

Why Teach?

Ethnic Minority College Students' Views on Teaching

A. Y. "Fred" Ramirez

I desired to become a teacher and receive a credential in special education. When I started to examine the number of years it would take to clear my credential, how the nation was demanding standardized testing for students who did not test well, and the low pay, I realized by the time I graduated with my Bachelors in biology then a Masters, I still would not be done with a cleared teaching credential.

This was a comment from a Latina female college student at a major university in Southern California when asked why she decided not to become a teacher. Her description and frustration concerning the teaching profession were consistent themes throughout the context of the investigation reported here.

In a previous study published in *Multicultural Education* (Ramirez, Summer 2009), ethnic minority high school students were asked their attitudes toward entering the teaching profession. In that study, students expressed disillusionment with teaching due to the lack of positive information given from teachers and counselors. Many from that high school study were unaware of other career opportunities within education (e.g., administration, university teaching). Most believed the only teaching positions one could hold in education were as kindergarten through high school teachers.

In contrast to those high school students, the college participants in this study were very knowledgeable as to what a career in teaching entailed, what they needed to do to become a teacher, resources available to them after becoming a teacher, and, in their mind, the obstacles and hurdles involved in becoming a teacher.

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Introduction

An investigation of the number of ethnic minority teachers was undertaken due to the increased awareness at one Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Southern California where there were low numbers of minorities entering the teacher credential programs. When approached about the low numbers of ethnic minority students in the teacher preparation program, university administrators agreed with and voiced the need to increase the numbers of ethnic minorities, yet no programs were in place to do so, and there was no mention of future university programs being considered.

Therefore, two studies were conducted to measure high school and college students' attitudes toward the teaching profession. This second study records the findings of college students' attitudes toward teaching. As mentioned previously, the study done to determine high school students' lack of interest in teaching found that it was due primarily to negative information generated from teachers and counselors about a career in teaching. In contrast, the responses from the college students recorded in this study were more analytical and based on each individuals' research into the field.

Recruitment of Ethnic Minority College Students

The recruitment of ethnic minority individuals is not limited to the state level or the national level (Summerhill, et.al., 1998), for there is an international concern as well (Carrington & Tomlin, 2000). What Carrington and Tomlin found in their study of ethnic minorities was the relatively low status of teachers, poor level of pay, and stressful working conditions have contributed to the low number of ethnic minorities entering teaching. The study reported here parallels these findings.

In their study, Carrington and Tomlin convey that students returning to school

after other initial work experience wished to conduct their student teaching in their home communities, while traditional students, those with no previous work experience, were more concerned with ethnic stereotyping by the schools and community they may be placed in for their student teaching. Those traditional students in the Carrington and Tomlin study did not wish to be placed in unfamiliar communities that did not reflect their own cultural or ethnic identities for fear that these unfamiliar placements would contribute to issues of stereotyping and racism. As we will see later on, the college students who participated in this study also had a concern regarding student placement and teaching positions.

In addition to the findings of the Carrington and Tomlin study, other studies on minorities in teaching have found complex reasons for why ethnic minorities are not choosing teaching as a profession. One such study analyzed four ethnic minority groups (African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American) in seeking to determine what hinders students of color from entering the teaching profession (Gordon, 2000). Gordon's study involved 116 interviews of teachers of color from three different states plus a group of 50 Asian American community members, all asked to answer the question of why minority students are not choosing teaching.

Gordon's study found that while there were differences between the reasons given by each minority group, some of the main reasons why the participants felt minority students were not choosing teaching were because of low pay, lack of encouragement, insufficient K-12 instruction, negative school experiences, and low status of and lack of respect for teachers. Many of these findings have been reinforced through a number of other studies (Miller & Endo, 2005; Gordon, 2005; Gordon, 1997), and many of them are again reflected in the study reported here.

