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Planning, Effort and Execution for Balancing Life and College

In order to make college fit into my life I used computer research to make my plans, I made a conscious effort to embrace change and I learned how to ask for help. Without those three actions I do not think I could have managed to take the steps necessary to meet my educational goals.

Making a decision to return to studies as an adult was very difficult for me. After making the decision though I could not sign up for classes right away. First I researched the website very carefully and looked for web blogs that other adult students had written. I wanted to find out their experiences. I felt excited whenever I read the student handbook and the catalog of classes on the computer. The only problem is that after awhile I started feeling and nervous and doubtful. Something that encouraged me more than anything else was reading the testimonials from past students on the CSU website.

Scott and Lewis (2012) have written an interesting article about a research study they carried out by asking adult students questions. I agreed with some of the observations of the participants in the study. For example one important difference in today's lessons from where I went to school is that students are allowed to think for themselves. That probably sounds strange to everyone except other adult learners, but many of us were taught to learn by memorization. (Scott & Lewis, 2012, 5) So returning to school means getting used to a new way of studying. Teachers also expect students to answer questions in a different way. It turns out that the new way is a lot

more interesting way of learning. This was a change for me that was scary but I think I am learning more so I am glad I tried.

I have learned to take advantage of the Career Services information available at the Success Center. I need help with everything available there especially writing my resume and how to go through an interview. I would not have understood anything about ' general networking skills' without having help from the career department.

Castelli (2011) wrote an article titled " An Integrative Model for Reflective Learning." She included a diagram for teachers on how to incorporate reflective learning into lessons. The diagram helps me to explain how I have executed my plans to continue my education, not by taking school loans or changing my job schedule; I mean the way I have been able to think differently. I take advantage of the instructors and I ask for help when I do not understand something. I am old enough to not feel embarrassed after all I came back to school to learn. It is important for me to understand how a class will impact my goals. I do take time to practice thinking critical to understand different meanings. I hope that will become a habit. Lastly since I made the decision to take risks I have been able to accept other points of view with more patience. The more I learn the better I handle problems and people in my student career or in real life.

As an adult student I feel that I am not always open to trusting other people, anyway not as much as when I was younger. A very good experience for me has been finding out the instructors are nice. I feel like I can trust them when

I need someone to talk with even if I am frustrated. Sometimes real life worries seem to be overwhelming my ability to study. I have been happy to find teachers that can help me find strategies to complete my assignments even when I think it may be hopeless.

The most helpful thing about the CSU website has been the online chat. There are times that I want and need to connect with a real person when I am at home. The online chat is really great. It has ' saved my life' sometimes. Computer research, taking risks and asking for help are part of my ' planning, effort and execution' for balancing life and college. In conclusion I would like to add that asking for help also extends to asking for support from my family and friends.

References

Castelli, P. A. (2011). An integrated model for practicing reflective learning. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 15, Special Issue, 15-30.

Scott, L. M. and Lewis, C. W. (2012). Nontraditional college students: Assumptions, perceptions, and directions for a meaningful academic experience. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 6(4), 1-10.