

students' academic achievement by improving students' self-esteem. This objective aligned with the emerging Black Power movement, which emphasized black control of key public institutions as a way to augment political and economic power.

In other words, even though most academics and many politicians believed that the Coleman Report provided incontrovertible support for school integration, a growing number of northern black parents, students, and teachers believed it offered persuasive evidence of the benefits of black-controlled schools designed to meet the needs of a majority black student body. By the end of the decade, northern black conceptions of school integration ranged from hopeful visions of political equality to angry fears of cultural annihilation. As such, it is crucial to understand how black educational activists conceived of school integration and separate, community-controlled schools as two viable strategies for advancing the black freedom struggle during the height of the civil rights and Black Power eras.

doi: 10.1017/heq.2017.33

From *Sesame Street* to Prime Time School Television: Educational Media in the Wake of the Coleman Report

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“Recent research has confirmed what good teachers have always known ... teachers cannot be held accountable for their results in the ‘cognitive domain’ apart from the ‘community domain’—the total learning environment in which the students function,” Al Shanker wrote to the members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in 1976. As “98 percent of America’s homes now

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have TV, homes often without books or newspapers, and sometimes too poor for plumbing,” television had become an important element in the community domain, he wrote, and educators should make use of it to “encourage the home and school cooperation that will help to motivate their students.”¹ Teachers should subscribe to the AFT-approved, NBC-sponsored *Teachers Guides to Television*, which offered lesson plans and learning resources based on upcoming network programming, Shanker concluded.

The idea that teachers would formally incorporate shows like *Wonder Woman* or *The Waltons* into classroom curriculum would have been unthinkable fifteen years earlier—well into the 1960s, educators and policymakers had dismissed most sitcoms as part of television’s vast wasteland. But the conclusions of the Coleman Report, I’ve found, prompted policymakers, foundation officials, and educators to reexamine television’s educational possibilities. This paper explains how, in the wake of the Coleman Report, these educational reformers forged new partnerships with media and production companies in an effort to reach low-income students of color.

In the last decade, the literature on the history of educational screen media has experienced something of a boom. Media scholars have drawn on new archival sources to recover the history of nontheatrical media—including educational film and television—and sociologists and ethnographers have begun to consider how educational technology has been used in efforts to reform schools.² This growing body of research has complicated the prevailing narrative that efficiency-minded administrators imposed classroom media technology

¹1977 advertisement, *Teachers Guides to Television*, United Federation of Teachers Records, WAG 022, box 246, folder 21, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.

²For relevant new scholarship in screen media history, see Devin Orgeron, Marsha Orgeron, and Dan Streible, eds., *Learning with the Lights Off: Educational Film in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Charles R. Acland and Haidee Wasson, eds., *Useful Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Katie D. Good, “Making Do with Media: Teachers, Technology, and Tactics of Media Use in American Classrooms, 1919–1946,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (Jan. 2016), 75–92; Zoë Druick, “The Myth of Media Literacy,” *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016), 1125–44; Ranjit Tigga, *Rise, Decline, and Re-Emergence of Media Literacy Education in the United States: 1960–2000* (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2009); and Allison Perlman, *Public Interests: Media Advocacy and Struggles over U.S. Television* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016). For applicable work in sociology and ethnology, see Jal Mehta, *The Allure of Order: High Hopes, Dashed Expectations, and the Troubled Quest to Remake American Schooling* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Christo Sims, *Disruptive Fixation: School Reform and the Pitfalls of Techno-Idealism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

upon unwilling teachers, instead demonstrating that the relationship between screens and schools is more multifaceted and multidirectional than previously acknowledged.

This study adds to this emerging literature by arguing that the Coleman Report helped to reestablish educational television as a viable tool for formal education. I explain how, inspired by the report's findings, a motley group of education reformers—officers at the Ford and Carnegie Foundations, federal policymakers at the US Office of Education (USOE), university-based education and media researchers, and classroom teachers—pushed extra-school television viewing as a way to enhance inner-city students' academic and affective education. The resulting experiments drew pedagogy and consumer culture ever closer in the 1970s, ultimately helping to legitimize the use of commercial network entertainment in American classrooms.

