

Disrupting the School to Prison Nexus



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What is “carceral logic”?

An ideology and commitment to punishment and carcerality as a solution to dealing with “throwaway”² people.



What is the school to prison nexus?

A complex, multilayered existence of carceral logic within schools that positions “Black and Brown bodies under constant observation and scrutiny”³ through policy, teacher praxis, school culture, admin praxis, etc...



Why a nexus and not a pipeline?

While the pipeline names the funneling of Black and Brown bodies into incarceration, the nexus names the connection between schools and other systems that treat Black and Brown people as disposable.



Educational Survival Complex

Educational Survival Complex is the ideology and systems that create the conditions for Black and Brown children to be excluded, decentralized, and dehumanized in Education. Since the inception of U.S. schooling, schools have been a site of spirit murdering for Black and Brown children, taking them further away from who they are and who they are called to be in this world. They are set up to merely survive, not thrive.¹



Educational Survival Complex

“Teachers who understand Black joy enter the classroom knowing that dark students knowing their history, falling in love with their history, and finding their voice is more important than grades.”

Dr. Bettina Love

We Want to do More Than Survive





How does the nexus show up in teacher praxis?

1. Strained relationships with “low-producing” students and strong relationships with “high-performing” students.
2. Time outs and isolation (solitary confinement for babies)





How does the nexus show up in teacher praxis?

3. Control and surveillance of bodies.

e.g. Dictating strict ways to sit, walk, or line up.

e.g. Not teaching or upholding consent and boundaries.





How does the nexus show up in teacher praxis?

4. Dehumanizing classroom management approach (e.g. time/structure, rigid routines and lack of relationship building).
5. Placing a high value on students' ability to follow directions.





How does the nexus show up in teacher praxis?

6. Expectation that all students should listen to the teacher, rather than an expectation on ourselves as teachers to earn relationship and trust with students

All of these lead to push out and suspension and all of these have the potential to create early childhood throwaways.





let's take a collective
breath



Reflection Activity

After hearing examples of practices that perpetuate the school to prison nexus, what top 2 practices can you identify in your own classroom?



Reflection Activity

1

**Unhealthy values
of productivity**

2

**Time outs and
Isolation**

3

**Control and
disposability of bodies**

4

**Dehumanizing
classroom
management**

5

**High value on
direction
following**

6

**Expectation of
automatic deference**



Reflection Activity

How might you change these 2 practices that perpetuate the STPN into practices that foster Black and Brown joy?



An abstract graphic featuring several thick, colorful brushstrokes in shades of purple, blue, yellow, and green, sweeping across the upper half of the image. A solid teal rectangle is positioned in the center, containing the text. Below the teal rectangle, a light gray horizontal band spans the width of the image. At the bottom right, there is a small logo consisting of a stylized 'Q' made of colorful brushstrokes.

let's take a collective
breath



How do we disrupt the
school to prison nexus
in early childhood
classrooms?

We must shift from a culture
of “classroom management”
to a culture of routines and
rituals.





Daily Community Circles

How do community circles disrupt the nexus?

- Create a sense of community
- Allow students to tap into themselves and others
- Remove power and control away from teacher and back to students



How to conduct daily community circles

Step 1

Call students to sit in a circle in a rug or to find a comfortable space in their homes.

Step 2

Play soft, mindful music or soft drumming.

Step 3

Assign a chimekeeper to use a soft instrument that opens and closes circle.



How to conduct daily community circles

Step 4

Lead students in an intentional breathing activity.

Step 5

Model an affirmation that students repeat.

Step 6

Chimekeeper closes circle. End in collective affirmation song.



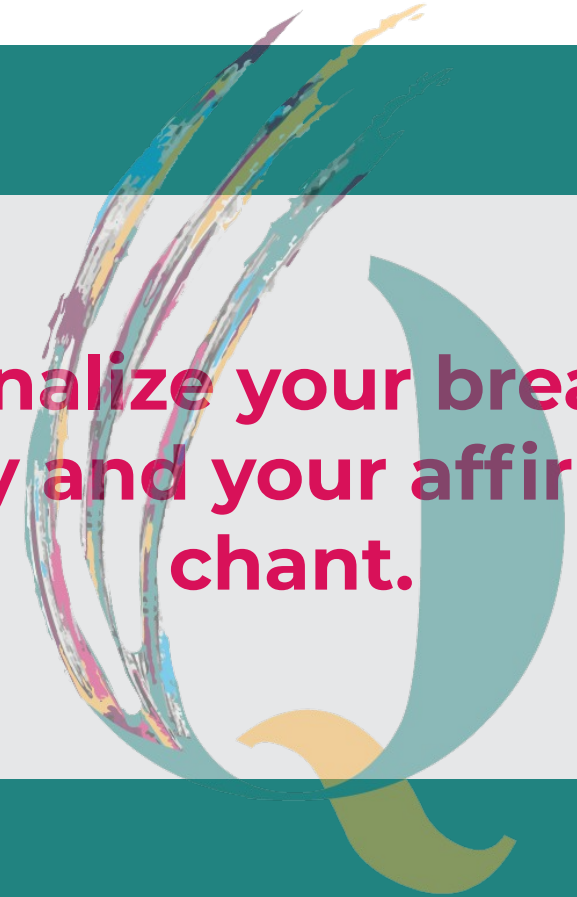
modeling abolitionist praxis

1.
“Disruptive”
movement of
bodies

2.
Baby cries



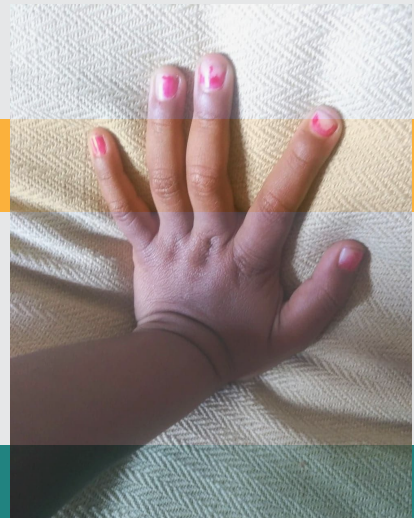
3.
Students do
anything else
that's not part
of circle time

An abstract graphic featuring several overlapping, colorful brushstrokes in shades of teal, yellow, and purple. A large, solid teal circle is positioned behind the text, partially obscured by the brushstrokes.

**Personalize your breathing
activity and your affirmation
chant.**



3 breathing activities





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References

1. Love, B. (2019) *We Want to do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*
2. Shalaby, C. (2017). *Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children at school*. New York: The New Press.
3. Wun, C. (n.d.). Schools as Carceral Sites. *Education at War*, 206-227.



Virtual Resources

1. Repurposing Our Pedagogies: Abolitionist Teaching in a Global Pandemic, A Webinar on How to Teach Through Tough Times
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9azT7_AyDQ4
2. Community Circle w/ Ms. Marylin: A Follow-Along Video for a Virtual Community Circle,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxU6kZaOtpg&t=28s>
3. Make a Peace Box w/ Ms. Marylin: A Step by Step Social Emotional Learning Tool for Distance Learning,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6Vm2hZo-Rw&t=3s>

