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WEBVTT

1
00:00:05.050 --> 00:00:08.880
Dan Krutka: Okay, Michael, you didn't get any prep on this question.

2
00:00:09.070 --> 00:00:10.250
Michael's iPhone: No, no.

3
00:00:10.250 --> 00:00:12.690
Dan Krutka: So. So this is. This is authentic.

4
00:00:13.240 --> 00:00:20.030
Dan Krutka: When you think of the word. When you think of being in a school as a teacher, your every, your career, your.

5
00:00:20.030 --> 00:00:20.380
Michael's iPhone: Yeah.

6
00:00:20.380 --> 00:00:26.140
Dan Krutka: Experiences, and I said, I'm going to say a word, and when I say it I want you to tell me the 1st thing you think of

7
00:00:26.990 --> 00:00:27.980
Dan Krutka: difficult.

8
00:00:30.100 --> 00:00:35.639
Michael's iPhone: Oh, God, more and more stuff these days.

9
00:00:36.554 --> 00:00:42.950
Michael's iPhone: I feel like our current events is really bleeding into a lot, and

10
00:00:43.620 --> 00:00:46.389
Michael's iPhone: it makes things a little more difficult.

11
00:00:47.242 --> 00:00:50.379
Michael's iPhone: Complicated, complex needing to be unpacked.

12
00:00:53.100 --> 00:00:54.760
Michael's iPhone: That's what I'm going with.

13
00:00:54.900 --> 00:01:02.319
Dan Krutka: So I mean, so you're thinking of it as a negative word. Always right? The difficult negative right? Although, you know, sometimes like doing difficult.

14
00:01:02.320 --> 00:01:11.269
Michael's iPhone: Needing to unpack. I thought that was like kind of couching like, you know, you can do some stuff with it. But yeah, I guess the overall undertone was negative.

15
00:01:11.770 --> 00:01:35.610
Dan Krutka: I mean it's and that's that I'm not critiquing either way, like the associations we make with different words can be really powerful. I used to do an activity in my class where I would try to put an object that was. It was not always clear what it was to the students right? It'd be some kind of little piece of technology or something. I used to use those little. But I think I've told this story before. Those little Bluetooth like head things people used to wear. But if you kind of turn it

16
00:01:35.610 --> 00:01:36.190
Dan Krutka: oh, yeah.

17
00:01:36.190 --> 00:01:49.290
Dan Krutka: and you're sitting back a little, it doesn't. It like looks like different things. And so I used to ask students, I put that in the middle and we call it a perspective circle. And we'd have students look at it, and they would all just say, like, What does it make you think of? And some would say, like.

18
00:01:49.450 --> 00:02:04.289

Dan Krutka: it reminds me of like a jet ski, and it makes me think of the lake, and it makes me think of my family and other people would think of technology, and they talk about like how cumbersome it is in their lives. And so, the point being like that, we all bring different perspectives to the situation.

19
00:02:04.690 --> 00:02:08.510
Dan Krutka: But also there's a lot more than just perspectives that can come to a situation.

20
00:02:10.190 --> 00:02:12.089
Michael's iPhone: Yeah, no, it's true.

21
00:02:14.080 --> 00:02:19.989
Dan Krutka: I think I'm just trying to prep us for this deep discussion of this word we're about to have.

22
00:02:20.130 --> 00:02:39.119
Dan Krutka: All right. We're getting into this. This is like the etymological episode. We're going to get into the meaning of words. We're going to define it. We're going to look at. No, we're probably not going to do all that. But we use a lot. We use words in all these ways, in social studies, and sometimes we use them very passively. We don't think about what they mean. So can we dig into that a little tonight?

23
00:02:39.580 --> 00:02:43.839
Michael's iPhone: Sure. Sure. Now you're telling me probably cause you're asking me this question.

24
00:02:44.273 --> 00:02:49.739
Michael's iPhone: You have a guest or 2 who are somehow gonna talk about the world difficult. And I'm assuming.

25
00:02:50.000 --> 00:02:53.869
Michael's iPhone: based upon how you phrase it, it's going to be about social studies, education.

26
00:02:53.870 --> 00:02:58.079

Dan Krutka: Yeah, as always, no one wants to hear us go on much longer than this about the topic. So we.

27
00:02:58.080 --> 00:02:59.110
Michael's iPhone: That is the.

28
00:02:59.110 --> 00:03:09.829
Dan Krutka: Right. So we with that we are very happy to welcome in 2 guests the podcast friend of the pod, Dr. Britney Jones returning, and Dr. Kim Edmondson. Welcome.

29
00:03:11.960 --> 00:03:12.770
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Hello!

30
00:03:13.650 --> 00:03:14.510
Michael's iPhone: Hello!

31
00:03:15.900 --> 00:03:21.619
Brittany Jones: So happy to be back great to have you back! Jeez how it's been like.

32
00:03:22.590 --> 00:03:23.649
Michael's iPhone: Actually no no.

33
00:03:24.030 --> 00:03:34.009
Dan Krutka: Envisions of bedtime. Not that long right? I think your your episode wasn't too long ago. Of course, if anyone did miss it, we will get it in the show notes, because it was one of our favorite episodes.

34
00:03:34.010 --> 00:03:41.730
Michael's iPhone: 194. It was teaching black and white fear. Think about this a lot. Thank you for coming on to talk to us that day.

35
00:03:42.340 --> 00:03:44.729
Brittany Jones: Thank you for having me appreciate it.

36

00:03:45.290 --> 00:03:53.260
Dan Krutka: So for the rare person who missed that episode, Dr. Jones, can you start by telling us a little bit about your background in education. Then we'll go to you. Dr. Edmondson.