Across the United States many programs have been created to recruit and retain ethnic minorities in the field of teaching, such as Project TEAM at Indiana University-Bloomington where recruitment of non-White students included a weekly seminar in which ethnic minority students could share their thoughts regarding the teaching program and what it was like being part of a predominately White institution (PWI) (Bennett, Cole, & Thompson, 2000). The program succeeded by drawing ethnic minorities to the field of education but eventually had to disband due to a lack of ongoing funding.

A similarly effective program called Project TEACH used what was referred to as a “home-growing” method to draw people of color into teaching. It created a partnership between a local district, a learning center, and a PWI university, and provided financial aid and extended support (spanning from preadmission to teacher induction). This program also ended as a result of a lack of university support and funding (Irizarry, 2007).

However, one program from the federal government is now seeing an increase in its mission of attracting minorities to teaching. This program targets ethnic minorities who are returning from active military service and desiring to enter teaching as a career. In Troops to Teachers (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, n.d.) an estimated 37% of the personnel wanting to enter the teaching profession are ethnic minorities. This is more than double the percentage of non-White students who go into teaching through traditional programs.

The Troops to Teachers initiative commenced in 1993 and has “graduated” over 8,000 teachers (mostly males). Obviously programs such as this, with a secure financial base, have been better able to recruit and retain minority candidates into the teaching profession.

Recognizing the Need

As indicated previously, there is a need to recruit and retain ethnic minorities to the field of education, for research indicates that when an ethnic minority teacher is present, there are less ethnic minority students in special education, a decrease in absenteeism, more parental involvement, and ethnic minority students are more involved in school activities. Morris (2008) goes into more depth regarding ethnic minority students and the need for ethnic teachers by stating:

Nevertheless, the cultural difference view of students’ schooling experiences will remain a viable explanation because of an increasingly heterogeneous student population in which non-White students accounted for more than 30 percent of the school-age population at the end of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the teaching force in the United States is more than 90 percent White. Whereas proponents of the cultural difference paradigm would not assume that all White teachers are unable to teach these students, they would, however, continue to assert that for some students, this imbalance fosters the kind of cultural incongruence that leads to school failure.

The argument that non-White teachers are best to teach non-White students is not the issue, but rather by recruiting and retaining ethnic minorities into teaching, teacher education could present a more realistic foundation of what society looks like for our K-12 students, and non-White teachers may be better able to serve as role models for ethnic students. Therefore, active recruitment needs to be in place for people of color to become teachers.

To best determine what programs may be successful at recruiting people of color, there must be an understanding of why ethnic minorities are not choosing a career in teaching. This study seeks to answer

the following questions: (1) What do ethnic minority college students know about teaching as a career? (2) What is drawing ethnic minority college students to teaching? (3) What is hindering ethnic minority college students from entering the teaching profession? (4) What issues need to be resolved before more ethnic minority students will consider teaching as a career?

Method

Data were collected through group interviews in which participants were asked twelve questions (see Table 1) to encourage discussion of issues related to why ethnic minority students are not choosing teaching as a profession. The questions were derived from a review of related literature, common information, and interaction with other professionals interested in this topic.

The questions were designed to be a starting point for discussion, and the findings and results will report information gained through direct response to the questions and through discussion that followed. After the interviews were conducted, time was spent to quantify the respondents’ judgments on teaching as a career. Often, emails were sent to better utilize time for participant responses due to busy schedules.

Table 1
List of Interview Questions for Students on the Topic of Teaching

- Have you ever considered teaching in P-12 schools as a career? If yes, are you in a teaching program? If not, why are you not pursuing teaching as a career?
- What are some benefits of teaching?
- What are some drawbacks to teaching?
- If not interested in the field of teaching, what would persuade you to become a teacher?
- What is your major?
- Were you ever given an opportunity in your K-12 education to hear about teaching as a career?
- What areas of study were you told to pursue in your K-12 education? Who told you to pursue these areas?
- On a scale of 1-5 (1 being lowest), how would you rank teaching as a profession in terms of personal satisfaction? In terms of benefits? In terms of salary? In terms of future opportunities?
- If a family member was to ask you about teaching as a profession, how would you counsel them?
- If a person you did not know asked for advice regarding teaching as a profession, how would you counsel them?
- Do you think ethnic minorities should be recruited to teach in P-12 school settings? If so, what incentives, if any, should be provided?
- Overall, what are your thoughts on the teaching profession?

