, like as if there's just two sides. And what's going on in Ukraine and Russia right now, there's multiple stakeholders.

Oh my gosh. I just used the word stakeholder. Oh, that's because we're in the university, please excuse me. Anyway, there's multiple players. And there's multiple sorts of decision points at which peace literacy moves and frameworks could actually change the conversation. And some of those are small. If Russians are, well now I don't want to sound like I'm giving advice to anybody, because I'm not in the midst of a firestorm. But I think it's easier to sort of do Monday morning quarterbacking and see, oh, if only this particular thing hadn't been recognized. So, there are some pretty predictable things once we think about trauma, when we think about trauma and its ubiquity and we see ... I don't want to psychoanalyze Putin, but fortunately you don't have to because it's all out there. It's just out there. There are moves to make that will elicit in him certain, fairly predictable responses and moves to make that wouldn't. And what kinds of options are live options and what options are foreclosed.

Anyway, the project of peace literacy is, it's difficult, but not impossible. You're doing two things at once. Paul and I, and a group of educators in the US and Canada for now and some folks also in Nigeria and some folks in Germany and some folks in Japan. And I think there's a couple of folks in the UK are, I'm more in touch with the folks in US and Canada for sure, are trying to get peace literacy skills and concepts in curriculum in K through 12. For the rest of us who missed out on all of that, we're all now playing catch up.

And we often use metaphors of playing basketball that imagine you threw a bunch of kids into the gymnasium and gave them basketballs or a basketball and said, okay, go play. And without any training it would be a mess. And we wouldn't expect them to be that good. And also when they floundered, we wouldn't be weeping for humanity. Oh, the failures of humans. Look, we can't naturally play basketball. And so similarly, we don't really give students any training in listening with empathy, perspective taking, recognizing when people are behaving aggressively that they're in distress, addressing that distress. We don't help them with any of that. And so we shouldn't be surprised when we see everything unfolding, fairly predictably. We know, historians ... This has happened before and it's fairly predictable. And so I don't mean that as a

cynical kind of, eh. But more like that actually gives hope because there's no reason to give up on humans, just teach them basketball or teach them in this case peace literacy.

The metaphor goes further that it's helpful to have at least one person on the team that understands the rules of basketball. But it would of course be better if more people did. And so there's this kind of iterative movement and lots of folks have peace literacy skills and frameworks and what we would call peace literacy skills and frameworks and concepts. They either lucked out and had parents who were sort of skilled, or they had a teacher, or they came to them in some other way. But trying to systematize them and see them as part of a bigger sort of project and movement is the task. So, I'm seeing lots of really beautiful movements from folks in Russia. I'm seeing really impressive moves from some Ukrainians on the ground.

I'm particularly concerned, as I know we all are about the ways in which social media is being marshaled almost as another player, which of course is not a surprise. And it's very difficult to know what kind of messages that we get are accurate. And here's a place where viewers won't know this just based on what I've said so far. But peace literacy comes, Paul is the founder, he was trained at West Point and served in the military and became a captain and retired as a captain. And I'm embarrassed that good, or good here means effective militaries. Like in some elements of the US military, know way more about how to change people's hearts and minds, how to build communities, how to get people working together. And the propaganda machines that we're watching kick in on both pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian.

I don't know if you're watching RT, the Russian television. It's just playbook. It's amazing how many stories are getting told to rally people to do things they would not normally do. Learning, for example, that it's really hard to get humans to kill each other. That was an astonishing, an astonishing insight to me. And it's not until you read military psychology and military history that you realize they know that. And so they have a ton of things they put into place to get people, to be able to kill each other and be willing to die for each other. And the sorts of narratives you have to have to get people being willing to die. Holy. All those narratives are in place now. All of them, in both Russia and Ukraine. So, sometimes peace literacy there can be a lens through which you can explain what's going on. And then there are smaller moves by citizens that could be made that could make the situation less worse, almost every decision point.

Nana Osei-Kofi 23:14

Yeah. I mean, I'm hearing, just knowing, I mean, sort of the lens, right? Just knowing some of what you shared. I can see how that has an impact. I'm curious, also you were talking about what happens to humans, little humans and what peace literacy can give them, all of us. I'm wondering is there a connection between peace literacy and trauma informed pedagogy?

Sharyn Clough 23:45

Yes.

Nana Osei-Kofi 23:46

Okay.

Sharyn Clough 23:46

Absolutely.

Nana Osei-Kofi 23:47

I felt like there was something there I wasn't sure.

