

Hip Hop, Creativity, Social Justice & Civics—Keynote, Bettina Love

CAST UDL Symposium 8/7/20

What is Abolitionist Teaching and Why It Matters?

abolition, not reform, is necessary

abolition gives up more than privilege

WHY ABOLITION

"Not so much the abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society."
Fred Moten & Stefano Harney

THE UNDERCOMMONS
PLACIVE PLANNING & BLACK POLITICS

Chat Raise Hand Q&A Closed Caption Leave

Need a framework to build a new world – if you’ve been oppressed for 400 years, you’d want to start over. This world was not set up for people of color, so need to tear this “thing” down...

ideas of abolition—need to consciously tear down a system that oppresses people, do away with prison, but more...tear down conditions that create prisons, schools that are like prisons, no windows—these children are not worthy of particular type of learning

Why not just Reform?

REFORM WILL NOT WORK

The practical cost of change for the nation up to this point has been cheap. The limited reforms have been obtained at bargain rates. There are no expenses, and no taxes are required, for Negroes to share lunch counters, libraries, parks, hotels, and facilities with whites...Even the more significant changes involved in voter registration required neither large monetary nor psychological sacrifice.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE
CHAOS OF COMMUNITY?
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Chat Rate Hand Q&A Closed Caption

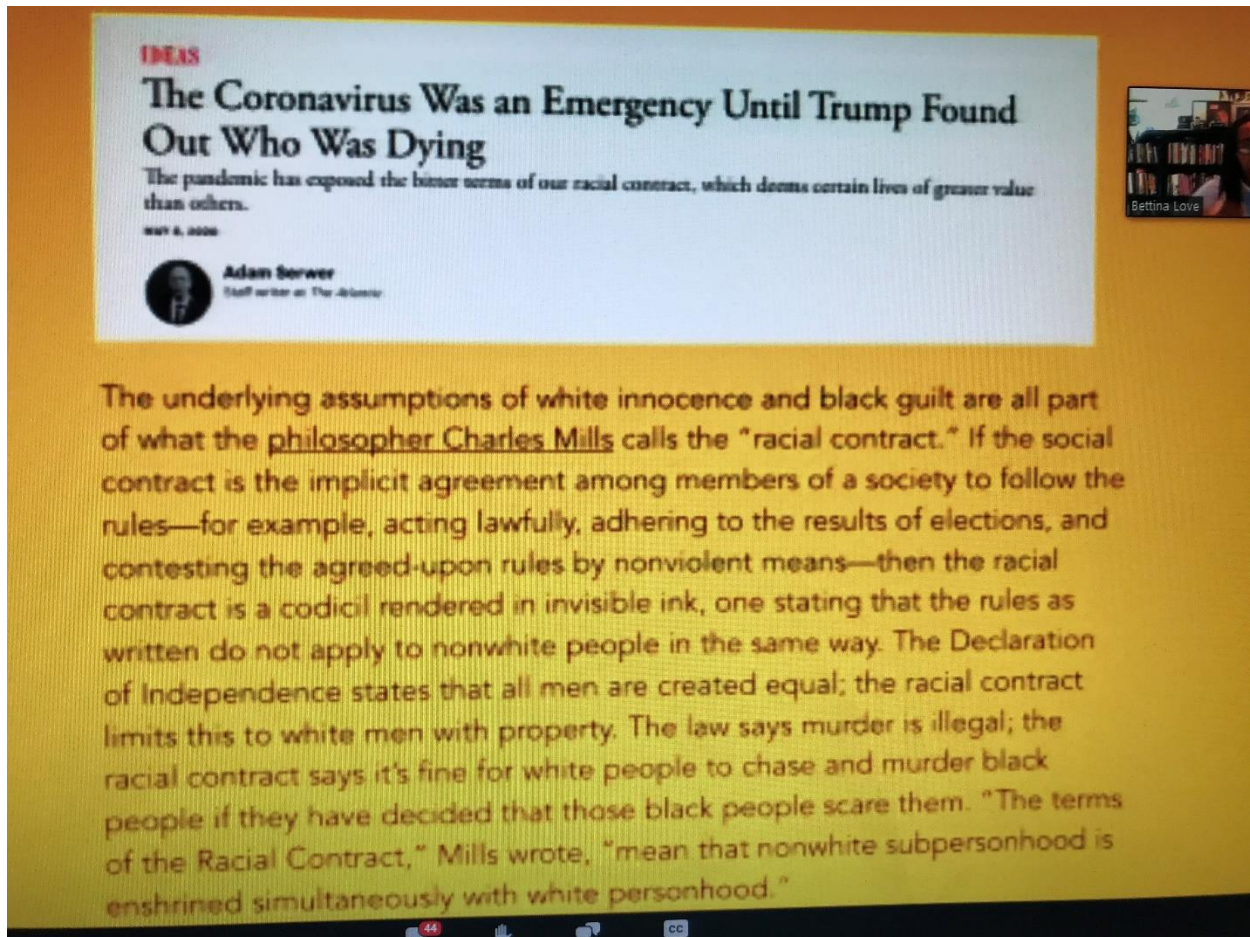
Reforms “given” do not change the conditions for blacks, cost you nothing...you get their money...e.g., allowing Blacks to sit at the counter—cost nothing, you got their money; cheap reforms haven’t gotten at the heart of dismantling this “thing.” Voting Rights Act... when b/b (black/brown) folks get close to finish line, move the finish line...voting...poll taxes...