Since the mid-1950s, liberal technocrats at the Ford Foundation and the USOE, as well as a surprising number of educators and parents, had fantasized that classroom television would help compensate for educational inequities resulting from race, poverty, or geographical isolation. Instructional television offered "the quietly exciting prospect of the remote Negro rural school sharing the teaching resources of a state capital without regard to segregation barriers," *New York Times* critic Jack Gould observed in 1963.³ Though the best-known experiments in instructional television occurred in white suburban and rural schools, the Ford Foundation's Fund for the Advancement of Education also sponsored a series of pilot programs that brought television into schools serving low-income students of color in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The Fund installed closed-circuit television in the schools of Manhattan's largely Puerto Rican Chelsea neighborhood, paid for television hardware for black schools all over the South, and subsidized the Pittsburgh public schools' Compensatory Education Program, which provided programming and hardware to schools in the largely black Hill District.⁴

By the mid-1960s, however, Ford's experiments had fizzled into expensive failures. Students fidgeted and rolled their eyes at dull, district-produced shows. Teachers strained to integrate station-scheduled programming into inflexible curricula and class periods.

³Jack Gould, "Channel 13 Controversy: Administrative Dispute at New York Station Raises Fundamental Points About Educational TV Definition Choice Creativity," *New York Times*, April 21, 1963, X17.

⁴Paul Woodring, *Investment in Innovation: An Historical Appraisal of the Fund for the Advancement of Education* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1970); and "Compensatory Education Enhanced by Ford Grant," *Pittsburgh Courier*, Feb. 6 1965, 5.

Administrators and parents struggled to procure often-balky technology for classrooms and cafeterias. Administrators in the Boston public schools estimated that only 4,000 of its 37,150 junior and senior high school students had ever encountered a television in school—no surprise given that the district owned less than one set per thousand students, and most of those didn't work.⁵ By 1967, the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, established to assess noncommercial television's social and cultural impact, could declare that "with minor exceptions the total disappearance of instructional television would leave the educational system fundamentally unchanged."⁶

Yet would-be school reformers at Ford, Carnegie, and the USOE didn't completely let go of their belief in the medium's pedagogical potential. Though on-screen classes led by talking heads hadn't been especially effective, foundation officials and policymakers believed there had to be a way to exploit television to offer quality education to all students. Quite unexpectedly, the Coleman Report's findings helped breathe new life into this faltering faith. According to the 1966 report, students' achievement levels hinged largely on their families' socioeconomic and educational background. As foundation officials and policymakers groped for reliable, affordable ways to supplement the academic backgrounds of low-income minority students beyond the school-yard gate, some wondered if television might be able to help.

Lloyd Morrisett, a cognitive psychologist working for the Carnegie Corporation, and Joan Ganz Cooney, a producer for Channel Thirteen, Manhattan's educational television station, were certain it would. Cooney had conducted a study the year before to find out whether television could ready young children, and particularly poor children, for elementary education, and the response she had received was promising. By the time the report was published, the two were busy developing a pitch for the show that would eventually become *Sesame Street*.⁷

To Cooney and Morrisett, television was an attractive candidate for supplemental and compensatory education. It possessed unparalleled reach, promising immediate access to the nation's most marginalized households. As of 1969, American children watched somewhere

⁵ Charles W. Benton et al., *Television in Urban Education: Its Application to Major Educational Problems in Sixteen Cities* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 77.

⁶ Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, *Public Television: A Program for Action* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), 81.

⁷ Heather Hendershot, *Saturday Morning Censors: Television Regulation before the V-Chip* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 139; and Michael Davis, *Street Gang: The Complete History of Sesame Street* (New York: Viking, 2008), 65.

between twenty and twenty-five hours a week, and low-income minority children often watched more. In New York City's Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood, 90 percent of households earning less than \$5,000 annually owned a television, and nearly two-thirds of those had two sets.⁸ And the medium seemed immensely powerful. By the mid-1960s, psychologists, parents, and educators were beginning to acknowledge the medium's influence on children's attitudes and behaviors. Perhaps, they mused, television's addictive amusements could be bent toward more constructive ends.⁹

Coleman's analysis lent urgency to the concept of using television to bridge home and school for low-income children. USOE commissioner Harold Howe, who had commissioned the Coleman Report, threw his weight behind Cooney and Morrisett's proposal and spent the next two years persuading officials at the Ford Foundation, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Public Broadcasting Corporation to join the Carnegie Corporation and the USOE in funding their program. The project's resulting preproduction and first-season budget was a startling \$8,191,1000—more money than anyone had ever put into an educational television series before. But Howe and foundation officials saw it as a bet on scalability. After all, it would be far cheaper than existing forms of early childhood education if it actually worked.¹⁰