Participants

A number of the studies that have been done on the issue of a lack of teachers of color have found that one of the reasons why there is not a higher number of teachers of color is because students of color are not sufficiently prepared to enter college. This study, however, will look at minority students who were *not* hindered in this way and *were* able to enter college. Therefore the results will reflect the views of participants who were academically able to enter the profession of teaching, and the suggestions given for increasing the number of minority students that enter teaching will be directed toward working with minority students who have already entered college.

The college students who participated (76 in all) were part of student organizations on a variety of university campuses in Southern California. A Latina sorority located at a university in Southern California provided 25 participants for this study, eight of whom were actively pursuing teaching as a career. Other participants included members of a Filipino student organization and a Black engineers association, both located at a different university in Southern California, and none of the members of those organizations were pursuing teaching as a career. The Filipino and Black students attend a university that is recognized as an HSI. All of the college students who participated in this study came from a variety of socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds and academic majors.

Findings

The responses received through the interview sessions have been categorized into three main sections: the perceived benefits of teaching as a career, the perceived drawbacks of teaching as a career, and the commentary received regarding teaching as a career. It is important to note that the participants in this study were familiar with the teaching profession as it is in California. The participant responses reflect an understanding of the profession of teaching based on an awareness of state regulations for preparation programs for teachers specific to the state of California.

Perceived Benefits of Teaching as a Career

It Provides an Opportunity to Give Back to the Community

One benefit the participants shared was the feeling of “giving back” to the

community. Two Latina sorority members who have chosen to pursue teaching stated that one of the reasons they chose teaching as a profession is because it is a way to give back to the community. A male Filipino student also considered teaching as a means to “give back” to society when he said,

I would like to be a teacher so I can assist other students who may have had the same problems I had as a student. I feel at this point in my life I may be able to help students as well as teach them what they needed to learn.

When responding in greater depth to questions about what giving back to the community means, the participants expressed a “volunteer” or “Peace Corp” value about teaching. Part of the rationale for this mindset came from students who believed since salaries were minimal in teaching you essentially become a volunteer, or as one student put it “like a Peace Corp person” who teaches out of the “goodness of their heart.” The participants felt that for a teacher to experience the feeling of giving back as a benefit of teaching, they had to enter the profession with this “Peace Corp” mentality. When asked to follow up on this perception, one student suggested,

They have a good heart and wish to give what they can without the need to receive anything in return. Teachers who get into teaching for the right reasons do not expect to be recognized for their work but wish to give to the students.

This was seen as the type of teacher who experienced the benefit of feeling that they are giving back to the community.

It Provides Time off

The number one benefit that the participants mentioned was time off. When this was mentioned, most of the participants laughed and made statements that assumed that teachers took three months off during the summer. Students in this study were then arguing among themselves whether teachers actually took three months off, because two of the participants had family members in teaching whose summer months were spent working on curriculum for the next year.

It Provides Employment Benefits

When asked to rank the employment benefits of teaching (health insurance, retirement program, etc.) on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being lowest, the students ranked benefits at an average of 4. Among per-

sonal satisfaction, benefits, salary, and future opportunities, benefits was ranked the highest.

Perceived Drawbacks of Teaching as a Career

The Time It Takes and the Cost of Earning a Credential

The participants in this study were aware of the state requirements in California that typically add a “5th” year of study for those enrolled in a teacher credentialing program. This was seen as a drawback because of the financial burden of a fifth year of tuition and because this year would be one in which the student would not be receiving a teaching salary.

One student shared that although she would be able to pay tuition for the extra year of study, she was more concerned with the time it would take before she could earn a teaching salary. A Filipino student from the university that is an HSI stated,

You know, I would like to teach, but in this program I would need to be placed in a school for one full academic year, which is a good thing, but I need to work to pay off my loans. I cannot take a year out of my life, not be able to work full-time, and go through a program that will only allow me a preliminary credential.

