The Think Inclusive Podcast

Season 9, Episode 14

What Inclusionists Need To Know About the Anti-CRT Movement

Tim Villegas (00:00:00):

Hi, I'm Tim Villegas and you are listening to a special bonus edition of the think inclusive podcast presented by MCIE. In the early hours one June morning in 2021, I sat down to drink my coffee and scroll through my various news feeds nothing particularly interesting until...

Cherokee Tribune Podcast (00:00:35):

This is your news minute on the Cherokee Tribune-Ledger podcast brought to you by credit union of Georgia. Today is Thursday, June the third, and I'm JP Edwards. Cecilia Lewis, the Maryland school principal who was hired to focus on diversity at Cherokee county school district, stepped away from the position after receiving a strong message from residents that she is not welcome. She said, quote, "The message I received from the Cherokee county community who had never met me or tried to get to know me, not the position, is we do not want you here. You don't belong here and you're not welcome here. Highlighting the fact that the work of celebrating and appreciating diversity instead of denying or judging it is much needed in the district." End quote. Rumors had circulated on social media connecting the hiring Ms. Lewis to critical race theory, an academic framework that assumes race is a social construct and that racism is embedded in legal systems and policies.

Tim Villegas (00:01:32):

I thought, wait one second. I know this person, the Maryland school principal, and the news story worked for one of MCIE's partners. And I had recently interviewed her about what it was like to be at a school that was going through inclusive systems change.

Cecelia Lewis (00:01:50):

Hi, good afternoon.

Tim Villegas (00:01:52):

Hello Cecilia.

Cecelia Lewis (00:01:54):

That is me.

Tim Villegas (00:01:56):

Excellent. Excellent. Thanks for taking some time out.

Tim Villegas (00:01:59):

She mentioned during our meeting that she and her husband were looking to move to Georgia to be closer to family. So light bulbs are going off in my head and I'm like, oh no. What a shame that Cecilia is being demonized by people that don't even know her about something that is so misunderstood. I mean, she is one of the good ones. If we can't have people like her who believe in equity for all students, including those with disabilities, in leadership positions, it doesn't bode well to make change, especially here in the south. And that is when it hit me. All of this critical race theory backlash is going to hurt our overall goal of including students with complex support needs in general education. I mean, listen to what Cecilia says about the difference including a student with significant behavioral support needs made for them in the school community.

Cecelia Lewis (00:03:02):

So we have a student who happens to be in the behavioral development program. And the majority of that student's time initially was in the behavioral development program, but we recognize that many, the supports that were identified for that student were not tied to necessarily any type of academic challenges. However, it did not justify that student being segregated. And so we, we phased in class by class. So it started with one class. And today that student is fully included in every single course. It really is about if you don't believe in it, then, you know, I, I, I would not recommend, you know, anyone spinning their wheels going through the motions, but I can tell, tell you that when you do believe in it, and you do invest in it becoming a priority, then you will begin to see, and I'm, I'm not talking about slow shifts. I'm talking about quick shifts because our kids can't afford for our kids to wait. You know, they...

Tim Villegas (00:04:16):

This is all fine, Tim, but what does CRT or the backlash have to do with any of it? Okay. Briefly stated the anti-CRT movement is taking down in its wake any initiatives that focus on educational equity. This includes any progress that we have made toward inclusive systems change in public schools, because advocates like you and me have been trying to connect the dots from disability rights to educational equity for quite some time now. And if you don't think this is a problem, Penn America is keeping track of over 100 bills from across the country proposing to keep teachers from talking about divisive subjects or subjects that cause students to feel discomfort. And some of them explicitly mentioned critical rates theory, or LGTQIA plus issues. So as we were producing this episode, I knew that I didn't know enough about this topic. So I called in a few people to help. King Williams.

King Williams (00:05:28):

I am a journalist and a filmmaker in Atlanta, Georgia.

Tim Villegas (00:05:31):

Alida Miranda-Wolff from the diversity equity inclusion and belonging sector.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:05:37):

I'm the CEO and founder of ethos.

Tim Villegas (00:05:39):

Eddie Fergus at temple university.

Eddie Fergus (00:05:41):

I'm a professor of urban education policy.

Tim Villegas (00:05:43):

And my old friend high school educator and doc student in Colorado, Pete Newlove.

Pete Newlove (00:05:50):

I am a doctoral student at the university of Colorado, Denver.

Tim Villegas (00:05:55):

To see if we could find out more about critical race theory and what we as advocates for inclusive education should know about it to get us started here is Eddie Fergus.

Eddie Fergus (00:06:06):

So, you know, what's interesting. So I'm a, you know, as a professor of urban education and policy, I actually teach us critical race theory class for doctoral students. Right? So, and I, I start there because I, part of what we have to understand is that critical race theory is just like many sets of theories that are taught at a graduate level and maybe even at an undergraduate level, right? It is part of the academic training that individuals are receiving within a particular discipline, right? It's like you learn about a range of theories, critical race theory is one of them that is, you know, sort of this really taught, right. And the idea what critical race theory is, right? It, it came out of a response to the ways in which legal theory was articulating and trying to make sense of what's how happening to a variety of marginalized populations who are interacting with the legal system and critical race theorists like Derek bell and others really started to push the idea and reconcile well, how does legal structures make sense of a racial life history of a society? Right? So if we're going to think about, you know housing discrimination, right, or housing inequalities, then we have to look at it alongside a history of Jim Crow laws, for example, that operated in such a way that encouraged a level of segregation, right? So we can't treat the idea of like, well, everybody has an opportunity to, to do how to live wherever they want. Right? So we're gonna look at housing and the, the, the, the degree to which inequality is existing around housing, we've gotta look at it within a historical context

Tim Villegas (00:07:57):

For more on the historical context of CRT here is King Williams.

King Williams (00:08:02):

Critical race theory comes out of a very important time in us history. Now us history is really the end of the civil rights movement and getting towards the tail end of the black power movement. So what we're talking about really is it's slowly but surely trickling up with the future of scholars. Most of which Derek bell in particular, who starts to take this idea for were in the 1970s. But one of the things I think people need to understand is that people who like Derrick bell are becoming in many cases, the first African Americans actually allow into law schools or the first after segregation in many parts of the country. And so many of these law school students are now analyzing legal frameworks that have been used to disenfranchise African Americans, but particularly between reconstruction, which is from 1865 to 1877. And then the period, we now call Jim Crow from basically 1877 till really about the 1950s and 1960s.

King Williams (00:08:52):

And so as much as we think maybe Martin Luther king had a dream and everything was over with in reality, that's not what happened at all, right? And so you have this first wave of people going to honest law schools and just universities, especially public. And this brings by the different backlash we, we can get into later, that's going to really cook your noodle on the second. But this back backlash comes from just effectively. These black students really challenging the notions that the law is the law. And more importantly, that the law and legality are moral and right. And I think this is something super important as we kind of talk through the rest of this conversation. And so that brought up to particular cases. One of which is Dred Scott and the other one is plenty versus Ferguson. And so many P people who've actually studied under critical race theory have actually brought these up because these are examples of things that are legal, but not necessarily moral.