Sharyn Clough 23:52

And so I'm really appreciating the trauma informed ... Well, it's become a bit of a cliché that we have to be careful to ... I mean, and maybe listeners will know about the ACEs score, adverse childhood ... oh, come on ... something survey. Where you check off boxes of how many times you witnessed or had something terrible happen to you by this age. And that score for all that it's super productive is actually very predictive of a number of outcomes for adults later in life. Having an ACEs score, I suppose, is one helpful element to know about a person. But I think the main question of trauma informed anything of not what's wrong with you, but what happened to you, it just opens up a whole other space.

And I think, I don't know if you folks had this worry. I certainly did coming into the peace literacy work. No one likes to be psychologized. You come and you bring a particular concern to the table and then someone says, oh, did your daddy hurt you? And it's a move to like, you are talking at this level and they want to respond at some other level. And so obviously understanding trauma doesn't mean trying to psych out the other person, but it doesn't take much to, as I said, with someone like Putin, people often give us permission to, they tell us lots of information about where they're at. And if we can create the right circumstances where instead of in fact, addressing whatever sort of aggressive, in the case where someone's behaving aggressively, or you're finding yourself responding with aggression, building the trust where you can dig a little deeper is ...

What if we all just got better at helping each other cope with the distress that we're feeling rather than responding back with aggression. We have a principal at Corvallis High School actually, and she's now retired, but she was like, if we could just get the students and staff and administrators and counselors, just to recognize that aggression is a response to distress. That would just be a game changer. And so I didn't really address trauma directly there, but you could imagine how trauma comes into the picture. Yeah. Yeah.

Bradley Boovy 26:32

So, I'm thinking. Thanks so much, Sharyn. I'm thinking specifically, so actually I'm thinking about the title of your piece. So, you got the peace literacy, cognitive bias, structural injustice. And from everything you're telling us so far, and because I share some of the initial kind of, maybe reservations that you expressed about peace. The same kind of like, oh, it seems so abstract. It seems like we should all just be nice. We should just be civil with each other. So, I'm very glad you gave voice to that. Because I share that and at the same time, I find peace literacy really compelling as a framework for understanding social justice education. And so I want to think about the other two parts of your title. So, the peace literacy, how do we go from peace literacy? Which seems from what you've been telling us to be a pretty focused on the behavioral or the interpersonal. Recognizing for example, that distresses or how you put it, right. The distress is a response to-

Sharyn Clough 27:34

Anger. That aggression is a distress response. Yeah.

Bradley Boovy 27:36

Distress response, right?

Sharyn Clough 27:36

Yeah.

Bradley Boovy 27:37

To go from there to the last part of your title, which is structural injustice. So, how do we build that bridge? Because I think it's something that I struggle with. As I'm listening to what you ...

Sharyn Clough 26:48

Thank you. So, in my philosophy classes I had often, because I was trained in social psychology before I moved, before someone said, "You're really interested in philosophy of science." And I said, "What the heck is that?" I had been trained in social psych, which you talk a lot about confirmation biases and especially the fundamental attribution era is my favorite of all of them.

Bradley Boovy 28:14

Can you gloss it for us just quickly?

Sharyn Clough 28:16

Yes, absolutely. [laughs] It seems to me to be so helpful in understanding structural injustice. Or at least our response to it, or the reasons why so many structures that are unjust stay in place. It's where, when you are attributing a cause to someone's misfortune, you will often misattribute it to something within their control as opposed to looking at the larger frame. And so in the standup comedy clip that I reference in the piece, I would often have students watch this while we talked about this particular cognitive bias. Greg Giraldo, may he rest. He would talk about walking down the street and passing a homeless person or someone he understood to be homeless just by the way they were presenting. And the guy in front of him was this well-dressed business guy. And the person who's homeless, the person experiencing houselessness, let's get more specific.

And again, this is an assumption we have, is ask the guy for money and he says, get out of here, you bum, why don't you get a job? We've all heard something like that. Or had moments of it ourselves. But Giraldo steps back and goes, get a job. Like it's that easy. He says like, I don't think this guy's resume's all up to snuff for one thing. Second of all, he's wearing his underpants outside his pants and like that's a laugh line. And then we get students to think about, okay, that's a cue. Greg Giraldo's giving us information about this man. What does this tell us about this guy? Maybe he's struggling with a mental illness of some kind however defined. What that means is it's probably not within the guy's immediate control to turn around and get a job. And so the guy, the well-dressed businessman committed the fundamental attribution error.

