

For a professional educator with a variety of vocational interests, Dr. Penelope Dyer has found satisfaction and diversity in her role as a professor of teacher education at California State University, Fresno.

Dr. Dyer has spent time as a teacher, a school district administrator, an administrator for the state Department of Education, a textbook consultant and a college professor. Each of her positions have assuaged personal desires and goals. None, however, has been as satisfying as her current position at CSUF.

"University life is much different from working for a publisher or a school district," Dr. Dyer explains. "Now, I have time to be creative, to explore. I have a much more willing audience here.

"This portion is more rewarding than any other I have had, because the students are more willing to try new learning techniques. It gives me the chance to influence teachers early in their careers and to work with seasoned teachers earning master's degrees. I really like it here."

While her previous positions — especially the publishing business — afforded her a very different life-style, the high-calibre of individuals she works with at CSUF make her post most worthwhile. Her teaching position also allows her enough flexibility to maintain ties with her past.

"Working for a publishing company is very exciting," Dr. Dyer says, recalling her past positions.

"I still do consulting with Simon and Schuster, and I do a lot of research and field work with school districts. I don't want to break those ties.

"But I find university life even more exciting. Here, there is the chance to form long-term working relationships with students and colleagues. I just think I have the best students in the whole world. We also have the most promising and effective reading staff in the CSU system."

Dr. Dyer's professional domain is the training of reading specialists, a concentration, which she says, encompasses every aspect of education.

"Being a reading specialist really means being a learning specialist. The study of reading instruction includes cognitive psychology — the study of how people learn. To be a really good reading teacher, you have to have an appreciation for all subject areas.

"It's an area that allows you to teach what school's all about. Reading is the foundation of learning. It's really an outstanding and rewarding career. When you see little children learn to read, it's very exciting. It opens the world to them."

Dr. Dyer discusses her speciality with zeal. She attributes her professional happiness to the students she works with and the students they teach.

"My enthusiasm is my strength. Students reflect your energy and give it back to you. It's a real gift from you to them, and them to you. I can walk into a class tired and leave exhilarated.

"I'm very interested in



watching the learning experience occur. That is why I'm a teacher."

According to Dr. Dyer, the opportunity to experience the energy students can provide has never been better for people interested in becoming teachers. Job prospects for teachers are about to explode onto the market, she says.

"In the '70s, teacher hirings were almost completely frozen, so you can see the handwriting on the wall. Many of the people who have been teachers since the '60s will be leaving. Approximately fifty percent of the teachers in California are going to be at retirement age in the next five years, especially in the Bay Area. People with degrees in other disciplines are coming back to school to go into teaching. Teachers will be in great demand soon."

Perhaps they are "reading" the "writing on the wall."

Penelope Dyer
Teacher Education

School of Education
and Human Development