King Williams (00:09:43):

And so in the case of Dred Scott, this is the 18 57 decision. This is gonna be one of the decisions that eventually leads to the civil war. And in short, what this just says was that, so this would never be possible for African Americans, especially if you, you were born a slave, you are still a slave, regardless if you're on free territory or not pretty straightforward. And so critical race theory is analyzing that particular decision and how that plays out in policies over time. So you have an entire, there's an entire discourse, an entire discipline just on that particular case, especially in law school, but that's what falls into. And the other one is Plessy versus Ferguson.

Tim Villegas (00:10:17):

Okay. In case you miss this in your history class, here is some information about Plessy versus Ferguson. In 1890, a law was passed in Louisiana providing for separate railway carriages for the white and colored races. It stated that all passenger railways have add to provide these separate cars, which should be equal in facilities. Hmm. Where have I heard the separate but equal concept before Homer Plessy who was mixed race, seven eighths, Caucasian, and one eighth African blood. According to him, agreed to be the plaintiff at testing the law's constitutionality. So on June 7th, 1892, Plessy bought a ticket on a train from new Orleans to Covington, Louisiana, and took a vacant seat in a White's only car after refusing to leave the car at the conductor's insistence. He was arrested and jailed convicted by a new Orleans court on violating the 1890 law Plessy filed a petition against the presiding judge, honorable John H. Ferguson claiming that the law violated the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment on May 18th, 1896, the Supreme court delivered its verdict in Plessy versus Ferguson in declaring separate but equal facilities constitutional on intrastate railroads.

Tim Villegas (00:11:51):

The court ruled that the protections of the 14th amendment applied only to political and civil rights like voting and jury service, not social rights like sitting in the railroad car of your choice in its ruling. The court denied that segregated railroad cars for black people were necessarily in. We consider the underlying fallacy of Plessy argument justice, Henry Brown wrote to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority, if this be so it is not by reason of anything found in the act solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it. Again, if you are a disability rights advocate, doesn't this sound familiar, for example, special education classrooms, big props to history.com for the information assist here is more about the implications of Plessy versus Ferguson from Eddie Ferguson.

Eddie Fergus (00:12:58):

If we think about the Plessy versus Ferguson, you know case the the premise around that was that you had Plessy that was that Plessy was trying to activate there their whiteness but that wasn't at the level that it needed to be because they also had a drop of black blood, right? So this person could activate their whiteness. So whiteness is property was sort of utilize and developed over time as a way to mechanize the idea that the greatest property value lives within whiteness, right? So you can use whiteness to get homes in where you wanted to, you could use whiteness to get the types of jobs, or or at least maybe not even get the jobs that you want, but you didn't have to compete with folks of color.

Tim Villegas (00:13:49):

But what about the tenants of CRT? I think this is where a lot of us are confused. So here is Alida Miranda Wolf explaining the tenants of critical race theory.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:14:02):

So very simply critical race theory is a theory that was developed in the 1970s as a way of examining and challenging the relationship between the law and race and racial inequity. And it's also important to note, because this is something that gets misinterpreted or mischaracterized, that it was part of a larger critical studies movement and the term critical doesn't refer to being critical of any given social group. It refers to critical thinking. I think what can make critical race theory a little bit easier to understand, or what are the sort of pillars or tenets of it? So the first thing that critical race theory says is that race is not biological. It's not physical, it's a social construct. And this is really tied to the wave of DNA testing and 23 in me and the consumer market for understanding your history, going back very far, race really isn't something that is finite or fixed or concrete.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:15:11):

It's something that is created by a group of people and used to label another group of people rather than a sort of objective fact or a situation. So the way to think about it is we have seen changes in how people are perceived in terms or race. I always go back to during the gilded age in the us Irish, people were considered to be black because they were considered of the same social station as African descendants of slaves. So we see change in it, and there's a historical precedent for it. The next kind of descriptor of critical race theory is that racism, isn't an outlier. It's not a few bad actors who engage in racist practices. Racism is the norm in the us. So our institutions like our criminal justice system, our education system, the legal system itself are really designed to act in the of racist ideologies and principles.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:16:16):

The third is a piece that is particularly important for the work that I do in diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, which is that critical race theory focuses on storytelling and counter storytelling. And they care in the movement about who gets to talk about race and who gets to talk about their lived experiences. And they argue that this is really necessary to unpacking race and racism. Then the last thing is that critical race theory rejects the school of thinking that says meritocracy and colorblindness are the right approaches to racism. Instead folks like Kimberly Crenshaw, who is a major, major figure in the movement, argue that when we take on these colorblind policies or this idea of meritocracy in the way our institutions and systems are built, we're at actually hiding the ways in which our public policy and law leg late inequality on the basis of race. So I, I say that because I've heard critical race theory described as a whole lot of things, and it's actually a pretty niche dynamic framework that came up in

legal circles and the principles of it are useful and do get taught in a variety of different contexts, but that's what it is as a whole.

Tim Villegas (00:17:46):

So the other thing I wanted to understand is how this backlash against CRT was affecting educators. So I asked my friend and current high school English teacher, Pete, Newlove.

Pete Newlove (00:17:57):

So I'm Pete Newlove. I am a doctoral student at the university of Colorado Denver where I'm finishing up my dissertation work right now on looking at the, the motivations and the negotiations that classroom teachers have when trying to enact anti-racist practices in their classroom. And I am also a classroom high school English teacher in the, the local area. I wanted to state upfront that, like my own relationship to CRT. CRT has definitely informed my work as, as a teacher and as a researcher. It's been part of like the analytical lens. That's helped me to understand, like, how does racism matter Fest in schools? How does it operate in these spaces in society and in schools specifically, but as a white male my kind of relationship to CRT is from like an outsider's perspective.

Pete Newlove (00:19:05):

What, what the, the loudest opponents of critical race theory are saying about CRT it's not CRT, just to reiterate that point and, and be clear about that. 99% of the people who are yelling loudly about critical race theory don't know anything about it, what they are really looking at and seeing is they don't like what's happening in regards to anti-racism, they don't like what's happening in regards to shifting power dynamics in regards to places making more space for for oppress folks to have more access when people who have had pro religion power feel like they're starting to lose that privilege and power, they'll start to lash out historically against all of that. Right? So the current moment that we're in is definitely, definitely related to the summer of 2020, to like the racial justice, you know, protest uprisings.

