Educational Needs of Linguistically and Culturally Underrepresented Immigrant Youths: The Case of African-Born Immigrant Students in United States Urban Schools

Immaculée Harushimana
Lehman College, CUNY

Abstract

This article posits that foreign-born immigrants from some linguistically and culturally underrepresented backgrounds, in this case African-born adolescent immigrants, have not been given sufficient consideration in multicultural education advocacy or in teacher education curricula across the United States. The author identifies the “majority-in-the-minority” paradox as one of the major challenges facing the advocates of a multicultural education philosophy. To illustrate the potential risk that the “majority-in-the-minority” paradox may pose to less visible immigrant minority populations, the author highlights four points that make African-born immigrant students in United States schools unique and vulnerable. These include: a demographic increase among African immigrant populations; the social challenges associated with being African-born; the African perception of school literacy as determined by the status of secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa; a multilayered adjustment process required of African-born youths as they try to integrate into United States urban secondary schools; and the nature of educational programs available for them. In closing, the author provides educational recommendations regarding possible ways to facilitate the integration of foreign-born immigrant youths from ethnically and linguistically underrepresented backgrounds mainstreamed in U. S. public schools.

Introduction

The lack of diversity among faculty in United States (U.S.) urban schools is a major problem, which necessitates the training of teachers and administrators to understand multicultural student populations (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997; Goodwin, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001). Within this multicultural population are students who are newcomers from linguistically and culturally underrepresented immigrant minority groups. Studies of immigrant students in urban schools, especially newcomers, are markedly absent from multicultural and urban education literature (Goodwin, 2002). This absence of targeted studies concerning underrepresented minority groups may result in recommendations which may profit some minorities, but alienate others. The ideal multicultural curriculum for culturally and linguistically diverse students should grant every child the opportunity to use his or her own personal linguistic, cultural, and educational experiences to develop the skills that a new educational system mandates. Multicultural education proponents need to make recommendations that will better integrate new immigrant students originating in lesser known parts of the world, especially developing nations.

Written from an African-born teacher educator perspective, the purpose of this paper is to alert the multicultural education leadership about the invisibility of foreign-born children from culturally and linguistically underrepresented backgrounds in the United States schools and the negative impact it has on their educational and academic integration.
Problems in the integration of African-born immigrant minorities in U. S. schools are cited to illustrate the cultural and educational idiosyncrasies of foreign-born minority youths, especially those coming from areas less known internationally, like some countries in Africa.

This paper discusses four main points pertaining to the educational integration of African-born youths in US schools: the vulnerability of African-born students in United States schools; the African perception of school literacy as determined by the status of secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa; the various challenges faced by African-born immigrant children as they try to integrate into United States urban secondary schools; and the mismatch between the educational models available and the needs of foreign-born immigrant children. These aspects are explored in consideration of the “majority-in-the-minority” paradox of multicultural education and the demographic diversity among African-born immigrant populations in the United States. The author concludes proposing pedagogical recommendations for school leaders regarding additional ways to facilitate the integration of foreign-born immigrant youths who are ethnic and linguistic minorities in mainstream urban classrooms.

The “Majority-in-the-Minority” Paradox of Multicultural Education

The last decades of the 20th century have witnessed the rise of multicultural educational critics (Ogbu, 1992; Rahim, 1990) who questioned the multiculturality of education in a system where a dominant ethnic group, by virtue of its political power, plays a crucial role in formulating and implementing social policy to strengthen its privileged status. In the process, the hegemonic ethnic group succeeds in mediating the dominant practices and values to other subordinate ethnic agencies through the education institutions of the dominant ethos. (Rahim, 1990, p. 29).

This assimilationist philosophy prevailed for quite some time as Anglo-Saxon practices continued to guide pedagogic actions in most of the schools until cultural flaws were detected both in the curricular content and the assessment mechanisms (Labov, 1975). In reaction, the multicultural education movement emerged, mainly led by ethnic minorities, demanding the replacement of a monolithic system of education with a culturally responsive system, especially at the elementary and secondary levels. However, three decades later, the question still remains: Is multicultural education truly multicultural?

