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RESEARCH STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: EDUCATING MULTICULTURAL COLLEGE STUDENTS- Front and Back Matter. Includes Table of Contents

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**RESEARCH STUDIES IN
HIGHER EDUCATION:
EDUCATING MULTICULTURAL
COLLEGE STUDENTS**

TERENCE HICKS AND ABUL PITRE

Dedication

As every achievement and plateau, I have attained in my lifetime, the success of this effort is dedicated to my wife Roxanne and to our beautiful children, Cordarius, Tyrice and Alexis

Terence Hicks

I am deeply indebted to my parents, wife, and children for their encouragement. This book is a result of your inspiration!

Abul Pitre

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Series Foreword

Historically, the state of Black education has been at the center of American life. When the first Blacks arrived to the Americas to be made slaves, a process of *mis-education* was systematized into the very fabric of American life. Newly arrived Blacks were dehumanized and forced through a process that has been described by a conspicuous slave owner named Willie Lynch as a “breaking process”: “Hence the horse and the nigger must be broken; that is, break them from one form of mental life to another—keep the body and take the mind” (Hassan-EL, 2007, p. 14). This horrendous process of breaking the African from one form of mental life into another included an elaborate educational system that was designed to kill the creative Black mind. Elijah Muhammad called this a process that made Black people blind, deaf, and dumb—meaning the minds of Black people were taken from them. He proclaimed, “Back when our fathers were brought here and put into slavery 400 years ago, 300 [of] which they served as servitude slaves, they taught our people everything against themselves” (Pitre, 2008, p.6). Woodson (2008) similarly decried, “Even schools for Negroes, then, are places where they must be convinced of their inferiority. The thought of inferiority of the Negro is drilled into him in almost every class he enters and almost in every book he studies” (p. 2).

Today, Black education seems to be at a crossroads. With the passing of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, schools that serve a large majority of Black children have been under the scrutiny of politicians who vigilantly proclaim the need to improve schools while not realizing that these schools were never intended to educate or educe the divine powers within Black people. Watkins (2001) posits that after the Civil War, schools for Black people—particularly those in the South—were designed by wealthy philanthropists. These philanthropists designed “seventy five years of education for blacks” (pp. 41-42). Seventy-five years from 1865 brings us to 1940, and today we are seventy years removed from 1940. The sum of these numbers does not equal seventy-five years of scripted education; to truly understand the plight of Black education, one has to consider the historical impact of seventy-five years of scripted education and its influence on the present state of Black education.

Presently, schools are still controlled by ruling class Whites who hold major power. Woodson (2008) saw this as a problem in his day and argued, “The education of the Negroes, then, the most important thing in the uplift of Negroes, is almost entirely in the hands of those who have enslaved them and now segregate them” (p.22). Here, Woodson cogently argues for historical understanding: To point out merely the defects as they appear today will be of little benefit to the present and future generations. These things must be viewed in their historic setting. The

conditions of today have been determined by what has taken place in the past. . . (p.9) Watkins (2001) summarizes that the “white architects of black education. . . carefully selected and sponsored knowledge, which contributed to obedience, subservience, and political docility” (p. 40). Historical knowledge is essential to understanding the plight of Black education.

A major historical point in Black education was the famous *Brown v. the Board of Education Topeka Kansas*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that segregation deprived Blacks of educational equality. Thus, schools were ordered to integrate with all deliberate speed. This historic ruling has continued to impact the education of Black children in myriad and complex ways.