Pete Newlove (00:20:10):

Some people call it a reckoning. I think some people reckoned, but you know, a lot of corporations apparently reckoned too, and put out various, you know, statements or whatever school districts put out various statements, the extent to which they really reckoned, right. There's probably a very white scale, but the, with that we're in now is absolutely this backlash and response to that moment where at least for a brief period of time, there were more conversations around like, yeah, like what is going on with racism all around us and whether it's police brutality or whether it's regards to racial profiling inequities in schooling, all sorts of other things. There are a couple of school districts in Colorado where school board elections that happened in November just a few months ago were, were very backed by the groups that have been behind all of this anti CRT fervor and all of the kind of like book banning fervor.

Pete Newlove (00:21:21):

So there was definitely some, some groups that put a lot of money into school, board races, and there was a district just south of Denver in Douglas county where the superintendent was just removed because they small majority of four in a seven person school board majority of four that was just recently elected and it into voted into the school board, being backed by one of these groups that is trying to enact all of this sort of anti CRT hype. They, they just straight up voted to remove the superintendent. And there's definitely a law suit coming out of that, but, but the step before they voted

to remove the superintendent was the, the year before the superintendent of that district helps to roll out a new equity policy that would look at what are the inequities that are happening across this school district, the school board that was voted in stripped that and then their next move was to remove the, the superintendent after that. So we we've got here in Colorado, definitely. Some very localized places where, where people are making these moves yell loudly about equity based initiatives to yell loudly about racial justice initiatives to yell loudly about any initiatives where they feel like the privilege and power that they have had are being stripped away from them.

Tim Villegas (00:23:08):

We will definitely link to that story from Douglas county in the show notes. One of the other questions I had, I pose to king Williams. How did we even get to this point where there is a concerted effort to ban CRT in schools?

King Williams (00:23:26):

In the case of critical race there in particular, the direct, direct reason why we're talking about this now, because in late August of last year and early September, the Trump administration came out right in band, like the teaching of critical race theory and anti-racist theory, right? That became a thing, but because 2020 had at least a new episode, every single day of life, it kind of just got sh lost in the shuffle. But it came back up again over the last few weeks as more and more people now, you know, are getting back adjusted to life. And more specifically, people are starting to challenge the notions of, of, you know, what race and what America is, right. And so a lot of things lump critical race theory together, and more specifically came out of backlash of one particular journalist and a university professor named Hannah, Nicole Jones.

King Williams (00:24:11):

And so a lot of her writing is not actually critical race theory by definition, right. But she gets grouped up into that because of her project called the 1619 project. And this also gets into one of the overall critiques of black scholar up in general. And it's something I've tweeted about written about before, which is there's two things you should know. And I, I say this, someone who's graduated degree and an African American states from Georgia state, one of the, the, the 10 or 12 best African American studies departments in the entire us, and I'm gonna give them a special shout out. The next thing is that when it comes to this there's, so that the two most important things about African American studies, which is a part of a broader ACON studies is two things. One of which is it's meant to be challenging, which is the first part. And it's meant to always be corrective. And so I think people really don't understand that when it comes to most of our academic discourse, we are, we effectively get, we take something and then the teacher, you know, we, something, a teacher teaches us, but we're not necessarily meant to talk back when you take African American studies or Africana studies, it's actually meant that you were social learn and then challenge, right? So it's one of the, the few disciplines that actually requires a certain level of challenge and discipline.

Tim Villegas (00:25:21):

Okay. I think I'm starting to get it. So, as I was talking to Eddie Fergus, I realized that's CRT is not being taught in public schools. In fact, it's not a curriculum at all. No, it's not like these are the CRT approved texts that you must, you know, in order to indoctrinate, indoctrinate your students. Right. Exactly. Yeah. But I, so let's get a little bit to the fee year. And the pushback that, that CRT has gotten you know, so like, like we just said, it's not a curriculum, it's not a step by step. This is, you know, how you teach it,

what you teach. It, it's really a, it's really a framework or a way of thinking intended who inform your actions, whether you're a policymaker, whether that you're a researcher, right. It's, it's really meant to inform, you know, what, wherever the work is. Right. So, you know, I guess, theoretically, a teacher, could you use this framework right. To inform their teaching, but not in the way that is being characterized. So, so why don't you I know that we probably could both swap stories about this, but, you know, in your experience, and as you've been talking about CRT what are some examples of how CRT has been distorted and used as a, as a weapon against educators and schools right now?

Eddie Fergus (00:27:03):

So, you know, the ways in which it's being weaponized is, well, one, you know, there's an element of this anti CRT that's it's, it's become a cultural wedge to to bring in. And this is, you know, sort of my own perspective around this, to bring in a voting constituency, into a political camp, right. That to arm them with a set of information, even though that information is disinformation, right. Bring them in, in a way that taps into a a, a, a sort of individualism sort of value point of view, right? The idea of nobody teaches my children anything, unless I teach it to them, nobody's gonna indoctrinate, right? Like, there's something about that that I'm the main driver of what's happening to my children. I'm the main driver of my family. What have you, right. That those are some of the elements of what's of what's being utilized here within this within this sort of environ.

Eddie Fergus (00:28:04):

And so for us to so as we weigh into how to, to deal with this, we have to understand those pieces. So in understanding those, you know, one of the things that, you know, it's the there's an element of sort of being mindful that there is a way in which we that there is a desire for some parts of our community that are experiencing this idea, particularly this idea that there's a sense of American exceptionalism and individualism and patriotism, which is all being kind of wrapped up to, into this really weird, not right. That it is being demonized or challenged over the last six, seven years, right. When and it's, and it's emerging in some ways as a bit of a response to black lives matter, you know, the, and not just black lives matters, but I also wanna put in there sort of other social movements that we've also been attentive to, right?

Eddie Fergus (00:29:04):

So I wanna put in there the two movement as well, and these types of social movements are really representing a an exhaustion that communities who have continuously experienced marginalization are speaking up and speaking up loud and speaking up specifically are around what it is that's happening to them. And so this response, this anti CRT is operating as a cultural wedge to get this group to kind of give them something that they presume they're losing, right? This they're losing sort of this, this rear knot of American exceptionalism, individualism, and patriotism that these social movements are perceived as challenging. You know, these social movements are challenging our sense of American exceptionalism, right? The idea of, you know, I, I was reading the, the Texas bill last week, and there was a piece in there that says, children need to be taught, want, you know, these founding documents to understand how great our country is, right.

Eddie Fergus (00:30:05):

And there's this, that sentiment is something that is perceived being challenged by these social movements. Right. But what's, what's misunderstood is like, you can be great and still have flaws. Right. And what these social movements are saying is like let's be mindful of that. That greatness has not been

great for everyone. Let's be better about achieving that level of greatness. Right. And that's why these types of social movements have been so critical to kind of point those things out. But I think they're being experienced as you know, it's the, a loss of an identity, right? A loss of this exceptionalism, this individualism and patriotism is being lost as a result of being, of having this light shined on the, the shortcomings.