The show's pedagogical approach was as carefully structured as a good slapstick routine. Knowing their success would be gauged by quantitative metrics, *Sesame Street's* producers invited officials from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the nation's leading standardized testing and assessment organization, to help them determine what skills could be evaluated and easily quantified. Upon the advice of ETS officials, the show's producers intentionally limited the show's educational objectives to clearly defined cognitive goals: letters, numbers, shapes, simple problem-solving, and basic Spanish and English

⁸Select Comm. on Equal Educational Opportunity, *Toward Equal Opportunity: The Report of the Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity*, S. Rep. pursuant to S. Res. 359, S92-000 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1972), Senate-92-000, 19.

⁹Anna McCarthy, *The Citizen Machine: Governing by Television in 1950s America* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 251; William Boddy, "Senator Dodd Goes to Washington: Investigating Video Violence," in *The Revolution Wasn't Televised: Sixties Television and Social Conflict*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin (New York: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁰T. Kay Beck, "Widening Sesame Street," *Journal of Educational Television* 5, no. 2 (June 1979), 39; and Richard Polsky and Aspen Program on Communications and Society, *Getting to Sesame Street: Origins of the Children's Television Workshop* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 114.

vocabulary.¹¹ But it was the sugar that would make the medicine go down. Rejecting the low-budget, slow-paced style of most educational television, Cooney instead modeled *Sesame Street* on *Laugh-In*, *Batman*, *The Ed Sullivan Show*, and cheerful commercials.¹²

When the much-anticipated program debuted in 1969, parents, policymakers, and educators hailed it as an educational revolution. WGBH, Boston's public television station, received more than seventy-six hundred calls and more than two thousand letters praising the show.¹³ *TIME* devoted nine pages to its impact and importance. With "a profusion of aims, a confusion of techniques, how could such a show possibly succeed? Answer: spectacularly well," the newsmagazine declared.¹⁴ ETS found that disadvantaged inner-city, middle-class suburban, and isolated rural children viewing at home all showed gains as great as, and in some cases greater than, their counterparts learning the same concepts in school.¹⁵ Though a handful of critics worried that *Sesame Street* would widen the achievement gap, most educators and policymakers saw it as a silver bullet. *Sesame Street* had rescued television from the instructional dustbin, proving it was possible to teach academic content through well-produced entertainment.

Researchers were delighted to find that *Sesame Street* had also succeeded in transforming students' social and emotional attitudes, educational categories with a significant impact on students' academic performance, according to the Coleman Report. Students of color, facing pervasive racism, often lacked a sense of control over present environs and future possibilities—a feeling critical to academic achievement, the report had observed.¹⁶ Aware of this, *Sesame Street's* producers tackled affective issues head-on. Its cast was thoroughly integrated, lived in various family configurations, and celebrated its intentionally dilapidated urban setting, which was never characterized as deficient or lacking. Educators and researchers reported that students' attitudes toward racial minorities,

¹¹ Edgar L. Sagan and C. Leland Smith, "For Sesame Street—A Role in Teacher Education," *Elementary School Journal* 75, no. 8 (May 1975), 487–88.

¹² Hendershot, *Saturday Morning Censors*, 144.

¹³ Davis, *Street Gang*, 197.

¹⁴ "Television: Who's Afraid of Big Bad TV?" *Time Magazine*, Nov. 23, 1970, 68.

¹⁵ Peter L. Klinge, "Sesame Street as Educator," in *American Education in the Electric Age: New Perspectives on Media and Learning*, ed. Peter L. Klinge (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, 1974), 105.

¹⁶ James S. Coleman et al., "Equality of Educational Opportunity" (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966), 23–24.

as well as races other than their own, improved notably after watching the show.¹⁷

Sesame Street's affective influence was as important as its cognitive impact, International Council for Educational Development chairman James Perkins told the Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity in 1970. "Educational programming," he declared, "can create positive racial attitudes which are essential if racial harmony is to prevail in the classroom and everywhere."¹⁸ Desperate to ease boiling racial tensions, policymakers took his suggestion to heart. "If we want our children to grow up without the prejudice that has stained so many of our generation, and we want the educational achievement of our children to be as great as possible, then why have we ignored the inexpensive chance to reach children over television?" Walter Mondale wondered aloud after *Sesame Street's* first season.¹⁹

Federal legislators promptly sought to replicate and build on the show's model. Citing Coleman's research and *Sesame Street's* success, the 1972 Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) funded the production of television programs intended to help school districts defuse racial tensions and overcome feelings of isolation among students of color.²⁰ Intended for out-of-school viewing, ESAA-TV, as it was called, served as an end-run around state educational agencies refusing to desegregate, invest in compensatory education, or even hold tolerance trainings.