To date, the landmark case of *Brown v. the Board of Education Topeka Kansas* has not lived up to the paper that it was printed on. Schools are more segregated today than they were at the time of the *Brown* decision. Even more disheartening is that schools that are supposedly desegregated may have tracking programs such as “gifted and talented” that attract White students and give schools the appearance of being integrated while actually creating segregation within the school. Spring (2006) calls this “second-generation segregation” and asserts: Unlike segregation that existed by state laws in the South before the 1954 *Brown* decision, second generation forms of segregation can occur in schools with balanced racial populations; for instance, all White students may be placed in one academic track and all African American or Hispanic students in another track (p. 82). In this type of setting, White supremacy may become rooted in the subconscious minds of both Black and White students. Nieto and Bode (2008) highlight the internalized damage that tracking may have on students when they say students “may begin to believe that their placement in these groups is natural and a true reflection of whether they are ‘smart,’ ‘average,’ or ‘dumb’” (p. 119). According to Oakes and Lipton (2007), “African American and Latino students are assigned to low-track classes more often than White (and Asian) students, leading to two separate schools in one building—one [W]hite and one minority” (p. 308). Nieto and Bode (2008) argue the teaching strategy in segregated settings “leaves its mark on pedagogy as well. Students in the lowest levels are most likely to be subjected to rote memorization and static teaching methods” (p. 119). These findings are consistent with Lipman’s (1998): “scholars have argued that desegregation policy has been framed by what is in the interest of [W]hites, has abstracted from excellence in education, and has been constructed as racial integration, thus avoiding the central problem of institutional racism” (p. 11). Hammond (2005) is not alone, then, in observing that “the school experiences of African American and other minority students in the United States continue to be substantially separate and unequal” (p. 202).

Clearly, the education of Black students must be addressed with a sense of urgency like never before. Lipman (1998) alludes to the crisis of Black education, noting that “The overwhelming failure of schools to develop the talents and potentials of students of color is a national crisis” (p.2). In just about every negative category in education, Black children are over-represented. Again Lipman (1998) alludes, “The character and depth of the crisis are only dimly depicted by low

achievement scores and high rates of school failure and dropping out” (p. 2). Under the guise of raising student achievement, the *No Child Left Behind Act* has instead contributed to the demise of educational equality for Black students. Hammond (2004) cites the negative impact of the law: “The Harvard Civil Rights Project, along with other advocacy groups, has warned that the law threatens to increase the growing dropout rate and pushout rates for students of color, ultimately reducing access to education for these students rather than enhancing it” (p. 4). Asante (2005) summarizes the situation thus: “I cannot honestly say that I have ever found a school in the United States run by whites that adequately prepares black children to enter the world as sane human beings . . . an exploitative, capitalist system that enshrines plantation owners as saints and national heroes cannot possibly create sane black children” (p. 65). The education of Black students and its surrounding issues indeed makes for a national crisis that must be put at the forefront of the African American agenda for liberation.

In this series, *Issues in Black Education*, I call upon a wide range of scholars, educators, and activists to speak to the issues of educating Black students. The series is designed to not only highlight issues that may negatively impact the education of Black students but also to provide possibilities for improving the quality of education for Black students. Another major goal of the series is to help pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, administrators, school board members, and those concerned with the plight of Black education by providing a wide range of scholarly research that is thought-provoking and stimulating. The series will cover every imaginable aspect of Black education from K-12 schools to higher education. It is hoped that this series will generate deep reflection and catalyze action-praxis to uproot the social injustices that exist in schools serving large numbers of Black students.

In the past, significant scholarly research has been conducted on the education of Black students; however, there does not seem to be a coherent theoretical approach to addressing Black education that is outside of European dominance. Thus, the series will serve as a foundation for such an approach—an examination of Black leaders, scholars, activists, and their exegeses and challenge of power relations in Black education. The idea is based on the educational philosophies of Elijah Muhammad, Carter G. Woodson, and others whose leadership and ideas could transform schools for Black students. One can only imagine how schools would look if Elijah Muhammad, Carter G. Woodson, Marcus Garvey, or other significant Black leaders were in charge. Additionally, the election of Barack Hussein Obama as the first Black president of the United States of America offers us a compelling examination of transformative leadership that could be inculcated into America’s schools. The newly elected president’s history of working for social justice, his campaign theme of “Change We Can Believe In,” and his inaugural address that challenged America to embrace a new era are similar to the ideas embodied in *Critical Black Pedagogy in Education*.

This series is a call to develop an entirely new educational system. This new system must envision how Black leaders would transform schools within the

context of our society's diversity. With this in mind, we are looking not only at historical Black leaders but also at contemporary extensions of these great leaders. Karen Johnson et al. (in press) describes the necessity for this perspective: "There is a need for researchers, educators, policy makers, etc. to comprehend the emancipatory teaching practices that African American teachers employed that in turn contributed to academic success of Black students as well as offered a vision for a more just society." Freire (2000) also lays a foundation for critical Black pedagogy in education by declaring, "it would be a contradiction in terms if the oppressors not only defended but actually implemented a liberating education" (p. 54). Thus, critical Black pedagogy in education is a historical and contemporary examination of Black leaders (scholars, ministers, educators, politicians, etc.) who challenged the European dominance of Black education and suggested ideas for the education of Black people.

