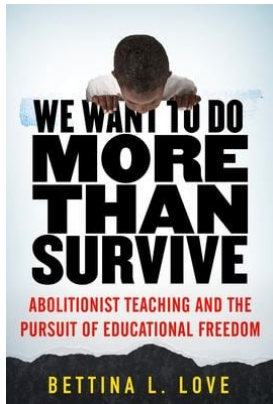


NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM ISSUE PAPER:

ANOTHER SUBVERSIVE CURRICULUM HEADED TO NEBRASKA CLASSROOMS.

BACKGROUND. Nebraska taxpayers who fund our K-12 public schools with 56%-60% of our property taxes have fought several curriculum battles in recent years, e.g., Common Core, the 1619 Project, and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. Taxpaying parents who are veterans of these battles and concerned others must mobilize for another curriculum fight, abolitionist teaching, now headed for our children's classrooms across the state.

THE DEFINITION. Abolitionist teaching is a set of academic practices and perspectives of teaching that emphasize abolishing educational practices considered by their authors as problematic and oppressive. Radical education professor Bettina Love originated this term.¹ In her 2019 book entitled We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom, she proposes abolitionist teaching as a corrective remedy for the root causes of inequities in education. the various ways that schools rob minority students of their humanity and prepare them for lives of exhaustion and trauma. Abolitionist teaching works to challenge and dismantle alleged White supremacy in schools by eliminating zero-tolerance discipline policies in favor of restorative justice leniency, integrating student cultural and community knowledge into the curriculum.²



Love co-founded the Abolitionist Teaching Network (ATN) in 2020, which mobilizes teachers and parents to fight injustices within their schools. Boosters of this curriculum condemn test-taking and prohibitions on classroom cheating and subordinate traditional literacy and math improvement plans.³ Standard curriculum and standardized tests also pegged as sources of racialized trauma and emotional harm. Radical organizations promoting this curriculum have infuriated parents by infusing radical politics and activism into classrooms, promoting anti-police, anti-capitalist, and antisemitic content. It includes huge amounts of radical feminism. It urges teachers to fight for leftwing social justice.

Abolitionist teaching aims to dismantle supposed oppressive systems within education. Community engagement considered a crucial component of abolitionist teaching with emphasis on building relationships with students, families, and community members.

Abolitionist teaching allegedly empowers students, shifts power dynamics in education, and promotes equity and inclusivity in the classroom. Its promotional scholars(?) argue that abolitionist teaching prevents feelings of guilt or pity among immigrants.⁴ Black feminist theory and direct action inspire its theme.⁵ Political activist and communist scholar Angela Davis is a major figure in the abolitionist teaching movement, an educational approach that aims to eliminate unfair discipline rules. Her objectives include ending zero-tolerance discipline rules and police presence in schools, teaching students to disobey unfair rules and mobilize for social justice. It encourages students to critically analyze and question establishment persons in the social, political, and economic systems that supposedly perpetuate inequality. Abolitionist teaching encourages students to critically engage with the curriculum and challenge dominant narratives. It instigates them to question systems of power and oppression, fostering a sense of victimization in their own lives and communities. It emphasizes the need to disrupt the traditional teacher-student hierarchy and question classroom authority. Collaborative decision-making processes advocated, such as involving students in setting classroom rules or co-creating the curriculum. By teaching students to recognize and challenge oppressive systems, students gain a sense of urgency and the belief that their actions can make a difference. This empowerment extends beyond the classroom and prepares students to confront injustice and work towards a more progressive society. To implement abolitionist teaching in the classroom, teachers should start by creating a culturally responsive curriculum, using literature and resources that challenge present oppressive systems. Abolitionist teaching then raises marginalized voices and empowers students to become agents of change in dismantling inequities.⁶

¹ Love, Bettina, We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom, 2019.

² Rethink Outside, Abolitionist Environmental and Place-Based Education, undated.

³ LeMaster, Benny; Mapes, Meggie, Refusing a compulsory want for revenge, or, teaching against retributive justice with liberatory pedagogy, 10-1-2020.

⁴ Blum, Denise, et. al., "'I've never cried with a stranger before': a pedagogy of discomfort, emotion and hope for immigrant justice, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 9-14-21.

⁵ Network, Abolitionist Teaching. "Abolitionist Teaching Network," 3-5-21.

⁶ Steps 4 Kids, Exploring Abolitionist Teaching: What Is It and Why It , Editorial Team, Sept. 24, 2024.

THE SPREAD. A 1st Grade teacher in Milwaukee belongs to the Abolitionist Teaching Network. She organizes rallies against Republican legislation that bans critical race theory in schools and participates in Black Lives Matter demonstrations. This network, a nonprofit launched in July, 2020 to advocate for educational equity, received 300 applications from teachers for its Activists in Residence (AIR) program that helps local education activists mobilize to improve education for minority children, based on the specific progressive issues in their communities. The first group of activists in residence, 6 educators from Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Georgia, and Ohio, selected in July, 2021. Each received an annual payment of \$30,000, made possible by donations from the Nellie Mae Foundation, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, and individual donors.⁷

CONSERVATIVE BACKLASH. Conservative criticism of abolitionist teaching points to political indoctrination, the promotion of radical leftist activism, and the erosion of academic standards. Critics argue that this curriculum shifts schools away from foundational learning and divides students along racial and ideological lines. Framing education around oppressors and the oppressed instills collective guilt, racial division, and psychological distress among students rather than unity. Abolitionist teaching, promoted by radicals like Bettina Love, uses K-12 schooling to recruit students into progressive, anti-capitalist, and anti-police political movements. Opponents object to the promoter dismissal of traditional grading, standard testing, and literacy benchmarks, arguing that lowering these metrics harms the educational development of all students. Conservatives state that attempts to dismantle standard learning objectives under the guise of social justice replaces traditional core academic instruction with subjective social theories. Criticisms highlight that calling for the removal of school resource officers and campus security undermines safety and order inside schools. Opponents argue that the philosophy teaches a generalized hostility toward American civic institutions and historical foundations rather than promoting constructive civic participation.



PRESENT IN NEBRASKA. The UN-L College of Education & Human Sciences uses the International Coalition for Multilingual Education & Equity program, a major organizational initiative committed to imagining and realizing the possibilities of abolitionist teaching and learning projects. These projects promote pluralistic, democratic educational practices and outcomes that supposedly promote expansive multilingualism and equity. The College seek to actively disrupt notions of teaching

and learning that fall into traditional cultural norms wherein teaching operated as surveillance and learning as compliance. It sees the limitations of such teaching and learning practices as an evasion whereby through compliance with such cultural practices, we actively avoid the opportunities to disrupt inequity. The College is engaging in teaching and learning as a NE educational entity committed to disrupting traditional teaching as it seeks to achieve racial and linguistic justice within a larger vision and imagination for abolition, decolonization, freedom, and equity.

TAKE ACTION NOW. Because the UN-L College of Education is propagandizing its students with abolitionist teaching methods, we can expect a steady crop of new teachers in our public schools to indoctrinate our kids and teens with this pernicious educational philosophy. Therefore, taxpaying parents should closely scrutinize the materials and programs used in our NE K-12 classrooms. If you discover that your offspring are being abused by this teaching method, complain to the principal and your school board member. If complaining to them does not bring results, complain to your State Board of Education member and the unbiased media. Using the above content, next, urge your university regent to pressure UN-L to drop abolitionist teaching from its education courses. Email netaxpayers@gmail.com for university regent contact information and join our NTF *Education Watch Project*.

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⁷ Abolitionist Teaching Network Supports Education Activists, March 17, 2022.