37
00:03:54.180 --> 00:04:09.839
Brittany Jones: Sure. So before I became a professor, and all the fun things that come along with that I, too, was a high school, social studies. Teacher, I taught primarily world history 1, 2,

38
00:04:10.210 --> 00:04:22.960
Brittany Jones: Us. History, government, all the fun things. And then, when, as as a teacher, I was constantly

39
00:04:24.440 --> 00:04:26.320
Brittany Jones: shocked and

40
00:04:26.660 --> 00:04:50.699
Brittany Jones: scared for my students, not necessarily because of them themselves, but because of the curriculum in which I was expected to teach. And a lot of my work currently thinks about the role and power of emotions and instruction and student learning and teaching, and that interest

41
00:04:50.740 --> 00:05:00.240
Brittany Jones: and stream of research really stemmed from the ways in which my students talked about how they felt when they experienced different

42
00:05:00.630 --> 00:05:29.659
Brittany Jones: phenomenon within the world, but also when they experience learning history, and how those feelings oftentimes were disconnected. So I became really interested in the role that emotions play in our understandings and the ways in which we make sense of the past and how that connects to the present. So I tell folks that I am an emotional scholar. But because words matter, it's really I'm a scholar of emotions.

43
00:05:31.440 --> 00:05:32.170
Dan Krutka: That's really

44
00:05:32.170 --> 00:05:58.540

Dan Krutka: great. And I do think about your work a lot. One of our local little brewery places had a like sing along night where we watched Hamilton and I have very mixed feelings about Hamilton in some ways, like as somebody who loves history like. I appreciate it coming to life and everything like that. But when you think about the emotions of it, that's the whole art of it. Right? Is. It? Brings emotions of characters like Alexander Hamilton.

45
00:05:58.540 --> 00:06:16.760
Dan Krutka: But then, when you have read critical critiques of the musical, you realize whose emotions are left out right. Who was in the room where it happened who you don't get to see. You don't get to understand how they feel during those times. And so it's just like present in so many moments that people feel emotions in history, but only some people's emotions

46
00:06:16.890 --> 00:06:23.689
Dan Krutka: are actually get get, you know, time in the classroom or in our history books or on our TV shows.

47
00:06:24.450 --> 00:06:25.340
Brittany Jones: Exactly right.

48
00:06:28.850 --> 00:06:31.330
Michael's iPhone: All right, Kim. We are on to you.

49
00:06:33.460 --> 00:06:43.608
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Alright. Well, thanks again. I for having us on. Well, Brittany again, I'm the long time listener. 1st time caller.

50
00:06:44.070 --> 00:06:44.650
Dan Krutka: Hi.

51
00:06:45.040 --> 00:06:54.900
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Friend of the pod from a distance. I guess. I like listening to it on my commutes, because it feels like I have buddies in the car with me. It's very nice.

52
00:06:54.900 --> 00:06:57.899
Michael's iPhone: Oh, well, thank you. We like being buddies in your car.

53
00:06:58.340 --> 00:07:00.210
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Yeah, you can.

54
00:07:00.210 --> 00:07:02.279
Michael's iPhone: Be a little bit shorter sometimes. I'm not gonna lie.

55
00:07:02.870 --> 00:07:07.821
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): That's yeah, also true. I am in

56
00:07:09.022 --> 00:07:18.190
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Edmonton or miskotchee with Skygon, and the traffic is terrible all the time. So. It's good to have buddies in the car.

57
00:07:19.217 --> 00:07:36.050
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): But I know that well, today is we're recording. On Thursday last Wednesday I successfully defended my doctoral dissertation. So I am officially, Doctor Kim Edmondson. I've been that way for about 8 days, so.

58
00:07:36.050 --> 00:07:36.630
Michael's iPhone: Woohoo.

59
00:07:36.630 --> 00:07:38.780
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Oh, yeah, it's a really.

60
00:07:38.780 --> 00:07:39.270
Michael's iPhone: Awesome.

61
00:07:39.270 --> 00:08:01.900
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Yeah, it's an exciting time, and in just a couple of days I'll be starting a new position as an assistant professor of Social studies education and curriculum theory at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. So bonus points. If you can spell Saskatchewan.

62
00:08:02.100 --> 00:08:06.719

Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): And yeah, I'm exciting excited to start that position.

63
00:08:08.570 --> 00:08:18.919
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): a little bit of my research background, my research kind of lives at the intersections of history, education, and

64
00:08:19.635 --> 00:08:36.910
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): and social studies education more broadly and teacher practice. I dapple mostly for now, anyway, in kind of post structural theories of teacher practice and and so

65
00:08:37.960 --> 00:08:46.526
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): talking about the idea of of difficult. What does difficult mean in teacher practice? Beyond just

66
00:08:47.270 --> 00:09:02.482
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): searching for a solution. To, you know, try to resolve or put a solve on something that might be difficult. My work, I I hope, challenges educators to

67
00:09:03.624 --> 00:09:25.799
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): kind of dig deep into the subjectivities that make up the that make up both their teacher selves and personal selves, and examining those the the things that are difficult and on whose terms do those difficulties arise? Is kind of a question that guides my practice.

68
00:09:26.710 --> 00:09:27.160
Dan Krutka: Well, that's really.

69
00:09:27.160 --> 00:09:28.260
Michael's iPhone: So I,

70
00:09:28.410 --> 00:09:33.424
Michael's iPhone: I have a question. And it's just about because we're going to be talking about definitions later.

71

00:09:33.830 --> 00:09:45.039
Michael's iPhone: post structural education. What do you mean like what is? Because sometimes I feel like I'm very pre structural in so much that I don't know exactly what that means. But what do you mean by post structural? If you could.

72
00:09:45.580 --> 00:10:14.412
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Sure. It's a good defense question. Prep feel prepped for it. How I understand that. I guess how post structuralism sort of sings to me is that post. Structuralism suggests that we, our identities, are not necessarily always knowable or stable. Often we define ourselves with a particular identity. But post structuralism challenges that in some respects to

73
00:10:14.880 --> 00:10:39.079
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): suggest that social and political conditions that are always, that we act on and are acted on us can shift and change and make the things that we might take up as identities. A little bit more dynamic, a little bit more fluid, a little bit more contingent on those sets of conditions.

