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Grace Fraser Integrated Education in Practice

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Grace Fraser: Issues Related to Integrated Education

Monday, 6 June 2005, 9:30-10:45 am, Lecture Theatre MD 007, Main Building, Magee College, Derry/Londonderry; Tape name: Grace Fraser Integrated Education

The tape begins with Grace Fraser sitting in a chair in front of a whiteboard in a classroom of students. A woman asks Grace for her permission to be videotaped during her lecture. Grace consents. The woman informs Grace that at the end of the tape she will be asked again and if there is anything she wishes to be deleted from the film she will be able to request that as well. Grace chuckles.

00:25

Female voice: So everyone this is Grace Fraser.

Grace: Its a pleasure to meet you all, can you hear me at the back? This is not really the format I would've liked, I would've preferred to sit rather at a large table and talk. I'll tell you a little bit of my background first. I taught in Scotland, I'm Scottish, as is my husband Tom Fraser who I believe you've met. I taught there 2 years as a history teacher in secondary school, then when I came here I taught history again for 4 years, then I had my kids. I tried to go back into teaching and couldn't, so I went into research. Hence, all the stuff I'm going to do this morning with you. I worked in the Center for the Study of Conflict, this is one of the publications I worked on *holds up book* this was based at Coleraine. It's a kind of forerunner of INCORE which you know about I think **(INCORE is the center for the study of conflict at Magee College headed at the time of these tapes by Mari Fitzduff who has her own lecture in this series as well as a personal interview tape)**. Most of the work that I've done was on integrated schools, but I also did some work on mixed marriages and women's organizations, so there's a feminist aspect to it too.

So Carl (Milofsky) said to me on the phone that some of you have been to Oak Grove (the integrated school in Derry where we usually had placed student interns), is that correct? The college. And I hope I've got it right from what he said, he thought you were wondering about the actual process of integration? How this was carried on in the school itself apart from the fact that people are simply put in contact with each other. You were looking for signs of this and were rather critical of it, is that correct? Well I want to talk of that this morning with you. I'm going to look at a project I worked on two or three years ago with Alan Smith who is the UNESCO professor at Coleraine (that is the main campus of the University of Ulster located in the town of Coleraine). We published a number of booklets on that project. Here's one of them *holds up book* called "Integration in Practice" and I've given you the reference for that in the front of the reading, it's the first one listed there.

Now, I will begin by looking at the research issue which is the NI Council for Integrated Education published a statement of principles and in those principles they said, "Integrated education is not simply about integration in the classroom, but about the integration of all those involved in the school." And that's everyone, parents, teachers support staff. And the question I thought would interest you was how did and how do people within those schools force that integration in terms

of the deadly practice and what are their concerns about it. Now this project that I worked on, that was one of the major research issues that we looked at.

4:10

Grace: We took a case study sample out of, there were then 40 schools, there are now about 58 schools. We took 16 of the 40 schools: 10 primary and 6 post primary schools, that's 10 elementary and 6 colleges (collages are the Northern Ireland term for what people in the U.S. would call high schools). And we talked to the principals, the teachers, the support staff and the students. I want to look at what we did with principals and the teaching staff. We did, the methodology we used, taped interview.

4:50

Are you familiar with the semi-structured framework for research? Yes. That's how we did it. We talked to them, we asked them a little bit about their background as biographical information, we asked them to define integration...as if they were defining it for someone who knew absolutely nothing about it. We asked them what they considered to be the socially divisive issues which had turned up in the classroom, and we asked them about rituals and symbols, flags, that type of thing and how they dealt with that. Challenges that might come. I remember talking to Mary about this particular thing which came up to do with...You have a Memorial Day in the States. Yours is in May? Ours in November and in NI some of the population would wear poppy and some wouldn't. It was pretty common for people to wear poppy, for Remembrance. But of course here, it has different connotation. **[The Poppy Fund is a major fundraising drive that occurs each year in the U.K. and people who support the fund wear a red paper poppy on his or her lapel. If you watch the Prime Minister's question hour with the British Parliament, you will usually see him or her wearing a poppy. In the context here, someone wearing a poppy would be presenting a symbol showing that they support the union with the United Kingdom. For that reason, Catholics would usually not be wearing the poppy and wearing one would be a sectarian symbol.]** I remember Mary **[the principal of Oak Grove primary school]** saying how difficult it was for her to cope with this So that's what I mean by challenges. Because some of the kids wanted to wear a poppy in remembrance of those who died in the wars, but it was also associated with Britain and the British establishment and the military. So that was a particular challenge she had to meet and it was very sensitive, so we asked about that type of thing.