Tim Villegas (00:30:51):

So before you say, Tim, you've absolutely lost the plot on this one. I want to bring us back around to why we wanted to produce this episode in the, for, and it has a lot to do with what Eddie is talking about here. The rise of the social justice movements, because embedded in those movements is the disability rights movement and the progress we have made for inclusive education for all students. When we talk about inclusion for all students, we don't just mean students with disabilities. We mean any student that has been historically marginalized, and that means students of color, LGBTQIA plus students, students who are experiencing poverty and homelessness and students who are English language learners, the rise of the anti CRT movement will crush the progress we have made with educational equity.

Eddie Fergus (00:31:43):

There are elements of our society that have historically privileged, a lot of different sets of identities, right? It's privileged a white identity. It is privileged a male identity. It's privileged a heterosexual identity. It's privileged a a, an ability identity, right? It it's, it has had this long history of doing that. And what these social movements are highlighting is that these, those set of privileges are are privileged in those things, based on those identities are highly problematic and we need to work on dissipating, the privileging of that stuff. Right. and you know, but the reaction to it is the it's either the, I disagree that those things are being privileged. Right. and which is, I find fascinating because you know, because it is so there's, there's a plethora of ongoing information that is showcasing how we privilege all of those set of identities.

Eddie Fergus (00:32:44):

Right. The me, the, the fact that it's, you know, I think about sort of ADA compliance, right? That's a example. That's a great example of, right. Like, we, we, we struggle with ADA compliance because we still have an ability privilege, right. That we keep putting in the simplest things of, you know, how, you know stores are built and the amount of the, the, whether or not there are handicapped parking spots, right? Like, come on, let's be clear and acknowledge that there's privileging that's happening in terms of these identities. And, but there's a struggle around them. Right. Because then it means, and, and this is where I think this anti CRT is, is sort of, they're sort of situating the idea of feeling a sense of individual blame, shame, guilt. Right. And don't want to have that experience. Right. Like, so if we're going acknowledge these things, I don't wanna be blamed for this.

Eddie Fergus (00:33:34):

I don't wanna feel guilty. Right. I didn't do anything. That was my ancestors. Right. What have you? Right. and so, and that, all of that disrupts that weird ball of American exceptionalism, individualism, and patriotism. Right. And don't wanna lose that. Don't wanna lose that at the expense of sort of reconciling that there's been this privileging, you know, I've been sort of comparing this pushback movement to the civil rights movement pushback, and in particular there's images that of the 1960s where they codified or I should say appropriated the civil rights movement, language, or slogans. And I saw, you know, I would see signs that said whites rights instead of civil rights. Right. And I see the same kind of strategy

that's happening, where there's actually, I've seen some board meetings, whereas people have, you know, signs. I saw one that said you know what about the rights for white people, right.

Eddie Fergus (00:34:35):

That they feel as if like it's they're, they're losing as a result of sort of this, these social movements who are reminding us that we're still falling short in terms of achieving equitable opportunities for everyone, everyone, because we have these set of privileged identities that we still hold constant. Right. And so this work that we need to do has to give us an opportunity to like we've gotta be clear what, that, that propaganda is about, all that stuff. Right. That's the Genesis of it. Right. And we, we, we've gotta develop, not only sort of, well, I will say this, we've gotta develop what is our curriculum to learn how to get along? Cause we still haven't figured that out. Right. We move, we came out of the civil rights movement and saying, okay, there's gonna be affirmative action. We're gonna have, we're gonna have all this plethora of sort of opportunities that we're just pushing in.

Eddie Fergus (00:35:28):

Right. but none of that came with a way in which we knew how to, or curriculum for how to get along. Right. And I think now, you know, there's a level to which, and a colleague was talking about this idea that, you know, within some of these white communities that are responding like this, that is partly a reflective of racial apathy. Right. That they're just, I'm just tired of trying to work on this stuff. It's like, I can't get it. Right. You know, so I just say, you know, something I just wanna, right. And I just, you know and if I remember correctly there was this article by this this media scholar who was examining a a social media movement in the, in 20 17, 20 18, right. At the beginnings of the Trump administration, it was called it's okay. To be white. And interesting. It was a very interesting article, right. It, it showed, it was like a YouTube video. And then it had a whole bunch of folks who were doing these, these additional videos of it's okay to be white. Right. And it's sort of, bit of reflection of that racial apathy. Hmm.

Tim Villegas (00:36:37):

A quick reminder, if you're feeling stressed to take a few deep breaths and listen to some relaxing music before we get into the second half of the podcast episode.

Tim Villegas (00:37:27):

But what about the over 100 bills against teaching CRT or divisive topics across the country here is king Williams. And I wanna read you, you, I know you sent that. I, I sent this to you, but I have the resolution here that was on from June 3rd 2021. And it has a number of you know, things that are listed in the resolution. But the number one thing was we, the state board of education for the state of Georgia, number one believes the United States is not a racist country. And that the state of Georgia is not a racist state. This resolution in particular is sending a message, right. It's sending a message. But does it, does it really have any impact other than sending a message?

King Williams (00:38:23):

It's a warning shot to teachers who want to teach outside of the curriculum that was provided to them, right. So that's the first warning shot. This is especially for K-12 schools. I went to a black school. We learned a lot about these things because we had black teachers who learned history and like were specifically like telling us like about it. Right. And so it's a warning shot for those teachers who I went to school and learned from who were just very much like you got to learn your history. There's what the textbook said. I'm gonna tell you what actually is there. And so it's a warning shot. You're meant to do

that. And more importantly, it's a weapon of education and it's meant to reinforce the status quo. What this is, it is enshrining a, in the state of Georgia in particular, a, a, a century plus of history that was very, very much carefully constructed.

King Williams (00:39:10):

And specifically about the, the state of Georgia and specifically about Brian up, this is the same person who within one year of him being elected to office, sign a law that say that you cannot remove Confederate monuments or deface Confederate minds without facing a legal challenge. And more specifically, once you do that, they have to be removed if they are removed to a place of equal prominence. The reason why I'm bringing that up in particular is that when we talk a about education and particularly nationalistic education, what we don't talk often about is the role that the daughters of the Confederacy and the Memorial societies, the Memorial societies were organizations that predate the daughters of Confederacy by a few decades. They did in actually changing the narrative of education. So many of the, the myths that were kind of fighting about now everything from like the lost cause mythology, or like the happy loyal slave to the, even the, the phrase, the war of a Northern aggression comes out of the daughter's the Confederacy and their ability to really get a lot of textbooks changed.