Today’s composition of minorities in the United States has expanded both in size and makeup, beyond more visible national identities and ethnic groups (Banks, 1988). In this post-modern context, the term “multicultural” can be associated with a plurality of national/linguistic identities, political ideologies, religious denominations, and sexual orientations. Within the broad context of what is included in the definition, multicultural education advocates face the challenge of being inclusive for so many constituencies on the curriculum negotiation table. Minority cultures particularly with smallest demographic and linguistic representation can be easily overlooked. In the same way the defenders of the elitist tradition (Bullivant, 1981) have accused multicultural education of “perpetuating ethnic hegemony,” underrepresented cultures can also look at their situation from the perspective of “majority-in-the-minority” hegemony (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). As Goodwin (2002) notes, “although the multicultural discourse has expanded, it is not yet fully inclusive or representative, and many groups in our diverse society remain voiceless and marginalized” (p. 170).
Whether the problem is framed as a “pluralist dilemma” (Bullivant, 1981) or a “majority-in-the-minority” paradox, multicultural education activists need to find a way to avoid a counterproductive cycle, where the vocal minority group which wins the debate becomes the new majority and imposes its curriculum on less-vocal minority groups. From the underrepresented minority point of view, the problem of multicultural education is not just at the level of deciding how much diversity to allow for in curriculum planning (Bullivant, 1981); it is also the problem of deciding which “majority-in-the-minority” cultures should dominate the curriculum. Immigrants from the remotest and poorest corners of the world, like many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with minimal ethnic and linguistic representation in the host culture, risk slipping through the cracks, thus becoming doomed to permanent invisibility. For, as Adrienne Rich (1994) puts it:

When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium. (p. 199)

Census 2000 data reports indicate that foreign-born blacks represent a significant number among the black population in the United States (McKinnon, 2001). Additionally, a large percentage of all black students in K-16 and beyond have parents that were not born in the United States (JBHE, 2006). On the other hand, little has been said about the adaptation challenges faced by African-born black youths in high schools and colleges (Essandoh 1995; Traore & Lukens, 2004; Obiakor, Obi, & Grant., 2000). As long as the educational hurdles faced by African-born immigrant children who integrate in United States schools remain unreported, chances for their socio-economic condition to improve will remain improbable.

**Africans in the USA: A Demographic Overview**

Drawing from the U. S. 2000 Census, several African-focused news reports, including *Migration Information Source* (Dixon, 2006; Grieco, 2004; Wilson, 2003), *People’s Weekly World Magazine* (Frasier, 2005); *The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture* (InMotionAAME, n.d.), and *Voice of America* (Hamza, 2005), concur that there are approximately one million African-born immigrants who are legal residents of the United States today. The statistical distribution of post-slavery African immigrants indicates that between 1960 and 2000, the number of African immigrants increased exponentially, from 30,000 in the 1960’s, to 80,000 in the 1970’s, to 176,000 in the 1980’s, to 1 million in 2000 (Frasier, 2005; Hamza, 2005). A further statistical breakdown shows that Africans now represent 6% of all the immigrants to the United States, whereas Sub-Saharan Africans make up 5% of the African-American population (McKinnon, 2001). In a society where racial minorities have used history to claim their rights, it is important to advocate that African-born immigrants who comprise 1.6 percent of the black population in the United States and have a long history as an economically and politically exploited people are and should continue to be seen as a distinct group, separate and apart from African-Americans.

One important feature shared by many African immigrants is their attraction to metropolitan areas, most likely because of affordable housing, employment possibilities, and community representation. It has been noted (InMotionAAME, n.d.) that New York has the largest African community, followed by California, Texas, and Maryland. African nations with the highest
number of immigrants in America include Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Séné-Gambie. Another general trend among African immigrants is their tendency to congregate in neighborhoods where other countrymen who preceded them have established a community. In New York’s Harlem, for example, the area around West 116th Street is known as Little Sénégal because Africans, mostly from French-speaking nations, own most of the stores (Daff, 2002). There, too, women from the same provenance have opened braiding salons. The language barrier and accent discrimination have barred most of these immigrants, even highly educated ones with foreign degrees, from integrating in the American job market (InMotionAAME, n.d.).

