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of Two Minority Groups in British Columbia**

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Careers in Teaching: Participation Rates and Perceptions of Two Minority Groups in British Columbia¹

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Abstract

This paper focuses on two studies concerned with the career aspirations of students enrolled in two of the three universities in British Columbia (Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia). Specifically examined were the career aspirations (with particular attention to teaching) of the two most populous minority groups in the province: Chinese and Punjabi Sikh Canadians.

In the first study, participation rates of these minority groups in university education were examined and seen to be roughly proportionate to their representation in the population as a whole. Participation rates in Simon Fraser University's teacher education program, however, were seen to be less than proportionate either to population or university participation.

In the second study, 34 Canadian university students of Chinese and Punjabi Sikh ancestry enrolled at either of the two universities were interviewed and asked about their own decision-making about career preparation and for their perceptions of their families' and ethnocultural groups' positions on these matters. Analysis of these data revealed that there were differences between the ethnocultural groups and between women and men within each group with regard to career decision-making. Nevertheless, across groups it was clear that parental influence, English language and communication proficiency and prejudice and discrimination were factors affecting the decisions of these young people about their careers. It is argued that recommendations made for increasing participation in teacher education must attend to variability within groups, as well as to structural barriers students perceive to their participation.

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This work focuses on the career aspirations of students enrolled in two of the three universities in British Columbia (Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia).² Specifically examined were the career aspirations (with particular attention to teaching) of the two most populous visible minority groups in the province: Canadians of South Asian (most specifically Punjabi Sikh) and Chinese ancestry. We initiated this research because it appeared to us that individuals from these minority backgrounds were poorly represented in our teacher education program at SFU and more generally in the population of teachers in the Vancouver greater metropolitan area. This was a problem for two sets of reasons:

1. One set of reasons related to policy issues of equity in employment as defined by the landmark 1984 Abella Royal Commission report. This report identifies four target groups and recommends the collection of "...data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada."(Canada, 1984: 21).

2. The other set of reasons has to do with the school based educational experiences of all student teachers, teachers and children. As educators we are concerned because of the wealth of literature on education in diverse societies indicating that the failure to introduce students to issues of diversity and practices of inclusion, is in part responsible for the perpetuation of institutionalized and personal racism. This concern is supported by a long tradition of educational research in Canada, the U.S. and England.(Aboud, 1988; Ghosh,1996; Brathwaite & James, 1996; Dei, 1996; in Canada; Sleeter, 1991; Grant, 1983; Banks, 1991 in the US; Figueroa, 1995, Lynch,1986; Milner, 1983; Troyna,1993; in England). We see the representation of minorities in teaching as one dimension of this multifaceted project of inclusion. It has the potential to provide minority ancestry role models to all students. It also increases the number of teaching

² These studies are reported respectively in 2 publications. The first reviews quantitative data and the second reviews qualitative data. (Beynon, Toohey & Kishor, 1992; Beynon&Toohey ,1995) The present paper is a synthesis of these earlier two studies. Funding for these studies was provided by the SSHRC, Thematic Grants on Education and Work in a Changing Society and by the Faculty of Education and President's Research Grant of Simon Fraser University.

personnel who have an intimate understanding of the problems minority students might be having and how to help them. Thus the issue of representation of minorities in teaching potentially has long term implications for the education of all Canadians and the kind of citizens we will be.

In the beginning stages of our work we set out to determine if our perception of under representation, with respect to teacher education in our own institution, was accurate and if so to look, in an introductory way, at the factors that might account for this under representation. In our first study we used census data and questionnaires. Our second study looked in greater depth at students' perceptions of their career choices, and was based on interviews. In approaching this issue of representation we were aware of the variety of theoretical models for analyzing inequity and institutional access in contemporary society.