6:40

Grace: Defining integration, what was revealed is that people recognized that there had to be two levels of integration in the schools. It wasn't just enough to put the two communities together, I'm not just talking Protestant and Catholic, you should also think of Other, those who don't fall into that category and that has become a big issue I think now with the schools. I want to talk about that again later. So it wasn't sufficient to just do that, to put them together, but you also have to structure the putting together. You have to educate them in a way which will enable them to live together, which would build on that contact. So two levels of integration. And that, the key element in that was that it had to be child centered. You had to respect the child and you had to

teach the child to respect others because a child educated in that way would respect others and that is preparation for pluralistic society.

It sounds very simple doesn't it? You teach a child respect, but of course it isn't.

8:10

And as we go on to the second page you'll see what is the big question there. Talking about it is one thing, putting it into practice is quite another. And that is a quotation from one of the principals. "Talking about it is one thing. Putting it into practice is quite another." How do you do it? When you are in the college, what kind of things were you looking for, or did you pick up any signs that people were building on that contact? Can you remember?

Student speaks up: Most of us didn't go, only a few went.

Woman clarifies for Grace as she cannot hear the student that most of the students did not go to Oak Ridge, there was only a few placements.

Another male student speaks: I don't remember ever, we've only been there for maybe 2 or 3 hours and I didn't see really any mention of society conflicts or anything. There was very little mention of any of that.

Grace: So you were looking for how they deal with controversial issues perhaps.

Male student: Yeah and there was a lot of uh... and we were there with many middle school age kids, so 13-14 year olds. So they were more grouped together, but I didn't go and see what the groupings were, but I assumed at that age they're gonna be just hanging out with their friends, whoever their friends might be. I asked one of the teachers how they deal with it and they gave me a roundabout answer, they said, well we just teach them that everybody's good. It was obvious they don't actually tackle the issue.

Grace: So that's what you've been critical of?

Student: Yeah

10:20

Grace: Teachers and the principals that we spoke to, some of them gave us a lot of roundabout answers too. And if you think about it, I think as far as handling problems here, how do they do it? How do you judge that it is done? If I said to you, how tall do you think I am? How would you judge my height?

Female student: Comparison?

Grace: Comparison, exactly. Well how do you compare with this? How do you compare is integration, is the process actually working, what are your benchmarks?

Another female student: They had another speaker, Danielle Cronelly, was that it? And...
another student corrects her, the speaker was Kaitlin Donnelly And she compared the integrated schools in Israel, integrating Arabs and Jews or whatever, so she compared to that and it seemed as though they really took on the problem. You know, discussed things. And when a problem arose as opposed to just ignoring it,. Like when a holiday came about and somebody wanted to celebrate it. As opposed to NI where they tried to ignore it and just kind of push it away. And they gave an example of, they were talking about soccer teams and I don't remember the names. Kids would say one, a Catholic one or a Protestant one and the teacher would say, "Well I like Manchester United," and then change the subject. As opposed to being like, "Oh that's cool that you both like different things, and you can."

Grace: Yeah. Could I look maybe at the conclusions I think because that goes along a bit with what you were saying just now? We didn't find that there was any single model of integration from what we were doing. There were 3 approaches which were identified.