Another important distinctive feature of African immigrants in the United States is the means by which they gain entry to the United States. There are no known cases of human trafficking or illegal border trespassing from Africa to the United States. Initially, African immigrants enter to the United States legally on any one of the many visa options offered by the United States, including diplomatic visas, diversity visa lottery, student visa, visitor’s visa, refugee/political asylum status, derivative refugee/asylum status, business visas (temporary work visa for skilled professionals), fiancee Visa, et cetera.

While most Africans who entered the United States in the 1960s and 1970s came as students, a significant number of those who arrived in the 1990s were refugees/asylees and immigrants seeking a safer and better life. Internal strife, natural disasters and economic hardships in some African countries are among the major causes of African immigration. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to difficult to find a proper designation for African immigrants. Neither of Ogbu’s (1992) immigrant appellations as voluntary or involuntary minorities reflects the reality of being victims of war, disease, and poverty due to economic exploitation.

Life in the United States is burdensome for the majority of contemporary African-born immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001; Dodoo, 1997), who tend to be of poorer stock because “the 1965 changes in the immigration law facilitated family-based and refugee migrations, both of which yield less positively selected migrants who have reduced chances of success in America” (Dodoo, 1997, p. 529). As a result, 1 in 5 African-born households in the United States live in poverty, according to the 2000 Census. Due to monetary devaluation, political unrest, and generalized poverty, many Africans take a big risk in immigrating with little or no economic or accredited credentials on which to build a successful future. Even highly educated immigrants, realizing that their limited proficiency in English and their foreign degrees prevent them from getting the American jobs they covet, end up either opening their own businesses or becoming taxi drivers (InMotionAAME, n.d.). Some of them count on the solidarity of their compatriots to start a new life and keep up with the struggle for survival, as the 2000 census data confirmed.

For many, access to education is impeded both by lack of time and financial resources. Hence, the chances of finding stable employment are minimal. While the figures reported by African immigration scholars have indicated that African-born students represent 7% of the foreign population enrolled in American universities, these numbers should be interpreted cautiously. It is important to distinguish between the students who are products of the American high school system and those who enrolled with foreign student visa status. Moreover, it should be recognized that the new wave of immigrants from Africa is mainly comprised of those for whom “schooling back in Africa [was made] impossible, [such as] refugees from the most unstable parts of the continent” (Clemetson, 2003, n. p.) and for whom educational adjustment in the American school system is a big challenge.

Evidently, the number of African-born immigrants living in the United States has reached a point where their cultural, social, and political contributions and gains must be uniquely considered.
Culturally, African-born adult immigrants try to preserve their culture and tradition through the creation of churches, African food markets, African braiding salons, and African clothing stores. Sociologically, they try to act and raise their children within the social norms of their culture. Politically, they need to be adept at Standard American English so that they can successfully disseminate their values and represent the true image of Africa, countering the misportrayals of Africa and Africans by the western media. As a growing and active community in the United States, African-born immigrants should be acknowledged as a distinct minority group with unique adaptation problems in the U.S. culture, as compared to foreign-born blacks from other parts of the world. Failure to notice and address the uniqueness of African-born populations is detrimental to their successful educational, political, and economic adaptation.

The Social Challenges of African-Born Students in United States Urban Schools

From an African-born immigrant perspective, the practice of multicultural education remains problematic. Identified by their “blackness,” African-born immigrants are indistinguishable from American-born or Caribbean-born blacks, who comprise the majority of the black population in the United States. Viewed from the adaptation perspective, however, the differences between the three groups are profound. As the testimonies of African-born students have revealed (Clemetson, 2003; Obiakor et al., 2000; Traoré & Lukens, 2004), these students endure rejection and humiliation from their African-American counterparts and other predominant minority groups. The students in Traoré & Lukens’s study expressed profound frustrations and disappointments with their schooling experiences, based on the attitudes of indifference displayed by both their teachers and peers due to their non-western accents, despite how well they had mastered the English language or how many other languages they spoke.

In addition to the double culture shock of being an adolescent in a foreign land, some of the African-born youths who attend school in the U.S. urban public school system are torn between keeping their home values and giving in to “the pressure to be cool and to fit in during junior high and high school” (Clemetson, 2003, n.p.). As a solution to the problem of being teased for “having the wrong clothes, wrong hair cut, wrong shoes and wrong accent” (Clemetson, 2003, n.p.), many African students succumb to peer pressure and start to engage in behaviors endorsed by the “cool” crowd. This affiliation often interferes with the achievement of their initial dream for economic success and social mobility. This situation is further complicated by some educational policy makers who assume that all black students can equally benefit from an educational system that recognizes and integrates the African-American experience in the curriculum. An educational policy like this sends a message to African-born immigrant students that their cultures and experiences do not count (Cummins et al., 2005; Nieto, 2004).

