

Canon 2:

Appreciate that while data may represent attributes of real people, they do not describe the whole person

Advising kids about their future educational opportunities and career choices was Mrs. Johnson's passion. Some of the students in her middle school had the ability to do just about anything they set their minds to, and she was always sure to tell these kids that the sky was the limit. But with other students, well, that was another story.

Colette, an eighth grader with a history of barely passing math courses, walked excitedly into Mrs. Johnson's office and told her that over the weekend she had taken an elevator ride to the top of the tallest building in the city. Clearly the experience had changed Colette's vision of her future. "I've decided to become an engineer who builds skyscrapers!" Mrs. Johnson quickly reviewed Colette's math scores, attendance history, and family situation, and decided that the data suggested another path. "You know, Colette, becoming an engineer requires a lot of specialized education, and college is very expensive. Maybe you shouldn't set your sights so high. I like your haircut. Have you ever thought about cosmetology?" Colette looked dejected. "Are you telling me that I can't build skyscrapers? What if I started studying really hard?" Mrs. Johnson decided not to sugarcoat her analysis. "No, dear, higher math can be quite challenging and your academic record isn't very strong." Colette chose to stand up for her new dream, "But I haven't even gotten to high school yet, Mrs. Johnson. Couldn't I take geometry next year and improve my grades?" Mrs. Johnson smiled condescendingly and said, "That's very ambitious, Colette, but geometry is much more difficult than it sounds. Why not register for general math and use the extra time to get a part-time job so that you have more experience when you start looking for a job?"