74
00:10:39.591 --> 00:10:53.920
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): So an example that I like to use that's pretty relevant in my own life is that I occupy a particular position. If, say I am with

75
00:10:54.130 --> 00:10:58.730
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): colleagues that are all white, I am a white woman.

76
00:10:59.480 --> 00:11:09.240
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): My position changes. If I'm in a room with women of color. The social and political conditions that act upon that situation

77
00:11:09.490 --> 00:11:13.879
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): change the power, dynamic, and so post-structuralism tries to account for that.

78
00:11:16.160 --> 00:11:25.579
Dan Krutka: That's a very good answer. I appreciate it. Yeah, I always like to talk about that. I think you know, structuralism and post structuralism are where most educational

79
00:11:25.600 --> 00:11:40.709
Dan Krutka: research happens, right structuralist assumptions are usually just to put it, simply student-centered post structuralist often is, too, except it often accounts for power relationships. And so it's, I think we're going to get into that tonight. Right? I think you all study

80
00:11:40.710 --> 00:11:58.660
Dan Krutka: dives into it. And so let's talk about it. So you all have a publication, I know, when I was finishing my dissertation I certainly wasn't publishing in Trsc. So congratulations to both of you. I know Dr. Jones is a repeat offender on Trsc's publication list.

81
00:11:58.660 --> 00:12:13.890
Dan Krutka: So the publication is titled. What is the word difficult doing in social studies? Research, a Systematic literature view of empirical research on difficult knowledges and histories, 2,004 to 2022.

82
00:12:13.890 --> 00:12:28.929
Dan Krutka: So first, st I think you have to tell us the story of this paper like, how did you get on this topic? Because difficult is something we've talked about on this podcast before, in previous episodes, real, quick pause, Zach, hold on. We got to mention it was

83
00:12:29.200 --> 00:12:33.310
Dan Krutka: Jim Garrett, I think, had had that episode me find it.

84
00:12:33.500 --> 00:12:34.280
Michael's iPhone: Hey! Zack!

85
00:12:34.280 --> 00:12:37.080
Dan Krutka: Yes, okay, Zach, I'm I'm coming back

86
00:12:37.850 --> 00:12:52.049
Dan Krutka: way back in Episode 53. Teaching, difficult knowledge with Jim Garrett. We we talked about it. So this is an issue that's been around. That was all the way back in 2,017. 0, my gosh, we've been recording this podcast. For a long time. You said.

87
00:12:52.050 --> 00:12:58.100

Michael's iPhone: 2,017, and on 2017, 2,017. Yes, save yourself some space.

88
00:12:58.100 --> 00:12:59.480
Dan Krutka: Potato, potato.

89
00:13:00.290 --> 00:13:07.139
Dan Krutka: So how did y'all get into this project? What? What made you want to explore this word? That's been kind of simmering in social studies for a little bit.

90
00:13:09.950 --> 00:13:30.969
Brittany Jones: Yeah, this is a great question. And I would just like to add that Kim and I had been working on this project for over 2 years. I was still a graduate student when we started this project. So it's something that's been brewing for a long time. But for me, my origin story with the word difficult.

91
00:13:31.190 --> 00:13:32.330
Brittany Jones: I

92
00:13:33.010 --> 00:13:49.680
Brittany Jones: when it when I heard when I came into education, right when I started my doc program and I would read, because that's what you're supposed to do as a doctoral student. And I would see this word like, Oh, these scholars are studying difficult histories.

93
00:13:49.680 --> 00:14:07.650
Brittany Jones: and I really asked myself, Why is this history called difficult? And part of this is because before I even got into education, I got my master's degree in history, I worked in archival museums and historians don't

94
00:14:07.790 --> 00:14:20.607
Brittany Jones: use an adjective to describe histories like they don't say, Oh, you know, the Jim Crow South is difficult, right? And so part of my

95
00:14:21.350 --> 00:14:31.449
Brittany Jones: Critique of the word is based in that positioning of myself as somebody who was very much in history and then moved to history education

96
00:14:31.470 --> 00:14:59.509
Brittany Jones: so fast forward. I'm reading and reading, and I'm still trying to figure out why folks are calling this difficult. Because for myself, I don't think this is difficult. I just think this is history. And so in I don't know. My second year of graduate school I did a mini study with black teachers, and I wanted them to kind of talk through whether they considered these topics that are oftentimes labeled difficult.

97
00:14:59.510 --> 00:15:27.100
Brittany Jones: difficult, right, and the findings from that study suggested that these teachers did not consider these histories difficult, but rather they. I think they talked about how these were necessary histories. These were the most important histories to teach, but nothing about it was difficult, and this really made me start to think about the ways in which language can unintentionally erase

98
00:15:27.100 --> 00:15:56.769
Brittany Jones: folks, perspectives and opinions about what constitutes as or not as difficult. And then we can start thinking about the implications of who's left out or difficult, for whom, or even uncomfortable, for whom, when we start to label these topics as difficult. So that's kind of where I started with my fascination. Really obsession, I would say at this point with the word difficult in social studies, research.

99
00:15:59.560 --> 00:16:09.239
Dan Krutka: That's a really important observation, right? The difference between how practicing teachers address these issues and the way historians address them.

100
00:16:09.420 --> 00:16:18.589
Dan Krutka: And then, just like where this is coming from. Right? Who is? Who is? Who is saying? This is difficult. So then, how did you 2 get started on this project? What I mean. So your docs, your Doc students

101
00:16:18.720 --> 00:16:23.160
Dan Krutka: with way too much to read way too much to do, and you still squeeze this one in.

102
00:16:23.480 --> 00:16:25.110
Dan Krutka: What what made you want to do it?