As reflected in the description below, educational issues that confront “predominant minorities” of color, who happen to be African-Americans and Hispanic Americans, are not necessarily the same for several African-born and other underrepresented ethnic groups of immigrant populations. Given the rising number of African student representation in today’s classrooms, American educators need to be informed about the African perception of education and literacy.

The Meaning of School Literacy from an African Perspective

Anthropological research on educational aspirations among minority youths in the United States indicates that black and Hispanic students from households with low socio-economic status (SES) are less likely to maintain their high aspirations throughout high school (Kao & Tienda, 1998).
This observation does not quite apply to most African-born children, or other foreign-born immigrant children, whose parents often have a great appreciation for formal education (Dodoo, 1997).

As demonstrated by the high number of college and high school graduates who immigrate to European nations, Canada, and the United States from Africa (InMotionAAME, n.d.), African-born communities attach a very high importance to formal education. According to the 1990 Census collected on the education attainment of foreign-born United States residents, “Nearly 90% of African-born U. S. residents over the age of 25 are high school graduates, [and] more than 47% of African-born US residents have completed college. . . . More than 22 percent of all African-born United States residents hold a graduate degree and 4 percent hold a Ph. D” (JBHE, 1996, p. 33). Even though Scribner and Cole (1981) provide evidence of a West-African community that has created and implemented a script-based literacy system outside of the school context, it can still be argued that modern African societies view school literacy as the surest means to achieve upward mobility (Al-Samarrai & Bennell, 2003). In the African’s mentality, school provides for the acquisition and development of socially, economically, and politically received literacy [Emphasis mine]. Because colonists and missionaries validated school-based knowledge as superior to indigenous knowledge, post-colonial Africans like many other colonial societies have embraced the traditional western mentality that “those who have more or better educational credentials have a better access to desirable jobs and wages” (Ogbu, 1983, p.176). The average African believes that schooling provides the ticket out of poverty.

Schooling in post-colonial Africa

In post-colonial Africa, the goal of schooling goes beyond the former colonial agenda, which aimed to teach a handful of privileged people from the indigenous community the rudiments of reading and writing “in order to better carry out the master’s divide and conquer agenda while making sure that he [emphasis mine] is, and always should be, a hewer of wood and drawer of water for his (white) master” (Mungazi, 1982, p. 17). With the acquisition of independence, schooling came to mean primarily the place to achieve intellectual excellence for bureaucratic efficacy. Post-colonial African generations, in general, perceive schooling as the ultimate means for accessing white-collar positions (Al-Sammarrai & Bennell, 2003); the post-colonial man “placed book learning on a pedestal, looked at it as a goal to be achieved, believed it would enable him to become a clerk, wear a white collar, and sit behind an important desk” (Mungazi, 1982, p. 21). Consequently, the ambition among African youths to get a decent education has always been very high due to the wide status gap that exists between the educated and the uneducated, between “the schooled and the unschooled,” as [Bray et al. label them (1986)]. “Literate” in Africa does not merely mean someone who is able to read and write; it means someone who has completed at least the secondary level of education (Al-Sammarrai & Bennell, 2003). With this distinction comes the need to define secondary education in the African context.

The status of secondary education in African societies

In developing nations, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, secondary education is perceived differently than it is in most developed countries, where public education is free for every child from kindergarten through secondary school, and financial support to pursue post-secondary and higher education is available to those who qualify for it. Due to poverty, only a
handful of people achieve basic, let alone post-primary education, in Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the high school diploma represents a big achievement; with it, one can hope to find a white collar job, though perhaps not at the executive level (Al-Samarai & Bennell, 2003).

Unlike in the United States, where a high school diploma is regarded as the most basic educational credential, a high school graduate in Sub-Saharan Africa is guaranteed decent employment and, therefore, a decent way of life. A secondary school graduate ultimately becomes part of the small, ill-defined but important group of citizens identified as “educated people” (Bray, Clark, & Stevens, 1986, p. 118). Notwithstanding, the major problem with education in Africa is its inaccessibility to the average person.

