

Abolitionist Teaching Is . . .

by Bettina L. Love

Abolitionist Teaching Is . . .

Working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools.

Choosing to engage in the struggle for educational justice knowing that you have the ability and human right to refuse oppression and refuse to oppress others.

* Teachers working with community groups in solidarity to address issues impacting their students and their students' communities

* Reimagining and rewriting curriculums with local and national activists to provide students with not only examples of resistance but also strategies of resistance

* Protecting and standing in solidarity with immigrant children and their families + joining pro-immigrant community organizations in the fight for rights for all

* Knowing that freedom is impossible without women and queer leaders being the thinkers and doers of abolitionist movements

* Engaging in civics education that teaches direct action and civil disobedience while incorporating the techniques of the millennial freedom-fighting generation

* Demanding restorative justice in our schools as the only schoolwide or districtwide approach

* Insisting that all children need to play.

* Ensur[ing] that children feel safe in schools and that schools are not perpetrators of violence

* Calling out teachers who degrade and diminish dark children

Refusing to take part in zero-tolerance policies and the school-to-prison pipeline.

Opposing . . .

- * standardized testing
- * English-only education
- * racist teachers
- * arming teachers with guns
- * turning schools into prisons

* Learning the sociopolitical landscape of students' communities through a historical, intersectional justice lens

* Abandoning teaching gimmicks like 'grit'

* Embracing theories such as critical race theory, settler colonialism, Black feminism, dis/ability, critical race studies, and other critical theories that have the ability to interrogate anti-Blackness

Acknowledging and accepting America and its policies as anti-Black, racist, discriminatory, and unjust.

Abolitionist teaching asks us to be accountable for the pain we have caused others, to restore justice, and call into question our liberal politics.

The ultimate goal of abolitionist teaching is freedom. Freedom to create your reality, where uplifting humanity is at the center of all decisions . . . Equal rights, liberties, and citizenship for dark children, their families, and their communities.

Art is a homeplace. Abolitionist teaching is dependent on art for resistance, for (re)membering, for joy, for love, for healing, and for humanity.

While we do not forget injustice, we are focused instead on love, well-being, and joy and refuse to be oppressed any longer.