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Guide to the

**Edmund W. Gordon papers**

1957-1990

Sc MG 316

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2017.

## Summary

**Creator:** Gordon, Edmund W.

**Title:** Edmund W. Gordon papers

**Date:** 1957-1990

**Size:** 36.69 linear feet (86 boxes, 1 volume); 3.2 kb (1 computer files)

**Source:** Donated by Edmund W. Gordon, 1990.

**Abstract:** Edmund W. Gordon (born 1921) is an African-American psychologist and an expert in child development who has worked throughout his career on the issues and challenges of underprivileged and minority students in American education. The Edmund W. Gordon papers, dating from 1957 to 1990, document Gordon's career in government and academia, mostly from the mid-1960s to 1990 at Project Head Start (federal office), Columbia University Teachers College, and Yale University. The papers contain correspondence and subject files holding published and unpublished papers by Gordon and others; drafts and manuscripts of book chapters; files of the Head Start program; lectures and speeches; academic departmental correspondence; government, non-profit, and academic reports; and research-in-progress.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

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**Preferred citation:** [Item], Edmund W. Gordon papers, Sc MG 316, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Processing note:** Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2017.

## Creator History

Edmund W. Gordon (born 1921) is an African-American psychologist and an expert in child development who has worked throughout his career on the issues and challenges of underprivileged and minority students in American education. As a clinician and researcher, he explored divergent learning styles and advocated for supplemental education long before most scholars had recognized

the existence and importance of those ideas. In addition, he was the chief of the Head Start Research Office under President Lyndon Johnson.

Born in North Carolina, Gordon received his bachelor's degrees in zoology and social ethics from Howard University; his masters in social psychology at American University; and a doctorate in child development and guidance from Teachers College, Columbia University. He spent his early career as a clinical psychologist and minister before earning his doctorate, after which he held professorial and departmental chair positions in the Psychology, Education, and/or Afro-American Studies departments of Yeshiva University, Teachers College/Columbia University, and Yale University. He is currently the John M. Musser Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, at Yale University; Richard March Hoe Professor, Emeritus, of Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University; and director emeritus of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education (IUME) at Teachers College. Gordon also served (from 2012) as chairman of the Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education.

In addition to his pedagogical work, and authoring or editing 15 books and 175 articles, Gordon was a consultant for the Educational Testing Service, several public school boards around the country, and the College Entrance Examination Board, where he developed and co-chaired the Taskforce on Minority High Achievement.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Edmund W. Gordon papers, dating from 1957 to 1990, document Gordon's career in government and academia, mostly from the mid-1960s to 1990 at Project Head Start (federal office), Columbia University Teachers College, and Yale University. The papers contain correspondence and subject files holding published and unpublished papers by Gordon and others; drafts and manuscripts of book chapters; files of the Head Start program; lectures and speeches; academic departmental correspondence; government, non-profit, and academic reports; and research-in-progress. The collection does not contain personal or family papers.

The papers are in two divisions: Correspondence and Subject Files. The Correspondence, dating from 1958 to 1986, is with researchers, educators, academics, organizations, students, and other colleagues. Many of the correspondents can also be found in the Subject Files. Some of the correspondence is arranged chronologically (1968 to 1986), but most is in alphabetical files. The collection holds no sustained correspondence between Gordon and any person or organization.

Gordon's drafts and final copies of published and unpublished papers, as well as speeches and lectures delivered at meetings and conferences, can be found throughout the collection.

The Subject Files, dating from 1957 to 1990, are arranged either alphabetically or chronologically. They hold correspondence; published and unpublished papers; book chapters and papers-in-progress; grant applications and reports; government, non-profit, and academic project reports; raw research data; transcripts and notes for speeches and lectures; and proceedings of conferences and retreats.

Subject Files with the most documentation include the Program of Research Concerned with the Improvement of Minority Education (PRIME); Yale University; Head Start; the National Institute of Education; the Academy for Educational Development; the American Orthopsychiatric Association; the American Personnel and Guidance Association; Compensatory Education; Exemplary Projects and Programs; the Educational Testing Service; Gordon's book *Human Diversity and Pedagogy*; the Institute for Urban and Minority Education; *Review of Research in Education* (a journal Gordon edited in the 1980s); and Teachers College/Columbia University.

The Program of Research Concerned with the Improvement of Minority Education (PRIME), funded in part by the Josiah Macy Junior Foundation, consisted of pilot projects at several New York City high schools with underprivileged and minority populations. The files include researcher correspondence; raw research results and teacher/student interview transcripts (which do not hold personally-identifiable information); Macy Foundation correspondence and reports; and letters from school administrators and teachers.

