

**Athens Institute for Education and Research  
ATINER**



**ATINER's Conference Paper Series  
EDU2017-2225**

**School Counselors' Role: Supporting the Developmental  
Transitions of Immigrant and African-American Students**

**Neffisatu Dambo  
Assistant Professor  
Southern Illinois University  
USA**

**Louis A. Akainya  
Southern Illinois University  
USA**

An Introduction to  
ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ATINER started to publish this conference papers series in 2012. It includes only the papers submitted for publication after they were presented at one of the conferences organized by our Institute every year. This paper has been peer reviewed by at least two academic members of ATINER.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos  
President  
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

**Dambo, N., and Akainya, L. A. (2016). "School Counselors' Role: Supporting the Developmental Transitions of Immigrant and African-American Students", Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: EDU2017-2225.**

Athens Institute for Education and Research  
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece  
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email: info@atiner.gr URL:  
www.atiner.gr  
URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm  
Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research. All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the source is fully acknowledged.  
ISSN: 2241-2891  
11/07/2017

## **School Counselors' Role: Supporting the Developmental Transitions of Immigrant and African-American Students**

**Neffisatu Dambo**  
**Assistant Professor**  
**Southern Illinois University**  
**USA**

**Louis A. Akainya**  
**Southern Illinois University**  
**USA**

### **Abstract**

Professional School counselors have an ethical and legal responsibility to support the academic, personal, social, and career development of *all* students. Similar to Immigrant students, African-American students have a high propensity to encounter cultural challenges that influence their identity, development, academic, and career progression. There is also a distinct stratification amongst individuals from different socioeconomic and racial groups as it pertains to academic and career trajectories. Immigrants and African-American high school students from low-income families need additional support as they are classified as “at-risk” due to their propensity to drop out of school and encounter other academic and vocational challenges limiting their pursuit of post-secondary education. Given the proper supports, “at-promise” Immigrants and African-Americans from low-income homes have overcome the predicted odds. They have made significant contributions to the larger society, while demonstrating resilience, academic progression, career success, and socioeconomic development. The purpose of this article, therefore is to: (a) review challenges confronting immigrants and African-American students, (b) introduce resiliency theory as an approach to support these students, (c) offer systemic, practical interventions that school counselors can employ to promote the holistic development of these students, and (d) discuss benefits of multi-cultural competent educators and cultural pedagogy in intercultural schools.

**Keywords:** multicultural education, Immigrants, African-Americans, at-risk, intercultural

The United States and Greece's emergent process of encouraging social inclusion, social justice, equality, and Greece's position to serve as an avenue for migration to European countries has attracted individuals from all over the world. There are approximately 35.1 million immigrants who are presently living in the EU, while 933,000 of these individuals are located in Greece (Eurostat, 2017). According to the Current Population Survey (CPS, 2016), approximately 84.3 million immigrants and their American born children are in the U.S., which is about 27% of the total population in the U.S. The United States Census Bureau (2016) estimated the overall U.S population at 323, 127,513, of which 37,000,000 were identified as Black or African-American. Immigrants and African-Americans have diverse socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, socio-economic statuses (SES), religions, and cultures. While individuals from all over the world have migrated to the U.S., as well as Greece, these countries have attracted a higher number of individuals from particular countries and regions. For instance Mexico, China, India and Philippines are listed as the most common countries to migrate to the U.S. Migrants who arrive to the U.S. typically populate areas, such as California, New York, Texas, Florida and Illinois (Fox, 2010). On the other hand, Greece serves as a final destination for migrants from the Eastern Europe, Balkans, and some Asian and African countries. Whereas migrants who consider Greece as the main transit stop to Europe, are mainly Kurdish, Afghan, and other Asian migrants (Antonopoulos, Winterdyk & John, 2005; Antonopoulos & Winterdyk, 2006). Migrants in Greece mostly populate areas in Lesbos Island in the northern Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey, and Thrace, in the north borders with Turkey (Magos, 2007).

Immigrant children are descendants of families with diverse careers, skills, talents, and intelligence who have the capacity to contribute to society, the nation's economy, and schools demographics. However, there are challenges that can impede their progress and adult transitions if not addressed (Breiseth, 2016; Dimakos, & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Goh, Wahl, McDonald, Brissett & Yoon, 2007; Haynes, 2007; Lad & Braganza, 2013; Lipsit, 2003; Motti-Stefanidi, 2014; Palaiologou, 2007; Roessingh, 2006; Williams & Butler, 2003). Comparable to Greece's population of immigrants, U.S immigrants and African-Americans are highly represented in their school systems. Interestingly, the fastest growing group of American children and youth are those in immigrant families (Hernandez, Denton & Macartney, 2008). The total population of immigrant children, either first- or second- generation in the United States younger than 18 increased by 45% between 1994 and 2014, to 18.7 million, including 2.8 million first-generation and 15.9 million second-generation immigrants (Child Trends, 2015). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016), between fall 2014 and fall 2025, the number of African-American students was projected at 7.8 million. People from the identified groups have made significant contributions to society. However, there are a large number of immigrants and African-American students who continue to experience academic and vocational challenges, which has stagnated the efforts at reducing the underrepresentation of immigrants and African-Americans who

transition to and complete diverse college degrees, pursue diverse career fields, hold influential political leadership positions, have equitable access to healthcare through insurance, as well as advance in economic status and security (Brown, Wyn, Yu, Valenzuela, & Dong, 1999; Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson & Passel, 2004; Harris, 1999; Kao, 1999; Reardon-Anderson, Capps & Fix; 2002). The aforementioned, illustrates the need for continuous progress and the expansion of multicultural education through the adoption of supplemental strategies, interventions, and holistic practices. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to address the following: (a) challenges that influence the development and progress of immigrants and African-American students, (b) encounters associated with student's socioeconomic status (SES) and cultural nationality, (c) as well as the benefits of employing interventions, such as multicultural education and resiliency approaches to support the holistic needs of students