This concern about not being able to clear their teaching credential easily was one of the items most often mentioned. In the state of California after a student has completed a credentialing program they receive a preliminary credential. To be able to clear that credential they must complete a two-year induction program, often completed through the state’s Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program during their first years of teaching.

One student with an undeclared major said,

You know, if scholarships were available for the 5th year for ethnic minorities who wanted to teach I would look into it more. As it is, the only item available is the APLE loan and I do not wish to be denied the opportunity to teach because of budget cuts and I would have to pay back the loan.

This student understood the qualifications and the conditions for applying for and receiving this particular state deferment loan. She knew if she did take out the loan and no positions were available, she would still have to pay it back. Taking out loans

for education was seen as negative for the Latinas in this study. They believed that all the loans would do is add up to extra money they would need to repay during their careers. One Latina stated, "Why borrow then default if you are unable to find a job?"

College students also commented that the extra course work (5th year for a preliminary credential) and BTSA for another two years would not adequately compensate a person for the time they put into receiving a cleared teaching credential. Many college students justified their choice of not pursuing teaching due to the fact that they can receive a Master's degree in their content area before clearing their teaching credential due to BTSA. They challenged this by questioning why they should spend time and not get paid for going to BTSA when the information they would receive is information they had already learned in their preliminary teacher credential programs.

Inadequate Salary

When asked what they believed were the drawbacks of teaching, the students recited many areas of concern. First and foremost was pay. The students were in agreement that the salary structure for teachers does not match the effort that a dedicated person puts into teaching. Due to the number of teachers they had experienced who seemed not to care during their K-12 lives, students were quick to point out their concern about trying to make positive change for their own students through working hard as a teacher, yet knowing they would not be adequately compensated for this work. Hence again the "Peace Corp" mentality that some of the students mentioned as being a benefit of teaching. One male kinesiology student went on to say,

If you have two teachers teaching the same subject and one teacher only provided worksheets everyday and the other is modifying curriculum, creating adaptations for their students, bringing in speakers, devising new ways of learning for their students, working late hours to contact parents and creating fun lesson plans, after a while the second teacher who is creative will burn out and may become upset with the system. This is the type of teacher I want to be but I know I would become frustrated with my colleagues who are in it (teaching) just to get a paycheck and not do much for a job.

Discussing this situation, another student then asked about the concept of paying a teacher more for their work each

year and not paying the other teacher. What this male student was campaigning for, of course, is merit pay.

It Is Not Considered a Respectable Profession

Salary was an issue also viewed in the light of respectability by the participants in this study. For these students, salary equals respect. If salary was comparable to the amount of time a teacher puts into their career, many of the students would consider teaching as an option. A female junior attending one of the universities in Southern California stated,

I see many good teachers arriving early and leaving late from school. These are the good teachers, the ones that care about teaching and care about their students. These are the teachers whom if you broke down their hourly wage would be making much less than those who arrive when the morning bell rings and leaves when the final bell rings.

The student respondents were knowledgeable about teacher union pressure and the issue of tenure. At least half of the students questioned the tenure process, for they remembered many poor teachers who had tenure and did not care about teaching. Due to these teachers, the participants believed the teaching profession does not get the respect it deserves. "Can you imagine if we didn't have tenure?" Mark, a history student, asked,

I bet if we didn't have tenure, teachers would have to work harder to go up the pay scale. Why is it that teaching is the only position to have guaranteed work if you are poor at your craft? No wonder people dislike teachers and teaching; many get paid for doing nothing.

Another way the participants felt the issue of respect impacted teachers was by impeding them from being able to make significant change. Some of the students expressed that they felt teachers would not be able to have a great influence beyond the classroom due to society's lack of respect for teachers and the teaching profession.

A male member of the Black student organization stated,

If I did wish to be part of the teaching profession I might as well give up my dreams of being an engineer where I would have the opportunity to give back to my community by working with powerbrokers to create better (living) conditions for all members of the city.