The resulting thirty shows catered to specific demographics in regional public television markets: *Bean Sprouts* depicted the lives of Chinese-American children in San Francisco; *Watch Your Mouth*, African American and Latino high schoolers in New York City; and *Carrascolendas*, a fictional town intended to appeal to white and Chicano youngsters in Austin, Texas. A few became national hits. *¿Qué Pasa U.S.A.?*, a bilingual PBS broadcast that focused on a three-generation Cuban American family in Miami, was hailed by critics as the best sitcom of 1978.²¹

¹⁷Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Getting to Sesame Street? Fifty Years of Federal Compensatory Education," *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (2015), 96–111.

¹⁸Bernadette Nelson, "Assessment of the ESAA-TV Program: An Examination of Its Production, Distribution and Financing," (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1980), 3.

¹⁹Senate Comm., *Toward Equal Educational Opportunity*, 2; and Nelson, "Assessment of the ESAA-TV Program," 2.

²⁰Education Amendments of 1972, "Title VII-Emergency School Aid," S 659, PL 92-318, 92nd Congress, § 2 (1972), 421–442.

²¹Yeidy M. Rivero, "Interpreting Cubanness, Americanness, and the Sitcom: WPBT-PBS's *¿Qué Pasa U.S.A.?* (1975–1980)," in *Global Television Formats:*

But most ESAA-TV shows fell short of politicians and producers' hopes—unsurprisingly, given the shows' daunting objectives and tiny budgets. To be considered successful, ESAA-TV shows had to raise the self-esteem and cognitive skills of small and specific minority demographics, ease viewers' discomfort with interracial and interethnic differences, and appeal to general audiences.²² Making matters worse, the bill had allotted each ESAA-TV program no more than \$300,000—in contrast, *Sesame Street's* annual budget ran around \$8 million, and federal agencies had covered nearly half of that.²³ Local public television stations, feeling the shows had been inflicted on them, assigned them terrible scheduling slots: WYNC aired *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?* on Saturdays at 4 p.m. for instance.²⁴ Few of the shows gained traction with viewers, and most quickly foundered.

Public television didn't reach everyone—kids in Philadelphia watched cartoons four times more often than they tuned into *Sesame Street* or its offspring, *Electric Company*—and after-school educational television programs for school-age children were few and far between.²⁵ So teachers and communications researchers around the country began to experiment with network programming to connect low-income minority households to classrooms. Educational psychologist Terry Borton worked with Philadelphia's Office of Curriculum and Instruction in 1971 to reach children living on the city's devastated north side through afternoon cartoons and sitcom reruns. While watching *Spider-Man* and *Gilligan's Island*, students could turn on the radio to hear a jovial district instructor provide ongoing educational commentary related to the shows.²⁶

In another Philadelphia-based experiment conducted that year, English teacher Michael McAndrew used transcripts of popular TV shows to catch the interest of his struggling seniors, asking them to read along to videotapes. Reading scores rose dramatically.²⁷ Networks and corporate program sponsors jumped to help, and McAndrew's experiment scaled quickly. The next year, students in

Understanding Television Across Borders, ed. Tasha Oren and Sharon Shahaf (New York: Routledge, 2013), 103.

²²Ibid., 94.

²³Nelson, "Assessment of the ESAA-TV Program," 41.

²⁴Aida Barrera, *Looking for Carrascalendas: From a Child's World to Award-Winning Television* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 127.

²⁵Terry Borton et al., *Dual Audio TV Instruction: A Broadcast Experiment* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Board of Education, 1972), 1.

²⁶Terry Borton, Leonard Belasco, and A. Rae Williams, "Dual Audio Television Goes Public," *Journal of Communication* 25, no. 3 (Sept. 1975), 66.

