

Gazing Toward a Multiracial Future of Intersectional Justice: Reconstruction, Representation, & Reparations in Social Foundations

We have to learn to think in radical terms. I use the term radical in its original meaning: getting down to and understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you can change that system...

We are not in the final stages of the freedom struggle. We are really just beginning.

Ella Baker

As the American Educational Studies Association (AESA) community gathers in Albuquerque, we will be in the midst of considering the fragility of democracy, the need for critical engagement, the impact of activism, the hope in healing, and the possibility of creating an anti-racist country and world. In the summer of 1955, one year after the Supreme Court declared school racial segregation unconstitutional, Chester Travelstead, the Dean of the School of Education at the University of South Carolina remained steadfast in his belief in equality, publicly supported integration and spoke out against racial segregation in schools. For this, he was fired. Immediately, the University of New Mexico hired him as Dean of the School of Education reminding us that there are places willing to embrace visions for educational and intersectional racial justice.

The 2025 Annual Meeting theme of “Gazing Toward a Multiracial Future of Intersectional Justice: Reconstruction, Representation, & Reparations in Social Foundations” is inspired by the work of scholars and activists who challenge dominant narratives and advocate for a more just and equitable society. By centering the experiences of communities targeted for the margins, embracing radical abolitionist visions of democracy, and reconstructing work toward educational justice, we seek to envision a present and future where all individuals thrive. This year’s conference theme builds upon previous themes centering education for liberation, collaboration, connections with/in difference. We invite proposals that use storytelling to recenter, reclaim, agitate, inspire, and ignite the purpose, significance, and importance of foundations of education and advances our work in formal and informal educational settings, public pedagogy, and the contexts of education.

The story of the Three Sisters is apropos for the strength and resilience of the AESA community, where everyone contributes to the collective well-being. For centuries, corn, beans, and squash, commonly known as “the Three Sisters,” have been important companion crops in Indigenous communities in the Americas. The corn provides support for the beans, the beans fix nitrogen in the soil, and the squash vines shade the ground which prevents weeds and helps retain moisture in dry years. The inter-planting of corn, beans and squash, or “Three Sisters”, demonstrates how each discipline plays a crucial role in helping the others grow, representing the idea that individuals can achieve more when they work together and rely on each other's strengths. As companion concepts, representation (Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004), reparations (Darity & Mullen, 2022; King, 2017; Matsuda, 1987; Torres & Milun, 1990), and reconstruction (Joseph, 2022; Davis, 1972; Du Bois, 1910, 1917) are generative ideas for advancing the multiracial democratic project of intersectional

justice. Collectively, they operationalize both the creation of new democratic institutions, practices, and social relations to ensure that all people are equal members of society.

We borrow a phrase from Anzia Bennett, Executive Director of Three Sisters Kitchen in Albuquerque and ask: how might our relationships serve as collateral for us to take the type of risks needed to advance more just educative possibilities? We invite proposals to consider this and other questions including:

- What are the implications for thinking about the multiple strains of social foundations disciplines as three sisters growing together?
- How does educational liberation challenge us to reconnect marginalized and minoritized communities with radical and/or overlooked aspects of social foundations within formal and informal learning spaces?
- How might we intentionally center our collective gaze toward a vision for a multiracial, intersectionally just, radical democracy?
- How do we move beyond rhetorical social justice commitments and enact new relations across humans, non-humans, and matter in the development of solutions?
- How can we recenter the experiences of communities targeted for the margins in our research and practice to decenter the white gaze?
- How can we re-tool social foundations research to advocate for reparative justice and restorative practices?
- What is the role of social foundations in advocating for policies and practices that promote intersectional educational justice?

As a community, let us courageously continue imagining different possibilities and ways to synergize our ideas towards justice.

Proposals related to educational studies that are not specific to this theme are also welcome.

All questions should be directed to Daniella Cook Sumpter and the Program Team at email: 2025aesa@gmail.com (questions only, not proposals).

Conference Proposals due Friday, March 14, 2025.