King Williams (00:40:15):

And at that point, again, like school is not formalized, especially in the south, like it is maybe the north and other places, but really pervading myths about the south, about education, about the civil war, about slavery as well as things like states rights, right? And so when people say states rights, that is a direct relationship to the daughters that a Confederacy and their, their movement to make the south seem less treasonous as possible. And more specifically, also we talk about Memorial day, which happened a month ago. The first Memorial day was actually reported in 1865, within one month at the end of the civil war. And it was done by a former slave, former enslaved Africans union soldiers, and then African American soldiers who had joined the union army. So this had already happened. The artists of Confederacy over the next couple of years had constituted Memorial day as a day of celebration for the Confederate dead, the Confederate fallen.

King Williams (00:41:06):

And as a result, this also brings about two things. That's super important that we just mentioned before, which is the rise of, of Confederate monuments and Confederate graves. And then the other one is the rise of promoting the, the rebel battle flag across the south. And so when we talk about education, these are all aspects of education. They don't fall necessarily in critical ratio as we're talking about today, but they do fall into this history of what is considered history. Right? When I, I went to school, Georgia history, none of this was covered, but it's actually important. I went to school and the Confederate flag was still flying. Well, I went to a black, so they just didn't fly it, but like they would have it in front of every elementary. And so that is a very important thing to think about when we talk about history and education, because what we're seeing effectively is the end of that system, like that said before Brian Kemp and Richard Nixon identity politics, and the other aspects of identity politics is identity.

King Williams (00:41:55):

Politics requires a construction. And so habit, it all relates to critical race theory, and we'll bring it back home. Is that the one of the, the, the early tenets of critical race theory that all races a construct. And I

know that's kind of hard for people to believe, but when we talk about critical race theory, critical race theory, it falls in again, Africana studies. And again, I cannot stress this enough to the guests at home. It is meant to be challenging. And so from one of your opening tenants, is that the construct of rates, which effectively renders all African American and Africana studies effectively, even by its definition either at challenge or should be abolished is because you have to think critically, right? And so one of the things that critical race theory brings up is that race is a construct. And as a result, the last 500 years or so, we've been living into a construct, which is something that should be abolished over time.

Tim Villegas (00:42:47):

So with everything we have been learning about critical race theory, that it is not being taught in K12 schools and how the anti CRT movement is hurting strides towards educational equity. I asked a Alida Miranda Wolf. Is there anything we can learn from CRT?

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:43:08):

So I wanna just start by saying most diversity equity, inclusion and belonging educators, I, and most educators in your space too. Aren't using CRT at all, especially because it is very focused on public policy. So the scope is much wider. One thing that I always like to clarify is diversity equity, inclusion, and belonging came out of organization and corporate workplaces, which means that it's a product of workplace dynamics and cultures and how people interact and what they expect from their work. CRT is illegal and racial theory. And it's an area of scholarship. So when we think about D E I B yes, there's theory behind it, but it's mostly practical. That's not necessarily the case with CRT or when we're thinking about K through 12 teachers. I mean, we, we really have to look at this. Realistically, a first grade teacher is not teaching her students about the hundreds of desegregation cases that led to negative outcomes.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:44:12):

It's not a concept that's being introduced. So we have to acknowledge that there are places and times where CRT principals show up in these areas. But it, as a concept, it's not showing up. I remember listening to the bucks county school board meetings, because I wanted to feel really stressed. I guess, if you ever wanna feel your heart rate, literally increase in seconds, just listen to parents, arguing in school board meetings. And I remember one of the teachers saying all I did was introduce social, emotional learning curriculum to my first graders on how to manage anger and sadness. And I'm being told that I'm teaching CRT and that I'm indoctrinating the students with these beliefs that go against everything America stands for. So there definitely is this inflation happening. That's not productive, but I will say this. I do use tenants of CRT in my work and where I think it is very helpful and hugely valuable is the idea that we're gonna think about the system and focus less on the bad apples, who, who are creating problems at the individual level, but instead thinking about the system and how to set up one, that's more stable, more sustainable more likely to advocate for and give access to people in underserved and, and underrepresented groups that is so central to consulting with an organization to really make the experience better for employees.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:45:56):

I also find that when I introduce true CRT principles in an adult learning setting, they're way less resistant because what we're telling them is you're not a bad person. You're not a bad person because you're white. You live in a society that's distributes power on the basis of race, but you are not personally responsible for this. There are things that you can do to make changes and you yourself, just

because of who you are, are not responsible for injustice equity, which is part of CRT. So it's the a opposite of what we're hearing in sort of the public discourse. I would also say, I don't think I could do the work that I do without the concept of intersectionality, because the reality is you hold multiple identities. You're not just your race. You're not just your sex assigned at birth or your gender identity, your nationality, your body type or side.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:46:54):

You are you, and you hold those identities and you might choose to identify with some and not with others. And others will place labels on you or distribute power to you differently based on the intersection of those identities. So it is just really helpful in thinking about a or holistic organizational strategy, but it's also really, really helpful when we're thinking about teachers and kids in the classroom. Because even if teachers aren't teaching intersectionality, they can better understand their students. You cannot look at two students and say, you will need exactly the same thing. I mean, any teacher, any educator will tell you that there are different learning needs in the classroom. Well, a lot of those are gonna be impacted by social factors. I also wanna just take this moment to get on my soapbox, because again, I'm not practicing CRT I'm not part of the scholarship.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:47:55):

I certainly rely on thinkers from the movement, especially Derek be and Kimberly Crenshaw, but that's not what I do. What I think is so frustrating is that when people try to use like the logic based argument and tear down CRT, what I hear over and over again is this is a feelings versus facts, argument, and it's coming from the principle of storytelling, but I just wanna go back to organizational culture and change in what expectations are there, because I have her probably nine out of 10 of leaders within the organizations we work with say, I just wanna create a space where people can bring their whole selves to work and be authentic. So how can people bring their whole selves to work and be authentic if they aren't allowed to share their stories or talk about their lived experiences? Does that mean that bringing your whole self to work is really only for people from dominant groups?

Alida Miranda-Wolff (00:48:57):

And then also when did we decide that actual situations, things that actually happened aren't facts. You know, when we do a storytelling share out will ask folks about when you first understand your racial identity. And generally we have at least one person in the room say, well, it was when I was called this racial slur and then five other people will say, Hey, that was my answer too. How is that not data? That, that is always just something that really bothers me, but in terms of, you know, K through 12 teachers, there might be some pieces. They might talk about how when we're talking about the criminal justice system, that people of color are much more likely to be incarcerated for committing the same crimes as white people that might come up in a high school class. But otherwise the main argument is not against critical race theory in general, but the whole concept of social justice. I mean, that is really where this debate is. And I just wish that we would name it that way, because it would make it a lot easier to participate in a discussion where we're not missing each other.

Tim Villegas (00:50:12):

Alida said that we are just missing each other. So I asked Pete Newlove, is this just one big misunderstanding or is something else going on here? So is it really just a misunderstanding of what CRT is, or is it a, an, is it people who see this, taking this as an opportunity to further a particular political viewpoint and using it as leverage?