Theoretical Perspectives on Inequity

Frances Henry in her 1994 book *The Caribbean Diaspora in Toronto* succinctly identifies two types of theoretical models for understanding inequity. One set of theories, commonly referred to in educational literature as 'deficit models', posits that inequity arises from cultural values of immigrant groups. The other set, commonly referred to as anti-racist models, identifies the source of inequity as barriers to access constructed, wittingly and unwittingly, within dominant society institutions. The deficit models identify characteristics within the minority group as sources of problems with regard to economic, social and political participation in the wider society. These deficit models idealize the school as a liberal institution equally open and rewarding to all on the basis of their individual merits. In contrast the anti-racist models investigate and analyze the ways in which normative practices, including teacher training, and employment; curriculum and language practices of dominant society schools, marginalize and create barriers to access for students who come from non-European, non-Anglophone traditions and non-White racial backgrounds.(See Mc Carthy, C. 1990 for the history of this analysis in the U.S.) Our research makes the distinctions between the deficit and anti-racist models less and less clear.

Our research is framed both by our affiliation with one of these liberal mainstream educational institutions and our commitment to improving access to this institution. In

our teaching and community work, we interrogate the practices and structures that may be creating barriers. At the same time, we recognize that as monolingual women of Anglo European ancestry we do not have systematic knowledge of the range of ways in which the minority students themselves perceive these issues. We see the students' perspectives as critical in gaining insight into factors, cultural and /or institutional, that may be influencing their educational experiences and choices.

From this stance as participant observers and educators in a mainstream teacher education program we have found the interpretivist theoretical approach a useful heuristic framework. The approach emphasizes that knowledge is socially constructed and that individuals can define social situations rather than , of necessity, accepting pre determined definitions of these situations. In this way there is the possibility that minority university students are negotiating between family and cultural values and institutional systems, in ways that are not completely determined by one set of social relationships or the other. (Blumer ,1969; Burger & Luckmann,1966). Educational theory utilizes the ideas of empowerment (Cummins,1986; Ghosh,1996; and Banks,1991) and education for cultural freedom (Freire, 1985; hooks, 1994; Shor, 1987), to promote these possibilities for individual agency where there is an acknowledged power imbalance between student and teacher and between dominant and minority cultures.

As we heard from university students in this study through questionnaires and interviews, institutional barriers, individual acts of discrimination and individual and minority group values work in different ways against minority representation in the profession of teaching .We found also that specific ethnic group membership was salient, as was gender, in helping to understand the operation of these factors. (Bannerji, 1993; Delpit,1995; hooks,1994; Li, 1988 a &b; McCarthy,1990; Ng, 1993; and Ogbu, 1991) .

Are Minority Students Underrepresented In the University?

We began this inquiry by looking first at the representation of minority ancestry students in university enrollments at SFU and UBC. University enrolment is an important prerequisite for participation in teacher education. We then compared these figures as best we could with census data. We acknowledge that there are a variety of dilemmas with this methodology, but nevertheless found the comparison of some use in our

exploration of the questions outlined above. Imprecisions arising from work with this data are as follows:

- Unlike many U.S. universities SFU and UBC do not collect student ethnic self-identification on applications for admission to university. Thus we made our calculations of enrollments of students of Chinese and South Asian ancestry by using identification by names . (Surnames, middle and first names). Marriage and name changes across ethnic groups obviously result in mis identifications: in both directions. On the positive side we find that many students who Anglicize their first names for everyday use, retain their full Punjabi, Muslim, Chinese etc. names on the official registration documents from which we worked.
- Census figures on ethnicity are broken down into multiple and single origins and we were unable to make this distinction in our university enrollment data.

With these caveats in mind, what we did was to hire graduate students of minority ancestry of the target groups to go through the alphabetical list of all students registered at the two universities. We did not pool the data from the two universities because the two institutions are frequently perceived as distinctive in ways which might influence who attends. (e.g. age of institutions, location, professional schools etc.). This is what we found:

[Table 1 about here]

[Table 2 about here]

These tables (1 & 2) demonstrate that representation at the university is not the key issue. Rather at issue is under representation in applications and subsequently in admissions to teacher education, at least at SFU. We understand that the situation is more encouraging at UBC.

How might we account for the differences between representation in the university and applications and admissions to the teacher education program at SFU? In order to help

determine this we administered, by mail, questionnaires to a random sample of students from both universities and each of the ethnic groups. The questionnaire, which was central in our first study) requested respondents to provide ethnic self-identification and thus the questionnaire information with regard to ethnic group can be considered with even more confidence than the information based on identification by name from registrar's lists of enrollment.

1. First we looked at what the students said on the questionnaires about the respective roles of parental and ethnic values on the one hand and institutional barriers on the other.