²⁷Maya Pines, "The Drive to Convince Teachers of the Educational Value of Commercial TV," *Phi Delta Kappan* 61, no. 3 (Nov. 1979), 169.

thirteen cities read along to *The Missiles of October, I Will Fight No More Forever*, and *Eleanor and Franklin*.²⁸ CBS launched its own national Television Reading Program in 1976, working with local papers to print and distribute scripts for *Wonder Woman* and other shows.²⁹

By the mid-1970s, foundations and media companies had partnered to generate television-based curricula designed to appeal not only to struggling readers in inner-city schools but to all students. Prime Time School Television (PTST), funded by all three networks and the Ford Foundation, introduced units such as “TV and Economics: From the Medium to the Marketplace,” which used news programs, advertisements, and situation comedies to discuss economic concepts, while Teachers Guides to Television offered up scripts, summaries, assignments, and discussion questions based on that season’s slate of programming.

Such curricula guaranteed networks and program sponsors a sizable audience share, both at home and on videotape. Thanks to McAndrew’s project, Philadelphia viewership of *Eleanor and Franklin* was almost double the national average.³⁰ And when NBC aired *Holocaust* in 1978, some ten million students and teachers watched it in class, relying on the supplementary reading material provided by Teachers Guides to Television, and millions more viewed it at home with their parents in the evenings.³¹

Classroom teachers reported that they enjoyed the curricula, though they found the logistics daunting. Constantly changing programming forced teachers to change what and how they taught each year as well as to cram more into class periods already stretched for time. And while nearly every home had a television, that didn’t mean every student could easily access assigned shows. Extracurricular conflicts, family obligations, power outages, or a parent’s insistence on watching a major sporting event could all derail carefully planned homework assignments.³² Still, the network supplements and curriculum units were astonishingly popular, resonating across class and geography. After PTST prepared two thousand copies

²⁸Michael J. McAndrew, “Bridge-Building and the Exploding Art Form,” in *Television, the Book, and the Classroom*, ed. John Y. Cole (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1978), 72–73.

²⁹Tigga, *Rise, Decline, and Re-Emergence*, 89–90.

³⁰Frank Stanton, “Television and the Book,” in Cole, *Television, the Book, and the Classroom*, 36.

³¹Robert E. Mulholland, “Television, Books, and Teachers,” *English Education* 10, no. 1 (Oct. 1978), 7.

³²Henry Loomis, “The Responsibilities of Public Television,” in Cole, *Television, the Book, and the Classroom*, 62–63; and Tigga, *Rise, Decline, and Re-Emergence*, 92–93.

of its earliest guide, the organization received requests for 262,000 copies.³³

Such local and national experiments went much further than *Sesame Street* and ESAA-TV in embracing commercial television as a pedagogical tool; whereas publicly funded shows had merely borrowed its tropes and formats, network-supported experiments wholly committed to its regular use, building programs that not only gave children permission to watch, but encouraged them to do so. Such attempts to marry formal education and entertainment showed how desperate educators and philanthropists had become to reach inner-city children.

Educators, policymakers, and academic researchers of all political stripes celebrated these educational-commercial hybrids as practical solutions to the seeming intractable problem of reaching poor students of color where they lived: increasingly, in front of television screens. Though schools struggled to reach and serve children from low-income and poorly educated homes, sociologist Herbert Gans noted in 1974, “The mass media have no difficulty in attracting the poor, poorly prepared, ‘culturally deprived,’ or ‘intellectually disadvantaged’ youngster. ... As viewers and readers, they are, after all, integrated—and equal. ... They do not get an inferior or segregated *Flip Wilson Show* even while they attend inferior and segregated schools.”³⁴

Liberal educators and policymakers also liked that such shows complemented the era’s emerging interest in affective education, a category whose importance the Coleman Report seemed to have affirmed. As teachers and curriculum developers began to emphasize discussions of values, feelings, and self-conceptions, television’s emotionally charged visuality now seemed a boon, not a distraction. Whereas earlier generations had hoped that television’s images would help them deliver facts more effectively, by the 1970s, advocates for television’s integration into curriculum saw the medium as a way to invite dialogue and prompt self-exploration. Rather than seeing television merely as a technology of efficiency, explained educator and CBS consultant Roger Fransecky, teachers were now approaching television as a way to make learning “more affectionate and more relevant, and, I hope, feelingful.”³⁵

Using commercial television to bridge home and school, the approach’s advocates predicted, would not only interest students, but

³³James A. Brown, *Television “Critical Viewing Skills” Education: Major Media Literacy Projects in the United States and Selected Countries* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991), 213; and Tigga, *Rise, Decline, and Re-Emergence*, 86–87.