103

00:16:30.160 --> 00:16:33.680
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Yeah, I guess. Shout out to

104
00:16:34.260 --> 00:16:50.204
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): roundtable discussions designed for grad, students for grad students to collaborate on papers. Because this sort of became the root. That was the root of what this paper actually, resulted in

105
00:16:50.780 --> 00:16:56.430
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Brittany. And I met online. Actually, after

106
00:16:56.600 --> 00:17:13.350
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Aera. I think it was after Britney gave a presentation. I didn't attend that aera conference. But also friend of the pod, Dr. Catherine Van Kessel. She sent me an email saying.

107
00:17:13.490 --> 00:17:36.152
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): you really need to talk to talk to Britney. I think you have a lot in common. There's a lot of really interesting intersections of of both of our graduate research. You should get in touch and I think in some ways Covid made me brave to talk to strangers on the Internet. So

108
00:17:36.710 --> 00:17:51.000
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): one way or the other, Britney and I got in touch and just had started with a zoom call to just sort of we just kind of jammed like kind of a an academic jamming session of of our interests.

109
00:17:51.130 --> 00:18:19.732
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): And as we sort of developed the that conversation we were like, I think there's a paper here that we that we can, that we can write, and I think that it's needed. So we took a crack at writing a paper, and then, with some scholarly advice from some of the scholars, Jim Garrett, Dr. Jim Garrett does one of those people giving us very like

110
00:18:20.230 --> 00:18:30.230
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): generous, constructive feedback. His big question was, Well, what does the literature say about this word? Difficult?

111
00:18:30.350 --> 00:18:36.543
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): And so Brittany and I went back after Kufa one year and

112
00:18:37.380 --> 00:18:57.029
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): and wrestled with that question. And Britney suggested a systematic literature review because it hadn't been done before, especially in in empirical research. And that's kind of where that's the origin story of of the paper, I think.

113
00:18:57.561 --> 00:19:00.089
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Dr. Jones, did I leave anything out.

114
00:19:01.360 --> 00:19:03.367
Brittany Jones: No, that's about right.

115
00:19:03.870 --> 00:19:14.330
Dan Krutka: I love that. And I also I also appreciate. You know, when one of the great things about conferences and getting to talk to other academics, especially when an idea like intrigues, you and you go to them and

116
00:19:14.350 --> 00:19:38.500
Dan Krutka: want to talk about my my favorite people are the people that when you bring a different perspective to on this like, Hey, we want to look at this. And they're like, cool like that's really interesting, right? It's like the way that that scholarships should work is that we get. We get excited when people have new ideas around around our things. And so it's cool to see people taking difficult in different directions and thinking about it in different ways.

117
00:19:38.866 --> 00:19:49.639
Dan Krutka: So all right. So what? So you did a systematic literature review, what did you. What did you all find about the way this word is being used in social studies? Research.

118
00:19:52.860 --> 00:19:57.969
Brittany Jones: Oh, man, that's such a loaded question. So, Kim, please jump in.

119
00:19:58.640 --> 00:20:00.959
Brittany Jones: So I just want to

120
00:20:01.230 --> 00:20:22.579
Brittany Jones: start with, I love the way we open this paper because we get to talk about Toni Morrison and Beloved. And we pull a quote from that paper. And I think what the quote does for us at least, is that it really shows the power of language, and how people can

121
00:20:22.710 --> 00:20:41.670
Brittany Jones: listen to and hear the same sentence, but understand it really differently. So you know, I don't need to go back over the quote in the paper, but it's between school teacher and 6, 0, and essentially, schoolteacher is saying, you ate my food, you stole

122
00:20:41.670 --> 00:21:10.699
Brittany Jones: property, and 6 0 was like, no, I ate the food so I could be stronger. So I'm actually helping your property right? And so these different perspectives are kind of at play. They're at tension. But what ends up happening from this scene is that the person with power ends up, that perspective ends up ringing true. And so that was schoolteacher, his perspective ring true, and then 6 0 was punished for that. And so

123
00:21:11.160 --> 00:21:18.464
Brittany Jones: we start with that because we want to kind of think about the ways in which researchers are grappling with

124
00:21:18.930 --> 00:21:25.969
Brittany Jones: the word difficult and their empirical research on the teaching of difficult histories or difficult topics and difficult knowledges.

125
00:21:26.170 --> 00:21:35.029
Brittany Jones: But really, we're trying to grapple with how Power and I like to. I want to stress like, unintentionally

126
00:21:36.482 --> 00:21:38.498
Brittany Jones: kind of redirects.

127
00:21:39.170 --> 00:22:07.429
Brittany Jones: and transforms how we're understanding difficult histories. So anyways, so one thing that we found was that a lot of topics can be difficult. I mean, there is a range of topics that

scholars have talked about and written about and examined, that are difficult, that range from enslavement to climate change and kind of everything in between, and also specific historical events to

128
00:22:07.430 --> 00:22:20.499
Brittany Jones: longer ranging historical events like black history is just difficult, right like. That's how some folks frame it. And so one of our findings was, well, everything can be difficult, depending on how you

129
00:22:20.500 --> 00:22:40.199
Brittany Jones: spin the term, depending on whose definition of difficult you're using, and that finding really makes me think about one of my favorite quotes from the Incredibles, where the little boy who's the fast one he's like, well, Dad, if everyone's special, then no one is which is true, right like. So if everything difficult.

130
00:22:40.220 --> 00:22:52.260
Brittany Jones: if everything is difficult, then nothing is so really, that's like, essentially, our 1st finding, the range of difficulty is so vast that one could argue, why do we need the adjective

131
00:22:52.360 --> 00:22:57.049
Brittany Jones: anyway? Because if everything can be difficult. Then why use it at all?

132
00:22:59.070 --> 00:23:01.397
Brittany Jones: It seems kind of like nailing Jello to the wall.

133
00:23:02.130 --> 00:23:02.680
Michael's iPhone: Right.

134
00:23:04.950 --> 00:23:06.380
Michael's iPhone: Very similar. Yeah.

135
00:23:08.530 --> 00:23:12.209
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): I think, to the one of the things that we found

136
00:23:12.540 --> 00:23:19.590

Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): overall is that this word difficult is doing a few different things.

