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Personal Interview

Eng. 102

Interviewer: Richie Heinlein

Interviewee: Debbie Britton-----B.S. Elementary Education, Minor Special Education;
College of St. Joseph The Provider (1979)

College's Current Name: College of St. Joseph in Vermont

Place of Employment for Interviewee's Experience: Virginia, Minnesota

Questions

1. Q: How much time has past since you taught special education?

A: I started teaching in 1979 and stopped in 1981. I substituted for ½ of a year after stopping.

2. Q: How much historic law do you know about the Children With Disabilities Rehabilitation Act of 1975?

A: Not much! (laughs)

3. Q: What grade level did you teach?

A: I did not teach any certain bracket. At first, I taught 21 and 22 year olds. These people had multiple handicaps. They were tested to be profoundly handicapped or retarded. They were taught helplessness in an institutional setting. There was not much that I could teach these people because their brains were underdeveloped due to their circumstances of how they were taught early in life. Some were even sick with a disorder called Tuberos Sclerosis. The situation, in general with these adults was that these adults who were profoundly handicapped could have done a lot better if they were taught better. Their situation, in part, could have been prevented.

4. Q: Tell me about the kids you taught.

A: I taught 5-8 year olds and had 6 children. Some of them were trainable. This means, if I am remembering right, that their IQ was 70-90. There are four categories. These are: Educable (90-110 IQ), Trainable (70-90 IQ), Severely Retarded (50-70 IQ), Profoundly Retarded (<50 IQ). These children were caught early by the system and were used to a school setting.

The good points were that I had only two that were badly off. One had a degenerative disorder called Spinal Meningitis. The other four showed signs of improvement.

There were some bad points though. First, the school that I taught in sometimes went too far with the curriculum in my opinion. Second, the school balked at some very needed accommodations.

5. Q: What was funding like back then?

A: Very good in some circumstances. Not much was wrong.

6. Q: Why did you leave?

A: Marriage was the main reason. Second, I did not feel like I was suited for the job. Third, legal red tape was a factor. I felt like I was caught in the middle because the school did not like the parents' demands for an IEP (Individual Education Plan)

Interviewer's Note: I guarantee that this interview and its contents are accurate. However, since my notes were in shorthand form I had to make sure that this interview was understandable, so some content is not word for word.