### **Bridging Success with Optimism**

Resiliency theory is an approach used throughout the paper to discuss an individual's ability to overcome challenges in the face of opposition or statistical odds affiliated with identified groups (Bryan, 2005; Burnham, 2009; Roberts & Ottens, 2005; VanBreda, 2001; Vazsonyi, Trejos-Castillo, & Young, 2008). Resiliency is the unremitting fortitude that gives individuals the determination and esteem needed to believe they have a sense of control over their life, which enables them to maintain hope, cope, and persevere (Bryan, 2005; Masten, 2013). Resilience is the engine of hope that engenders the motivation, thus action to keep on keeping on as they thrive through their journey to success. Immigrants and African-American students have demonstrated their resilience as at-promise students by refraining from becoming a negative statistic related to an identified risk factor.

### **Challenges**

There are continuous barriers that perpetuate the academic and career gaps of Immigrants and African-American children, whereas barriers to an individual's cultural identity present challenges with one's socioemotional wellness (Breiseth, 2016; Dimakos, & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Goh et al., 2007;; Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides, 2015; Haynes, 2007; Lad & Braganza, 2013; Lipsit, 2003; Lopez, 2015; Motti-Stefanidi, 2014; Palaiologou, 2007; Roessingh, 2006; Williams & Butler, 2003). The primary barriers that may hinder a students' development are funding, cultural insensitivity, curriculum, and stratifications that exists amongst one's socioeconomic status, race, educational background, and employment status and position. These challenges likely contribute to the underrepresentation of Immigrants and African-American's vital role in expanding on the diverse needs of society to make a larger impact

on entities, such as education, policies, and careers. However, an effort to mitigate these challenges can present learning opportunities that advance diversity, equity, progressiveness, and needed change.

### **The Impact of National Policies and Education**

The US (K-12) and Greece (K-20) education systems generally consists of three levels that may adopt diverse curriculum to promote inclusive education environments. This requires a movement toward supporting diverse student populations through municipal approaches, which includes multicultural education. Throughout the US and EU's development to support diverse students and integrate social justice approaches, they incurred complex challenges with intercultural interactions and transitions (Triandafyllidou, Gropas, & Eliame, 2007). Several challenges require advancements in structural, systemic, and relevant cultural shifts that improve student outcomes. For instance, Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides (2015), reported non-dominant cultures, such as Immigrant and African-Americans to have experienced interactions and policies that have encumbered their progress. There are major concerns with the need to intervene at the national level in order to diminish unaligned U.S. and EU policies and practices that impede the progress of multicultural education and performance outcomes in Greece and the U.S. (Alviar-Martin, & Ho, 2011). The acknowledgement of potential challenges and common experiences associated with the transitions of amalgamation have prompted stakeholders to begin initiating interventions to start mitigating complications of marginalization, micro-aggressions, and inequities (Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Eliame, 2007; Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides, 2015; Theodorou, 2011).

Reportedly, the financial challenges of Greece and the U.S. significantly impacted the access that Immigrants and African-Americans had to educational opportunities and educational resources (Alexiadou, 2016; Fernandez & Rogerson, 1995; Gintis, 1972). This was illustrated by the decrease in financial allocations, funding, and resources for educational institutions that were known to serve Immigrants and African-Americans leading to subsequent declines in student resources, attendance, education enrollment, graduation, and performance outcomes. For instance, there has been a decline in the allocation of resources (i.e., funding, personnel, textbooks, lab materials, course selection, and technology) for K-20 schools in Greece where the general Greek government expenditure on education as a proportion of its GDP was recorded among the lowest in the EU. Compared to an EU average of 5.0%, Greece education expenditure stood at 4.5% in 2013 (European commission, 2013). Furthermore, a 36% fall in funding for education during the 2009 to 2015 periods was reported by the government (Hellenic Government, 2015). The European commission (2015) reported that Greece's proportion of spending on education out of total public expenditure is the smallest in the EU, at 7.6%, compared to an EU average of 10.2% in 2015. High school graduation rates

and college enrollment were also affected. Consistent with previous research (Roby, 2004), there is a positive relationship between their regression in attendance and school performance. The US, in like manner, has seen education funding cuts in previous years (Oliff, Palacios, Johnson & Leachman, 2013). The current administration has cut as much as \$9 billion to federal education programs in the 2017-2017 fiscal year which includes cuts of about \$2.4 billion in federal funding for Title II, Part A or the Supporting Effective Instruction grant program, the third-largest federal K-12 program in the country (Camera, 2017; Hohlfeld, Ritzhaupt, Barron & Kemker, 2008; Oliff, Palacios, Johnson & Leachman, 2013; Kemker, 2008).