Pete Newlove (00:50:53):

I, I would say all of the above for sure. It's, it's absolutely a misunderstanding and, and it's definitely this like placeholder for racist, classist, ableist anxieties that, that, that folks with all of those privileges are, are dumping their anxieties into, or dumping their racism in classes of enablism.

Tim Villegas (00:51:21):

You know, I understand as a, you know, a Latinx person that I can be racist. Right, right. Like at absolutely a hundred percent, I can, I can be racist, but the awareness that I am or can be doesn't mean that I can't do something about it or that it's, that it's like, it's like either you are racist or you're not racist. Like it it's like at any point you can be right. Yes, yes, yes. And that, there, there shouldn't be any shame in, in that other than I mean, there shouldn't be any shame in acknowledging that but we need to move forward with like understanding it and what do I do of about it. So, you know, I, I see this connection with, like, we don't want our kids to feel bad, you know, we don't want to, to put you know, we don't want to change or examine the structures. We're just gonna say, everything's fine.

Pete Newlove (00:52:35):

Right, right. Right.

Tim Villegas (00:52:36):

You know, because if we say that we, if we acknowledge racism or if we acknowledge ableism, then we're forever marked with that. Instead of saying, you know what, there are racist structures, there are ableist structures. Well, we can do something about that. We can change, you know?

Pete Newlove (00:52:57):

Yeah. There, there's always tensions between, like, I think what is the conversation that we need to have here? And I think some conversations do need to be at that level of the interpersonal. But of, of course, if that it, if the conversations within the realm of like trying to figure out if a person is racist or classist or xenophobic or ableist, the conversation can't really ever get that far, but still people, people do things and make choices and enact behaviors that, that are always upholding these systems and structures. So we need to talk about the systems and structures, and we need to talk about who, who are the people involved and how do we, how do we work towards upholding these things in ways that maybe we're aware of in, in ways that we're not aware of as well, you, you mentioned the idea of shame and that, that that's actually really important to, to lean into as well, because while, while a, a lot of white folks are expressing concern about, like, if we learn about racism, then my white, child's gonna feel this shame.

Pete Newlove (00:54:11):

You, you know, again, first off, that's an important thing to actually lean into rather than avoid, but also like shame is something that gets weaponized for people who hold all of these privileges in order to make, or that we kind of get socialized into upholding all of these practices in our daily lives. So like you know, able bodied folks, like when we're very young, we'll get taught things like the R word so that we can make sure, like, you are not like this person who might have some kind of like mental incapacity or some sort of like learning disability or struggle. You're not like that person. So we're taught to like, use, like these words at like these incredibly young ages. You know, we actually go to school in a sense to learn some of these words that we end up coming home with, or a lot of people learn them in their home too.

Pete Newlove (00:55:06):

Of course. Right. Sure. Or we learn in, in white households such as like what, what I grew up in and like the white circles that I, that I kind of grew up in, in my community we learn how to make sure that, like we marked differences according to like, those folks are Chinese. Those folks are black, those folks are Latino. Those folks speak a different language and we're in, you know, all this terrible, stereotypical racist sort of jokes and everything that come along with that are all for the purpose of socializing us to make sure that like we, we, we maintain privilege and, and we're made to feel shame if, if we ever start to like sympathize, right. If, if we actually question any of that shame is actually one of the primary mechanisms that like white adults will use to make sure that like, kids don't actually explore racial inequalities. Don't ask that question,

Tim Villegas (00:56:08):

Right? Yeah.

Pete Newlove (00:56:11):

Yeah. Why is that person different is a completely natural question for a kid to ask. Right, right. Like, like my, my own daughter, like we had neighbors who, who happened to be immigrants from Mexico and ask like, why, why are they speaking Spanish? You know, there there's a lot of white parents who will like, in that moment act a bunch of shame. Like, no, no, no, don't say that, like, you know, like why don't they speaking? No, you're not supposed to say that you'll, you'll sound racist. If you say that, don't do that. Right. We're not supposed to talk about that Instead of like, that's a perfectly normal question for my four year old daughter to ask.

Tim Villegas (00:56:51):

Yeah.

Pete Newlove (00:56:52):

Yeah. They come from a country where that's the language that they do speak pretty simple, I think. Right.

Tim Villegas (00:56:58):

Right.

Pete Newlove (00:56:59):

It’s gonna handle that conversation, I think. Or, you know, I'm thinking of you know, like a person using a wheelchair, you know? Yes. Like, or what happened to them, what's wrong with them? You know, that's a natural question for a kid to ask.

Tim Villegas (00:57:15):

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. And, and, and we yeah. And by, by shame, by saying, no, don't talk about that. Or we don't talk about that or that's not appropriate, you know, or we're reinforcing that, that difference is, is shameful, right?

Pete Newlove (00:57:36):

Absolutely. Yeah.

Tim Villegas (00:57:38):

Okay. So you might be thinking, Tim, we have made so much progress with racism and ableism. Isn't it getting better here is Eddie Fergus.

Eddie Fergus (00:57:49):

Well, you know, so the idea of like, it, you know, give us credit for it's getting better, has to be contextualized also that the, the work to try to make things better has, has, has, you know, spurs and starts over time. Right. Like there's been, and, you know, so you had, for example, let's take desegregation of schools, right. The, the, the, the terrain of, or I should say the, the conveyor belt of desegregating schools reached this peak in the 1980s. Right. And then it had its, and it's been having sort of this ongoing downturn, right. As a as a tool that, you know that school districts have been attentive to, or, or caring for. Right. And some of that is, you know we have to contextualize that. So if we talking about what things getting better, that's one piece of it, right.

Eddie Fergus (00:58:43):

That we've kind of lost steam in terms of our efforts around the desegregating schools, right. Particularly desegregating schools by race. And we see that loss of it in particular it's greatest loss with the, the Supreme court case of 20 se 20 2007, the picks versus Seattle case, right. Where basically said, you know, race can't be used as a as a variable in how we are trying to sort of create diverse school settings. Right. and, and socioeconomic status can only be used, but to a certain degree. Right. so there is a, a manner in which some of this stuff is showing up and you know, those types of sort of resource allocation conditions or the ways in which schools are being organized, that we've gotta be mindful that they haven't been at a steady clip to ensure that things can get better.

Eddie Fergus (00:59:38):

Right. we still have, have, like, so for example, you have states like New Jersey, New York there's several states in the Midwest that I'm blanking out. Now who've had court cases for the last 15 to 20 years to ensure that there is equitable funding in schooling. Right. So we want to talk about it's getting better. We're still trying to ensure that there's baseline resourcing, that there's baseline of a a desire for integrated schools. So when we're, when we have a steady clip of that stuff, then let's engage into the idea of it's getting better. Right. because we haven't, we haven't, we're still, in some ways we're still mirroring or still having the same set of struggles that we had that lit that leaned in and were part of, sort of the argument around brown versus board that is still at play here.