BLM – symbolic reforms, cheap and come at a bargain rate, but these reforms don’t change daily lives of black folks

Corporations have symbols, e.g., mission/vision statements on equity –beautiful gestures, but cannot live off gestures, and are not changing lives of black people—no promotions, pay raises...

Reform does not change the status quo, that’s why abolition is so important

Racial contract – Charles Mills, underlying assumptions of white innocence and black guilt are all part of the racial contract



IDEAS

The Coronavirus Was an Emergency Until Trump Found Out Who Was Dying

The pandemic has exposed the bitter terms of our racial contract, which deems certain lives of greater value than others.

MAY 8, 2020

Adan Serwer
Staff writer at The Atlantic

The underlying assumptions of white innocence and black guilt are all part of what the philosopher Charles Mills calls the "racial contract." If the social contract is the implicit agreement among members of a society to follow the rules—for example, acting lawfully, adhering to the results of elections, and contesting the agreed-upon rules by nonviolent means—then the racial contract is a codicil rendered in invisible ink, one stating that the rules as written do not apply to nonwhite people in the same way. The Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal; the racial contract limits this to white men with property. The law says murder is illegal; the racial contract says it's fine for white people to chase and murder black people if they have decided that those black people scare them. "The terms of the Racial Contract," Mills wrote, "mean that nonwhite subpersonhood is enshrined simultaneously with white personhood."

Bettina Love

- Racial contract says it's ok for white people to kill blacks with immunity
- Must take down ideas of racial contract, we all live in this world with these rules
- Racism is propped up by racial contract—no rules written, but we all seem to abide by them
- people fighting for 400 years to say their lives matter in EVERY institution-- up against racism—lives are not disposable, worthy of humanity
- manage oppression—schools are built to manage racism
- the work of fighting racism must be the work of white (all) people, black people did not start this

Use of language

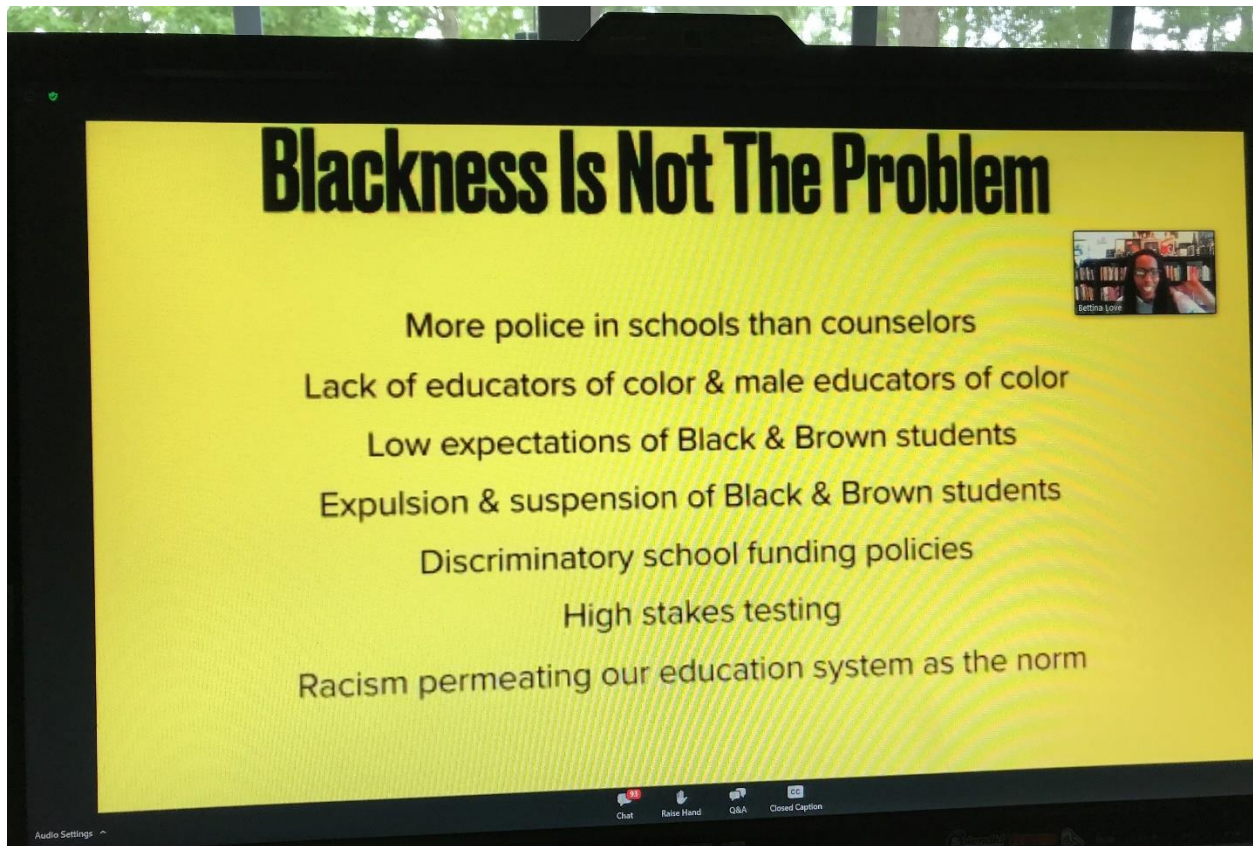
- Way that we use language as a mechanism for freedom, every group has had to fight to have an education in this country, has had to understand language/culture are important, I deserve to have teachers who look like me
- think about curriculum used in schools, free or oppress, to tell whole story or not?
 - use of language in 4th grade history texts—Native Americans SURVIVED... (they were doing just fine)...colonists SETTLED (didn't take, colonize)...
 - history books—deny people's humanity, history, contributions