In addition to the connection amongst the economic struggle and policies that influence the educational arena of the U.S. and Greece, the socioemotional aspects that ascend as a result of the interactions that occur between one's academic processes and experiences with transitions has an enormous impact on student's development and transitions from high school. The transitional challenges that have been presented often incorporate the emersion of amalgamation and cultural adjustments (i.e., language, unspoken rules) (Palaiologou, 2007; Schachner, Noack, Van de Vijver & Eckstein, 2016; Triandafyllidou, Gropas, & Eliame, 2007). The interactivity that exists amongst students' and their experience in educational institutions have been identified to influence students' identity development, academic achievement, as well as their career progression (Ozer, Bertelsen, Singla & Schwartz, 2016). It is important that we support these three aspects because they are key to the conception of student's future, especially as it pertains to socioeconomic status, academic attainment, career positions, and political influence. Currently, reports illustrate an achievement gap amongst Immigrants and African-American students in the U.S. and Greece when compared to their counterparts (native; Caucasian) (Dearing, Walsh, Sibley, Lee-St John, Foley & Raczek, 2016; Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides, 2015; Patel, Barrera, Strambler, Muñoz & Macciomei, 2016; Schnell and Azzolini, 2015). For example, in 2015, the average ACT composite score (grading scale of 1 to 36) for 252,566 Black students who were in the high school graduating class was 17.1. This average score for Blacks was lower than for any other racial or ethnic grouping in the United States including American Indians, Hispanics, and Pacific Islanders. However, the average composite score for Whites in the same year was 22.4 which represents a 26.8% gap in performance. The average score for Blacks on the optional writing test of the ACT was 15.9, compared to white students' average score of 21.8. The achievement gap amongst Immigrants and African-Americans was also apparent with comparing their graduation rates with their counterparts. Considering the school year 2014–15, the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students in the U.S rose to a record 83%. Breaking the performance further down by race showed that Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest rate of 90%, followed by White with 88%, Hispanic with 78%, Blacks with 75%, and American Indian/Alaska Native with 72% students. However, there have been great gains in decreasing the achievement gap amongst Immigrant and African-American students' who

attend holistic educational programs that integrate culturally relevant pedagogy, multicultural practices, resiliency approaches, and nationally aligned curriculum.

Career disparities also exist between dominant groups and underrepresented minority groups. This includes identified career exposure and opportunities available to students in the K-12 sector and during college. In K-12 schools, Immigrants and African-Americans were less likely to have internships and externships, yet more likely to hold *blue collar* jobs. This has likely influenced their transitions from high school, including the college major or change in college majors. Educational attainment of the United States population aged 25 and older reported by Ryan & Bauman (2016) shows that in 2015, close to 9 out of 10 adults (88%) had at least a high school diploma or GED, while nearly 1 in 3 adults (33%) held a bachelor's or higher degree. However, educational attainment varied by race and Hispanic origin. They reported that Asians and non-Hispanic whites were more likely to hold a bachelor's degree or higher compared with Blacks and Hispanics. They also found that, native or American born adults were more likely to have a high school education or higher but not likely to hold an advanced degree as mostly held by foreign-born adults. Education attainment of African American population in the age bracket shows that about 87% are high school graduates, 22.5% have bachelor's degree or more and only 8.2% have advanced degrees (Ryan & Bauman, 2016). Comparatively, foreign born adults with high school diploma made up 72% and 31.4% had bachelor's degree or more and 12.5% had higher degrees. Following high school and in college, there were less individuals from these underrepresented groups who participated in career preparation (internships, externships, and apprenticeships). Presently, African-Americans and Immigrants primarily engage in various occupation to contribute to the economy of Greece and the U.S. The 2001 Greece census showed that the majority of immigrants are employed in manual occupations, particularly in construction, whereas a large percentage work as technicians, machinery operators or are employed in agriculture and in sales services in shops and outdoor markets (Ambrosini & Barone, 2007). Records also show that the majority of female immigrants living in Greece are employed as providers of personal and cleaning services, and in general work in unskilled manual occupations.

Nevertheless, Greece and U.S. have inaugurated a cultural move toward multicultural education and have acknowledged the contributions made by African-Americans and Immigrants. African-Americans and Immigrants have made major impacts on medical advancements, the economy, political and social reforms, sports, science technology engineering arts and math (STEAM). This includes innovations such as the shoe machine, telephone, electric light signal, railway, basketball, hair and beauty products, incubator, telegraph, chemicals to extinguish gas fires, the first successful heart transplant, and pharmaceutical drugs and treatments for diseases (glaucoma). Immigrants and African-Americans have also made significant contributions when serving in



political leadership roles as president, congress member, senator, and supreme-court justice.

The interactions that often occur as a result of students' academic process, career exposure, and cultural encounters have been said to influence the development of their cultural identity (Newman & Newman, 2017). With the appropriate supports and the intentional building of cultural climates conducive for diverse student learning, students are more likely to develop a healthy cultural identity. This includes cultural exposure, high expectations, positive adult interactions (mentors, role-models), goal setting, as well as resiliency groups that promote group belonging and opportunities for learning diverse skills. In addition to the interactions that Immigrants and African-Americans are likely to experience as minorities, scholars have also suggested for students to be encouraged to interact with identifiable groups to learn about their heritage, discuss similarities, and to take pride in their native and ancestry culture. Arasaratnam (2015) conducted a meta-analysis study by examining multicultural articles ( $N = 608$ ) pertaining to immigrant identity development and found that individuals who identified with their culture of lineage had healthy adjustments, identity, emotional well-being, and positive family relationships. Cultural experiences enables students to appropriately develop their identity and refute identity foreclosure and diffusion, which can stem from being isolated from their cultural group, as well as from experiencing, racism, micro-aggressions, bullying, and marginalization (Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Holmes, 2015; Newman & Newman, 2017; Theodorou, 2011).

Researchers (Awad, 2007; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Noguera, 2003; Walton & Cohen, 2011) have also reported that students with healthy cultural identity have positive academic outcomes, socioemotional development, higher career aspirations, and relationships with their family and friends. Acknowledging the impact and positive benefits that can evolve from promoting students' cultural identity has prompted the inclusion of proactive measures that help bring awareness of culture amongst all groups through strict policies banning barriers. This includes barriers that harm an individual's healthy socioemotional and cultural identity development, yet promotes the healthy progression of identity development through cultural respect.

### **Professional Responsibility**

Cultural interchanges are imperative to one's development and requires the attention of all stakeholders (i.e., educators, political leaders, families). It also provides the opportunity for educators to activate professional, ethical, and legal responsibilities on an international level.