Tim Villegas (01:00:37):

Why does it feel like, and, and this is not necessarily coming from me in my thoughts, but I'm just, I'm trying to reflect some of the pushback, cause I know, you know, educators have a, you know, a wide spectrum of where they fall politically. Right. And if you happen to be right, leaning, conservative, leaning, even if you aren't, you know, weren't storming the capital on Jan January 6th, you have you, or yeah. Let's hope. Let's hope not let's hope. No one that listens to this was storming the capital. But if you're, if you're that way, if you have a mindset that's right. Leaning to at least honor some of those questions about like, well, why, how like what's going on? Why am I feeling the way that I'm feeling? And see if we can kind of unpack that. So my, my question is if things have not progressed as much as, you know they, we really think they have, why, why do we think they have, like why, you know, just a, an educator who, you know, is in Georgia why, why do I think that we've come farther than we really have?

Tim Villegas (01:02:02):

Like, where is that? Where is that coming from?

Eddie Fergus (01:02:05):

Right. Well, and I think we, you know, we have to kind of contextualize the, that, that the idea of where we've come from in terms of, you know, that, those particular elements of that journey. Right. So that educator in Georgia thinking about the context of, of where it's come from. Right. So and, and in you know, a, a particularly sort of thinking about a social context that you know, prior to much of the 1950s and sixties law, you know, statute changes that transpired, you know, there was a lot of social permission to keep social and legal permission to keep distance from various racial, ethnic groups, right. And social and legal permission to exclude from you know from certain stores or certain using certain water fountains, right? Like there were a great deal of some of that, you know, that was the context.

Eddie Fergus (01:03:02):

Right. So their comparison points, maybe he was like, we don't do that anymore. We don't have colored and white, you know water fountains. Right. Like we don't, we don't explicitly have segregated schools. Right. Like, you know, yeah. Black kids can come to this school. I mean, it's not gonna be the school that we're not gonna necessarily have the complete doors wide open for them. Right. But they can come to the school. Right. we can have our, you know, we can have Mexican essential American students here. Right. in these school settings. So the, the idea of it's gotten better, we've gotten further. It's like, yeah. So there's, it's almost as if the you know, we've, we wanna applaud ourselves for having, given ourselves the social permission to kind of hang out with people that are different than us. And yes, that's that's progress.

Eddie Fergus (01:03:51):

Right. but let's also be mindful of the goodness of what's happening in those social interactions to, you know it doesn't mean that these, particularly these public school environments, that, that kids are situated in that it's not operating from the vantage point of stereotyped or biased perspectives around the populations that they're serving. Right. There's still sentiments of, you know, we see it in who's ending up being over-identified in special education that is pre premised on the sort of presumption around sort of intelligence that's perceived as not as great for particular groups. Right. You know, like some of my survey data that I do with of school settings, you know one of the the survey items that in every district that I work with about 15 to 20% of the educators that respond to the survey agree with the idea that differences in racial differences in in intelligence performance tests like IQ they perceive it as due to genetic differences by racial group.

Tim Villegas (01:05:03):

How much, how many percent?

Eddie Fergus (01:05:05):

About, about 15 to 20% of every district that I do of, of the educators who take those surveys. Right. Wow. And so for me, that's, that means that there's still an I of, of of racial hierarchy. That's still sitting with educators, right. So yes, we've got progress where it's like, yeah, you're hanging out and you're willing to give some op you know you're willing to have conversation, but it doesn't mean that you've, that we've worked on and we've necessarily dissipated sort of some of the racialized ideologies, right. Or racist ideologies that we maintain about each other. So I want to sort of, I can give the credit for, we've

made this progress. Yeah. We still got a lot more to go. Right. It's the, so you can hang out with folks, but it doesn't mean that there is there's a complete social inclusion that's happening in terms of, in terms of instruction and pedagogy and school systems. Right. that are absent of those sets of bias perspectives particularly racial, ethnic minority populations.

Tim Villegas (01:06:07):

Yeah. and once again, in this conversation, I keep coming back to disability and ableism and how, how it, it really just runs parallel, you know? Yes. With because again, you know, well, back before 1975 kids with disability, they weren't even allowed in school. So now they are so, Hey.

Eddie Fergus (01:06:34):

Right. So, yeah, so we got, we got 'em in school, but I don't know if I want them in my, a class. Right. Or as a year, at times from parents in focus groups, you know, it's like, oh, I, they distract from the teacher. Right. Right. Like they're, and, and they're the, the, the argument is that it's taking away something from my kid, because the teacher's distracted, distracted. Right. In terms of providing support services for, with IEP. Right. Right. so there's, I always think back to what is it, it's a quote by clays when you're accustomed to privilege, equity feels like oppression, right?

Tim Villegas (01:07:17):

Say that again, Eddie.

Eddie Fergus (01:07:18):

When you're accustomed to privilege, equity feels like oppression. Right. Cause you've just been, you've gotten used to whatever that is. Right. And, but whatever that is, it's also it's, I was situated as like, it's an an abundance of sort of, of opportunity and privilege that isn't necessarily necessary for you to be successful. Right. But you get used to it right. In, in a way that when we start to sort of even out the playing field, it feels as if that there's a loss that's happening, I'm losing something. Right. And, and in fact, it's like, it's not a loss per se, but it's a it's a real orientation of how we should have been operating our systems.

Tim Villegas (01:08:04):

So what can educators do about this? Here is Alida Miranda Wolf.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (01:08:09):

From what I've gathered, 26 states have proposed legislation or executive actions that limit or ban CRT in schools in the classroom. And what I want to also emphasize there is it can feel like a minefield for teachers when these laws are not referring to anything in C, R T there's a civil rights law and policy expert, but who's written really eloquently about this whole situation. And frankly, really simply so that it's easy to understand. And he's been able to break down how these laws often have nothing to do with CRT and are more product of that previous administrations to the 16, 19 project. Many people believe that that executive order was issued in response to the 1619 project. And the 1776 project was a, a counter argument against it. This idea that America is great, that we're criticizing elements of American history are focusing on them to my, to invalidate the country's greatness, which is really a nationalism issue has created really an ambiguous environment.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (01:09:26):

Because as a teacher, you feel like you can get fined or fired for saying anything. I mean, my, one of my favorite articles, because it was so, but also felt so true, it was from the onion at the start of February where it basically, the, the headline is something like school calendar jumps to March 1st after critical race theory band prohibits month of February, which of course is black history month. And it was interesting. I remember sharing it with a number teachers that I work with who were all, you know, laughing. So as not to be crying because that's what they were feeling. So just a few things that can be helpful. I wanna start by saying, I'm not a lawyer and I'm not providing legal advice. But the first thing I would do is look up your state and what legislation or exec exist first.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (01:10:19):