He attributed the unfortunate circumstances of the guy who on the sidewalk to something within that guy's control, as opposed to stepping back and looking at the broader kinds of circumstances that might better explain his situation that were not in any obvious way within his control. The flip side of that is a self-serving bias. Which is where, if things don't go well for us, we tend not to go to, wow, I really suck. I mean, I should say there are graduate students even now working on all of the counterexamples to all of these. [laughter] But they're all well worked out. I got to say they're all pretty much worked out. There's cross-cultural work on this. Some of this in certain context with folks of different genders, it plays out differently. But the broad trend still holds remarkably robustly.

Many of us will under certain circumstances more than we should. If something bad happens to us, instead of looking at what we could have done to change, we will be like, no. If we do badly on a test, no, the professor didn't give us the right study guide or whatever, right? Like automatically it's something beyond our control. So, we will over attribute external control when it's us and over attribute internal control when it's a misfortune with someone else. So, and then how that ties in with race, there's been some work to ... That's that story is a little more complicated, but blaming someone's misfortune on a racial characteristic, that itself is standing in for a bunch of other explanations that are things beyond their control as sort of a standard move. So, that bias is one that's always fascinated me.

Nana Osei-Kofi 32:00

So, Shari, you started saying something about an art exercise that you use in classrooms and you discuss it in your chapter. So, we know from having worked with you in the past that this is an exercise that has a lot of impact. I think, on all audiences or participants, whether they're students, faculty that have gone through the experience of being involved with this. Tells us a little bit about the exercise. And also, do you have a sense of why it has such pedagogical power?

Sharyn Clough 32:33

Oh gosh. Well thank you. So, I was talking about the fundamental attribution error and I think, in its relationship to structural injustice. And I think this exercise gets at that step. So, what I do is divide, and I attribute, I did not come up with this exercise. The attribution info and stuff is in the book. But-

Nana Osei-Kofi 32:56

Buy the book.

Sharyn Clough 32:57

Buy the book, please. [laughter] Yes. And so I divide the students up into groups of about four or five and it's best if there's like at least five groups. And I give them all envelopes that have art supplies in them. This is after we've done some sort of intro stuff on structural injustice and how it affects, because I'm a philosopher, epistemology who gets to know whose testimony counts, whose testimony doesn't, who counts as a knower. All of that is influenced by social categories.

We've talked a little bit about that. So, now you're going to have a chance to illustrate one of those concepts via a mobile. Like the mobiles that hangover baby's cribs. I'm going to give you a hanger and a bunch of supplies and you have 45 minutes to choose a theme and then make an art, a sculpture. And I'm going to give you all your supplies. Let's think, that's going to be a contest. So, the contest part is important. What are some criteria that you all look for? And they all know, and if they don't know, I show Alexander Calder's, a picture of one of his mobiles. And so what kind of criteria should we look for? And most of them will say color at some point. If they don't, I make sure that colors a criterion. Creativity, movement, originality, those kind of things.

And so I then distribute and I get them seated so that we're all in one room. They could see each other, but I tell them because originality is one of the criterion or creativity, try and keep your ideas, don't let other people see your cool idea. So, they could look around, but I discourage it through that by invoking that criterion. Give them 45 minutes. And then I take all of their sculptures and I put them up at the front and then they vote on them with little slips of

paper, which one they liked, you can't vote for your own. But what they don't know is I have not distributed the supplies equitably. So, some students get, or participants, get felt pens and colored cardboard paper, and all kinds of colorful, glue sticks and scissors and yarn. And everyone gets a hanger. But then one or two groups will, depending on the size will just get a hanger, three pieces of white thread or string, two pencils, one of which is broken. And no tape, no scissors, nothing. Oh. And then three index cards. And then go. 45 minutes. Go. And it's heartbreaking to see the folks who are the underprivileged in this context, just try so hard.

And there's three hypotheses that come out of this. One is that the folks who have all the things they need will never notice that there's been an inequitable distribution. The other is that the folks who don't have what they need will typically be the ones looking around. And often what it'll be is the squeak of scissors. They'll hear, and it's like little gopher heads, just go up, hey, hey. And then I have to run over to that group and debrief them and say, okay, actually this is going to be an exercise to see if they notice.

And so they never do. They never do. And then typically the people who have the really crappy supplies, that's reflected in their ... And if we had more time, I would talk about the times where it's not reflected and what do we do then? Because sometimes the groups that don't have what they need come up with some kind of like Disney underdog thing, where they come up with this amazing Rube Goldberg contraption that's just unbelievable. Anyway. And then often the folks who have everything they need come up with the most mediocre things you've ever seen. But there will often be one that's really good. And it's usually the folks who've got all the supplies they needed and it gets all the votes. So, then I'll ask them, I'll try and get them to see, and it's usually some white woman sort of outed herself as a little liberal.

