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Student Perspectives Regarding School Failure at the American Samoa Community College

Siamaua Ropeti
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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Siamaua Ropeti

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Walden University
2014

Abstract

Student Perspectives Regarding School Failure at the American Samoa Community
College

by

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MEd, University of Hawaii, Manoa, 2006

BEd, University of Hawaii, Manoa, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

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Abstract

Students taking remedial English courses at the American Samoa Community College are facing problems relating to school failure. The purpose of this study was to explore the stories and experiences of students who were not passing in remedial English courses. This study was guided by (a) Weiner's attribution theory, which posits that students achieve when they can identify the causes of their success or failure; (b) Bandura's social cognitive, which explains student efficacy; (c) Covington's self-worth theory, contending there is a connection between emotions and the perceptions of motivation; and (d) critical race theory, which gives voices to racial oppression. The research question addressed the stories of students taking remedial English courses at American Samoa Community College (ASCC). A qualitative paradigm of a narrative analysis formed the basis for the semi structured interviews. Results revealed confusion of many students about services offered by the institution; results also revealed the increased influence of peer pressure and the need for improvement in instructional strategies. Based on these findings, it was recommended that a systematic organizational approach to all ASCC services and facilities be implemented. Positive social changes implicated by this study are a change in students' academic experiences through a proper orientation into ASCC, thus avoiding confusion and allowing student feedback to inform decisions. Accommodating students' needs based on students' feedback will decrease school failure and increase quality learning and achievement.

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Teacher Leadership

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to all students taking courses at the English Language Institute Department at American Samoa Community College. We have struggled together to upgrade our learning experiences and I hope the results of this study will inspire all stakeholders of American Samoa Community College to provide quality services to support every one of you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my family, who has helped me throughout this journey with their motivation, support, and patience; without their commitment to encourage this study, it would not have reached its desired conclusion. To my girls, Tala, Hope, Ruta, Jessebeth, and Amber, I hope you pursue your dreams to their ends. To my husband, Ropati Ropeti, I thank you for being patient and supportive; together we have accomplished much. I would like to make mention of the dedication of my committee chair, Dr. Boyd Dressler, whose inspiration to write this study and his expertise inspired me to persist to the end. I acknowledge the support of committee member Dr. Sue Adragna, who shaped my perception of the study and encouraged me to be an effective researcher. Dr. Tom Cavanagh my URR was extremely helpful in guiding this study to be one of quality; I am blessed to have worked with him who taught me so much. I would also like to make mention of American Samoa Community College personnel, Dr. Irene Helsham for pointing out college policies that could be inserted in my study, my department colleagues, and former chair Fa'alafi Jones for seeing potential in this endeavor. Finally I would not have reached this point without the guidance of the Lord; I struggled to write this paper but my faith in that Superior Power helped me not only to support my passion, but also drive this study that will no doubt make a difference in the lives of all students at the American Samoa Community College.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

The central phenomenon for this study is school failure. Students failing to pass their English remedial courses at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) have been a constant and real challenge for instructors and administrators every year. Like other ethnic students, Samoan students are expected to be competitive in every aspect of education (Falealii, 1975). Having a number of students repeatedly fail courses given by the English Language Institute department at ASCC fundamentally defeats this purpose.

For example, in 2008, of the 865 students registered for courses in developmental reading, 333 (39%) did not pass. The success rate for students in Developmental Writing was no better; of the 820 students who registered, 320 (39%) students did not pass (ASCC, 2009). Of the 1,685 students enrolled in remedial reading and writing courses at ASCC in 2008, 653 (39%) students, almost half of the total number of students enrolled, did not pass their courses. In the fall of 2008, 86% of students enrolled at ASCC were placed in developmental reading, while 84% were placed in developmental writing. In the fall of 2007, 96 % of students enrolled at ASCC were placed in developmental reading, while 92% were in developmental writing (ASCC, 2009).

It is vital for educators to understand deficiency factors or what is lacking in the current educational system, excuses, and setbacks hindering learning and causing huge numbers of students to fail (Green-Demers & Pelletier, 2003). For ASCC students, these factors may include components of the English language, which is the students' second language, but used as the primary language of instruction in school and the Samoan

culture, or *the way of Samoa* that is foreign and adverse from Western practices. Findings from this study will contribute to the knowledge of teachers and administrators at ASCC by promoting the understanding of Samoan students' perceptions of why they fail developmental English.