As Njoku (1993) observed, “the global economic crisis of the twentieth century has destroyed the hopes and aspirations of the young African child who has the intrinsic desire to attain a better life” (p. 100). Because of economic problems at a national level, and rampant poverty at the family level, very few African children go past primary education (Harsch, 2000). Either their parents cannot afford high school fees, or they are not competitive enough to gain access to the highly limited number of high schools that are available in most African countries. Lewin (1994), in an article presented at the Donor Conference on Secondary Education in Africa (SEI), observed that the secondary Gross Enrollment Rate (GER2) is below 20% in 15 Sub-Saharan Africa countries, with Burundi, Chad, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Rwanda, and the Central African Republic standing out as having the lowest GER2s (p. 3). Secondary and higher education in Africa is primarily accessible to members of the privileged class and their relatives, who can afford to finance it. Due partly to an insufficient number of secondary and post-secondary institutions, and partly to financial scarcity in some African nations, it is highly unlikely that a child of a peasant can break through the cycle of poverty and go to secondary school.

In recent years, a more serious problem has added to the acute problem of poverty and low education rate. In many African countries, the escalating violence and political unrest has made an already precarious situation even worse. Education has been practically made impossible by political unrest, demolition of infrastructures, shortage of teachers, and financial chaos. Due to precarious conditions prevailing in their countries, more and more African people are forced to seek immigration or refugee/asylum status in European and North American countries. This uprootedness brings about new, unexpected problems for the disenfranchised young refugee/immigrant from Africa looking to integrate in the United States school system.

The Educational Challenges of the African-Born Immigrant Child in America

As is the case with immigrants from other cultures, the African-born child who immigrates to the United States expects to achieve the American dream. However, according to Goodwin (2002), the structure of the American society is not equitably favorable to the fulfillment of the dream: “Children who are culturally and linguistically different, children who are poor, children with disabilities, and children of immigrants have not consistently and uniformly received the care and equitable education they deserve” (p. 170). Like many immigrant children from developing countries, African immigrant children who integrate in the school system in developed countries are confronted with a lot of challenges: educational, social, and psychological. Obiakor et al.’s (2000) study indicated that foreign-born black males encountered multidimensional problems, including prejudicial perceptions, xenophobia, discriminatory generalizations, and overall adjustment. Unfortunately, educational environments do not seem to have a multiculturally trained personnel who can adequately address counseling needs of
African-born students (Essandoh, 1995), whose cultural experiences and outlook on life are not necessarily shared by American-born blacks or other predominant minorities of color.

In Africa, primary and secondary schools are usually taught either by nationals or faculty from neighboring countries who use the same official language and share cultural ties with the students. Also, in the African school context, the teacher has similar expectations for the success of every child. This educational picture of a young immigrant from Africa brings with him/her to the new school experience is often reversed on the first day of schooling in America. Encountering a teacher of a different race can be a culture shocking experience for an African-born child. In the first days, the newcomer child might embrace the educational task with optimism and determination, expecting his/her efforts to be reciprocated by a teacher who is patient and understanding. Contrary to the student’s optimistic expectations, the lack of multicultural understanding and curriculum demands often limit the time and patience that teachers and administrators need to discern differences between students. The situation becomes overwhelming for the silent African-born child, coming from a culture where the teacher authority is highly respected to the point of being feared. African-born children are likely to display a silent attitude in their first days at school, whether they understand what is being taught or not (Lamping, 2006). This attitude is counterproductive especially when most classes are predominantly taught by white, female, monolingual, and middle class teachers, who often exhibit parochial attitudes and expect to teach children like themselves in environments with which they are familiar (Goodwin, 2002).

Hence, often feeling overlooked and unaccounted for, newly-arrived students from Africa start looking for acceptance among their African-American peers to the point of compromising their own identity. Suddenly, their educational dreams seem to change, and their former aspirations to study hard and become “somebody” – a doctor, a banker, or a professor – are replaced by the fleeting idea of stardom in music or sports (Goldstein, 2004). Confusion and tension rise due to the irreconcilable conflicts between family expectations and pressure from the external world. Unfortunately, educational models available for immigrant students support the observation that schools are not serving African-born immigrant students well.

