

ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL HISTORIANS

-Call for Proposals-

EARLY SUBMISSION DEADLINE – May 13, 2024!

REGULAR SUBMISSION DEADLINE – June 28, 2024!

Mapping Tomorrow Through Yesterday: Educational History as Road Signs into the Unknown

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

September 27 and 28, 2024

Since 1965, the Organization of Educational Historians, formerly the Midwest History of Education Society, has brought together a wide range of scholars to examine the history of education through a broad framing of perspectives and possibilities.

The theme of this year’s annual conference, “**Mapping Tomorrow Through Yesterday: Educational History as Road Signs into the Unknown**,” invites educational historians to explore the ways in which educational history might serve as a roadmap to involvement and action in the present-day and future. The theme mirrors Harlan Ellison’s (1974) *Approaching Oblivion: Road Signs on the Treadmill Toward Tomorrow* in seeing historical events as possible future intervention lest events “turn around a mere five years later to see the status returned to quo” (p. 14). Carol Anderson, author of *New York Times* Bestseller, *White Rage*, shows that through history, the perpetual return to the White¹ status-quo is something, that if analyzed through history, provides clarity for potential course correction. For example, Anderson invites us to imagine the present if Reconstruction had honored the citizenship of four million freed people whose ancestors built the wealth of the United States. Instead of the Black Codes and Jim Crow which codified White supremacy and Black subjugation after the Civil War, providing education, political autonomy, and economic resources would have made for a different historical present.

The study of history can provide a lens for a more inclusive and just future. For example, educational scholars Geneva Gay and Gloria Ladson-Billings documented the push back of multiculturalism in the 1980s. The multicultural education movement was characterized as “an insidious movement destined to destroy national unity and our common history memory” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 308). If we see this event as a “divided highway” road sign from the 1980s in which conservatives dispelled unity and diversity as commensurable, this road sign marker becomes a symbol of how the status-quo persists through present-day iterations of White

¹ Consistent with (Mack & Palfrey, 2020), *Black* and *White* are capitalized as racial descriptors tied to a history of systemic racism. The intentional choice to capitalize *White* is to call attention to the inextricable relation between *Black* and *White* and to name the explicit function of Whiteness in perpetuating racism.

supremacy as embodied by “anti-CRT” legislation² intended to regulate teachers’ discourse on issues of systemic inequality.

This call encourages historical research that traces the past through various road signs that might help us better understand the present and speculate the future. We envision papers organized into various road signs such as:

Detours: Conference presentations that consider the understudied, the roads less traveled, etc.

No Passing: Conference presentations that examine aspects of limitation, such as education in apartheid, segregation, internment camps, etc. – histories that restricted the growth of education as we know it.

Merging: Conference presentations that consider gains and losses through integration/merging. In what ways have people from different starting points come together and/or apart?

Fork in the Road: Conference presentations that highlight multiple journeys that resulted from a historical event.

Alternate Route: Conference presentations that speculate the future.

On ramps: Presentations that discuss emerging research and allow for mentorship and guidance of graduate students and early career professionals.

The metaphor *educational history as road signs* denotes a parallel to how education has connected and disconnected the US in many ways. Education, like roadways, engenders aspects of the same complications of the built environment that include issues of access and equity for which history could play an important role in advocacy and change. *Please note that papers are not restricted to topics that focus on the conference theme.* Proposals that relate to the conference theme will be grouped into topical sessions that provide the opportunity for interaction and future-imagining. WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE PANEL PRESENTATIONS.

All papers presented at the annual conference WILL be peer reviewed. We encourage participants to submit papers for review for possible publication in the *American Educational History Journal*.

References

- Anderson, C. (2016). *White rage: The unspoken truth of our racial divide*. Bloomsbury.
- Ellison, Harlan. (1974). *Approaching oblivion: Road signs on the treadmill toward tomorrow*. Walker.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). The multicultural mission: Unity and diversity. *Social Education*, 56(5), 308.
- Mack, K. & Palfrey, J. (2020, August 26). *Capitalizing black and white: Grammatical justice And equity*. MacArthur Foundation.

² See Schwartz (2023) on current and proposed regulation of teachers’ discourse on issues of systemic inequality.

<https://www.macfound.org/press/perspectives/capitalizing-black-and-white-grammatical-justice-and-equity>

Schwartz, S. (2023, June 13). Map: Where critical race theory is under attack. Education Week.
<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06>