³⁴Herbert Gans, “Mass Communications as an Educational Institution,” in Klinge, *American Education in the Electric Age*, 67.

³⁵Roger Fransecky, *Report of the Second Annual Visual Literacy Conference*, April 30, 1972, 7, International Visual Literacy Association Records, MSS-181, box 2, folder 6. Arizona State University Libraries, Visual Literacy Collection.

would result in their inclusion and participation in national conversations, reducing the feelings of marginalization that hampered academic achievement. After all, argued Corporation for Public Broadcasting president Henry Loomis in 1978, television offered something akin to a national social and political curriculum, one that students of all backgrounds could experience and discuss together.³⁶ “Television enlarges our world and links us more closely together,” agreed anthropologist and communications scholar John Platt. “All human beings become parts of a simultaneous emotional response network. ... We all follow Claudius together or stand with hope beside Sadat in Jerusalem.”³⁷

But as the decade drew to a close, critics of the approach became more vocal, loudly arguing that entertainment and education were far from synonymous. “They know how to sell snake oil on the midway, don’t they? Well, kid, why not *sell* education in the same way,” sputtered Fordham University communications professor George Gordon. “Teach reading the way you sell cooking oil! Let Weber and Fields squawk morality to ghetto kids. ... Then test your audience for quantified learning.”³⁸ Other critics objected that educators’ attempts to use commercial television ultimately benefited corporations more than students. Though “getting students to read more and write better, by any device, is all to the good,” observed liberal television critic Maya Pines in 1979, “students may end up watching even *more* TV, rather than *better* TV, and also being exposed to more commercials.”³⁹

The Coleman Report helped to change the landscape of educational media in the United States. In pointing out the importance of the domestic and affective realms in academic achievement, its findings seemed to justify greater emphasis upon entertainment as an important component of educational television. The resulting experiments in educational media, nourished by philanthropic and federal funds throughout the 1970s, were rooted in the premise that commercial culture—or cheeky Muppet-led riffs on it—could be a powerful pedagogical strategy. Champions of these television experiments cast the approach as fundamentally progressive, a way to integrate formal education with students’ own interests. “Today—for better or worse—Archie Bunker is better known than Silas Marner, Fellini is more influential than Faulkner, and the six o’clock news is more compelling

³⁶Loomis, “The Responsibilities of Public Television,” 61–62.

³⁷John Platt, “Education in the Electronic Society,” in Cole, *Television, the Book, and the Classroom*, 115–16.

³⁸George N. Gordon, “Instructional Television: Yesterday’s Magic,” in *Instructional Television: Status and Directions*, ed. Jerrold Ackerman and Lawrence Lipsitz (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, 1976), 149–50.

³⁹Pines, “The Drive to Convince Teachers,” 169.

than the history text,” declared US Commissioner of Education Ernest L. Boyer. “Our job as communicators as well as educators is to recognize the world has changed ... and to find ways to relate the classroom more closely to the networks of information beyond the classroom.”⁴⁰

Many of these media experiments faltered in the 1980s, as the Reagan administration curtailed federal education spending, encouraged back-to-basics curricula, and deprioritized low-income students’ needs. These policy shifts hobbled the child-centered pedagogy and affective agendas underlying many Coleman-inspired television experiments. Nonetheless, the Coleman Report’s findings had fundamentally changed policymakers’ attitudes toward television’s educational possibilities. They had helped draw pedagogy and consumer culture closer in the 1960s and 1970s, legitimizing television’s use in curricula and promoting the medium as a productive tool for the development of affective and cognitive skills in and out of the classroom. And the conviction that entertainment-oriented and commercial media can effectively complement formal education has persisted well into the digital age.

doi: 10.1017/beq.2017.34

If Opportunity Is Not Enough: Coleman and His Critics in the Era of Equality of Results

Leah N. Gordon

Six years after James Coleman’s *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966) asked whether educators could effectively equalize opportunity for low-income African American and Latino students in the nation’s increasingly segregated cities, sociologist Christopher Jencks

⁴⁰Ernest L. Boyer, “Opening Remarks,” in Cole, *Television, the Book, and the Classroom*, 11–12.

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