The challenges associated with students' development are directly related to the responsibilities of school counselors, educator, and policy makers in diverse fields. As they are responsible for supporting the state of the nation and academic achievement of all students, which is inevitably tied to student's

socioemotional well-being and career trajectory. Therefore, it is important to promote multicultural educational practices, cultural respect, and integrate curriculum practices known to address the holistic needs of students, thus leading to their healthy development and success. Educators also have a civic and professional duty to promote the growth and development of students by providing the tools necessary for them to engage in their human rights as they transition into adulthood.

In an effort to promote the educational advancement of multicultural students, while mitigating common barriers to their development, these countries have incorporated policies and guidelines to promote a national cultural movement, which is known as the Europeanisation of multicultural education in the EU. This includes governing policies (EESA, Title IX.), policy projects (i.e., Rainbow Paper), funding, programs (Obama's International education Program for girls), resources, and laws. For Greece and Europe, supports include the Rainbow Paper, the Soft-law tool of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), intercultural teacher requirements, college preparatory programs, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Human Rights Act of 1998, 2525/97 and 2640/98 Greece educational reform laws), as well as Law 2413/96 pertaining to intercultural education, regulations, academic support, resources, and Greek education abroad (Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides, 2015; Palaiologou, 20047; Triandafyllidou, Gropas & Eliame, 2007). America's movement toward amalgamation and multicultural education includes Title IX: Right to public education, Title VI: Increase accessibility for immigrant resources, multilingual programs (English as a second language), the Dream Act, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, Obama's International Program for Girls, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, as well as the 15<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> Amendments promoting equitable voting rights and participation in government, which is influenced by one's ability to read and understand the voting process.

In addition to the governing policies that guide multicultural education, there are specific ethics relevant to school counselor's responsibility to support the education and rights of at-risk students. International School Counseling Association (ISCA), American Counseling Association, American School Counseling Association, Illinois School Counseling Association (ISCA) ethics address the duty (ACA, 2005; 2014; ASCA, 2005; ISCA, 2011; ISCA, 2008) of counselors to support and cultivate students' potential (A.1.b.), including students who are considered at-risk (at-risk) through the following: (a) implementation of comprehensive counseling programs and engagement in professional development that promotes effective programs (i.e., best practices) and accountability measures for closing gaps (A.9.g; C.2.f., E.1.), (c) cultural and cross cultural competencies (A.1.b, E.2.a, E.5.b., F.11.c; AMCD 1991,2015; S; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMilan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015; Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis,1992), and (d) interdisciplinary networks and collaborations with stakeholders (F.4; D.1.c.; D.2.).

## **Problem Statement**

It is important to support students' academic, career, and socioemotional development through cultural considerations that promote their successful transitions, abridge disparities, and maximize opportunities for societal benefits, such as an increase in economic development, innovations, and life expectancy (i.e., medical advancements) rates. Consequently, populating results that decrease negative (i.e., delinquency, high school dropout) minority outcomes (Roberts & Ottens, 2005; Newman & Newman, 2017). Therefore, it is important for educators, including school counselors to have the appropriate resources and competencies as they continue to allure students from diverse backgrounds. This is especially critical when considering the impact that educators can have on student development and achievement (Marzano, 2004). Previous researchers have discussed the benefits and challenges of multicultural education, language, student diversity, cultural identity, and the ethical and legal responsibilities of educational leaders; however, it is also important to acknowledge opportunities to address the areas in the literature where research is limited or nonexistent. Following an extensive review of the literature, the researchers concluded that there was a need for additional research to improve multicultural competence and research based practices. This provides an opportunity for scholars to expand research that identifies the significant levels of particular multicultural elements and interventions that influence student outcomes and the implementation of culturally competent behaviors.

## **Review of Literature**

Researchers have conducted both quantitative and qualitative research on multicultural education and intercultural schools and have found that there are student and educator benefits that stem from diversity, multicultural training and effective multicultural education (i.e., cultural pedagogy, language programs, resiliency approaches). A quantitative study conducted by Schoorman and Bogotch (2010) showed that teachers ( $N = 27$ ) believed multicultural education was important, with majority of them indicating the relevance of multicultural training to their professional career. Individuals who were exposed to multicultural education, training, and diversity were likely to have more positive attitudes towards differing cultural groups, be less fearful, more tolerant, welcoming, and practice culturally competent behaviors. Stephan and Stephan's (2013) four-stage structural equation model (SEM) with dialogue groups ( $N = 1500$ ) found that participants involved in multicultural training had enhanced empathy, openness, positive attitudes towards diversity and intercultural interactions when compared to control groups. Magos (2007) also conducted case studies ( $N = 9$ ) in North-Eastern Greece and found multicultural training increased teachers knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity toward diverse groups. While researchers, educational policy makers, and

stakeholders believe multicultural education is important in the educational arena (i.e., student development), they have also recognized the need for further research, training, resources, and nationally aligned policies to help ignite better results through the implementation of multicultural practices known to increase the impact that multicultural education can have on students' development and performance (Arasaratnam, 2014; Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides, 2015). The desire and need for additional training to address the gaps for preparing emerging professionals to participate in multicultural education was supported by Yang and Montgomery's (2013) Q study that evaluated U.S. universities ( $N=43$ ) and Tsaliki's (2017) mixed methods study with teachers ( $N = 133$ ) in Greece.