I'll have her in my sights and it'll be okay. Why did you not vote for the group that, group number four, whatever, that's the two little sticks tied with string hanging from a thing that's supposed to represent something. And she'll say, oh, well, I guess I just thought, why didn't they use color. And it seemed maybe they didn't use their time well. I'm sorry you guys, I don't want you to take this personally, but I just thought the other group did ... And they'd never like saying anything bad about anybody. But it's really great if she can evoke that they weren't trying, or they didn't use their time well, or they didn't follow instructions like why would they not have? And so then when I reveal that, in fact, I messed with them, then there's this moment of oh gosh.

And then, yeah. And so then I ask them to reflect on how this illustrates the fundamental attribution era. That they're explanations for why the one group did so poorly had to do with internal features of the group and almost never of a structural sort of maybe Clough messed with the distribution. Twice and only twice in over 20 years, has anyone ever asked. And it was in one of your DPD seminars was one of the times. Does everyone getting the same supplies? And my answer then is like, it's America, everyone gets there ... I forgot what I would say. It's the land of opportunity, and I just sort of dodge it. So, yeah, it's a great illustration. And so part of what it does is it helps us recognize that our cognitive biases, such as the fundamental attribution, keep us from actually recognizing that there is a structural problem.

So, the bias can keep us from seeing that there's a structural problem. If we think about biases then as habits of mind, and that's where the Gendler piece is really helpful, I reference in the book, buy the book. That if we think about racism, for example, and sexism and other kinds of, and we're talking now about structural problems, and how those structural problems are hard to shift, even amongst folks who themselves disavow racism, disavow sexism. That because we've all grown up. If we take the structural bit about structural stuff seriously, that means we are in the structure. And so every time we are trying to work against it, we are reinforcing the cognitive habit in our head. We're rehearsing the racism so we can unlearn it. It is very difficult then energy wise, the amount of cognitive energy required to both hold the racist thought and do, which is the shortcut.

If it's a structural thing that racist thought is the quick explanation that you go to, the homeless person just doesn't have a job. Whatever, it's the quick [snaps fingers] ... If we think of our brains as machines that need glucose, they need energy to do what they do. That's the path of least resistance. So, if we're asking our brains to go the hard way, it's going to take more energy. And what do we know about ... That means we need not be anxious. We need not to be stressed. We ought to engage in empathy for each other, and ourselves as we're doing that work. It can't be one of like ... We're seeing glimpses of this in social justice movements, the calling people in, rather than calling them out. Like, oh my gosh, we could talk about this forever. But anyway, the empathy moment of like, oh, we are all in this. And then what are the conditions we can create as a community to get us out of it are going to be very different than what we've been doing so far. Yeah.

Bradley Boovy 40:55

That was great. Yeah. Yeah.

Nana Osei-Kofi 40:57

So, helpful.

Bradley Boovy 40:59

No, no, absolutely. Yeah. Was there anything else Shari, before we close? Anything else you want to share about your chapter or things you want to leave our listeners with?

Sharyn Clough 41:07

Oh, so much. I'm just grateful. I do want to say to anyone, who's trying to do this work right now during ... We are still in a global pandemic, CDC, whatever be damned. Sometimes you might be feeling like you got your peace literacy skills all lined up. You've got certain kind of habits that you've accrued since you were a kid that you're trying to relearn. You're finding yourself going back to old habits or just stuff you thought you should have known better. The

goal posts have been moved. Whatever you trained for, it was not this. So, if any of you play video games, you have leveled up. And we are now in a, I mean, times are always difficult, but there are moments historically where we can look to that are particularly difficult.

Afghanistan, one of the reasons Afghanistan, we're not responding to it. There's lots of inappropriate reasons not to be responding to Afghanistan the way we ought to be. But what's going on with Ukraine could lead much more likely to global nuclear problems. So, that then the Afghanistan problem would. That level of anxiety on top of the pandemic, on top of the people that you've lost, on top of the ways of being that you've loved that are gone, is going to make all the work you're doing more difficult. And I hope you can bring some empathy for yourself as you do your work. And thank you.

Nana Osei-Kofi 42:41

Thank you!

Bradley Boovy 42:42

Thanks so much. Thanks for being with us.

Nana Osei-Kofi 42:43

Thanks for being with us. Yes. Please join us for the next episode of Transforming the College Classroom when we'll be talking with Dr. Stephanie Jenkins and Martha Smith about their chapter, which is titled "Universal Design for Instruction and Institutional Change: A Case Study." Be sure to tune in.

Bradley Boovy 42:59

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

Kali Furman 43:04

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Nana Osei-Kofi 43:16

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