This ground breaking book by Terence Hicks, a quantitative research professor and Abul Pitre, a qualitative research professor builds upon the usefulness of each research method and integrates them by providing valuable findings on a diverse group of college students. This book provides the reader with a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research studies surrounding nine chapters. Drawing from major quantitative and qualitative theoretical research frameworks found in multicultural education, this book, "*Research Studies in Higher Education: Educating Multicultural College Students*" is a must read. The editors feel that their book contributes much to the research literature regarding the role that educational leaders have in educating multicultural college students.

The book is a welcome addition to the literature on Black education. Similar to Joyce King's (2005) *Black Education: A Transformative Research and Action Agenda for the New Century*, this book addresses research issues raised in *The Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE)*. Like CORIBE's agenda, it focuses on "using culture as an asset in the design of learning environments that are applicable to students' lives and that lead students toward more analytical and critical learning" (p. 353). The book is indeed provocative, compelling, and rich with information that will propel those concerned with equity, justice, and equality of education into a renewed activism.

Abul Pitre
Series Editor

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Foreword

Our nation is not operating at its full potential. Every day we are missing out on the latent contributions of bright, talented, academically promising students. These students are primarily students of color, first-generation students and students from low-income backgrounds who never graduate from college. Many of them never get the opportunity to attend college—we are failing them throughout the PreK-16 educational pipeline. Many of the under-served students who enter college are not achieving at high levels or to their full potential. We now see a trend that is especially troubling—African American and Latino males are not achieving at the same levels as their female counterparts.

There are numerous reasons we find ourselves in this predicament. Nationwide standardized tests scores of our public school students have increased for all subgroups, but there remains an achievement gap—in fact the gap between white students and African American students in reading assessments has remained virtually unchanged since 1992. This gap follows our students on to college—they often begin their post-secondary careers with an academic deficit. All too often college faculty members do not know what is necessary to ensure the success of under-served students; they are neither certain what strategies are successful when working with under-served and under-represented students nor are they informed of the types of support that these students need.

As the Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin, I have the pleasure of overseeing a number of projects and programs that support under-served and under-represented students. We have some phenomenal students in our programs—students who make a difference at the university and who are sure to become outstanding leaders during their careers and in their communities. We would not have the successful programs without implementation of the research-based best practices and strategies that form the foundation of our programs. I would like to see all students of color, first-generation students, and students from low-income backgrounds not only have a shot at attending the college or university of their choice, but the chance to be academically successful.

Through current research, there is hope that faculty and staff can achieve a better understanding of what our under-served and under-represented students at the post-secondary level need. A good place to begin or continue our search for understanding is in *Research Studies in Higher Education: Educating Multicultural College Students*. Editors Dr. Terence Hicks and Dr. Abul Pitre present a series of qualitative and quantitative studies, all focusing on educational attainment, access and equity for college students who are under-served or under-represented given

their race, ethnicity, low-income, first-generation, or nontraditional student status. The selection of studies represents a cross-section of institutions and provides an examination of what is and what is not working with regard to policies and structures that are meant to assist our under-served and under-represented students at colleges across the country. The research focuses on programs and policies from community colleges, and public and private universities. The researchers themselves come from a variety of academic backgrounds and institutional settings that help inform their findings.

Research Studies in Higher Education: Educating Multicultural College Students. is one in a series titled *Issues in Black Education*. Eight books are planned for the series and they will address topics ranging from black males in special education to issues around the STEM subjects. With help from researchers whose findings are included in *Research Studies in Higher Education* and the entire *Issues* series edited by Dr. Abul Pitre, faculty and staff should be able to tap into practices that make a difference.

Dr. Gregory J. Vincent
Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement
W.K. Kellogg Professor in Community College Leadership
Professor of Law
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas

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Finally, while it is not possible to acknowledge everyone, we would like to thank our colleagues and others who have maintained an interest and enthusiasm for this project concerning research studies on multicultural college students.