The Yale University files include documentation of the Program for Curriculum Materials Research; correspondence among the Psychology and Afro-American Studies department students and faculty, as well as course syllabi; correspondence with university administration; and letters and literature regarding the Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy.

The Head Start files date from 1965 to 1971. They contain inter-office correspondence; progress reports; evaluations; survey results and other research data; and minutes and transcripts of meetings.

Files regarding the American Orthopsychiatric Association hold correspondence pertaining to the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, which Gordon edited in the early 1980s.

Files documenting Gordon's work with the National Institute of Education appear under the Institute's parent entity, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The Teachers College files include a copy of Gordon's doctoral dissertation; course descriptions; files on the Counseling and Guidance Training Institute; committee and sub-committee reports; and site visit reports.

Subjects with medium amounts of documentation include the College Entrance Examination Board; the Educational Testing Service; Exemplary Projects and Programs; the Institute for Urban and Minority Education; and the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Smaller files hold letters from researchers, former students, organizations, and school systems consulting with Gordon, as well as grant applications, reports, and information on conferences, symposia, retreats, and other events.

The collection contains one electronic file in WordStar format holding the outline for a book titled "Defiers of Negative Predictions for Success."

The collection also contains a small set of audio and video recordings dating from 1971 to 1989. They document conferences, speeches, and academic retreats. Audio and video recordings are currently unavailable pending preservation transfer.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged in two sections: Correspondence and Subject Files. Both have chronological and alphabetical subdivisions.

## **Key Terms**

### **Occupations**

Academics (people)  
Psychologists

### **Subjects**

African American psychologists  
Children with social disabilities--Education  
Compensatory education  
Educational evaluation  
Educational psychology

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Correspondence  
Electronic records  
Manuscripts  
Papers (documents)  
Proceedings  
Reports  
Speeches  
Transcripts

**Names**

Columbia University. Teachers College  
Project Head Start (U.S.)  
Yale University. Department of Psychology

## Container List

### Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1-7 1968-1984
- b. 38 f. 13-14 1979-1986
- b. 2 f. 1-20 A - C 1958-1978
- b. 3 f. 1-23 D - Hi 1962-1977
- b. 4 f. 1-6 Hu - Y 1963-1975

### Subject Files

- b. 4 f. 7-20 1967-1970
  - b. 5 f. 1-15 1970-1972  
Includes Gordon's paper "A Look at Youth Culture and Student Unrest in the Seventies" in folder 8.
  - b. 6 f. 1-21 1971
  - b. 7 f. 1-21 1972-1973
  - b. 8 f. 1-15 1972, 1983-1986
  - b. 9 f. 1-22 1985-1988
  - b. 10 f. 1-15 1987-1988
  - b. 11 f. 1-21 1987-1990
  - b. 12 f. 1-8 1988-1989
  - b. 12 f. 9-11 A - Ab 1968-1984
- ### Academy for Educational Development
- b. 12 f. 12-13 1967
  - b. 13 f. 1-6 1968-1972
  - b. 14 f. 1-15 Ac - American Council 1966-1983
- ### American Educational Research Association
- b. 15 f. 1-10 1971-1986
  - b. 16 f. 2 1989-1990
  - b. 16 f. 3-6 American Federation of Teachers - American Medical Association 1966-1990
- ### American Orthopsychiatric Association
- b. 16 f. 7-14 1971-1980
  - b. 17 f. 1-2 1982-1986
- ### American Journal of Orthopsychiatry
- b. 17 f. 3-10 1968, 1979-1984
  - b. 18 f. 1-2 1981-1982
- ### American Personnel and Guidance Association
- b. 18 f. 3-10 1968-1972
  - b. 19 f. 1-3 1972-1974
- ### American Psychological Association
- b. 19 f. 4-12 1966-1984
  - b. 20 f. 1-5 1984-1986
  - b. 20 f. 6-12 American - Association 1966-1990

Subject Files (cont.)