2. Second, we looked at several different numerical models of what equitable representation might look like.

3 .After presenting and discussing this data wego on to present the data from the interviews, which were the focus of our second study. We discuss how the interview data has deepened our understanding of the interplay between ethnic group histories and values, and institutional barriers.

The Questionnaire Data

Personal Career Preferences: Students were asked to rank their personal career preferences from 1 to 10 using a list of 10 careers. Careers ranked first or second (out of 10) were considered as a high personal preference.

[Table 3 about here]

Students' perceptions of the career preferences of their respective ethnic groups were relatively similar between the two universities. All respondents' indicated that the first choices of their respective groups are similar to one another with medicine and business consistently seen as the most popular. Teaching was identified as first choice of their ethnic group by 4% of Anglo-European Canadians, 2% of Canadians of South Asian ancestry, and none of the students of Chinese ancestry.

This indicates an area where, in spite of the students' acknowledgment of clear ethnic group values which could inhibit the choice of teaching as a career, these students nevertheless see differences between their own interests and ethnic group preferences. The next key question then is the extent to which these students feel their ethnic group and parental wishes influence their individual career choices.

Factors Influencing Career Choice

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 12 factors influencing their choice of career. These factors relate to key intrinsic, extrinsic and interpersonal influences identified by research among the general population into the choice of teaching as a career.(Carpenter and & Foster,1977). For the population overall at the two universities the highest means were associated with intrinsic factors, such as interest in the subject matter and work that is personally satisfying, with no statistically significant differences between any ethnic groups. The next highest means were associated with extrinsic factors of salary and job availability, again with no statistically significant differences between any two groups. The only factors in which there were significant differences between groups were the interpersonal factors of family member's expectations, parents' wishes and ethnic group expectations. The overall means for these factors were relatively low for all groups; nevertheless the influence was reported as greater by minority group individuals than by their counterparts of Anglo-European ancestry.

Obstacles to Pursuing the Career of Choice

An open-ended question was posed asking respondents to identify what they saw as obstacles to pursuing the career of their choice. For those respondents rating teaching as a high preference, lack of contacts was noted most frequently and lack of experience was reported as the second most important obstacle at both SFU and UBC. Race, ethnicity and language were cited more frequently by minority students, but in very small numbers.

What are the possible ways to define equity in admissions to teacher education?

Establishing equity in teacher education for these visible minorities could, of course, mean raising participation rates in the SFU teacher education program to be similar to

representation in the B.C. population as a whole, or representation in the University or to numbers of students in each ethnic group expressing a preference for the profession. The next table outlines , the percentages and numbers of students from each group who would be admitted if the three different formulas for equity were applied, and shows these in relation to the SFU teacher education admissions and enrollment figures. Calculations are based on admissions of 500 students per year.

[Table 4 about here]

This questionnaire-based study had some tantalizing information about how the students themselves explained their reasons for choosing the careers they did. In regard to education, they more clearly identified explanations around cultural values and parental influence than around institutional barriers. It was this question we pursued in more depth in a second study which used interview methodology. As outlined in the preceding presentation the theoretical orientation which informed these interviews is that individuals are at the intersection of family and cultural values and institutional systems. There is some room for them to negotiate these two in ways that are not completely predetermined by one set of social relationships or the other.

The Interviews

We sought in a second study to ascertain the perceptions of a group of Chinese Canadian and Punjabi-Sikh Canadian students about this under representation. We asked university students from the original sample, who volunteered to be interviewed, about their own decision making with regard to careers and about their perceptions of their families' and ethnocultural group about teaching as a career.

This study used the categories Chinese Canadian and Punjabi-Sikh Canadian, and not South Asian, as we were able to verify through interviews the origins and religious affiliations of the South Asian students. We were aware that the groupings obscured matters such as country of origin and recency of immigration. We have tried, in some cases, to retrieve this information when its importance has been obvious. Nevertheless, in an exploratory study such as this, such grouping has seemed at least initially appropriate as an heuristic framework for analysis.

We did see it as essential to subdivide students within each ethnocultural group with regard to gender. Not surprisingly, this characteristic was mentioned frequently by the interviewed students as a major factor in their families' influence on their career decision making and the literature on family dynamics, education and career choice also supported this distinction.