When asked to clarify his statement, he continued,

Teaching is a good profession and people who are called to teach should teach. For me, I know as a teacher I wouldn't be able to make the types of change I wish to make. Teachers, although good, are not looked upon seriously if they wish to make change within society.

This student's comments rang true for many of the participants who believed that teaching was a good career but to develop significant change in society you would need to be in a career that was more "respected."

The Desire to Teach in a Specific Community

A member of the Filipina organization contributed by saying:

If there is a need, sure. I cannot speak for others, but if I were to teach I would like to go back to my community and teach. However, by the time I am finished (with clearing a teaching credential in California) and the salary I would make, it would make it difficult to move back to my neighborhood and buy a home. This then will make me live in a different place with different people and commute to my school.

The point of going back to the school or neighborhoods where the students themselves attended K-12 schools was an issue for some of the students. Many of the college students desired to go back and live in their communities, but found they may be unable to do so due to rising real estate prices combined with low salaries.

The placement for student teaching was an issue that students were concerned about as well. Students, when asked about their student teaching placements, were told they would need to go where the university wishes them to go. Debbie, a student studying ancient histories, remembers wishing to move back home after graduation so she can student teach and save money. Instead, she was told if she wanted to teach she would need to do her student teaching within a different specific community. When she found out where this would be, she asked if another placement could be found, for the school was known not to be hospitable toward ethnic minorities. The university dismissed the request, and Debbie ended up not wanting to pursue a teaching credential. This parallels the findings of Carrington and Tomlin and the desire of teacher candidates to be in school surroundings with which they are familiar.

The students shared other placement issues as well. Those who attend the HSI

complained that they have heard of departments accepting students into their teaching credential program knowing they will live between 45-50 minutes away from campus and not granting the students their request of having a student teaching placement near their home so they would not have to make such a long commute. When asked how they felt about this, one of the students stated,

This is an ethical issue. If my career is starting with my professors not having the respect to tell me up front that I will not be able to student teach in my surrounding area, why would I wish to continue with this career when I am not getting paid for student teaching. I am pumping gasoline into my car at \$3.50 a gallon and then finding out that the reason they want the placement closer to the university is for faculty mileage reimbursement, since supervisors need to make 8-10 visits. Excuse me, I drive more that in two weeks.

Government Regulations

Gillis (1990) suggests that there is a concern about fewer ethnic minorities entering teacher education programs due to the influx of state administered tests as a requirement to be accepted in and complete a teacher credential program. Based on responses from the students in this study, state administered tests are indeed an issue.

In California, prospective teachers need to take and pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), and the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) before being eligible to clear their teaching credential. This situation was clearly recognized by the group of 55 Latina sorority women. While speaking with and asking them about a career in teaching, they were very knowledgeable about these tests and the implications of not passing. They were not only concerned about passing the tests; they were even more concerned with the amount of study time it would take to pass each one while trying to also complete their student teaching.

One student replied,

Why would I wish to spend time pursuing a teaching credential if another hurdle is placed before us? The TPA (Teachers Performance Assessment) is just another measure of how the State really does not want people in teaching. If they did, they would somehow combine all these tests so as to make it (teaching) more manageable for us.

Another student was more skeptical of standardized tests by saying,

It's funny how the state wishes teachers to teach in ways that all students can learn. Then all they give us are paper and pencil tests when many people do not do well on these types of exams.

Mention of the TPA and the reality of teaching was then made by a woman whose family members teach:

I find it funny that the TPA wants students to teach in creative ways and to accommodate all learners when in reality once these students get into the classroom they are handed curriculum that dictates where they should be on a specific day. So much for accommodations.

The discussion of standardization then went on to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The participants were really at odds with NCLB and the regulations it has forced on schools. Several students mentioned that the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) along with standardization of curriculum has created a negative reaction toward the teaching profession. A male student reacted by saying:

If I wish to teach, why would I want to when all we would be doing is reading off of curriculum already set up by the state? How much education would one need to read off something already developed?