Problem Statement

In the English Language Institute Department in the ASCC, the problem is the failure of Samoan students to be academically successful in the remedial reading and writing courses. This problem has negatively impacted students because many are discouraged to continue with their education. The possible causes of this problem may be attributed to the lack of readiness, no motivation, a lack of parental support, language barriers, peer pressure, and cultural differences. A qualitative narrative analysis was used to examine student deficiency or school failure through the perceptions of 12 students who were repeating their remedial courses determined institutional and instructional support vital to getting all students to be successful.

In Table 1 is a description of the actual number of students enrolled in ELI writing and reading courses in 2008, and the percentage and number of students who did not pass (NP) these courses. In the spring of 2008, there were 313 students in Reading, 146 of these students received and NP, also in the spring of 2008, there were 311 students in Writing and 136 received an NP. A total of 282 or 44% of students received an NP their classes in the spring semester (ASCC, 2008).

Table 1

Student Enrollment and No-Pass (NP) Statistics, 2008 and 2009

Semester	Reading courses			Writing courses			Total NP students (N)
	Students (N)	NP students (n)	%	Students (N)	NP students (n)	%	
2008-2009							
Spring	313	146	47	311	136	44	282
Summer	103	40	39	101	26	26	66
Fall	449	147	33	408	158	39	305
Total	865	333		820	320		653
2009-2010							
Spring	386	161	42	360	151	42	312
Summer	188	41	22	144	41	28	82
Fall	578	273	46	513	238	47	93
Total	1152	475		1017	480		487

When students are interested and enjoy learning, they are likely to be motivated to become involved in school (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). When they are not, they may experience failure. Cullen (1985) identified four types of responses in students reacting to school failure: (a) strategy-oriented, (b) action-oriented, (c) anxiety-oriented, and (d) anger-oriented. Cullen (1981) found that the negative emotions children felt when they failed in their first attempts to complete a task interfered with their ability to use metacognitive strategies. Cullen further asserted that understanding students' emotions was critical because it altered students' capabilities to execute sound judgment and make reasonable choices.

Elliot and Thrash (2004) believed fears and failures of parents could be translated to their child's performance in the classroom. Parents' expectations sometimes exceed

children's attainment and inevitable punishment causes fear in many learners consequently resulting in failure (p.957). Similarly, teacher's attitudes, expectations, and opinions shape a student's outcomes and performance (Ting & Gilmore, 2012). School failure is the product of many different factors; among them are economic conditions, teacher expectations and social and emotional skill deficits (Whitted, 2011). Placing students in developmental courses causes many of them to feel inferior to their colleagues and eventually drop out or fail. In some institutions, remedial education is perceived as a burden to faculty and a threat to the institution's reputation (Shapiro, 2012). Students in such programs repeat the curriculum they did not pass the first time (Abbott et al., 2010; Dougan & Pijanowaski, 2011) and even with interventions, effectiveness is minimal (Cannon & Limpscomb, 2011).

Students tested into the ASCC English Language Institute already have challenges before they start the semester; for one thing, they are embarrassed to be included in an educational-repair shop and given the label ELI student. In addition to the many academic weaknesses they display, they also had to tolerate being wedged in a group of others who share minor intelligence in terms of reading and writing (Willingham & Price, 2009). Community college developmental education students face numerous obstacles as they begin and proceed through their years of higher education.

According to Lazarick (1997), remedial programs give students opportunities to develop their academic skills to succeed in college although they may not have been fully prepared for college-level work. Boylan et al. (1999), Minnesota State College and University System (1996), and Crews and Aragon (2004) all suggested remedial

programs do have positive effects on student success in college thus eliminating failure and dropping out. Educating a student with remedial needs is the most crucial issue in the United States today (Handel & Williams, 2011). When this is neglected, it gives rise to a host of other problems including drug dependency, welfare, and criminal activity

Nature of the Study

The research question was designed to gather the stories of ASCC students about school failure. The research question that guided this study was:

What are the stories of a select group of ASCC students about school failure?