Create Disruption

- radically changing education, tearing down structures that hurt b/b children
- abolitionists, not anarchists, want to tear down AND build up
- try to take all identities and see them as beautiful, do this work at the intersections, that's the work of disruption
- center the people that have been so marginalized, build system that protects those with the least...you protect EVERYBODY! (UDL)
- demanding change and focus on that change, keep pushing on these changes that are more than just reform

Individuals are not the problem, the system is

Blackness is not the problem, racism is...all isms/phobias are the problem



Co-conspirators vs. Ally--Dr. Dillard

Ally –cognitive level—read all the books, writing, discussing privilege, not being upset when folks mention white people need to get out of white emotionality, trying to unpack work

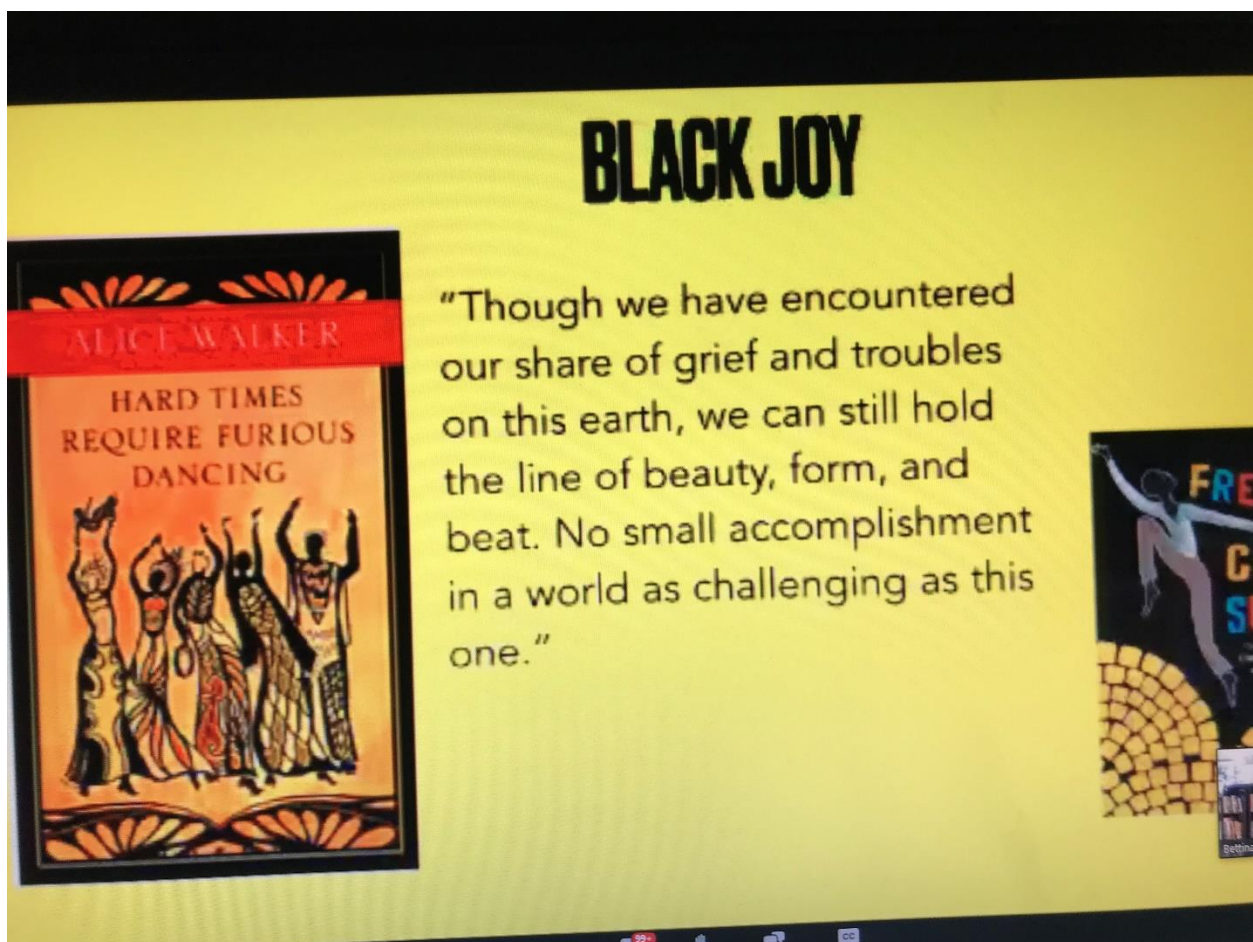
Co-conspirator—action level—what are you willing to give up, what is the work, need to work toward action, change things, put money where it needs to go