Others who wanted to go into teaching to be creative and teach in new ways agreed with that student's response, and overall the feeling from these respondents is that creativity in today's K-12 classrooms is non-existent. A different student who was in the senior year of college remembers life as a high school student in the age of NCLB:

You know, I remember going through school and not being taught how to critically think. I attended a very good school with very good API scores (Academic Performance Index) and was in the top of my classes but all we did was regurgitate information. When I attended the university I was lost for I wanted to be told what to do and what to think. As a teacher, I would have to recreate the same scenario for others that I went through.

This student also mentioned problems with the CAHSEE, remembering students who performed well in high school classroom exams, but found it difficult to pass this exit examination. This same student added, "Why can't the state think of alternative ways of assessing students when in education people are being told to assess in a variety of ways?"

Many of the students felt compelled to express their displeasure with K-12 schools and the state and federal governments for creating more obstacles for students wishing to become teachers. A different student exclaimed that although they might favor a standard requiring students to learn material by a certain time, the problem was in the delivery of the curriculum, rather than the outcome.

This student asserted: "By allowing students to creatively think, we are better able to have students learn material outside of their courses and draw parallels to add more thought into another course such as math or science."

Additional problems concerning curriculum issues came from those interested in the fine arts and music. One student said: "Why is it that these courses (art and music) are the first to be dissolved when these are the very courses that students can be creative in?" The teacher's ability to allow for students to be creative in classrooms was seen as lacking by these participants due to governmental standardization, which became another reason for the students to not pursue teaching as a career.

Commentary Received Regarding Teaching as a Career

From School Personnel

The participants mentioned that only negative comments regarding teaching had been given to them when they were high school students. Their college counselors did not mention that a career in teaching could be an option, nor did their teachers state that teaching was a good profession. The Gordon study (2000) also revealed this issue. In that study it was found that very few of the teachers in the study would recommend the career of teaching to their students.

From Family

A male second generation Asian student shared the pressure from parents not to become a teacher: "I was told by my father not to teach, that teaching was for women and that he was not paying for me to become a teacher." However, a third generation Filipina was also asked by her parents not to teach for they believed that she would be unable to financially take care of herself.

Results***What do Ethnic Minority College Students Know about Teaching as a Career?***

One of the more surprising findings from this study was the knowledge base that these college students have about the field of teaching. When asked why they did not wish to pursue teaching or education as a career, many knew of the new policies in place regarding teaching. For instance, the students know about the Teacher Performance Assessments (TPA) and the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) programs implemented in California and believe that these two programs would add either frustration and/or time to their professional preparation and goals such as attaining a Master's degree. When speaking with these college students, they made it fully clear that they had examined teaching as a career and were content in their decision of whether or not they would pursue teaching.

More than half of the participants in this study were aware of the "time" it took to be awarded a cleared teaching credential. In the State of California, students often need to be part of a one-year program after their bachelor's degree to receive a preliminary credential, followed by a further two-year induction program to clear their credential.

Although the students were well informed about the requirements to receive a teaching credential, as evidenced by their responses, many were unaware of other opportunities within the field of education.

What Is It That Is Drawing Ethnic Minority College Students to Teaching?

Based upon responses from the participants, this study found that there were three main factors that draw ethnic minority college students to teaching as a career. These factors were a feeling of intrinsic reward for giving back to the community, time off, and benefits such as health and retirement programs.

Many of the participants conveyed the idea that they believed that those entering teaching needed to do so with an attitude similar to that of someone entering the Peace Corps. This was due to a belief that while teaching does not offer a great monetary reward, it does offer the intrinsic reward of feeling that one has given something to the community. Also, if a person enters the profession with this mentality, the participants felt they would be better teachers because they would put

in more work than just that necessary to get by and get a pay check.

One of the most commonly mentioned attractions to teaching was the schedule of a teacher, with the summer break, spring break, and winter break off in addition to holidays throughout the year. Although some participants recognized that it is often necessary for teachers to use this time to prepare for class time, it was still seen as a great benefit of teaching.