In this qualitative narrative research, the perceptions of a select/sample group of ASCC students were gathered about their experiences. The selected students represented those who have failed ELI reading and writing courses at ASCC. The stories have been collected through 12 open-ended interviews, with students selected from different three levels of the ELI reading and writing, who have previously failed one or more ELI courses. This study was conducted at the ASCC over the course of one semester. Participants for the study were purposefully selected from all students enrolled in the English reading and writing courses in the ELI department. Twelve students from Intermediate and Advance levels of developmental English reading and writing were selected: Six from Advance Writing, 1 from Advance Reading, three from Intermediate Writing, and three from Intermediate Reading. The participating students were selected based on the criterion of those who have received an NP in one or more of their previous ELI courses. Data collected through interviews and typological analysis were used to interpret findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore school failure through the personal experiences of ASCC students. This study had encouraged Samoan students to tell their story of why there is consistent failing and how these failures are related to students of a unique cultural ancestry struggling to learn, achieve, and conform to western educational practices. These stories would initially identify interventions to improve learning for all students taking remedial English courses at ASCC.

Students taking developmental English courses at ASCC are often criticized and denied upper level college courses because they are placed in remedial English programs and are assumed to have very limited academic abilities. These assumptions have caused 14 academic departments to raise their prerequisites enabling this population to have less access to many of their required classes (ASCC Catalog 2012-2014). This is of concern as the number of students entering ASCC is enrolled and placed in lower English levels from placement tests, SAT, TOEFL, or ACT scores. Being placed in the ELI is enough to dampen many students' spirits causing an emphasis to devalue education. Instead of diligent commitment to pass these developmental courses, students are disengaged, discouraged, and when some opt to take up jobs without furthering their education, many are not career ready (Lee, 2012; Maruyama, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

Attribution Theory

Theoretical perspectives have contributed knowledge to understanding why students behave the way they do. According to Weiner's (1972, 1974; Weiner et al.,

1971) attribution theory, students can better identify whether they are motivated and can recognize the causes for their failures or successes. Motivation is not fixed; it can fluctuate over time and circumstance. Of the four main components of motivation, ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty, Weiner (1972) suggested effort is the most important because belief in effort can transform into inclination to complete tasks and persist over time. Weiner explained that people are inclined to seek clarifications for the unexpected positive and negative consequences in their lives. These consequences can be classified into three categories: locus of casualty, stability, and controllability.

Locus of casualty refers to the individual's internal and external causes. Stability refers to stable and unstable causes. Controllability refers to causes that are either controllable or uncontrollable (Weiner, 1979). Seligman (1975) expanded attribution theory by adding that the way in which individuals express their failures or successes is a learned trait. Likewise, according to Seligman's version of the theory, individuals possess the power to change a negative exploratory style, referred to as "learned helplessness" (p. 84) into a success-oriented style. In summarizing attribution theory, Cooper and McCaslin (2006) remarked, "Attribution theory helps us understand how students interpret—'attribute'—events that happen" (p. 6), as well as allowing us to investigate and explain the "why" and "how" in the questions we ask.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1997) developed social cognitive theory to explain student efficacy. According to social cognitive theory, a person learns acceptable behaviors that coincide with their environments and people with whom they affiliate. Two important ideas are

highlighted in the theory regarding learning: vicarious learning and self-efficacy (Cooper & McCaslin, 2006). Vicarious learning involves modeling, which can inspire students to feel motivated. Self-efficacy involves personal beliefs in successfully completing specific tasks and performing specific behaviors.

Self-Worth Theory

Self-worth theory, developed by Covington (1985a, 1985b, 1987; Covington & Beery, 1976) argued that self-worth is threatened if the classroom criteria for self-acceptance are too high. Covington (1992) contended; people tend to associate achievements with human value; their accomplishments define who they are. The danger is, as students struggle to avoid failure, they are confused between ability and worth, their abilities are threatened in schools, and schools are unable to afford compensations for students to attempt success.

Covington (1992) asserted in his self-worth theory that the “perceptions of an individual’s own ability dominates his/her willingness to learn” (p.74). In other words, there is a connection between emotions and the perceptions of no motivation. The existence of this connection was reinforced in studies conducted by Gazzaniga (1992), LeDoux (1994, 1996), Pinker (1997), Restak (1994), and Sylwester (1995). As LeDoux (1996) explained, “when fear becomes anxiety, desire gives way to greed, or annoyance turns to anger, anger to hatred, friendship to envy . . . our emotions start working against us” (pp. 19-20).