We analyzed interviews of 22 university students of Chinese ancestry and 12 of Punjabi Sikh ancestry. Four Canadian women of South Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Anglo-European ancestry conducted the interviews and tapes were summarized and transcribed by 4 Anglo-European women. Analysis was typical of this kind of ethnographic work: we searched for common and diverse themes within the summaries and transcripts.

Three factors emerged across the groups as most frequently mentioned and strongest in these students' perceptions of reasons for the under representation of members of their groups in teacher education. We cannot, of course, with this methodology assess precisely the importance of any factor for any group, but we have at least a sense from these exploratory interviews of places to begin our own work within our faculty of education, and the schools and teachers with whom we work. Chart 5 diagrams in a broad thematic way the findings of the interviews.

Insert Chart 1

The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate these broad themes. In order to respect the confidentiality of the information we changed the interviewees names.

Canadian Women of Chinese Ancestry

Parental Influence

My parents would approve of teaching, just as equally as nursing. My sister is a teacher.
(Lucia)

My parents would be neutral. It is a secure profession. To my mother's generation teaching was the most natural thing to do for a girl. I'm not too sure about my dad, but my mom wouldn't mind. (Carol)

My family would approve of teaching only if there is a high demand for teachers in the marketplace. It is not a preferred career and the first thing they examined was the financial aspect. (Laura)

My parents would think there was nowhere to go as a teacher. (Veronica)

Language and communication

I have never thought of teaching as a career. Maybe it is because my language [English] is not good. (Jill, age on arrival: 16)

I have a problem talking in front of a lot of people, so I think I'd have to overcome that fear first. I get really nervous, usually with superiors or peers my age, but I guess with kids a little younger than I am I wouldn't be afraid but with high school level I would be. (Corrine, age on arrival: 3)

I tend to mumble a lot, especially for words that I know I couldn't pronounce it right and I tend to get nervous...I don't think I would be a good teacher in Canada because of my language...I still have quite a heavy accent and I don't think it's good to be a teacher and have such an accent...in a lot of cases, I couldn't pronounce words correctly, so I didn't choose teaching. (Sandra, age on arrival: 11).

Prejudice and discrimination

I got into trouble in preschool, that is where I experienced my first racial remark, the first time I knew what racism was. I knew what the words were, I knew that they were bad, because my brothers and cousins would talk about it. And I met this girl and we were on a slide and she called me a chink and a Chinaman, and she was standing up on the slide

and I pushed her off, and she landed flat on her face, and I got into trouble and I have been in and out of it ever since.

As a child you are intimidated. There is this tall white lady telling you that you have to go to E.S.L., even though you watch Sesame Street and can say your numbers in French. (Laura)

We were always wondering if teachers were wondering why we [Chinese Canadian students] were here [in French class]. Again you had to be top-notch. [Josephine had earlier explained "You have to be 110% to be accepted in the white world".] And I couldn't stand it. I'm here to learn, I'm not here to become you. (Josephine)

Canadian Men of Chinese Ancestry

Parental Influence

In the beginning, my parents' expectations were very high. They wanted me to go into medicine or into business. But it's a bit difficult. I found getting the grades to go into those fields difficult. But now my parents just sort of let me be, sort of. I can't get into medical school or the business faculty so right now my parents have taken a really relaxed attitude. They say 'Well do your best and then we'll see what happens from then.'
There used to be a lot more pressure from my parents to do certain things. (Peter)

There are pressures from my family to get a professional career-- either a doctor or a lawyer. They felt more strongly about this before but now I know what I want so they have less of an influence. . . .My mother always thought business was a risky thing versus a doctor...If you got shipped back to Germany or something, you would always have a career. (Richard is now pursuing a Business degree).