- b. 21 f. 1-2 B - Ba 1979-1985  
A Better Chance, Inc
- b. 21 f. 3-12 1983-1988
- b. 22 f. 1 1989
- b. 22 f. 2-15 Bi - Car 1967-1970, 1979-1989
- b. 23 f. 1-15 Cas - Chi 1965-1986
- b. 24 f. 1-8 Chi - Col 1970-1985  
College Entrance Examination Board
- b. 24 f. 9-14 1970-1971
- b. 25 f. 1-9 1972-1973, 1979-1986
- b. 26 f. 1-2 Commission - Committee 1968-1972
- v. 1 A Comparative Study of Quality Integrated Education 1976  
Compensatory Education  
These files contain notes, correspondence, lectures, and manuscripts of papers.
- b. 26 f. 3-8 1970-1975
- b. 27 f. 1-7 1970-1979
- b. 28 f. 1 1979
- b. 28 f. 2-9 Com - Con 1968-1970, 1983-1984  
Connecticut State Board of Education Teacher Examination Development Panel  
Gordon acted as an independent consultant for the Board of Education.
- b. 28 f. 10-11 1982-1983
- b. 29 f. 1-7 1984-1988
- b. 29 f. 8-15 Con - Def 1967-1972, 1980-1985  
"Defiers of Negative Predictions for Success" 1980s  
er.1 (3.2 Kilobytes (1 computer file))  
A book outline.
- Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
- b. 29 f. 16-19 1967-1974  
National Institute of Education
- b. 30 f. 1-11 1970-1978
- b. 31 f. 1-7 1978-1985
- b. 31 f. 8-13 Des - Do 1967-1968, 1981-1985
- b. 32 f. 1-7 Dr - Ed 1961-1974, 1986  
Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)
- b. 32 f. 8-12 1968-1979
- b. 33 f. 1-3 1978-1986
- b. 33 f. 4-9 Education - Educational 1964-1979  
Educational Testing Service
- b. 33 f. 10-15 1966-1972
- b. 34 f. 1-9 1972-1987

Subject Files (cont.)

- b. 34 f. 10-12    EI - Eq 1967-1968, 1974, 1985  
Exemplary Projects and Programs 1972  
These files document evaluations of academic programs at various school systems around the United States.
- b. 34 f. 13-16    Correspondence and Final Reports  
Projects
- b. 35 f. 1-8        Atlanta - Hempstead
- b. 36 f. 1-7        Mishawaka, Indiana - West Las Vegas, New Mexico
- b. 36 f. 8-16    Ex - FI 1965-1989
- b. 37 f. 1-21    Fo - Gh 1962-1988
- b. 38 f. 1-12    Gi - Go 1963-1985
- b. 39 f. 1-4        Gordon, Edmund 1970s-1980s  
    The files include academic papers and biographies in the form of typescripts and written drafts.
- b. 39 f. 5-9        Got - Gou 1967-1977
- b. 40 f. 1-9        Gr - H 1960-1985
- b. 41 f. 1-17    Ha - Harvard University 1966-1986
- b. 42 f. 1-3        Hay - Haz 1963-1980  
    Head Start  
    b. 42 f. 4-7        1965-1968  
    b. 43 f. 1-8        1966-1968  
    b. 44 f. 1-3        1969-1971
- b. 44 f. 4-8        He - Higher Education 1966-1971, 1978  
    Includes a file on Gordon's research project on Higher Education for the Disadvantaged.
- b. 45 f. 1-7        Ho - Hu 1965-1980  
    *Human Diversity and Pedagogy*  
    The files hold correspondence, notes, drafts, manuscripts, and one lecture.
- b. 45 f. 8-16        1978-1983
- b. 46 f. 1-11        1979-1983
- b. 47 f. 1-10    Hu - In 1964-1984  
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
- b. 47 f. 11-12    1973
- b. 48 f. 1-7        1973-1979
- b. 49 f. 1        1979
- b. 49 f. 2-15      Ins - Jo 1965-1984
- b. 50 f. 1-12      Joh - Ju 1966-1986
- b. 51 f. 1-8        K - Learning 1967-1987  
    Learning Potential Assessment Device
- b. 51 f. 9-10      1979-1980
- b. 52 f. 1-8        1979-1984
- b. 52 f. 9        Learning Research Center, Cheyney State College 1969-1970

Subject Files (cont.)