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race theory was developed in the 1970s by intellectuals of color who were disturbed about racial oppression (Calmore, 1992; Delgado, 2000; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002). According to Delgado (1995), it is a framework based on the foundation that racism is naturally entwined in American culture it is hardly identifiable while Ladson-Billings (1998) argued it is a White supremacy system that is perceived to be normal and natural. Critical race theory centers on topics such as ethnicity, prejudice, and structural inequity (Miller & Garran, 2008) while encompassing specific themes, such as the ending of subordination to race, religion, ethnicity, ability, defining race and racism, understanding racial subordination, and finally encourages educators to input their standpoints regarding the issue (Cappiccie, Chada, & Snyder, 2012). I sought to explain how critical race theory influenced and impacted the learning of an indigenous Samoan student by conforming to dominant western school systems that are alien and contradicting to native cultural and practices. It highlighted how language, culture, and learning preferences are huge indicators for failure for Samoan students as they struggle to adapt to a supremacy western school system.

Definition of Terms

Amotivation: The absence of motivation, or a state in which a person cannot identify a relationship between their behavior and the expected outcome (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).

Intrinsic motivation: Motivation that comes from within; it is a key outcome of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Learned helplessness: A situation where one might have failed in one or several tasks in the past and that has convinced that individual he or she is incapable to do anything in order to improve performance in that task(s) (Stipek, 1988).

Motivation: Woolfolk and Hoy (2006) believed motivation is an internal state that controls and maintains behavior. Tileston (2004) asserted this is the drive that gets us to do something and Purkey and Schmidt (1996) contended motivation is an internal and continuous incentive.

Perception: A way of becoming aware, realizing or understanding a situation (Karal, Cebi, & Yigit, 2011). Theoretical biases are subjective prejudices or partialities based on theories; informed judgments are objective opinions based on reliable information, informed sources and experiences.

Self-efficacy: The belief people hold of their abilities to perform at different levels in events that govern their lives. These beliefs determine how they feel, think, behave and motivate themselves through processes such as cognitive, affective, and motivational and selection processes (Bandura, 1994).

Other terms, concepts, and phrases will be defined in the context of this study.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Participants in the study responded to all interview questions honestly. Their responses clarified weaknesses or strengths in instruction, assignment processes, peer collaboration, college support services, environmental influences and other such factors that have contributed to school failure. During the interview, students described their

learning experiences in high school and explained how these experiences were similar or different in college.

After an extensive assessment of the perceptions of students regarding their poor performance in Basic English courses, teachers will clearly identify weaknesses, challenges, and setbacks that can be accommodated through varied activities. Other factors contributing to this academic challenge include the inability of students to identify tutoring services, teacher instruction and activities, the employment of the English language in a Samoan classroom setting, peer pressure, and family affiliations.

Limitations

Creswell (2003) suggested limitations are imposed to identify possible weaknesses of the study; these are conditions that restrict the scope of the study. In this qualitative study, the findings could be subject to other interpretations. The findings of this study cannot be generalized; but, may be transferrable to other settings if the people in that setting consider it suitable. The purposive sampling procedure can be transferrable to other Pacific Islanders. Other limitations to the study included time span to conduct the interviews, the availability of students, the absence of students repeating courses, the exact number of females and males targeted, or the noncompliance of subjects to participate.

Delimitations

According to Creswell (2003), delimitations are used to specialize or limit the scope of the study; these limitations may apply to specific variables, sites, participants, phenomena, or type of research design. They further establish boundaries, exceptions,

reservations, and qualifications for each study (Castetter & Heisler, 1977). This study was confined to data collection at ASCC college campus and focused specifically on Samoan students. It did not include other ethnicities also taking Basic English who encounter the same dilemma within the ELI at the ASCC.

Significance of the Study

The gathering of students' stories about school failure is essential to altering, developing, and initiating instruction designed specifically to meet students' needs. Through these stories administrators and instructors can collaboratively examine sources of student frustration, pressure, anxiety, and low self-esteem to alleviate high rates of retention in ELI courses and promote learning. Effective school leaders envision accomplishments with their students, comprehend the process to achieve it, and have the foresight to make these accomplishments a reality (Elmore, 2000; Glickman, 2002).

Ultimately, when students in the ELI at ASCC exhibit actions of carelessness, absenteeism, failure to do homework, or simply laziness, instructors are frustrated because these students are not aware they are limiting themselves within the scope of remediation. In this study, the intention was to gather Samoan students' stories in order to understand their perceptions about their behavior and performance in ELI courses. The narratives of why students behave and perform the way they do will ultimately help facilitate an effective working curriculum for the ELI, design innovative strategies to combat the lack of motivation, and increase learning and achievement. When educators understand the perspectives of these students, accommodating those perceptions can bring about social change.