Well in Chinese circles it *used to be* highly respected to be a teacher. (Wesley)

I always found it ironic that although, according to classic Confucian ideals, a teacher is accorded respect, in real life this hardly ever happens. (Wallace)

Language and communication

You have to have good speaking ability. You have to be able to communicate. You have to be able to express your wishes to students or whatever and you have to deal with the students on a daily basis. I don't know if I can do that. (Peter, born in Canada)

Prejudice and discrimination

It was very bad between students. You learn to take care of yourself. Name calling is always big. Mostly between Chinese and Caucasians was the major conflict. I think I was pushed around quite a bit because I was Chinese. A scapegoat. Day-to-day things... Teachers ... accepted it as something that happens. They didn't really do anything about it. (Jason)

Minority students are not interested in teaching because of the social problems that exist in schools, with gangs, drugs, and the large immigrant population. Many minority students did not have good experiences in Canadian high schools and would not wish to go back to that same environment. Many Asian students do not integrate very well and tend to stay in their own cultural groups. Consequently they get bored and turned off and do not get very involved with the social community of the school. They are then unlikely to want to get reinvolved in schools after they graduate. (Wallace)

[After describing an experience in kindergarten where other boys repeatedly stole his lunch for the entire school year]:

That was one experience that pushed me to say I'm not going to take this anymore. Whatever the world throws at me I'll take it and I'll do better cause I have to cause otherwise where's my family going to go? ... That never got solved and bothered me. I decided I'm not going to let this happen to me again. I don't want any of this to happen to me or my family again. (Wallace)

Canadian Women of Punjabi Sikh Ancestry

Parental Influence

I get a lot of my ideals from my dad, you know, the idea that I have a responsibility toward community and to put something back and help change people's lives. (Rajinder)

My father has always been the one to encourage me to do well. Always since I was 6 or 7 years old. My mother was always happy if I did well and it was important and if I didn't I would hear from her but I talked to my Dad when it came to school. The general idea of having done well and getting a good job in the end was important. There was definitely a difference. My Mom would want me to be happy and my Dad would want me to be successful. I was talking to my cousin and she said almost the same thing. I don't know if it is a general female versus male stuff. (Jathinder)

Language and communication

I used to cry and cry. I was very shy. I couldn't speak English and I went to this humongous school. I was always nervous about my English. There were new immigrants and I wouldn't talk to them because I felt they just got here and it wasn't cool. (Surjeet, born in Canada, now enrolled in medical school)

Prejudice and discrimination

Students were very cruel...The teachers were OK...They were supportive. They went out of their way... Things have changed. When they came here they [Sikh parents] didn't have the facilities. They all came from villages. They had to assimilate, they had no choice. They had to bring up their children this way. My mother felt like she had to wear a miniskirt otherwise people would harass her walking down the street in a sari. It is a double whammy if you are adolescent and a minority. (Surjeet)

The kids in the education system at the moment are very obnoxious. Maybe not all of them and in different schools it might vary but I just had this experience working with a group of kids for a few weeks and they were so racist, I couldn't believe it ... Actually there was one person in the group who was also Indian and they would make comments to him, and then they would make sort of oblique comments to me about the colour brown. It was just obvious from the tone of their voice that they were being racist and I couldn't deal with it at that point and I really didn't want to. (Rajinder)

I experienced less racism in grades 11 and 12 because I didn't hang around with other East Indians. When I was in grade 7, we had a girl who came from India and they asked me to help her out, my being East Indian and everything. That's what they have ESL teachers for ... I don't think students should have to bear the burden of teaching another student a new language...Kids would say or imply that I should stay with 'your East Indian friend'. (Harjeet)

Canadian Men of Punjabi Sikh Ancestry

Parental influence

I want to be something that would be respectable in my dad's eyes. My Dad wants me to become an accountant because he thinks that is a good job to have. He just wants me to graduate with a good degree so he can say 'my son is graduating with so and so...' There is a bit of pressure but not alot. My mother doesn't think about it too much. She just wants me to graduate. My Dad really talks to a lot of people and he knows my personality really well...So I go to my Dad for a lot of advice. (Rick)

Prejudice and discrimination

I just think there is no communication there [if minority students are treated unfairly in school]. If I have a problem, I go up and tell the teacher. I say, "Listen, why is this the case? Why am I doing poorly?" and usually the teachers are very helpful in that sense. (Anoop)

I think that it should be a teacher's responsibility, especially if they are teaching in a multicultural district, to understand the cultures a little bit more...it goes beyond the significance of why they wear a certain type of clothing or their food and dancing; religion is a really touchy subject but it is such a fundamental subject that I believe that kids should be exposed to why people's beliefs are the way they are, it just leads to a bit more understanding, teachers have to play a bigger role. I wouldn't limit that to ethnic groups, I would say it's just social issues. Making sure that teacher treat minority students well while they are in grade school is an important first step in encouraging minority students to become teachers. (Perry)