12:55

Grace: One was the passive one: if it will happen naturally. If you put them together, they will become integrated, it will happen naturally. And then there's the one you were mentioning there, the reactive one: something pops up, we'll deal with it. And another one, the last one, is the proactive one, you need to be actually constructive about it and some of the schools have actually appointed a coordinator on the staff who is responsible for the integration policy.

I wanted to read you something about this report *picks up book to read from*

This is a teacher, *now reading* "I think this is something we realize will not just happen. And through the past year we actually appointed someone to try to make it happen. It does need serious consideration and work and its not an ongoing process." That's a college principal speaking there.

"On the other hand, I would hate to think that you would have ever achieved integration, that would be just an illusion, because every human being is a changing, growing human being. You have to acknowledge that with constant change, you have to constantly address new things. A longing process for myself. I think that has been the most exciting part of the whole situation. It is a process for the individual and for the school and for the movement. I couldn't think that even the worry to achieve integration throughout Northern Ireland, that the process will still have to go on because that's human nature."

14:31

So some different views there. I think the first one I read there (from the teacher) is the more important one. Reading again, "I think its something we realized will not just happen. And through the past year we actually appointed someone to try to make it happen." Teachers we spoke to, not all of them, but some of them were concerned and what they were concerned about was that the school was becoming, "normal." Now you then have to define what is normality. Because if

the school is becoming normal, it is not what was intended. It should be, can you understand that? It's sort of a fine distinction, what is normality?

15:35

Grace:

On the other hand, you're telling me that you would not pick up signs of people dealing with things you thought they would have done? You have to remember of course, what the preface of the school is, is to educate. Like your schools in the States, the schools here follow a curriculum which is laid down by the state. That is the preface of the school to follow that curriculum, that's the major thing they have to do. So if you're critical of them, you bear that in mind that that is something that they have to do.

Staff. Some of the staff we spoke to were concerned, and I have their report here, that integration was being pushed into a corner, like it was an add on to something that was dealt with. If it just popped up. What did you expect when you went into Oak Grove? What did you expect to see? Tell me that? What did you think you were going to see?

16:45

Male student: Um I expected that we would see in some form or anything, we were working with the gym classes, the PE classes, so maybe not so much there, but I asked the question, "What do you guys do for integration?" In the States, at least in my school in New Jersey, we had mandatory speakers and assemblies that would talk about diversity, not so much integration, but diversity. They basically just expose you to a different culture that you normally wouldn't be exposed to. I'm not sure if that was state mandated, but there was something where we had to have so many of these a year. I figured they'd have something like that, where they would have to have some assembly or something that taught them integration or diversity, but they didn't.

Grace: You weren't there for very long, were you?

Student: We were there for like 3 hours.

17:50

Female student: I think in my experience I didn't work one on one with children, but I talked with principals at a number of different schools. My reaction was, seeing some of the integrated [schools], whether it be the primary or the college, I was looking for some difference as opposed to containing and maintaining schools they already had that education for mutual understanding where they are trying to change the context. I was looking for something different other than just the normal because they are already getting that element in the other schools, so I guess something a little bit normal I suppose.

Grace: The Education for Mutual Understanding Program itself has had problems. Very often schools are simply paying a kind of token in its direction and not really doing much about it. The integrated schools, they tackle it in a different way. The original purpose, why they are there, is not an add on, but that teachers were set on the concern that it was... I always found this concept of being afraid of normality quite interesting. The schools have been around since 1981.

A long time. So they must be settling down into some sort of process, not necessarily the schools, but the whole business of integrated education has been around for a long time. There's bound to be some settling down. I suppose in a way, it's like I moved into a new house in September and now that there are cracks beginning to appear in the walls. That's a part of the process of settling. The house won't fall down. I hop. But you know in a sense the analogy is true to this particular topic. They are settling, which is good, and they'll stay maybe even though a crack is appearing. I think there's a general recognition among integrated schools that there may be a need to return to the basics. Just a revisiting of why they are there in the first place.