Summary

The problem explored in this study was school failure of students taking remedial English at ASCC. The problem of school failure facing the students attending the American Samoa community College is a serious dilemma that needs to be addressed. If it is not addressed, it would lead to other serious problems such as dropping out, unemployment, and lack of necessary skills to hold a career in the future.

The purpose of the study was to explore school failure through the lens of student's stories and experiences who have previously failed one or more of their English remedial courses. A purposeful sampling was applicable as the study is restricted to only students who have experience failure in school. Twelve participants were involved in the study from Intermediate and Advance Reading and Writing levels. The findings from the interviews will inform all stakeholders that school failure in ASCC is a problem worthy of attention. Similarly, the results propose interventions to improve support services, instruction, learning, curriculum, assessment, and other related activities to alleviate school failure.

The conceptual framework of the study is related to specific theoretical perspectives. Weiner's (1972, 1974; Weiner et al., 1971) attribution theory suggests students can be successful if they are able to attribute their success to certain events and also explain how and why they were successful. Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory argues students' behavior corresponds with the environment they live in and people with whom they associate with. Bandura emphasized the importance of vicarious learning or modeling and self-efficacy. Covington's (1985a, 1985b, 1987; Covington & Beery, 1976)

self-worth theory proposes humans are only as worthy as their accomplishments, he believes students perceptions of themselves governs their willingness or unwillingness to learn. Critical race theory (Calmore, 1992; Delgado, 2000; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002) asserts this system of white supremacy is perceived to be normal and natural while racism is intertwined in its framework.

These conceptual perspectives are important to this study because first, I observed in relation to Weiner's (1972, 1974; Weiner et al., 1971) attribution theory how students explained events that caused them to fail. Second, I illuminated student's stories of the people they associated with and the environments such as school settings they learned in that caused failure in correspondence to Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. Third, I described in detail students perceptions of themselves associating with Covington's (1992) self-worth theory, and finally I examined how student's failures are attributed to western educational practices foreign to many students in the islands in relation to critical race theory.

Important terms relating and enhancing components of this study included amotivation, intrinsic motivation, learned helplessness, motivation, perception, and self-efficacy. Other specific terms will be discussed further in the study. The study does not extend beyond Samoan students; it includes only Samoan students who have repeated their failed courses in the ELI department and not the general population at ASCC, nor other remedial students who have passed their remedial English courses. The results of this study can be transferrable to other pacific people; however, it cannot be generalized. It was confirmed after data collection the revelation of important factors relating to

school failure such as peer pressure and the need to inform students of tutoring services available. The experiences of ELI students will advocate for appropriate interventions needed to help students pass their courses. Data collected from interviews were used to analyze the challenges faced by these students. Section 2 of this study is a literature review of issues surrounding school failure as well as a description of data collection and analysis in Section 3. Section 4 is a report of the results. Section 5 is the analysis and interpretation of those results.

Section 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The central phenomenon explored in this literature review is Samoan students' school failure. Most Samoan students attending ASCC were raised in a unique culture and are required to be motivated to achieve in a foreign language (English) through adaptation to a system of education different from their own. In this study, *failure* refers to students taking remedial English at the community college and having to repeat these courses because of receiving an NP (failing) grade. A review of literature was conducted on the topics of school failure, student perception, using the Samoan language to teach English and its relationship to school failure, cultural perceptions and experiences, the English-only perspective, and the role of motivation to avoid school failure. Searches were conducted using the Education Research Complete database, and Google. Search terms included *school failure*, *school motivation and failure*, *English language learners and school failure*, *Western practices versus culture, indigenous cultures and education, parental environmental in schools, language and cultures*, and *Pacific Island cultures*.

The context of school failure in this study revolved around Samoan students' indigenous culture and the Western school system now practiced on the island. Samoan students struggle to achieve success in a school system using English as the primary language of instruction. Motivational issues relate to educational attainment and success. The literature details the importance of including students' stories or perceptions as a means to understand why there is continuous failure in passing remedial English courses.

As McAdams (1993) claimed, stories define people, to gain an understanding of one's self, one needs to know their story.

School Failure

Academic failure remains a serious problem across the United States (Education Week, 2009), although the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation oversees student academic progress using standardized testing, it does not make certain the recognition and arbitration of at-risk students (Casillas, Robbins, & Allen, 2012). Failure in school is contingent on circumstances that may include poor teaching (Johnson, 2011; Zholkov, 2010), teachers' low expectations (Cavazos & Cavazos, 2010), poverty (Chudgar & Luschei, 2009; Cuthrell, Stopleton, & Ledford, 2010; Harris, 2009), poor grades (McIver, 2010); lack of social control in behavior (Robbins et al, 2009), lack of family or parental support (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jasinski, 2012; Reglin, Cameron, & Losike-Sedimo, 2012), adolescent depression (Quiroga, Jasnoz, Bisset, & Morin 2013); and weak leadership (Christman et al., 2009; Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010; McEwan, 2009).