- b. 53 f. 1-10 Learning Research and Development Center 1971-1974, 1981-1986
- b. 54 f. 1-16 Li - Mas 1967-1988
- b. 55 f. 1-2 Mat - Mc 1968-1986
- MediAx Associates Inc
- b. 55 f. 3-9 1974, 1980-1984
- b. 56 f. 1-2 1981-1985
- b. 56 f. 3-16 Met - Nap 1973-1990
- National Academy of Education
- b. 57 f. 1-9 1979-1988
- Fellows Program 1983-1987
- b. 57 f. 10-13 1983-1984
- b. 58 f. 1-3 1983-1987
- Task Force on Ethno-Cultural Experience  
Originally called the Task Force on the Relevance of the Social Sciences to the Black Experience.
- b. 58 f. 4-17 1981-1983
- b. 59 f. 1-6 1983-1985
- b. 59 f. 7-8 National Academy - National Action 1981-1986
- National Advisory Committee on Educational Laboratories
- b. 59 f. 9-10 1968-1970
- b. 60 f. 1 1969
- b. 60 f. 2-15 National Association - New 1968-1987
- b. 61 f. 1-16 New - O 1967-1988
- b. 62 f. 1-13 Pa - Pot 1967-1985
- b. 63 f. 1-6 Pau - Pre 1966-1988
- These files include papers regarding the President's Task Force on Child Development.
- Program of Research Concerned with the Improvement of Minority Education (PRIME)
- b. 63 f. 7-8 1983-1985
- b. 68 f. 6-9 1984-1986
- b. 64 f. 1-6 1985-1989
- b. 69 f. 1 1986-1987
- High Schools  
A. Philip Randolph, Clara Barton, DeWitt Clinton, Hill House, Tuba City (Arizona).
- b. 64 f. 7 1983-1984
- b. 65 f. 1-7 1983-1985
- b. 66 f. 1-5 1983-1986
- Josiah Macy Junior Foundation
- b. 66 f. 6-8 1983-1985
- b. 67 f. 1-9 1984-1985
- b. 68 f. 1-5 1984-1985



Subject Files (cont.)

- b. 69 f. 2-11 Pr - R 1965-1985  
*Review of Research in Education*  
The files hold editorial correspondence, drafts, and commentary.
- b. 69 f. 12-13 1981-1986  
Volume 10
- b. 69 f. 14-15 1981-1983
- b. 70 f. 1-4 1981-1984
- b. 70 f. 5-10 1983
- b. 70 f. 11 Volume 11 1983-1985
- b. 71 f. 1-15 Rel - Sem 1965-1990  
Includes drafts and the final version of Gordon's speech "Relevance and Revolt," from 1969.
- b. 72 f. 1-10 Sex - Sh 1967-1986
- b. 73 f. 1-13 SI - Te 1965-1989  
Teachers College, Columbia University
- b. 73 f. 14-16 1957-1960
- b. 74 f. 1-8 1962, 1970-1982  
Teaching and Learning Research Corporation
- b. 74 f. 9 1968-1972
- b. 75 f. 1-5 1968-1974
- b. 75 f. 6-9 Tem - Tho 1968-1969, 1976-1984
- b. 76 f. 1-17 Tho - Un 1965-1986
- b. 77 f. 1-23 Un - Wo 1966-1986
- b. 78 f. 1-3 Wr - Y 1972, 1980-1985
- b. 85 f. 16 Yale Club 1984  
Yale University  
See also box 8.
- b. 78 f. 1-4 1980-1986
- b. 78 f. 5-10 Afro-American Studies Department 1979-1985  
Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy
- b. 78 f. 11 1980-1984
- b. 79 f. 1-2 1981-1984
- b. 79 f. 3 Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture, and Education 1984-1985
- b. 79 f. 4 Child Study Center 1979-1985
- b. 79 f. 5 Clerical and Technical Workers' Union 1983-1984
- b. 79 f. 6 Ezra Stiles College 1979-1985
- b. 79 f. 7 Harassment Committee 1980-1981
- b. 79 f. 8 Hiring Papers 1979
- b. 79 f. 9 Institute for Policy Studies 1980-1986
- b. 80 f. 1 Minority Advisory Council 1980-1981
- b. 80 f. 2 Preventive Intervention Research Centers 1985

Subject Files (cont.)  
Yale University (cont.)

Program for Curriculum Materials Research Project

b. 80 f. 3-5 1988-1989

b. 81 f. 1-6 1989-1990

Psychology Department

b. 81 f. 7 1978-1979

b. 82 f. 1-6 1980-1985

b. 83 f. 1-2 1985-1986

b. 83 f. 3-10 Courses 1979-1986

b. 84 f. 1-17 Faculty 1977-1986

b. 85 f. 1-8 Students 1984-1986

b. 85 f. 9 Research and Development Center on Effective Schooling for  
Disadvantaged Students 1988

b. 85 f. 10 Spencer Foundation 1980

b. 85 f. 11-13 Student Academic Development Program 1981-1984

b. 85 f. 14 Yale-New Haven Consortium for Compensatory Education 1971

b. 85 f. 15 Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute 1980

Yeakey, Carol Camp

b. 85 f. 17 1979-1982

b. 86 f. 1 1981-1985

b. 86 f. 2 Yeshiva University 1964-1968

b. 86 f. 3 Z 1981