20:20

Grace: Could I look maybe back at the problems again of why they might not be tackling integration as much as they should be. First of all, I spoke of the lack of benchmarks. How do you judge this? How do you judge whether a person is integrated? What is integration? What is an integrated person? That is a hard concept. If you remember how the schools started, when I began work there were 8 schools, 6 elementary and 2 colleges and the 2 colleges were in Belfast. They had all started in very difficult circumstances. With all the 8 schools you could visit them all very easily and they started in some very strange places and of course they had no funding. A lot of the principals' time was spent trying to secure that at the end of the month he/she would be able to pay the staff. I knew people up in the North Coast here who started Mill Strand Primary School in Portrush and to fund that school they took out second mortgages on their houses, that was the extent of their commitment. That is a big commitment because there was no state funding. They had to spend a lot of time doing that, they had to spend a lot of time hiring staff. They spent a lot of time having meetings. My memory of the school at the beginning is going to visit them in the evening and the principal had been there all day, and it might have been a teaching principal since it was elementary school and in the evening they had endless meetings to do with setting up the school, to do with the very structures they were working with. One of them said to me, who was a principal in a previous school, "This is at least 50% more work, if not 100% more work. Because at the end of the day might come 4 or 5 o'clock, the day is not finished." Because they would have to go to meetings in the evening with parents. The setting up of a school was a lot of work.

23:05

Grace: I was a governor in an integrated college in Coleraine, North Coast Integrated College until recently when I moved up here. The amount of time, remember that a governor's job is voluntary, the amount of time that was spent as the school was building up every Easter working toward appointing staff, hours and hours and hours with teachers coming in after teaching during the day, the principal being there, these are all things that you take for granted in a school that has been dealt with for quite some time. But in these schools...the point I'm trying to make is they were busy. They were trying to establish themselves. So, maybe in that, all that work and activity, the purpose got lost a little bit, why they were there.

When I worked as a governor I can remember, I tried to be a kind of voice of integration in a way to remind them why they were there. When we interviewed prospective staff, I would insist that we ask them about their commitment to integrated education. Now of course, if you read some

of the research work, you'll see its very easy for a person to say, oh I'm for it, I approve of it. But you have to prod and pry until you get some kind of answer out of them that indicates that they haven't just thought this up the day before and come in.

25:00

Female student: So has the workload stabilized then, or are people still saying its twice as much work? Or now that the schools are a bit more established...

Grace: I think its probably stabilized now, but of course there are schools still opening. In the pipeline there are schools still coming on. It seems to me that a lot of the cases they were reinventing the wheel. I saw these groups time after time after time going through the same process and this is why you have... see I mentioned on that very first page *holds paper* the NI Council for Integrated education. Schools, established schools here, in the controlled and the maintained sectors are run through boards. This area here is run through the Western Board. The area I used to live in was under the Northeastern Board and there's a structure there with advisors and with lawyers and all sorts of people who are there to help the schools, there's this whole other layer to help schools run efficiently. Integrated schools didn't have that at the beginning, they had nobody they would float to. So, now the Council is set up, it's not a statutory body and that is important. It in a sense tries to pass on the experience of the schools which are already set up to those which are beginning. When I worked in the North Coast College Governor's Group, we would always have somebody from the NI Council sitting in on interview and they were there to kind of point you in the right direction. That is the role that a board... a Northeastern Board or a Western Board official or officer would normally do. The integrated schools had to invent their own way of doing this. All for these things had to be tackled.

27:20

Grace: They also had to cope with what parents expected. Remember it's the parents who set up the schools. You are aware of that. For most of these parents it was the first time they had ever done anything like this. They didn't know what they were doing, they had tremendous expectations in what these schools would be like. They spent a lot of time fundraising and working to try to find a suitable site for the schools to open. The problem was that once the schools opened, they couldn't let them go. It was their baby. And some schools I went to the principal was saying, so and so has been in every day she comes in to chat and I'm very busy. I've been appointed to do this, but one of the founder parents, because in the Board of Governors in Integrated schools you always have a number of founder parents and the founder parents are very important and you have a different concept from the governors who are appointed later. The founder parents at one particular school they were in and out all the time and it was almost getting to the stage of interference. They couldn't let go, it was their baby, and they couldn't let go. That of course is not a normal situation. Parents' expectations are were expecting people to be treated equally, that's what I mean by equity. It's about respect, therefore I should be treated as well as anybody else.