And then based on that, bring whatever proposed curriculum or content to your leadership within your school to check, is this gonna be within our commitments? I wanna emphasize that most of these laws actually are really vague or really broad. I've looked at Iowa and Texas in part, and in Iowa, you can talk about whatever you want. You can talk about the KKK. You can talk about white supremacy. You can talk about racism. You just, as a teacher, have to make sure that you're not telling students, they have to believe in your ideology while you teach it. Which to me reads actually like a response to parent, right? Parents who are afraid that their kids are being taught, that their country is bad, that their race is bad, that these institutions are bad. So presenting the information and noting what students find helpful is what they can take with them, but that you're not trying to convince them that they can make up their own minds.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (01:11:22):

That's a useful practice. And then, like I said, talking to your school leadership about this is important too, because you know, school leadership can be afraid. They can also decide they wanna take an activist stance on this. And we are seeing that in a number of schools, especially because public schools in particular do have a right to freedom of speech. And many educators are viewing this legislation as being illegal and interfering with freedom of speech. But also because the laws being written are so vague and so broad, and in such unspecific generic terms, there's just a question about whether they are even legal and will even hold. So for educators, that's a reminder. And then the other thing I'll say is it's a blurry line when we about your individual, right? To freedom of speech. Because as an individual, you can advocate, you can state your opinions, you can share what you think about these concepts outside of the classroom.

Alida Miranda-Wolff (01:12:29):

The problem here of course, is what is the role of social media and schools. We've seen this a lot on the side of students posting and being expelled or being given detention or being investigated for their behavior, but teachers are afraid of the same happening to them. And so it is limiting their speech in some ways, because there aren't yearly defined parameters. And so this is another place where I don't think enough schools have crystal clear policies on what their social media policy is for teachers and what will be considered and won't be considered. And that is absolutely something that I believe teachers should be advocating for. How can you follow the rules if you don't know what they

Tim Villegas (01:13:18):

I'm so thankful you made it this far. And before we wrap up with some final thoughts from Eddie Fergus, I wanted to say that if you loved this episode, let us know by emailing us at podcast, think inclusive.us,

or message us on social media. You can also am a patron visit patreon.com/think inclusive podcast. I'll be posting the unedited versions of all of our interviews in the one with king Williams. We have a great discussion about Confederate monuments and memorials, including stone mountain in Georgia, the largest Confederate Memorial in the world. Check it out. Okay, here is Eddie Fergus to close this out,

Eddie Fergus (01:14:03):

Right. But we just, unfortunately we made a mistake and overprivileged you in? This is in this particular dynamic, right? And now we are needing to you know, really rectify the field. And some of that means we're gonna have to do more for the groups who've been absent of for a long time in order for us to really reconcile sort of the damage and the over privileging that we've done, we've damaged one group and overprivileged other so and I'm sort of, I, I keep coming back to that over and over again, as we're, this is, as this pushback is happening. It's like, you know, it's like, you've been so accustomed to a level of privilege that equity, any sentiment of equity feels like oppression, right? The idea of, wait a second, now I have to learn about other people. I have to take a course on you in Connecticut.

Eddie Fergus (01:14:52):

You know, they passed the a law now where they're gonna be offering African American and Puerto Rican and Latinx history courses at the high school level. Right. And, you know, there's, there's angst around it, right. Cuz folks are like, wait a second. I was never trained on this. Wait a second. My kids have to learn some other I more history. Well, you know, it's like, that's too much, right. When in fact you actually were, you know you were being privileged, your identity was being overly privileged by being the centerpiece of everything. Right. As a former social studies teacher, right. I had to supplement the stories of everyone else to kind of help fill in this historical sort of understanding that we have about sort of what's transpired particularly in us history so that kids weren't walking away, that, you know, all we need to know about Mexicans is that they fought us, you know, during the Alamo.

Eddie Fergus (01:15:46):

And we and we had to take their land in the 1848 Guadalupe treaty, or, you know you know, now I need to know about sort of the, the Tulsa riots, right? It's like I had to do all this supplements so that my kids could have a more robust and complete historical picture. So they weren't just situating with the idea of like, oh, we're so exceptional, we've done everything great. We wrote the declaration, we had the Federalist papers we had, I mean, all these great things that we've done and look at us now. Right. because that is, you know, that's, it creates a level of analytical shortcomings for our kids when we are sort of allowing them to have the sort of very myopic curricular over time. So, and that's what we, you know, so we have to have this sort of over abundance of work that happens now in order for us to really achieve the level of equity that's necessary for our kids.

Tim Villegas (01:16:45):

Yeah. So, so what I'm hearing is, you know, the, I can hear some of the critics like CRT is teaching kids to hate America, know it's teaching kids to understand America better.

Eddie Fergus (01:17:02):

Yes. Yes. That's a great way to say it, to understand America better because there's so much of, particularly in history as somebody who's taught history of how our textbooks, our are, you know, well, you know, folks for first of all, most folks don't know that, you know, textbooks are actually, they're written by publishing companies, but are approved by state boards. Right. So they get to make decisions

around what's the stuff that's in, in there. Right. And that's, that's those state boards are compiled of folks who are from that state, right. They're determining the set of standards that are most important and the types of information that's within there. Right. like for example, there was a textbook that McGraw hill published for Texas, a geography textbook in 2015 in, and one of the pages where it had in the caption it had a picture of the of the slave states and in the caption, it said between I forget what years it had down there, you know thousands of workers were brought from Africa right to United States.

Eddie Fergus (01:18:08):

And it goes down to talk about how they brought workers, right? Not slaves not had a system of slavery, but had workers. Right. And so those are sets of, that's a orientation that in that particular Texas geography book that McGraw hill published, but it was the Texas state board and the who sat there who made that approval. Right. They're the ones who said, no, no, no, this is, this is how we are languaging sort of those touchpoints of how we understand that historical moment. So you're right. It is a matter of, you know we are helping our kids understand America better.

Tim Villegas (01:18:49):

That will do it for this episode of the think inclusive podcast. Special thanks to king Williams, Eddie Fergus, Alida, Miranda-Wolff, and Pete Newlove for taking time to speak with me about CRT. Thanks to BG ad group for giving us permission to repost the Cherokee Tribune ledger podcast. Thanks to Kayla Kingston for her note-taking and editing powers. We couldn't produce the show without you. Thank you to patrons Veronica E, Sonya A, Pamela P, Mark C, Kathy B, Kathleen T, and Jarett T for their continued support of the podcast. This podcast is a production of MCIE, where we envision a society where neighborhood at schools welcome all learners and create the foundation for inclusive communities. Learn more at mcie.org. We will be back with another think inclusive episode in a couple weeks and look out for more additions of the Weeklyish and bonus episodes in the meantime. Thanks for your time attention and for listening. Until next time. Remember inclusion always works.

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