137
00:23:19.650 --> 00:23:24.809
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): It's kind of being used, as I wouldn't say a placeholder. But

138
00:23:24.830 --> 00:23:44.760
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): it's a little. It's quite vague which was part of our like. Our inquiry was like like, what is it? What is it doing? Because it's not very clear what it is doing? And so what our findings kind of do is they suggest that in research it's being used a couple of different ways.

139
00:23:44.760 --> 00:24:10.520
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): One, it's being used as an adjective to describe the actual topics themselves. So a label of like Britney said, like black histories as difficult, or colonization as difficult or you know war or historical events around war as difficult. And then there's this other piece that is also

140
00:24:10.520 --> 00:24:23.231
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): going on in the background when researchers are using the the term. And that's the process of teaching, learning and researching. And that's where the

141
00:24:23.940 --> 00:24:42.460
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): emotional responses to those events might be included. It might include being implicated the process of being implicated in those histories. And so, but in the research itself

142
00:24:43.339 --> 00:24:49.129
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): seldom does do researchers really distinguish, or really try to

143
00:24:49.500 --> 00:25:18.999
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): be precise about how they're using it? And so it really required us going, going into each one of these papers and trying to figure that out. It's being used as this kind of vague label but it's really describing a real like. It's very prismatic in terms of what it's actually trying to convey which is really rich in and of itself.

144
00:25:20.670 --> 00:25:21.040

Dan Krutka: It.

145
00:25:21.040 --> 00:25:25.180
Brittany Jones: And I'm sorry. Can I just add really quickly, and something that

146
00:25:25.810 --> 00:25:31.195
Brittany Jones: we talk about in our paper that the label does right is it allows

147
00:25:31.820 --> 00:25:35.660
Brittany Jones: white supremacy to go unnamed in

148
00:25:35.730 --> 00:26:05.579
Brittany Jones: the research on difficult histories. Because for me, right, these histories don't just happen something, some force, some system caused these historical events to happen and to maintain them right? So the consequences of difficult histories within the present. But what's fascinating is that when we look at how scholars have defined difficult histories, white supremacy is never mentioned, which to me

149
00:26:06.110 --> 00:26:22.809
Brittany Jones: kind of speaks to Kim's point about what is the difficult then doing like, how is the adjective acting as a way to allow us to evade actually talking about the root causes of the histories that so many scholars have examined.

150
00:26:25.420 --> 00:26:26.350
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Yeah, and.

151
00:26:26.570 --> 00:26:27.120
Dan Krutka: Oh, sorry! Go!

152
00:26:27.760 --> 00:26:49.407
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Sorry and then just to echo that as well, that that it in some cases is also being used as a as a way to deflect those. You know that that idea of being implicated, or like almost to suggest that by naming something as difficult.

153
00:26:50.620 --> 00:26:57.670

Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): because we could recognize it as difficult then. There is.

154
00:27:02.260 --> 00:27:16.275
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): It kind of gives people a pass for for being implicated, or for for trying to like difficult serves as this vague term that might allude to white supremacy, but never really

155
00:27:16.850 --> 00:27:19.319
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): states it outright.

156
00:27:20.790 --> 00:27:29.790
Dan Krutka: Yeah, I mean, and it seems to me like this could be, you know, a white teacher in a classroom who doesn't know how to talk about race

157
00:27:30.130 --> 00:27:55.739
Dan Krutka: they personally feel. This is, it seems like difficult just being used, for like this is uncomfortable to me. I don't know how to talk about this, or I don't want to talk about this. So now I'm using the label difficult. Now. I know you all looked at research, but it seems problematic, especially now where we see state legislatures, even passing laws saying that white children should not be uncomfortable right like talking about something. And so

158
00:27:56.930 --> 00:28:14.760
Dan Krutka: it's very. I'm so surprised I guess I shouldn't be. I don't know why that because this is a history that delves into, you know, talking about, you know things that that can be uncomfortable I always think of like genocide. Right like is this, it makes you wrestle with things you have never wrestled with before or war, which can be like

159
00:28:14.930 --> 00:28:23.009
Dan Krutka: just horrible in ways you can't. But of course white supremacy and the violence it enacts can do those same things. So

160
00:28:23.190 --> 00:28:33.360
Dan Krutka: do you? Why didn't it come up? But also, what did come up like? What are we talking about? Is, are we just skirting around racial violence when this is coming up, and what is brought up.

161

00:28:41.380 --> 00:28:55.380
Brittany Jones: So this that's a really good question about what is brought up, and something that's brought up continuously are to your point emotions and comfortability. And I think.

162
00:28:55.490 --> 00:29:08.970
Brittany Jones: while there are varying definitions, there are various definitions of difficult histories, something that emerges across all the definitions. Is this idea of

163
00:29:09.380 --> 00:29:25.549
Brittany Jones: engaging or encountering with these topics cause folks to feel like these negative emotions or these negative feelings, so discomfort, guilt, shame, even like disequilibrium. So the idea of

164
00:29:26.160 --> 00:29:27.190
Brittany Jones: feeling.

165
00:29:28.690 --> 00:29:36.060
Brittany Jones: Discomfort came up a lot in our research on difficult topics. Also.

166
00:29:36.550 --> 00:29:50.910
Brittany Jones: I think something else that was, I thought, was fascinating from our research was that, of course, topics related to anti-blackness was one of the most frequently examined topics in the study, and

167
00:29:51.150 --> 00:29:54.260
Brittany Jones: what I think is interesting is that

168
00:29:54.580 --> 00:29:59.839
Brittany Jones: when we position like anti-blackness as difficult.

169
00:30:01.150 --> 00:30:08.939
Brittany Jones: But we don't position other things as difficult. It's it makes it seem like

170
00:30:10.570 --> 00:30:25.639

Brittany Jones: difficult topics. One are something like specific to North America and something specific to blackness. And it's something that like it kind of recreates. It's like black, white, binary. But we know that white supremacy is something that's a global.