Interpretation of the Interviews

We were continually struck in reading the interviews and listening to the tapes, by the individual differences in the ways these students made decisions and managed problems as they set about getting the education they needed to make a living. At the same time, commonalities in the experiences and perceptions of members within each of the four groups were also evident. We began the work with the conviction that individuals make choices which are shaped and constrained not only by family and cultural values, but also by institutional systems. How has the information gathered contributed to our sense of work which needs to be done in our faculty, and in the schools and with the teachers with whom we work?

First, it appears clear that, if we are to increase the representation of members of these particular groups in teaching, we will need to be persuasive with parents of these students. It appears that it may be more difficult to convince Chinese ancestry parents that their sons might usefully pursue careers in education, but it may not be so difficult to

make this argument with regard to their daughters. The financial stability, safety and integrity of the teaching profession may be, among others, important factors to stress in communicating effectively with Chinese parents. Though it appears that students of Punjabi-Sikh ancestry are now participating in teacher education at least roughly relative to their proportion in the population, if we were to engage in recruitment of individuals from this community so as to redress historical underrepresentation in the teaching profession as a whole, stressing the contributions teachers make to the social well being of the community may be important in communicating with parents of Punjabi Sikh ancestry, especially fathers. The SFU Faculty of Education does not now commonly engage in recruitment activities for minority students. Making the decision to do so will be dependent upon internal-to-the-faculty arguments about the relative importance of such activities.

Second, the English language and communication difficulties reported by students of Chinese ancestry merits further investigation. Seeing Canadian males and females of Chinese ancestry as being "naturally" or even "culturally" concerned with science and business and absent from areas where work is importantly conducted through oral communication, for example, may ignore structural arrangements that make it difficult for these young people to enter those professions. What our informants may identify as linguistic barriers may also encompass social barriers. Our Chinese Canadian informants self evaluate their English skills as low. Are the students right: are their verbal skills really less developed than would be necessary for jobs like teaching? Why would a group of students who have lived in Canada for many years, attended English-medium schools and have enough intellectual ability to attend university not have developed correspondingly in English proficiency? Have these individuals been excluded from certain kinds of conversations? What evidence have they that their English language skills are inadequate? We have no conclusions here but we do have suspicions that what initially looks like personal or cultural inadequacies precluding teaching careers might be constructed impediments to the participation of individuals from particular groups from particular jobs. Nevertheless, this language factor, particularly in the case of Chinese Canadian students, must be attended to. High schools bear some responsibility for this, and our work with secondary school teachers will be informed by this finding. We think as well faculties of education bear some responsibility for this. We notice, for example,

that as we prepare anglophone teachers to work in French immersion settings, we offer courses explicitly designed to improve candidates' French proficiency. If universities are to prepare minority students to become teachers, students may need opportunities to improve their English language skills (or increase their confidence in their oral language abilities), so that this job requirement does not preclude their participation. Again, this is a decision to be made in the faculty of education, and as the recent university-wide discussions about ESL within the university make clear, there are certainly strongly held views about universities offering what some see as "remedial" courses.

Third, individuals from the groups have experienced and report their experiences with discrimination differently. The Punjabi women students appear to be most acutely aware and articulate about it. Many of the students said they perceived schools to be unwelcoming to "people like them" and because of this, they had no wish to work in such places. Of course, we believe until there are more of "people like them" in schools, this situation will not change much.

None of the students we interviewed had taken part in any special multicultural education or antiracist programs which are available on a limited basis in many schools. Sleeter (1991) argues that such initiatives in any case appear to have little impact on the reality of most students' lives in secondary schools. While the students we interviewed had been "successful" within the conventional norms of their schools, many described that experience as alienating, upsetting and one to which they were not anxious to return. Clearly, then, we see it as necessary to continue our work in informing secondary, intermediate and primary teachers about anti-racist education. Again, we believe and hope that the increased presence of teachers of colour in classrooms would go some way toward making those classrooms more likely to be places where students of colour are comfortable and safe.