Dimakos and Tasiopoulou's (2003) quantitative study with students ( $N=100$ ) between the ages of 12 and 17 exemplifies how students may have initially held stereotypical attitudes toward unfamiliar cultures. Dimakos and Tasiopoulou's (2003) findings illustrated that students held neutral or negative attitudes towards immigrants. The researchers believed students negative attitudes toward diverse students decreased with age with a moderate significance ( $r = 0.222, p = 0.015$ ). Negative attitudes and stereotypes can lead to a lack of interactions or negative interactions that impact a school's cultural climate for learning. Therefore, it is critical that students are also appropriately acclimated and educated on multicultural competencies. Palaiologou (2016) studied emerging teachers and undergraduates ( $N = 25$ ) implemented multicultural experiential activities with young immigrants and refugee children from Florina and Kozani and found multicultural interventions to have positive results. The intercultural interventions were reported to have positively influenced college students' multicultural considerations of respect, equity, and inclusionary practices.

### **Alternative Views**

Researchers have challenged the impact multicultural education and multicultural practices have had on students and trainees. This was often a result of researchers who triangulated the data and found that observational data and content analysis either differed from survey data primarily completed by educators or required a more in depth examination of research. The illustration triangulated data may also be influenced by how students' academic performance has been viewed, while reviewing student achievement and performance from a growth perspective may show an increase in their development following their exposure to multicultural education and interventions.

Theodorou (2011) conducted a qualitative study with primary teachers ( $N = 10$ ) in Cyprus and found educators perceived immigrant children had integrated and adjusted well into educational institutions, however researchers identified gaps in immigrant's academic achievement and observed minimal integration of students' culture within the curriculum. In an Athens project with

Albania immigrants and Greek Pontians (immigrants who were formerly from Soviet Union), Motti-Stefanidi (2014) also found that immigrant students academic performance was significantly lower than their counterparts (e.g., citizens) and believed it may have been related to a lack of language proficiency, educational supports, and discrimination. There are also researchers who have not found significant impacts of multi-cultural education on students' development or differ in respect to the importance of cultural identity development. The primary findings of opposing literature may be related to the methodological approach, as well as how constructs are being defined or manipulated in the study. Qualitative methodology primarily consisted of self-report surveys from the educators' perspective, while few studies included student observations.

## **Discussion**

Immigrant and African-American students are destined for greatness. Their abilities and talents can position them to play a vital role in societal advancements, especially when the appropriate supports are available. Inopportunistly, they are inclined to face intercultural challenges that can impede their development and progress when equitable supports, expectations, attitudes, climates, and resources are not appropriated. The paucity of consistent proactive supports and practices are commonly derived from the need for additional education, interactions, resources, and multicultural training known to build multicultural competencies, yet lessen stereotypes and fears associated with the unknown. Multicultural education involves a set of strategies and materials in education developed to assist educators in dealing with the issues that arise with the rapidly changing demographics of their students (Sharidan, 2006). It allows teachers to support the child's intellectual and socio-emotional growth and avoids hindering students by intentionally bringing aspects of the students' cultures into the classroom (O'Donnell). Among the many benefits, it has been cited to help promote educational achievements among immigrant students, as well as, helping students to think more critically and encouraging them to have a more open mindset (Levinson, 2010).

In addition to intercultural challenges that may be experienced by Immigrant and African-American children, there are some students who also face challenges related to their socioeconomic status. In 2015, there were 29.4 million children under the age of 18 living in poor families (i.e. families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold). Of these, almost 9.4 million (32 percent) were children of immigrants. Considering the socioeconomic status of students and making a proactive attempt to mitigate predicted risks is important because of the stratifications that exist between socioeconomic status, race, education attainment, health care, life expectancy, and career options. While African-Americans and Immigrants have made some progress since their initial arrival to countries that differ from their family

lineage, stakeholders continue to strive to address gaps in health, income, academic performance, high school graduation, post-secondary enrollment, and college degree completion when comparing these groups to their counterparts (native, Caucasian). For instance, in the U.S., there was about a 60% difference between African-Americans and Caucasians in household income, home ownership, and college degree completion. Minorities were also less likely to have access to quality health care, while approximately 50% of older African-Americans with a chronic illness were not likely to have insurance. Cultural gaps also exist between students and their teachers which is known to partly contribute to academic performance and achievement gaps among different student groups. Bridging students' carried culture and the new knowledge and skills they encounter in school is prime to ensuring that all students achieve at high levels (National Education Association, 2005). A key factor in enabling educators to be effective with students from cultures other than their own includes advocating for policies to better equip educators to be culturally competent practitioners to better serve diverse students (Van Roekel, 2008). U.S. and Greece have recognized the emergence of intercultural interactions, amalgamation, as well as the benefits and challenges that minorities may face as they progress through systems of education and society. The US and, Greece (through the EU) have demonstrated their interest in supporting the emergence of intercultural education and may serve as a conduit for educational evolve through programs, funding, intercultural schools, policies, and guidelines to enhance multicultural education opportunities and positive climates for amalgamation. Intercultural education can best be served with culturally competent educators. Cultural competence entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, developing certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching (Ratts et al., 2016; Diller & Moule, 2005). The development and support of intercultural education that breeds diversity provides avenues for stakeholders to identify areas that require attention in order to strengthen the impacts of multicultural education on students' development and cultural interchanges. The primary areas identified were the absence of or complications with nationally aligned accountability measures, as well as practical guidelines and resources (qualified personnel) for implementing multicultural education practices and policies. Intercultural schools face challenges with recruiting teachers who meet the language requirement, while educators in both the U.S. and Greece schools that promote intercultural education may not have additional training. This includes approximately 69% of teachers in Greece (Tsaliki, 2017). Researchers have identified the need for improvements and advocate for practical interventions, appropriate resources, supports, the collaboration of stakeholders to remove constraints that may create barriers to implementing multicultural education, and encourage the alignment of policies and practices at the national and state level. This can help educators implement, comply, monitor, and reinforce multicultural education and relative legal agreements (Alviar-Martin, & Ho, 2011; Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides, 2015).