- racial wealth gap – don't talk about why...not because wp are smarter, or work harder...b/b people work harder
- history of different acts—all racist; if you understand that, what are you going to do about it? Where are you going to put your money? where are

you going to put your wealth? policies that benefit you? now we're asking you to create policies that benefit everyone.

- what are you going to do about the inequities in society? Willing to make up the difference?
- we drive by inequalities every day, and we continue to drive by not willing to give up what we must to address problems—white schools get \$XX more than b/b schools per year, and racism is a norm

Black joy – critical piece of justice



BLACK JOY

“Though we have encountered our share of grief and troubles on this earth, we can still hold the line of beauty, form, and beat. No small accomplishment in a world as challenging as this one.”


The slide features two book covers. On the left is the cover of 'Hard Times Require Furious Dancing' by Alice Walker, which depicts five women in traditional African attire dancing. On the right is a partial view of the cover of 'Freight Train' by Faith Ringgold, showing a figure in a dynamic pose.

It is imperative for children to reach/experience joy because it impacts teaching and learning. you want black joy, black folks/humanity to have a full range of emotions. Schools don't let black children experience that full range of emotions. since emotions don't match "norm," black children get punished. anger and rage

not a good emotions for b/b people (gave example of Kindergartener getting arrested). if want joy, need to allow folks to have full range of emotions

JOY

Black feminist Brittney Cooper writes that joy "is critical in reinvigorating our capacity for a new vision. When we lack joy, we have diminished capacity for self-love and self-valuing and for empathy. If political struggle is exercise for the soul, joy is the endorphin rush such struggles bring."

A photograph of three young Black women standing in a hallway, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are dressed in casual clothing, including a blue jacket, a maroon shirt, and a pink shirt. The hallway has orange lockers in the background.

racial battle fatigue – how do you recharge? – ensure she has joy

"Style has a profound meaning to Black Americans. If we can't drive, we will invent walks and the world will envy the dexterity of our feet. If we can't have ham, we will boil chitterlings; if we are given rotten peaches, we will make cobbles; if given scraps, we will make quilts; take away our drums, and we will clap our hands. We prove the human spirit will prevail. We will take what we have to make what we need. We need confidence in our knowledge of who we are."

– Nikki Giovanni

What does abolition look like in the classroom? check out abolition teaching network website <https://abolitionistteachingnetwork.org/>

- standards – for anti-racist education, teacher eval, need rules and policies, curriculum, standardized testing
- pandemic – testing thrown away overnight. folks have been fighting for testing reforms for years. computers for all now, in the past students weren't permitted to take computers home because they weren't trusted to bring them back or care for them properly
- can't go back to school nor administer standardized testing; right now have to trust teachers, can't go back to surveillance in schools anymore; new reliance on parents
- pandemic demonstrated how quickly change can occur, language, momentum, fortitude to fight back
- need to get police out of schools, hire and retain b/b teachers, need loving environments

- allow full range of emotions to get to joy, if can't express that, can't get to joy!
- respectability politics –social justice, feminism, all are important
- need to work with teachers, administrators, history identity; need to understand the history of what's happened to parents to help teachers understand why parents respond or present like they do
- school that works for SWDs, then it works for all...first what are the needs of those who have the least...then it'll work for all!