29:30

Grace: Another thing which I think was a problem for the schools was the government itself. Integrated education took the government by surprise in this country. I'm trying to think back myself to when they were going. In '81, when Lagon College opened people said this will not last. How will they pay for it? How will it continue? Then very slowly other schools began to open. I said there were 8 when I started working on this, now we got 58. Though that has taken years and years to happen.

Female student: When did the government start to fund it?

Grace: In '89. 8 years.

Student: And what made them change? And decide to fund them?

Grace: I think they saw it was a good thing. Governments like Good Things, capital G, capital T. I think also the pressure. Remember all this is happening through the Troubles. I don't think this would have happened had it not been for the Troubles. They made it much more important that you have some kind of attempt to solve the conflict here. It took until '89 that legislation... and it isn't and there was a lot of facility for funding being given to integrated schools from established sectors. They said there is little enough money. This is a cake. This money is a cake, so if the integrated schools are going to be part of this, that cake is going to be divided into smaller pieces so we will get even less funding. Is the cake bigger? If the cake is bigger, there must be extra money coming from somewhere. And if there is extra money, where is it coming from and why are we not getting it? The '89 Act did give funding but only in a minor way.

32:05

Grace: Teachers who went to teach in integrated schools had to put up with a lot of hostility from where they had taught before. Once teacher I remember in the Portrush area said to me, "I keep meeting people in the town and they say that I have betrayed my origins. I have burned my boats." Because she was not teaching in a controlled school which she was teaching in before. Remember that the two established sectors, the controlled sector and the maintained sector, although the control sector is technically open to everyone, de facto it's Protestant and the maintained sector is Catholic. So if you turned your back on that to teach in integrated schools, it was quite easy for people to say that you were betraying your origins. Some teachers said to me, "I can't go back, I can't ever go back, I've burned my boats." Even if they wanted to go back, sometimes they said they didn't want to go back, that this is teaching how they preferred it. It was difficult for them.

Female student: I don't know if we just... But I think with the funding situation that you were talking about, I find that for example, some of the raisers that we have seen throughout the lectures seem somewhat critical. And I'm trying to decide if that's wrong because the funding situation which creates more efficiencies across the board when you have one more school thrown in and resources are spread out more thinly. I find that it's almost normal to try to see what differences there are and what advantages there are provided by a new school since less

resources are given to students at other schools. So, I guess in general it's just, I don't think it's necessarily wrong, maybe, to be critical. It's just big shoes to fill in terms of, you used the saying of high expectations for the schools, that maybe some of them aren't panning out.

Grace: You could understand when funding was coming through and schools were getting new premises. The maintained sector has, still having a number of schools which were not in good shape and they were watching these new buildings going up. That was very hard. Is that what you're thinking?

Female student: Yea

Male student: Why is, why the growth? Why 58 schools? Is it, because it seems like the actual integration part is questionable on whether its actually working or not, so is it the fact that these are brand new schools and parents want their kids to go into the new facilities? Is it the fact that education is a little better or... than the less elite grammar schools? Why the growth over the years?

Grace: I think parents have become educated themselves to the idea that they should have a choice. I mean it is about parental choice and I think their expectations have been raised in a way that say maybe wouldn't have happened. I was talking to my husband about this last night. He was saying, we were simply sent to a new school. In Scotland, we were sent to the school around the corner. There was never any suggestions that you would choose a school, that is simply where you went. I think that has changed. Parents realize they are entitled to choose.

36:35

Grace: It also raises the issue of class. One of the criticisms of the integrated movement is to do with class, that it is a middle class movement. And I know as Americans, you find the idea of class probably quite difficult to cope with. Or do you?