Considering the high number of Immigrants and African-Americans from diverse economic backgrounds, Professional School Counselors are apt to encounter students who could benefit from multicultural competent counselors that support their healthy development. There is the need for educators to become knowledgeable about their students' unique cultural backgrounds in order to translate that knowledge into effective instruction and curriculum (Banks, McGee & Cherry, 2001) and to be familiar with programs, interventions, and multicultural resources known to promote the resilience of students, including minority students who are susceptible to encounter risk factors (i.e., peer bullying; stereotyping) that can influence their development. Research shows that more diverse environments increase students' level of critical thinking, raises their knowledge and awareness levels, challenges assumptions, and improves their connections and communications (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Homan, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, Van Knippenberg, Ilgen & Van Kleef, 2008; Jaap, 1999; Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; McKay, Avery, Tonidandel, Morris, Hernandez & Hebl, 2007; Ogbu, 1992).

Cultural competence leads to more effective teaching through the application of different teaching strategies adopted to serve the diverse group of students (Marzano, 2004). Furthermore, cultural competence reinforces democratic ideals and advocates for students' appreciation of diverse cultures; in challenging discrimination and intolerance; and helps in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society (Van Roekel, 2008). Immigrant and African-American students often incur challenges (i.e., racism, classism, micro-aggressions, and marginalization) as minorities which can hinder their development (e.g., cultural identity, socioemotional, academic, career). When appropriate supports are not put in place to mitigate potential intercultural experiences (systematic, institutional, and social), it may lead to critical implications for school counselors and educators (Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Holmes, 2015; Newman & Newman, 2015; Theodorou, 2011). Attending to the needs of students through collaboration with stakeholders is essential to their healthy development. Whereas school counselors' professional, ethical, and legal responsibility is to support the academic, career, and socioemotional development of students through the inclusion of comprehensive school counseling programs, collaboration, psychoeducation, and counseling interventions that are known to decrease negative stereotypes and promote intercultural respect (ACA, 2005; 2014; ASCA, 2005; ISCA, 2011; ISCA, 2008; Palaiologou, 2016; Dimakos and Tasiopoulou, 2003). Counselors can collaborate with the family, community, businesses, and school personnel to assist with interventions (i.e., cultural exposure, mentorship, psychoeducation, groups) and use data driven practices to advocate for the integration of multicultural education. School counselors and educators can also share and conduct research, as well as provide professional development (presentations, workshops) regarding intercultural statistics, multicultural content, pedagogy, benefits, resources, and interventions. During the professional development series, participants may engage in reflective activities, multicultural assessments, constructivist

approaches that allow them to practice multicultural skills, model differentiated learning, and partake in guided service learning projects that expose them to diverse populations. School Counselors and Counselor Educators can advocate for proactive resiliency approaches and encourage multicultural education awareness by engaging in interdisciplinary work, utilizing multicultural service learning projects in counselor preparation programs, interacting with policy makers, and participating in the decision making process at various levels (international, national, state, local).

It is important for stakeholders to continue making progress through multicultural practices that can benefit organizations, staff, the development of all students, and society as a whole. This can be achieved through research, holistic models, and valued accountability measures that are aligned and account for adequate supports and resources. Future research may include interdisciplinary teams (Arasaratnam, 2014), longitudinal studies, as well as mixed method studies that include student perspectives, a critical look at the intricacies of pedagogy and classroom occurrences through identifiable roadmaps and measurable activities, and identify the significant level of specific multicultural components and practices that are having a positive impact on the development (academic, career, socioemotional, cultural identity), progress, and transitions of students. Additionally, enhancing valued systems of accountability may produce better results regarding the implementation of multicultural education and practices. This would include the creation of interdisciplinary teams with clear objectives, legal documents, and strategic plans that align with national missions of multicultural education. Aligning programs, curriculum, theory, practice, evaluation (observation), reward systems, and the evaluation of resources to carry out strategic plans can engender excellent outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

The authors have discussed strengths and common challenges that Immigrants and African American students face with reference to Greece in Europe and the United States. They also discussed how the combination of socioeconomic status with intercultural interchanges can influence their developmental (academic, career, cultural identity, socioemotional) progression and transitions. The authors reviewed the role of school counselors and stakeholders in supporting students and the movement toward multicultural education and intercultural schools. Additionally, the authors discussed interventions, such as research, interdisciplinary teams, cross alignment, and practical interventions for enhancing multicultural practices and identifying the impact it has on student development.