Introduction

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Expanding equity and access to higher education for minorities and low-income students continues to be a major focus in the twenty-first century. So, what are the advantages of a book on quantitative and qualitative research studies on a diverse population of college students in higher education? For one, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to transit research provides an innovative tool in both determining and understanding college students and their needs to transition into an institution. Researchers have consistently engaged in critical policy and equity research through quantitative and qualitative research methods, addressing issues of race, sex, diversity, and ethnicity in their research and publications. This groundbreaking book edited by Terence Hicks, a quantitative research professor and Abul Pitre, a qualitative research professor builds upon the usefulness of each research method and integrates them by providing valuable findings on a diverse group of college students.

The editors provide a unique mixture of quantitative and qualitative research studies conducted on African American, first-generation, undecided and non-traditional college students. There is an apparent gap in the knowledge of college administrators and faculty concerning the educational expectations that are held by incoming African American, first-generation, undecided and non-traditional college students and how these expectations may relate to their persistence, or lack thereof, at a post-secondary institution. Until more accurate methods are developed to identify which college students are at risk of failing and leaving college, little can be done to intervene and avoid the undesired consequences of poor educational performances and attrition that affect college students and the institutions. Thus, it would be helpful to know what educational challenges exist for these students upon entering a college setting. Such information is needed to assess more fully the at-risk potential of these students for non-completion of college.

Given that a relatively large percentage of African Americans, first generation, undecided and non-traditional college students are entering college and considering the low completion rate among these groups, it is of importance to explore means to improve their college completion rates. Furthermore, it is imperative that these

college students receive appropriate support in and out of the classroom in order to navigate successfully the educational pathway. In this important book on quantitative and qualitative research studies surrounding the African American, first-generation, undecided and non-traditional college students, the chapter authors provide important recommendations for university administrators, faculty and staff in supporting the adjustment to college life of these students. Most importantly, the recommendations focused primarily on these college students, and ways in which university administrators and faculty could provide support to address the low college retention rate among this group due to their educational challenges.

This book offers three dynamic sections. In the first section, the contributing chapter authors provide qualitative research findings on the African American and Latino college student population. In Chapter One, Desiree' Vega and James Moore III chapter focuses on the lived experiences of African American and Latino first-generation college students encounters throughout their elementary and secondary educational process and its impact on their pursuit and completion of a higher education. Chapter Two, by Pamela Larde uses the phenomenological research approach to capture the lived experiences and essence of why and how African American first-generation college students decided to pursue higher education. In Chapter Three, J. Luke Wood and Adriel A. Hilton discusses the factors affecting the academic success of African American male students in the community college. This study employed a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews conducted with twenty-eight Black male community college students. Chapter Four by Ron Brown discusses the perceived influence of racialized discrimination (societal dissonance) on the academic success of seven academically successful African American male undergraduate students at a predominantly White institution of higher education. Through the lived experiences of these students, the chapter provides insight into issues of societal perception, persistence, support, and access through the perspective of African American males.

In the second section of the book, the chapter authors provide a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research studies on the first-generation college student. Chapter Five by Bryan Andriano uses quantitative data collected by the Center for Post-secondary Study (CPS) at Indiana University-Bloomington through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) College Survey Report to examine engagement practices and study abroad participation among first-generation American college students. Bryan Andriano uses a logistic regression model to predict study abroad participation among the first-generation American college students. In Chapter Six, Ashley Rondini uses a grounded theory analytical approach and uses in-depth interviews with low-income first-generation college students and parents of these students to study the lived experiences of educational mobility for low income first-generation students on an elite campus. Chapter Seven by Mona Davenport uses analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression analyses to examine nine critical factors that affect persistence of ethnic minority first-generation and non-first-generation college students.

In the third section of the book, the chapter authors provide quantitative research findings on undecided and non-traditional college students. Chapter Eight by Kimberly Brown uses the t-test and chi-square analysis to determine if there were statistically significant differences between Specific Majors (SMs) and Non-Specific Majors (NSMs) college students in terms of background characteristics, self-perception of abilities, degree aspirations and academic achievement (first year GPA). In Chapter Nine, J. Michael Harpe and Theodore Kaniuka uses quantitative data to analyze retention and persistence rates among North Carolina Community College traditional and non-traditional students.

**Qualitative Research Studies on the
African American and Latino
College Student**

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