Female student: Not really

Grace: No? I have always thought to myself, well, *laughs* the parents who started the schools in many instances would have been pretty well educated themselves. This is where I'm going to be struck by a bolt of lightning from somewhere. They are the movers and shakers of society. It is the kind of thing that you would expect them to get involved in and do. This is not to say that all founder parents came from that kind of social class, but a good a number of them actually did. When I worked in the Center for Conflict I could have walked down the corridor and done my interviews there because we had I think 2 or 3 of the staff who were founder parents. So that should tell you something. It also meant that that particular school they were invested in got the reputation of being a university school. It was people from the University who set it up and there was facility to it because of that. Did anybody else want to ask something. Yes?

38:30

Male student: I would imagine that the representation of being a middle class or upper class school could be the only factor preventing lower class from joining in. I would almost think that it might be something that's appealing. I am considering your forms, it's not always identifiable who is upper class and who is middle class, so I was wondering if there would be any other factors why the lower classes wouldn't send their children to an integrated school based on the fact that they thought it was an upperclass thing?

Grace: I think in some cases, yes that would apply.

Female student: So do you mean parents from the lower classes are not sending their children to integrated schools? Or?

Grace: Well they do because in some cases, its pretty obvious that they are doing this. (to male student) You are suggesting they might be put off?

Male student: Yea. I'm wondering why they are put off? If there's another reason why other than the fact that they see it as a middle class or upper class school. Is there a tuition that they can't afford?

Grace: No, there's not. There's nothing financial.

39:55

Female student: What about the testing scores that are currently coming out of these schools? Because I know some of them are pretty new? What are some of the statistics? How are their students doing in relation to the more traditional segregated schools?

Grace: I only remember some of them, not all. It's to do with, how the children came in at the beginning. If you think about it, when the schools start to build up the coming in to the college, they are coming in at 11 or 12 and then they are coming to be having major exams at 16 or 17. You are familiar with the 11 Plus thing here which Martin McGuinness is trying to get rid of. One of the criticisms of the integrated movement was that they were taking kids who had not passed the 11 Plus because their parents, this was a social class thing, because their parents didn't want to send them to a local secondary school. That is true to some extent. The reason I'm mentioning it is if they were coming in like that at fone end, not particularly well qualified, at the other end, its going to have an effect. So I think the early results, even in Oak Grove, the early results from their 11+ results were not particularly good. But that is a consequence of that you have to work with material you've got. That is hard on the teachers when they don't get very good results. This country is obsessed with the 11 Plus business. Of course, they are only part of the UK that has this transfer test left. I came through that system in Scotland. It's known as the qualifying exam or "qually" and you went through it at 11 or 12 and it was a terror! You sat the exam and the headmaster came in at some point with this bundle of envelopes and the envelop had the sheet of paper, open and inside the folder, it had your name and the school you were going to and he came and these were given out in class so the child could see. Can you imagine

them doing this now? The child could actually see where they were going. I was lucky. There were 5 of us out of 40 odd children that went to what was an "academy" which is what they called it then, which was like a local grammar school. Then you got 2 stages after that and the bottom stage was the school which was not very good. And I can remember children dissolving into tears at that occasion. How would they go home and tell their parents that they had not passed this?

That has gone, what we call "across the water" now is what we call it in Scotland and in England and in Wales as well. But it still runs here, but hopefully it will go. People are still mentally tied into it. Your child will get the opportunity to go to a grammar school and the whole of life pans out after that. Good grades, good education, degree, blah blah blah. When I lived in Castle Rock, which is near Coleraine, my son went to grammar school there, Coleraine Academical Institution and that school was the sort of, that was where you went if you wanted to be a social achiever. The main thing was to get your child into this uniform with the red and blue and all the rest of it and that was a sign that you had made it socially. My daughter went to the high school, of course single sex and that's different again. She went to the high school, so that was a social achievement. No matter how hard I tried not to look at it that way, I felt satisfied when I saw her in her uniform because I knew that was the opportunity that she needed. And that is the way that the transfer exam affects people.