Educational Models for Newcomer Non-English Speaking Immigrant Children

African-born immigrants are among the many groups in American society who remain “voiceless and marginalized” (Goodwin, 2002, p. 170). Because little is known about Africans’ educational history, the educational options made available to newly-arrived students tend to not match African-born immigrant children’s anticipation of educational opportunities nor allow them to utilize the academic skills they developed through previous schooling. Additionally, urban high schools as we know them, understaffed, overcrowded, and unsafe, do not make a learning haven for African-born refugee/immigrant children, who are psychologically needy, linguistically diverse and geographically scattered.

Academic adaptation will remain problematic for many newly-arrived immigrants from Africa unless the faculty personnel in these programs are linguistically and culturally educated such that they can appreciate students who come from places where non-institutionalized variations of former colonial languages are spoken. Whatever language these students speak will be difficult to understand for a faculty member who is not familiar with foreign, non-Western accents. So far, most of the newcomer programs in the United States, including bilingual education, English as a Second Language, and dual language or accelerated English programs (Hood, 2003), which were
originally designed to address the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) immigrant populations, tend to base curricular decisions on the needs of predominant immigrant student populations, who are mainly from Latin-America, the West Indies, and Asia.

The International High School model, which espouses the idea of bringing together small groups of English Language Learners (ELLs) who speak different languages in order to increase their English-language interaction (Hood, 2003, p. 6), could work better for younger African-born children in early grades, who have had no substantial exposure to English instruction before. At the middle and high school level, however, African-born students especially from English-speaking countries have already internalized the Africans’ way of using English, dominated by an African accent, the British English system, and African semantics (Eisemon & Schwille, 1991; Gorman, 1968). Learning Standard American English may be difficult for transferring middle and high school students from Africa, especially those whose English proficiency has not been fully achieved.

As a politically silent, economically uprooted, and linguistically underrepresented community, African-born émigrés need carefully thought-out intervention strategies. In an urban school setting where classrooms are oversized and counselors overloaded, where the faculty and administration barely understand the language and the accent of either the African-born child or his/her parents, it is highly unlikely that African-born students will receive the services they severely need in order to advance academically and economically (Goodwin, 2002). There is a need for adult representation of linguistically and culturally underrepresented students on school boards, in teacher education programs, and in the school faculty body.

**Conclusion: Recommendations for Intervention from an African-Born Perspective**

Realistically, an adequate solution to the educational needs of linguistically and culturally underrepresented immigrant students remains a significant challenge, especially in urban school settings with critical multicultural teacher shortages, high student diversity, and low financial capacity. Educational policy makers need to establish mechanisms to facilitate and support successful academic integration for the African-born immigrant/refugee child in the American school system. African-born refugee/immigrant students who are mainstreamed in urban secondary schools may be in danger of academic and professional failure, not because they are intellectually incapable or intrinsically unmotivated but because of administrative inadequacy in addressing their needs and insufficient advocacy on their behalf. How can this situation be prevented?

The responsibility of implementing the pedagogy of diversity cannot be left to multicultural education advocacy alone. While urging multicultural educational proponents “to embrace definitions of diversity and multiculturalism that are broader, more complex, and truly multiethnic,” Goodwin (2002, p. 170) raised the need for teacher education programs to encourage a multicultural mindset among mono-cultural and monolingual pre- and in-service teachers. Also, given the absence of information on African-born immigrants, educational scholars currently established in the United States need to become pro-active in conducting research and publishing findings on the social and academic conditions of African-born refugee/immigrant students in the United States. Additionally, it should be primarily the responsibility of academically and professionally successful African-born refugee/immigrants to facilitate the socialization and adjustment processes of newly-arrived African refugee/immigrant families, by collecting and disseminating relevant information on school choice, academic enhancement programs, and other opportunities for academic success afforded to predominant minority children of color.
Finally, foreign-born scholars from linguistically and culturally underrepresented communities in the United States need to work jointly with multicultural education advocates to put pressure on the United States Department of Education to increase grant-funded programs for training multiculturally sensitive teachers. None of this can be possible unless the leadership in multicultural education, urban education, and teacher education recognizes the partiality of an educational system where only the visible learner and the vocal minority count.
References