171
00:30:26.490 --> 00:30:40.019
Brittany Jones: And so when we only really name difficult or white supremacy in relation to anti-blackness, but not all the other difficult things that exist in the world. We're kind of like recreating that black, white binary.

172
00:30:44.830 --> 00:31:13.040
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): I think also just another piece that kind of comes through in our in our discussion and sort of areas. Maybe of future research is, we mention it in the paper towards the end, drawing from Susan Dion's work of the perfect stranger. She's writing. Her research around the perfect stranger is in a Canadian context with

173
00:31:14.590 --> 00:31:24.970
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Canadian teachers teaching indigenous history or teaching histories of indigenous people in Canada. And

174
00:31:25.010 --> 00:31:47.460
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): she, this idea of the perfect stranger is sort of to where teachers will sort of remove themselves, or put themselves at a distance from the the history in as as that kind of deflection. So it's sort of almost a positioning of of ignorance, so that you don't have to be implicated. And

175
00:31:47.980 --> 00:32:12.150
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): we kind of saw that the word difficult has the potential to do that as well. So, imagining this like kind of empathy, right? I can't imagine how difficult this would have been for this group of people, which is a fair statement to make. You know where. Perhaps your experiences just simply don't align

176
00:32:12.638 --> 00:32:20.170
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): but there's a little bit of danger in that as well. Because it also has the potential to to

177
00:32:20.560 --> 00:32:34.540

Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): remove you from being implicated right? So being like, I have no idea. I have no idea what that would be like. I can't imagine how difficult it would be to experience Xyz

178
00:32:35.100 --> 00:32:38.740
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): And yet I think perhaps a

179
00:32:38.870 --> 00:32:53.366
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): a braver question to ask or a braver statement to make might be something like in what ways do I continue to privilege, be privileged, or continue to benefit from the

180
00:32:54.030 --> 00:32:58.869
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): from the difficulties of of other groups of people. Historically.

181
00:33:01.660 --> 00:33:10.721
Brittany Jones: Yeah. And the other really important piece that I think we found from this research again, it's a lot that we do in this paper. But

182
00:33:11.210 --> 00:33:37.099
Brittany Jones: the researcher themselves, right? I think what's really interesting when we're talking about empirical studies of difficult histories is that we are going in both classrooms, or we're working with our pre-service teachers. But particularly when we're in teachers classrooms. They themselves are not like, Hello, kids. Today, we're going to teach a difficult history, right? The researcher themselves puts that language

183
00:33:37.200 --> 00:33:43.100
Brittany Jones: in their paper. So they essentially put that language on their participants. And that's fine.

184
00:33:43.120 --> 00:33:56.880
Brittany Jones: But that also means that as researchers, we need to do a better job in explaining explicitly how we're positioning ourselves to the difficult topics, since we ourselves are calling it difficult.

185
00:33:56.880 --> 00:34:19.640

Brittany Jones: As we write up our papers. And so something that we found was that as scholars engaged in this work, they did not have any positionality or positioning statements. So as readers, we don't really understand how your relationship to the topic. How do you understand this difficulty, this difficult topic? How did you learn about it. Do you think it's difficult? Why.

186
00:34:19.639 --> 00:34:30.600
Brittany Jones: where in your schooling and your learning did this topic become difficult for you? And I think that's just responsible research? Because, again, if we're going to apply this topic to

187
00:34:30.679 --> 00:34:39.449
Brittany Jones: the research that we're doing, then we need to be very clear about how we're making meaning of the difficult topic that we are indeed studying.

188
00:34:41.570 --> 00:34:51.849
Michael's iPhone: It seemed like when Dr. Edmondson you were talking about it. The research being like you're solving. It's like you're solving capers. You're trying to get to like what

189
00:34:52.040 --> 00:34:56.590
Michael's iPhone: the researchers belief of like difficultness was.

190
00:34:56.969 --> 00:35:02.930
Michael's iPhone: Which is kind of fascinating. It also seems like it. It must have taken a lot of work to to put this together.

191
00:35:03.490 --> 00:35:10.659
Michael's iPhone: So wow, also, it seems, you know, very much like a a mystery like, yeah, like a mystery, which also is kind of.

192
00:35:12.012 --> 00:35:17.639
Dan Krutka: Yeah, I had to to build on Michael's point. The coding for this must have been really slippery.

193
00:35:17.750 --> 00:35:31.609

Dan Krutka: right? I can only imagine that like, there was a lot of recoding and going back and forth and and redefining things, because because this is a concept where people are using it in all kinds of different ways.

194
00:35:33.780 --> 00:35:36.689
Brittany Jones: Yeah, that's why it took 2 and a half years.

195
00:35:39.180 --> 00:36:03.860
Michael's iPhone: Oh, man, so is there a fear that if we label the things that people feel uncomfortable? So we're talking a lot about slavery, white supremacy. If we get, if we label that as difficult, that classroom teachers might not cover it because it would make it's too difficult. And so they might just do like a like a broad stroke, and then just move forward without getting into it. Is that the fear.

196
00:36:05.890 --> 00:36:32.120
Brittany Jones: I think so. No, I think that's right. And I think that gets that's kind of like the question that we asked in the title of the paper, like What is difficult doing in social studies research. And that could be a potential right like, if we're calling something difficult, then why do I need to explore it and teach it effectively, like they've already said, it's difficult. So if I just say it and move on, that's fine enough, because it's difficult, right? Why do we need to? We don't want to delve into something that's difficult, right? So if we just

197
00:36:32.660 --> 00:36:37.689
Brittany Jones: saying it once in class and moving along is enough for me, because it's difficult, anyway.

198
00:36:38.510 --> 00:36:45.959
Michael's iPhone: Too bad we couldn't just go into the the settings and just give move people up to, you know, extreme instead of it on easy.