45:40

Grace: Yes

Female student: You mentioned that one of the criticisms of the integrated schools was that they accepted people who had not passed their 11 Plus? Why were people critical of that? I look at that as, "Wow they are so giving these kids a chance to continue to learn!" Other than, oh you're not capable. So, why were people critical of that?

Grace: People are always critical *laughter* of things they don't like. They would say kids in these schools are rubbish. If you send your child to these schools your child will be educated alongside children who are not very bright, this is what they would have said. I'm just telling you straight.

Female student: The secondary schools though, do they ever have separation? Like different classes or advanced classes or anything like that within the schools?

Grace: Yes. Streaming we call it. Separating into different levels.

Student: Yea, basically. I feel like the teachers and knowing the ratio of teachers to students, and what not. Things like that are more important.

Grace: That was one attraction of the schools. Remember they started small. Classes were going to be small and that appealed to a lot of parents and still appeals to a lot of parents. The idea of smaller classes, a better ratio of student to teacher.

47:30

Student: I'm wondering, so you did this research project asking during these semi-structured interviews and came to the conclusion that there were 3 identifiable approaches. How were they equally used? I think one of the comparisons I'm making in my head is to what you're saying to this other speaker that we had who talked about the schools in Israel. And what she found was that the third kind, the proactive actually is most constructive and is the least used form then.

Grace: Again it's, the whole thing is very difficult to measure. That's why I said to you, if I asked you what height I was how would you do it and you said by comparison. How do you compare here? *silence*

I mean am I integrated? How would you know?

Male student: I just wanted to comment, on I guess my observations for the past couple of weeks staying here in NI and it seems that everyone I've talked to, the efforts are really there and trying to make this blend seem to work better. I think in America the conflict that we may sometimes vastly overlook is growing like worse and worse every year. At least here there is efforts they made. I think I'd have to disagree with what Sandy said, people are trying harder than I've ever seen anywhere else or heard of here. I'm just thinking about what it's like growing up in schools in America and the conflict there is sometimes even worse.

Grace: Are you talking about the racial conflict?

Student: Racial, economic... You know its ignored more than here. It's not ignored here, I don't think it is at all, it's right in your face.

Grace: I spent a year in the States and my children attended an elementary school and I got a letter inviting parents for activities to become involved in so I put down my name for 2 reasons: because my children were at the school and I wanted to see what they were doing, but also out of professional interest it would give me entre into the school. So all I did was help them keep the library open on one afternoon a week. I'm not a school teacher but it was very interesting. The teachers knew that I was there, and if they had any problems with my children they knew they could speak to me. And they did. My son, in fact... If he found out that I were telling you he would be horrified. At the time the fact that he was different, that he was from NI and spoke with an accent, it went to his head, the attention he was getting. His teacher was able to approach me one afternoon and said we need to do something about this. So I took him aside and warned him that it was not to happen again. But, she was able to do that.

So what was I talking about? I've forgotten. Are you people are aware I had a brain hemorrhage 2 years ago? That's why I walk with a stick. It has affected my memory, so this is an excuse. Not so much the long term, but the short term, so if somebody asked me a question 5 minutes ago I'd be trying hard to remember what it was.

Student: *reminding her* I just was saying about how the efforts here have been present whereas I think in the States...

Grace: Ah so I was telling. *remembering* The reason I mentioned that example was I can remember one particular instance where there were black kids coming in as part of the class, but they kept in their group actually in the library. They didn't mix. I felt the teachers treated them differently and it made me think, "Boy you can put them all together, but that's not enough." That's the point I was trying to make, that you have to do something with that. I mean it was quite clear that they might have been in the school, but they weren't part of the general group. Maybe I was expecting too much, I don't know. Do you understand what I'm saying? I don't know how you would structure that, but to me its a similar analogy here with what I was saying.

53:30

Female student: Do you think that there's always gonna be the need for faith-based schools? And if so how do you center, or put emphasis on integrated schooling if certain sectors are always going to maintain that they need faith-based schools because of their personal views?