## References

- Alviar-Martin, T., & Ho, L. C. (2011). "So, where do they fit in?" Teachers' perspectives of multi-cultural education and diversity in Singapore. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 127-135.
- Alexiadou, N. (2016). Responding to 'crisis': Education policy research in Europe. *Research in Education*, 96(1), 23-30.
- Ambrosini, M., & Barone, C. (2007). Employment and working conditions of migrant workers.
- Arasaratnam, L. A. (2015). Research in intercultural communication: Reviewing the past decade. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 8(4), 290-310.
- Awad, G. H. (2007). The role of racial identity, academic self-concept, and self-esteem in the prediction of academic outcomes for African American students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 33(2), 188-207.
- Banks, J.A., McGee, B., & Cherry, A. (2001). Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives (4th Ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., p. 176.
- Breiset, L. (2016). Getting to know ELLs' families. *Educational Leadership*, 73(5), 46-50.
- Brown, R., Wyn, R., Yu, H., Valenzuela, A., & Dong, L. (1999). Access to health insurance and health care for children in immigrant families, pp. 126-186 in *Children of Immigrants: Health Adjustment and Public Assistance*. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Available at: <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309065453/html/>
- Burnham, J. J. (2009). Contemporary fears of children and adolescents: Coping and resiliency in the 21st century. *Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD*, 87(1), 28.
- Bryan, J. (2005). Fostering educational resilience and achievement in urban schools through school-family-community partnerships. *Professional School Counseling*, 219-227.
- Capps, R., Fix, M., Ost, J., Reardon-Anderson, J., & Passel, J. S. (2004). *The health and well-being of young children of immigrants*. The Urban Institute. Available at: [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311182\\_immigrant\\_families\\_5.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311182_immigrant_families_5.pdf)
- Current Population Survey (CPS), 2016). 26(4) 317–326.
- Dearing, E., Walsh, M. E., Sibley, E., Lee-St John, T., Foley, C., & Raczek, A. E. (2016). Can Community and School-Based Supports Improve the Achievement of First-Generation Immigrant Children Attending High-Poverty Schools? *Child development*, 87(3), 883-897.
- Diller, J.V. and Moule, J. (2005). Cultural competence: A primer for educators. Belmont, CA: Thomas Wadsworth.
- Dimakos, I. C., & Tasiopoulou, K. (2003). Attitudes towards Migrants: what do Greek students think about their immigrant classmates?. *Intercultural Education*, 14(3), 307-316.
- European Commission (2013), Key data on teachers and school leaders, retrieved from [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key\\_data\\_series/151EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/151EN.pdf)
- European Commission (2015), Education and Training Monitor 2015, Greece, retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-greece\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-greece_en.pdf)
- Eurostat (2017). Migration and migrant population statistics. (Data extracted in March 2017).

- Fernandez, R., & Rogerson, R. (1995). On the political economy of education subsidies. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 62(2), 249-262.
- Fox, S (2010, April 28). Which U.S. State Has the Most Immigrants? *Livescience*, Retrieved from <http://www.livescience.com>*Future of Children*, 21(1), 129-152.
- Gintis, H. (1972). Towards a political economy of education: A radical critique of Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*. *Harvard Educational Review*, 42(1), 70-96.
- Goh, M., Wahl, K. H., McDonald, J. K., Brissett, A. A., & Yoon, E. (2007). Working with immigrant students in schools: The role of school counselors in building cross-cultural bridges. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 35(2), 66.
- Hadjisoteriou, C., Faas, D., & Angelides, P. (2015). The Europeanisation of intercultural education? Responses from EU policy-makers. *Educational Review*, 67(2), 218-235.
- Harris, K. M. (1999). The health status and risk behaviors of adolescents in immigrant families, pp 286-347 in *Children of Immigrants: Health Adjustment and Public Assistance*. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Available at: <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309065453/html/>
- Harrison, D. A., & Klein, K. J. (2007). What's the difference? Diversity constructs as separation, variety, or disparity in organizations. *Academy of management review*, 32(4), 1199-1228.
- Haynes, J. (2007). *Getting started with English language learners: How educators can meet the challenge*. ASCD.
- Hellenic Government (2015), National reform programme (NRP) for 2015, retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/nrp2015\\_greece\\_el.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/nrp2015_greece_el.pdf)
- Hernandez, D. J., Denton, N. A., & Macartney, S. E. (2008). Children in Immigrant Families: Looking to America's Future. Social Policy Report. Volume 22, Number 3. *Society for Research in Child Development*.
- Hohlfeld, T. N., Ritzhaupt, A. D., Barron, A. E., & Kemker, K. (2008). Examining the digital divide in K-12 public schools: Four-year trends for supporting ICT literacy in Florida. *Computers & Education*, 51(4), 1648-1663.
- Homan, A. C., Hollenbeck, J. R., Humphrey, S. E., Van Knippenberg, D., Ilgen, D. R., & Van Kleef, G. A. (2008). Facing differences with an open mind: Openness to experience, salience of intragroup differences, and performance of diverse work groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(6), 1204-1222.
- Holmes, P. (2015). 'The cultural stuff around how to talk to people': immigrants' intercultural communication during a pre-employment work-placement. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 15(1), 109-124.
- Irving, M. A., & Hudley, C. (2008). Cultural identification and academic achievement among African American males. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 19(4), 676-698.
- Jaap, J. (1999). Addressing diversity: Growing our own teacher in an urban setting. In *The Forum* (Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 3-4).
- Jehn, K. A., Northcraft, G. B., & Neale, M. A. (1999). Why differences make a difference: A field study of diversity, conflict and performance in workgroups. *Administrative science quarterly*, 44(4), 741-763.
- Kao, G. (1999). Psychological well-being and educational achievement among immigrant youth, pp. 410-477 in *Children of Immigrants: Health Adjustment and Public Assistance*. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Available at: <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309065453/html/>