In conclusion, this research has reinforced our commitment to the theoretical orientation outlined by McCarthy(1988) and others which stresses the non-synchrony of the experiences of members of different minority groups. As well, we have been struck by the variety of maneuverings of individuals within these two minority groups in making career decisions. At the same time, there appear to be commonalities in the experiences of groups, especially gendered groups which have effects on what decisions are made and how they are made. Our particular interest here was to provide ourselves

with principles to guide activity within our workplaces, and we believe we have done so. Employment equity programs which mandate the hiring of persons from particular minority groups are important, but we believe that equally important are programs which aim at equity in training and educating. Failing provision of such programs, employers (in this case, school boards) can continue to claim that they would hire minority candidates if there were sufficient applicants. The concomitant explanation that a particular minority group is simply unsuited to the profession, or that parents and students are focussed on more prestigious and financially rewarding professions. The research in which we have engaged clearly shows matters to be much more complex than this.

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Table 1
University Enrollments Relative to B.C. Population:1991
(based on last, middle and first name identification)

Name Identification	UBC	SFU	Province of B.C.
Canadians of Chinese Ancestry	4,191 (17.8%)	1,070 (9.6%)	181,185 (5.5%) + 15,535 (.5%) <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> 6%
Canadians of South-Asian Ancestry	607 (2.6%)	323 (2.9%)	103,545 (3%) + 10,810 (.3%) <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> 3.3%
Total Population	23,518	11,127	3,282,061

Table 2

Applications and Admissions to the SFU Professional Development Program by Ethnic Group

	TOTAL	AEC	CC	SAC	Other Visible Minorities
4 Semester Average (1989-91)					
Applications	550	93.8%	2.8%	2%	1.3%
Admissions	242	95.5%	1%	2.5%	1.3%

Table 3

**Students with High Preference for Teaching
by Ethnic Group**

Ethnic Group	SFU		UBC	
A/E Ancestry	N=136	37.5%	N=184	45.1%
Chinese Ancestry	N=115	21.7%	N=112	20.5%
South Asian Ancestry	N=54	35.2%	N=49	22.4%

Students' Perceptions of Ethnic Group's Preference for Teaching

A/E Ancestry 4%
Chinese Ancestry 0%
South Asian Ancestry 2%

Table 4

Projected and Actual Admissions to SFU Teacher Education

By B.C. Population	By University Participation Rates	By Expressed High Preference for Teaching
AEC = 408 (81.5%)	AEC = 397 (79.5%)	AEC = 455 (91%)
CC = 30 (6%)	CC = 48 (9.6%)	CC = 30 (6%)
SAC = 17 (3.3%)	SAC = 14 (2.9%)	SAC = 15 (3%)

	Parental Influence	English Language & Communication	Prejudice & Discrimination
Canadian Students of Chinese Ancestry	<p>Strong parental preference for financially secure, prestigious, possibly portable occupations</p> <p> n = 12 1 in t.e.</p> <p>10 said parents think it's acceptable for girls. 2 said parents think it's not acceptable for girls</p> <p>0 in t.e. n = 12 </p>	<p>About half said their difficulties with English precluded their considering teaching as a career. Most of these had grown up in Canada.</p> <p>Many, including those who had been in Canada as pre-schoolers, were of the opinion their English was not sufficient for a teaching career.</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p>Three men spoke at length about discrimination in schools. Others said they had not experienced discrimination or it was not an issue affecting career choice.</p> <p>Majority said they had no experience of discrimination in schools. Two women spoke at length about their view "generally, school is not a pleasant experience for minorities".</p> <p></p> <p></p>
Canadian Students of Punjabi-Sikh Ancestry	<p>All but one said parents would find teaching an acceptable choice.</p> <p> n = 7 1 in t.e.</p> <p>All said fathers' influence very important with regard to career choice. About 1/2 said teaching was okay with their parents.</p> <p>1 in t.e. n = 5 </p>	<p>One man said he had had English language difficulties in the past, but now language was not a factor in career choice.</p> <p>About half said they had difficulties at time of immigration or at school entry, but English language ability was now not a factor in career choice.</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p>Variety of perceptions.</p> <p>Six of seven women talked at length about discrimination in schools.</p> <p></p> <p></p>

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