Grace: I think people should have the choice. Very firmly. I believe parents should have the choice if they want to send their child to faith-based school, they should have the choice to do that. As to what might happen, I think the established sectors are very powerful here. They have resisted all that has happened so far, but the integrated schools haven't gone away and they're not going to go away. I would find it very hard to visualize a situation where you had completely integrated education here, it may happen, but look how long it has taken to get to 50 odd schools. The NICIE's [Northern Ireland Center for Integrated Education] aim is 10% by 2010, something like that. There's too much influence and power still in the established sectors I think for that to happen. I don't think it will happen.

Female student: Do you find that there are many Protestant children, especially in the middle class, who are leaving NI to continue their education either in most likely in England. How do you think that will affect the growth rate of integrated education?

Grace: Even if they stayed and had children here.

Student: Because more and more people are leaving from the Protestant community how will that affect the people who are left here?

Grace: I wouldn't have thought it would be substantial enough to have a big effect.

56:10

Female student: I'm curious, this isn't related to integrated education, but to your life. You mentioned that you were a history teacher and then you stopped teaching to have your children and then you couldn't get back into the field? Is that common? Is it hard to get a teaching position?

Grace: I did a master's in education because I thought the more qualification... Then I found myself sitting, maybe mid to late 70s early 80s, sitting in front of interviewing groups who would be biased against me because I was married and female. Also they would say, what is this degree that you've done, what have you studied. I remember in one setting I was trying to talk about the type of history teaching that I had learned in the master's and I mentioned something called "The New History" and remember, you may not be aware of it, but Boards of Governors at that time, would be heavily clergy on them as well and heavily male and when I was mentioning The New History, one of them said, "Oh Mrs. Fraser, well what is new about history?" Of course you feel crushed at that. I thought, what's the point. That's part of it. I decided, I will keep trying to get into doing research and the third attempt I started to work in the Center for Conflict. I got into it because it was education and because I had done the master's as well and took off from there.

58:20

Student: This is also unrelated, but I'm curious about your work and what your looking at and what you found.

Grace: The people, the kind of problems that they had here and how they dealt with them and how the State and how the Churches ease the situation or not. I could tell you some horror stories.

Student: Do most couples get married? Even if they are different. Like how you said you then got treated badly.

Grace: It depends what you actually wanted. Suppose you want to involve clergy from Protestant and Catholic. If say it were Protestant/Catholic, it can be very difficult for the clergy to take part. It depends on the area, the person, the Bishop.

Student: Is there any... Is it as proper to marry within different sects of Protestant because there are dozens of different Protestant sects here, like is it expected to marry within that as well?

Grace: I wouldn't have thought so, perhaps some of the more evangelical ones. That would have been the main distinction.

Student: So its mainly just Protestant vs Catholic, not so much Presbyterian vs...

Grace: No, but in some of the churches it tends to be more difficult. Church of Ireland say, because I'm Church of Ireland, would be easier probably than the Presbyterians would. Does that come as a shock to you that it should be so much difficulty with marriages like that? No? My son got married in September to an American girl he met over the Internet *laughter* on the Buffy the Vampire site, I know you probably think I'm kidding but I'm not. He announced to us when we lived in Castle Rock that he was going to San Francisco with some of his friends from Castle Rock. Two days before he went he said, "I will not be staying with them." And I asked where he was staying and the whole thing came out. He had established this relationship with this girl on the Buffy the Vampire Slayer website and I thought... As a mother I thought what is she like? Does she hang from the ceiling on her toes? So he came back and then that Christmas because I had the brain hemorrhage and I have this vague memory of this girl coming to see me in the hospital and then he went back the next summer to America and at the end of the first week he phoned and said they got engaged. So she then came over last summer and they were going to fly from Belfast and they got married in September in the city hall. She's Jewish. I saved

that one up. They had a civil ceremony, a wonderful wedding. 20 of her people came over it was a quiet wedding and my daughter.....

Here the tape cuts off abruptly and ends with Grace Fraser in mid sentence.