199
00:36:46.290 --> 00:36:49.090
Michael's iPhone: Sorry we're playing a lot of video games at home.

200
00:36:50.060 --> 00:36:51.869
Michael's iPhone: Alright had to deal with that leveling.

201

00:36:52.928 --> 00:37:00.110
Dan Krutka: And and I guess the the work that that has happened around difficult knowledges and stuff would be that

202
00:37:00.600 --> 00:37:22.910
Dan Krutka: when they raise the term. Probably their goal is to that. They want you to have a care in taking care of the topic. Right? That don't like put pictures of like tragedy or violence up on your screen, and not know how that's gonna affect the affect right? The emotions of your students in the classroom that you have to be very thoughtful about that.

203
00:37:23.230 --> 00:37:47.680
Dan Krutka: but at the same time that label can also maybe deter people from getting into it. So I guess that leaves me with, and I'm sure difficult is not the only word here. Right? Y'all could do. Some follow up studies on the words we're using in social studies, and maybe need to be more careful and precise with and thoughtful with. So what recommendations do you have for researchers as they go forward in using or not using this word.

204
00:37:47.790 --> 00:37:52.639
Dan Krutka: And then for like teachers and thinking about like what this means like, what, how, what can we all take away from this.

205
00:37:54.950 --> 00:38:06.239
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): I think one of the things that comes through in this paper is that we can't always know what

206
00:38:06.610 --> 00:38:08.834
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): the words are doing.

207
00:38:10.150 --> 00:38:19.899
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): we've the research has has sort of showed that this word gets sort of plunked in, and we make some assumptions about what it's doing.

208
00:38:20.020 --> 00:38:39.660
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): And we've also discovered that there's some unintended consequences, right? And those trickle down all the way to it's not so explicit in Canada. But you know my understanding of some of the educational policies in the Us. About like just avoiding that content altogether.

209
00:38:40.170 --> 00:38:56.830
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): in in Canada. It's a it's a little bit more subtle, but it's it's still there. So I think one of the things that I that I would like to highlight for. You know, recommendations for future work is that there? There's kind of

210
00:38:57.430 --> 00:39:18.979
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): there's a tension between like knowing and unknowing or knowing, and not knowing, I suppose, where you can with greater vigilance, you know, be more deliberate, more precise, more thoughtful about the word difficult, and perhaps other words that we use in social studies research.

211
00:39:19.130 --> 00:39:26.000
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): and also that we can't always know ahead of time. What those

212
00:39:26.618 --> 00:39:44.191
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): those you know, the choices of language, or the way that we, you know, a buzzword, or the way that a word is used in discourse. We can't always know with certainty what it's what it's doing, and part of that vigilance is to sort of continue to

213
00:39:45.333 --> 00:39:49.256
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): inquire about about what those

214
00:39:50.370 --> 00:39:53.000
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): words are are doing in our research.

215
00:39:55.390 --> 00:39:57.265
Brittany Jones: Yeah, I agree.

216
00:39:59.130 --> 00:40:05.060
Brittany Jones: I think for me. So something that I've really been grappling with a lot and I've been

217
00:40:05.230 --> 00:40:31.770

Brittany Jones: creating literally like columns side by side. Where to your point, Dan, I've looked at the rationale that these conservative politicians have used to try to ban topics from being taught in schools right? And they'd say we shouldn't teach these topics because they're going to make students feel guilty or have discomfort right? And if we took those definitions, and put it next

218
00:40:31.770 --> 00:40:39.320
Brittany Jones: to the definitions of difficult histories. They're very similar, like difficult histories are these topics that make folks feel uncomfortable?

219
00:40:39.320 --> 00:40:53.789
Brittany Jones: We shouldn't teach these topics because they make folks feel uncomfortable right? And so if somebody in the White House ever decided to read something, and God forbid they pick up one of our colleagues

220
00:40:54.020 --> 00:41:01.500
Brittany Jones: articles and looked at the definition, they could say, Oh, my gosh! Look! These scholars are saying

221
00:41:02.150 --> 00:41:18.299
Brittany Jones: These histories are difficult, and we know that our colleagues are not being nefarious, right? They're being very helpful about and offering suggestions about how to teach these topics right? They're not the same. But someone

222
00:41:18.410 --> 00:41:41.100
Brittany Jones: could look at them and say, Wow, they're very similar. And so really, the point is that I think we have to just take more seriously the language that we use in our work, and I think something that we talk about in our paper is like, what do we stand to lose if we don't use the word difficult. Does that change anything

223
00:41:41.520 --> 00:41:59.439
Brittany Jones: adjective really do anything to improve our practice? Our pedagogy, when engaging with these topics? And I would argue that there is harm when we use words that erase and omit folks, feelings and folks, perspectives and people's ideas.

224
00:41:59.500 --> 00:42:22.850

Brittany Jones: And so I think some research that we should see more when engaging with difficult topics, are engaging with students as perspectives, particularly students of color students from non-dominant backgrounds. Do you all think these topics are difficult. How are you engaging with these topics? What can we learn from the people who actually have to learn what we're teaching?

225
00:42:23.000 --> 00:42:34.309
Brittany Jones: So yeah, I think there's a lot to be gained when we take more seriously, and we think more carefully about the language that we use in our research.

226
00:42:34.790 --> 00:42:37.270
Brittany Jones: But of course I always like to do this disclaimer.

227
00:42:37.620 --> 00:42:53.310
Brittany Jones: We appreciate all of the work that folks before us have done, because I think lit reviews can be a little tricky in those ways. So this is only a paper that's asking to push our field forward and building on the very generative work that's come before ours.

228
00:42:55.470 --> 00:42:59.610
Dan Krutka: It's really it's really great paper. And I hope everyone, you know

229
00:42:59.760 --> 00:43:10.310
Dan Krutka: goes and gets the Pdf. And and reads the full thing because it makes you think again like one of my big takeaways is just.