Academic failure, according to Ozabaci (2005), is the difference between students' skills and talents and their performance at school, this performance shapes individual image, although everyone might not achieve at the same pace or reach the same level (Keskin, 2008). Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, and Levy (2007) asserted that low performance is associated to poor instructional interventions, ineffective curricula, deficient facilities, and the lack of clear focus. Whitted (2011) contended that school failure is the byproduct of social and emotional skill deficits while Collins (2009) proclaimed the reasons for academic failure are similar to those for business failure, and

that failure is part of the cycle of change. Successful businesses, successful schools, and successful students must all actively engage to avoid failure by continuously using data to evaluate and acting immediately to respond to manifestations of failure.

Hancer (2012), in a study involving Turkish and Polish sixth graders, found male and female students expressed different opinions regarding the reasons for failure. Male students reported believing their failures were more family-related, while female students believed their failures were school-related. Similar differences were observed by Gündüz and Özcan (2010). Rosenbaum (2011) argued poor articulation during high school, specifically senior year results in failure during college while (Brock 2010; Loyd & Eckhardt, 2010), declare being in a 2 year college and engaging in a semester long curriculum discourages students as they are involved with jobs and other family responsibilities. Leah, (2009) observed students need effective advising to guide them through college to avoid failure and Thrift, Heath, Reardon and Peterson (2012) proposed Pacific students distinctively can avoid failure and be taught to make better career choices and judgments if they are given obtainable options.

Student Perception

The achievement problems Samoan students' encounter at ASCC has escalated since the ELI was established in 1970. Many students in ASCC are repeating courses or dropping out due to scholastic failure similar to their counterparts taking remedial courses in the US (Bahr, 2010). To understand this phenomenon and to correct its recurrence every semester, it is imperative to listen to the voice of students and determine from their

stories, ideas, and perceptions the compensatory methods needed to alleviate or mitigate the problem.

Having students voice their opinions and express perspectives regarding their education is an essential component of learning. “Student voice is a direct pathway to elicit from students the essence of who they are and what is important to them” (Toppel, 2012, p. 102), they are intellectual peers who bring a wealth of experience and a great resource for building professional knowledge (Looker, 2012), and their input can evaluate academic process and procedures (Byrnes & Rickards, 2011). According to Shankman and Allen (2008), self-perception promotes leadership and leadership development. Savickas (2004) affirmed that as students construct meaning in their lives, they gain the means for self-direction. Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, and Teddy (2007) used student voice to understand educational disparities facing Maori students in New Zealand; the knowledge gained from the study eventually led to the revamping of educational practices that improved performances for all Maori students. *Te Kotahitanga* was a research and professional project, the goal of which was to advance Maori students academically; student voices were employed to analyze Maori student learning, develop professional activities, and to initiate an effective teaching repertoire (Bishop et al., 2007).

Beaudrie, Ducar, and Relaño-Pastor (2009), assessed culture and identity within the Latino community to determine whether students’ needs were being met, contended that when students’ voices are heard, students’ responsibilities extend beyond the classroom and they are able to construct their own future. In a related study, Marcoulides,

Heck, and Papanastasiou (2005) sought to identify the factors that affect student achievement. In doing so, Marcoulides et al. used students' perceptions to inform the research; the researchers believed that student achievement varies because students hold different perceptions regarding learning processes. These variables in learning processes provide helpful information concerning student experiences and achievements.

When students are involved and engaged in their academic learning and are provided with inviting educational settings in which to learn, scholastic success is inevitable (Yonezawa, Jones, & Joselowsky, 2009). Mack (2012) suggested that sometimes, an effective teacher can create a learning environment where social inclusion or interaction among students becomes a methodology to encourage student participation, and further "removes potential barriers to engaging in reflective practice (Seale, 2009, p. 998). To ensure greater success and student achievement in classroom settings, students' voices were widely researched and incorporated in education, schools are one of the few remaining places where people share historical and sociological ideas; therefore, educators should provide opportunities for these voices to be heard (Friend & Caruthers, 2011). