

competitive behaviors in various experimental settings. For example, we observed children's behavior in experimental games involving tower building, paper chain construction, and puzzle design. Our primary focus was the interpersonal skills that these children develop and typically use.

During the same period, I also worked with Dr. Alexander Gonzalez on a competition scale for adults. These are statements that deal with competition. We wanted to see if we could rate people on their attitudes about competition. From that scale, I developed my own competition scale for children. I am curious about the way an individual sees himself or herself in relation to other people, whether opponent or rival, or potential co-worker. For many individuals, the school experience communicates that they must think of others as competitors for such things as attention, praise, or grades.

***What was it like being a teaching assistant?***

That was a wonderful opportunity for me as a graduate student. I had had limited working experience because I married immediately after graduating from high school and had been a full-time homemaker until I came back to school. That was the first time in years that I was presented with a job opportunity to test myself. I started as head teaching assistant (TA), which is a demanding position. The head TA for Psych. 10 [Introductory Psychology] coordinates laboratory materials and supervises other TAs. Once a week, I met with Dr. Barbara Basden, the faculty supervisor for Psych. 10 labs., to go over the following week's lesson plan. As a TA, I taught four laboratory classes each week and held office hours so students could come by and talk with me about the class, personal problems, or career opportunities in psychology.

***What are you teaching now?***

At West Hills Community College, I teach two Psych. 1A [Introductory Psychology] classes and one Psych. 10 [Child Psychology] class. One of the Psych. 1A classes was offered to high school students. In fact, this class was held at my daughter's school. When I first found out that I was going to teach this class, I asked my daughter if she would mind my teaching on her campus. She said it was okay, as long as she could check what I wore every morning, so that I wouldn't embarrass her.

***What's it like to be a reentry student?***

I wish I could say that it's easy to go back to school, but it isn't. Sometimes it is like being a little kid again and asking yourself, "What should I be when I grow up?" And yet, you're 35 years old and you're talking about what you're going to do when you grow up. It's paradoxical and kind of silly, and yet, it's really true. You come to a point in your life when you say, "I'm not satisfied with the way I am. I want to do something else with my life and going back to school is how I'm going to do it." With a college education, I'll have career opportunities and options that I didn't have before. It's exciting, but it means facing some real challenges and making sacrifices.

***Has it been difficult coming to school with your family in Lemoore?***

I think there are sacrifices that you have to make to go back to school. And your family makes sacrifices, too. You need your family's cooperation. Luckily, my husband has been very supportive, but there have been times when it has been very difficult, and he's let me know that. At one time or another, the whole family has helped do things around the house. It's been good in a lot of ways for them to take on household responsibilities. But I know it's been a sacrifice, too.

***Do you have any advice for reentry students?***

If you have a family, discuss with your spouse and children the possible strains that might result from the reentry experience. They have a right to know what to expect and to have input into this decision. Your decision to return to school will affect them significantly, and you need as much positive support as you can get. Also, don't overload yourself the first semester. Some reentry students jump right in and take 18 units their first semester here. If you've been out of school for a while, it would be a good idea to take it a little slower the first semester to get acclimated to the university environment. You have to learn to study again and discipline yourself. Give yourself some time. Not only are you adjusting, but your family is adjusting, too. This situation can cause a lot of pressure if you're so overwhelmed by what's happening at school that you have nothing left to give to your family. You need some energy left, not only for your family, but also for yourself.

***What do you do for relaxation?***

Something that I have done for myself each semester is to take one fun class. Usually this was a physical education class like racquetball or aerobics. I felt I needed the physical exercise, and I looked forward to that class each day. I also have taken piano lessons for several semesters. These classes served as a reinforcement for me to keep going when things got tough, and some have led to new interests. Racquetball lessons have led to a new hobby. I try to play racquetball twice a week and have recently participated in several tournaments. Also — this is a little crazy — but I love to chew Hubba Bubba bubble gum, which helps to reduce tension when I'm driving home after a long day at the university. Sometimes, I blow a huge bubble as I am passing another car on the freeway. Well, can you imagine the stares I get?