230
00:43:10.480 --> 00:43:11.980
Dan Krutka: Who am I to label it

231
00:43:12.640 --> 00:43:17.350
Dan Krutka: right? Who who am I to call to call it difficult. That is, that would be just my perspective.

232
00:43:17.540 --> 00:43:27.080
Dan Krutka: And that comes from my positionality. So maybe I need to step back and just see where my students are at, and and then go from there

233
00:43:27.450 --> 00:43:39.270
Dan Krutka: and so, and then also, I promise you I will be very thoughtful if that word comes into any papers. I'm writing, too. So I feel like this has really been a helpful talk. So thank you all so much.

234
00:43:41.810 --> 00:43:43.120
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Thank you for having us.

235
00:43:43.120 --> 00:43:45.889
Brittany Jones: Thank you. Always a good time with you all.

236
00:43:48.030 --> 00:43:49.030
Michael's iPhone: You're welcome

237
00:43:49.706 --> 00:43:56.430
Michael's iPhone: now. Do you mind giving telling folks where they can let me do this again, Zach? I apologize.

238
00:43:58.160 --> 00:44:05.320
Michael's iPhone: You're very welcome. Now, where could our listeners find you or your work online, or you know wherever they can?

239
00:44:05.580 --> 00:44:07.879
Michael's iPhone: I don't know where else they would find it. The library, maybe.

240
00:44:16.787 --> 00:44:45.809
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): I've been slowly taking myself further and further away from from social media, and so much so that I have a blue sky account that I'm just currently looking up what my actual like handle is. So bear with me one moment I do have a a blue sky account that I, I think, is probably the place that you can get in touch with me Dr. Kim edmondson@dotbsky.social.

241
00:44:47.362 --> 00:44:48.490
Dan Krutka: It's updated. I love.

242
00:44:48.490 --> 00:44:50.020
Michael's iPhone: Did you make that 8 days ago.

243
00:44:50.570 --> 00:44:53.719
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): I made it early, but just never posted anything.

244
00:44:54.030 --> 00:44:56.559
Dan Krutka: Oh, I like the confidence.

245
00:44:56.720 --> 00:44:57.350
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Oops!

246
00:44:57.730 --> 00:45:00.980
Dan Krutka: And and you came through. So you delivered. So that's just legendary.

247
00:45:01.360 --> 00:45:02.780
Kimberly Edmondson (she/her): Go big or go home.

248
00:45:05.203 --> 00:45:19.890
Brittany Jones: Oh, man! You can! I guess you can find me on X, formerly known as Twitter. I love Jones under safe. I don't get on Twitter or Mx that much anymore. So I don't know where you can find me. I guess Facebook.

249
00:45:21.200 --> 00:45:29.669
Dan Krutka: We can. I mean, we could just search Google Scholar for your articles or find your University web pages. When we used to ask this social media.

250
00:45:30.230 --> 00:45:37.359
Dan Krutka: Now we were a little naive. It like was never as good as we'd like imagine. But yeah, increasingly, everyone's like no

251
00:45:37.610 --> 00:45:47.259

Dan Krutka: trying to stay off of it, so we appreciate you both, and we will. We can make sure to check our our show notes. Everything will be in the show notes, so you can find their article there.

252
00:45:47.960 --> 00:45:56.449
Dan Krutka: So again, thank you so much, both of you, for joining us. We definitely hope to continue the discussion online, or maybe at the local library.

253
00:45:59.100 --> 00:46:13.029
Michael's iPhone: Now at the visions of education, podcast we're all about sharing the learning multifaceted. Or you know, whatever it may be. If you're doing something fun or creative in education, or you just want to chat. We're on blue sky. Then.

254
00:46:14.570 --> 00:46:17.860
Dan Krutka: I you can. I can't log into the account I tried. I don't know what.

255
00:46:17.860 --> 00:46:19.740
Michael's iPhone: You did, but it did post the other day.

256
00:46:20.010 --> 00:46:24.190
Dan Krutka: Oh, yeah, that's automated. I can't. But I can't do it myself. I'm gonna figure it out. Y'all.

257
00:46:25.287 --> 00:46:29.212
Michael's iPhone: Yeah. So we are on the blue. We're we're on blue sky.

258
00:46:30.390 --> 00:46:45.860
Michael's iPhone: and if you haven't already, this is actually something we can definitely say, if you haven't already. And really you should subscribe to visions of education on apple podcasts, citrus, spotify Google, play, or anywhere you'd like us to be, and fun. Fact

259
00:46:46.350 --> 00:46:52.889
Michael's iPhone: your plants will also enjoy it. So you can just go ahead and stick us on. Repeat, and we'll just play that one episode over and over.

260

00:46:53.060 --> 00:46:53.640
Dan Krutka: That's right.

261
00:46:53.640 --> 00:46:54.760
Michael's iPhone: Maybe 1, 94.

262
00:46:54.980 --> 00:46:56.516
Dan Krutka: That that is verified.

263
00:46:57.550 --> 00:47:10.140
Dan Krutka: days you could. We could probably just say AI verified that fact right? And hey, you know, 5 star reviews help people find this. I'm hesitant to say that it's not that difficult to post a 5 Star review, but

264
00:47:10.330 --> 00:47:17.130
Dan Krutka: I don't know. I don't know what's going on, but maybe just give it a try. And we'd also like to thank Zack sites of Wiley High School and the University of.

265
00:47:17.130 --> 00:47:17.990
Michael's iPhone: Thanks for.

266
00:47:17.990 --> 00:47:19.549
Dan Krutka: His editing skills.

267
00:47:20.070 --> 00:47:23.509
Dan Krutka: You can find me in my local community trying to do some good.

268
00:47:24.090 --> 00:47:27.699
Michael's iPhone: And sometimes oh, it's summer, so I could be anywhere.

269
00:47:28.040 --> 00:47:32.709
Dan Krutka: He's a traveling man until next time. This is the visions of education podcast.

270
00:47:32.960 --> 00:47:34.010

Michael's iPhone: Signing off.