Moreover the participants of this study believed that teachers receive good health and retirement benefits. While this is a practical draw to the teaching profession, many of the participants felt that the low salary, government regulations, and lack of respect significantly outweighed the health and retirement benefits.

What Is It That Hinders Ethnic Minority College Students from Entering the Teaching Profession?

Two of the most prominent hindrances to entering the teaching profession for the participants in this study were salary and government regulations. The students felt that good teachers were neither paid adequately for the time that they put into their profession, nor were they shown the respect they deserved due to their low salaries. Despite the ability of a teacher to climb the pay scale as they gain experience and education, the common belief among the participants of this study was that teachers are not appropriately financially compensated for the time they put into teaching. This idea is closely connected to the participants' negative feelings toward current government regulations.

Given the participants' understanding of the California state requirements for becoming a teacher, they knew that they would likely have to put in five years of schooling before receiving a teaching credential, with the fifth year adding additional expense after earning their degree. They also recognized that they would not be earning a salary while completing student teaching.

After completing a teacher credentialing program, they would then be receiving what they felt is a low salary that would make paying off school loans difficult. Furthermore they would need to be in an induction program for their first two or more years of teaching, adding time to their work day for which they would not receive financial compensation.

Government regulations also played a part in the thinking of the respondents to

this study, since such regulations caused participants to feel they would be unable to use their education and creativity once becoming a teacher, due to the strict guidelines set out by the government through laws such as NCLB. The participants also felt the time it takes to fulfill the requirement to receive a cleared credential were significant and in their view not particularly necessary. Also, some students questioned how the traditional student teacher training pertained to their future experience as teachers.

In addition to salary and government regulations hindering participants from entering the teaching profession, inability to student teach in a chosen community and lack of societal respect for teachers precluded many of the participants from desiring to enter the teaching profession.

What Issues Need To Be Resolved To Encourage More Ethnic Minority Students To Enter the Teaching Profession?

When the participants were asked to comment on what could be done to create incentives for ethnic minority students to enter the profession of teaching five basic suggestions were made:

1. Offer scholarships for the fifth year of teacher preparation;
2. Provide an ability to earn money as a teacher's assistant during student teaching;
3. Make available low percentage home loans for teachers teaching in low socioeconomic communities;
4. Offer incentives for a master's degree; and
5. Increase pay for teachers who work with disadvantaged or low performing youth or schools.

The suggestions made by the participants clearly reflected the felt impact of expense during the teacher-credentialing period, and the low salaries teachers receive once they obtain a full-time teaching position.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The nation and the state of California are on a critical path regarding the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority teachers. If school districts, junior colleges, and universities choose not to investigate this problem, and choose not to implement changes, many of our Pre-K-12 youth may

never have an ethnic minority person as a teacher.

Included here are recommendations that were supported by follow-up visits with the participants, who stated that if such measures were in place, they would consider teaching as a career choice:

1. Expansion of state sponsored efforts in recruitment of ethnic minorities as teachers;

2. Examination and implementation of state sponsored financial programs for students wishing to teach, since candidates entering student teaching do not get paid, whereas some other states provide stipends for student teachers;

3. Implementation of specialized cohorts that recruit ethnic minorities from high schools and continue those cohorts within a university teacher education program;

4. Re-examination of BTSA, for many participants felt this program alone is responsible for a decreased desire to teach;

5. Examination of and increases in teacher salaries;

6. Review of high school career centers to increase their efforts to include teaching as a viable career option;

7. Review of state requirements for teacher education such as the TPAs;

8. Creating opportunities for ethnic minority teachers to team with professional and private agencies to continue their professional and educational development;

9. Development of specialized home buying programs for teachers;

10. Creation of 4-year teacher credential programs that would result in a teaching credential; and

11. Examination of how to recruit mid-career employees into teaching.

Much was discovered from this study in Southern California. However, to gain further information, researchers, teachers, educators, and school district personnel will need to come together on a nationwide basis to develop policy for greater recruitment and retention of our ethnic minority students to consider teaching as a career option across the United States. Without this, we may lose many prospective teachers wishing to become role models for our current and next generations of students.

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