- Lad, K., & Braganza, D. (2013). Increasing knowledge related to the experiences of undocumented immigrants in public schools. *Educational Leadership and Administration, 24*, 1.
- Camera, L. (2017). The Effectiveness Dilemma Retrieved on April 21, from <https://www.usnews.com>.
- Levinson, M. (2010). Mapping multicultural education. Oxford University Press.
- Lipsit, M. (2003). *Newcomers left behind: Immigrant parents lack equal access to New York City's schools* (Doctoral dissertation, New School University).
- Magos, K. (2007). The contribution of action-research to training teachers in intercultural education: A research in the field of Greek minority education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(7), 1102-1112.
- Marzano, B. (2004). *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement: Research on What Works in Schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Masten, A. (2013). Risk and resilience in development. In P. D. Zelazo (Ed.), *Oxford handbook*
- McKay, P. F., Avery, D. R., Tonidandel, S., Morris, M. A., Hernandez, M., & Hebl, M. R. (2007). Racial differences in employee retention: Are diversity climate perceptions the key?. *Personnel psychology, 60*(1), 35-62.
- Motti-Stefanidi, F. (2014). Immigrant youth adaptation in the Greek school context: A risk and resilience developmental perspective. *Child Development Perspectives, 8*(3), 180-185.
- National Education Association. (2005). C.A.R.E.: Strategies for closing the achievement gaps. (2nd Ed). Washington, DC: NEA Human and Civil Rights, National Education Association, [www.nea.org/teachexperience/images/CARE\\_book0804.pdf](http://www.nea.org/teachexperience/images/CARE_book0804.pdf).
- Newman, B. M., & Newman, P. R. (2017). *Development through life: A psychosocial approach*. Cengage Learning.
- Noguera, P. A. (2003). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban education, 38*(4), 431-459.
- O'Donnell, C. Commentary. (online). Retrieved from <http://www.learner.org/workshops/tml/workshop1/commentary.html>
- Ogbu, J. U. (1992). Understanding cultural diversity and learning. *Educational researcher, 21*(8), 5-14.
- Oliff, P., Palacios, V., Johnson, I., & Leachman, M. (2013). Recent deep state higher education cuts may harm students and the economy for years to come. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*.
- Ozer, S., Bertelsen, P., Singla, R., & Schwartz, S. J. (2016). "Grab Your Culture and Walk With the Global" Ladakhi Students' Negotiation of Cultural Identity in the Context of Globalization-Based Acculturation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 0022022116687394*.
- Palaiologou, N. (2007). School adjustment difficulties of immigrant children in Greece 1. *Intercultural Education, 18*(2), 99-110.
- Patel, S. G., Barrera, A. Z., Strambler, M. J., Muñoz, R. F., & Macciomei, E. (2016). The Achievement Gap Among Newcomer Immigrant Adolescents: Life Stressors Hinder Latina/o Academic Success. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 15*(2), 121-133.
- Ratts, M., Singh, A. A., Nassar-McMilan, S., Butler, S.K., & McCullough, J. R. (2015). *Multicultural and social justice counseling competencies*. AMCD: Alexandria, VA.

- Reardon-Anderson, J., Capps, R., & Fix, M. E. (2002). *The health and well-being of children in immigrant families*. The Urban Institute: Washington, DC. Available at: [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310584\\_B52.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310584_B52.pdf)
- Roby, D. E. (2004). Research on school attendance and student achievement: A study of Ohio schools. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 28(1), 3.
- Roessingh, H. (2006). The teacher is the key: Building trust in ESL high school programs. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 62(4), 563-590.
- Roberts, A. R., & Ottens, A. J. (2005). The seven-stage crisis intervention model: A road map to goal attainment, problem solving, and crisis resolution. *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, 5(4), 329.
- Ryan, C. L., & Bauman, K. (2016). Educational attainment in the United States: 2015. *March Current Population Report*.
- Schachner, M. K., Noack, P., Van de Vijver, F. J., & Eckstein, K. (2016). Cultural diversity climate and psychological adjustment at school—equality and inclusion versus cultural pluralism. *Child development*, 87(4), 1175-1191.
- Schnell P., Azzolini D. (2015). The academic achievements of immigrants youths in new destination countries: evidence from southern Europe. *Migr. Stud.* 3, 217–240. 10.1093/migration/mnu040
- Schoorman, D., & Bogotch, I. (2010). Moving beyond ‘diversity’ to ‘social justice’: the challenge to re-conceptualize multicultural education. *Intercultural Education*, 21(1), 79-85.
- Sharidan, D. (April 2006). Cultural competence in the classroom: An advocacy guide (Mimeograph draft). Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Sue, D. W., Arrendondo, P., & McDavis, R.J. (1992). Multicultural counseling competencies and standards: A call to the profession. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 70, 477-486.
- Theodorou, E. (2011). ‘Children at our school are integrated. No one sticks out’: Greek-Cypriot teachers’ perceptions of integration of immigrant children in Cyprus. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24(4), 501-520.
- Title VI of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 42 U.S.C. § 2000d Et Seq. (2016, January 22). Retrieved April 04, 2016, from <https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-vi-civil-rights-act-1964-42-usc-2000d-et-seq>
- Triandafyllidou, A., Gropas, R., & Eliame, P. (2007). Greek Education Policy and the Challenge of Migration: an intercultural view of assimilation. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 14(3), 300-419.
- Tsaliki, E. (2017). Balancing between theory and practice in intercultural education: The case of intercultural primary schools in Greece. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(2).
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). The Condition of Education 2016 (NCES 2016-144), Immediate College Enrollment Rate.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2015* (NCES 2016–014), Chapter 2.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated State Performance Report, 2014–15. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 219.46.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2007). The condition of education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe>.

- VanBreda, A. D. (2001). *Resilience Theory: A Literature Review: With Special Chapters on Deployment Resilience in Military Families & Resilience Theory in Social Work*. South African Military Health Service.
- Van Roekel, N. P. D. (2008). Promoting Educators' Cultural Competence To Better Serve Culturally Diverse Students. *Washington, DC: National Education Agency*.
- Vazsonyi, A. T., Trejos-Castillo, E., & Young, M. A. (2008). Rural and non-rural African American youth: Does context matter in the etiology of problem behaviors?. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 37*(7), 798-811.
- Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science, 331*(6023), 1447-1451.
- Williams, F. C., & Butler, S. K. (2003). Concerns of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students: Implications for School Counselors. *Professional School Counseling, 7*(1), 9-14.
- Yang, Y., & Montgomery, D. (2013). Gaps or bridges in multicultural teacher education: A study of attitudes toward student diversity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 30*, 27-37.