

Are We Ready for "School" Abolition?: Lessons and Challenges from Prison Abolitionists

David Omotoso Stovall, Professor
Education Policy Studies and African American Studies
University of Illinois at Chicago

Monday, April 30, 2018
12:00 – 1:15 pm, Education 2010

Abstract: Prison abolitionist scholars Angela Davis, Ruth Gillmore, Dylan Rodriguez and Erica Meiners challenge us to rethink the utility of carceral state-sanctioned violence in the form of incarceration. Because the United States over-incarcerates its populace, the purpose of the prison is centered in the continued subjugation of historically marginalized and dispossessed populations. As the country with the highest proportional and actual numbers of incarcerated persons, Stovall is asking a similar question of the difference between "school" and education. If "school" in urban centers for many poor Black and Brown populations is mired in draconian order, compliance, and standardized tests (none of which constitute learning), then what can be learned from prison abolitionists in terms of the abolition of the conditions that dehumanize these populations? If education allows us to ask questions of the purpose and function of the "school", then there is something to be learned from those working to end the Prison Nation.



Bio: David Omotoso Stovall is a professor of Educational Policy Studies and African-American Studies. He studies the influence of race in urban education, community development, and housing and investigates the significance of race in the quality of schools located in communities that are changing both racially and economically. From a practical and theoretical perspective, his research draws from Critical Race Theory, educational policy analysis, sociology, urban planning, political science, community organizing, and youth culture. Since his arrival at UIC, Stovall has been working with youth, community organizations and schools in Chicago, New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area. Furthering his attempt to connect K to 12 and university spaces, Stovall also serves as a volunteer social studies teacher at the Lawndale Little Village School of Social Justice.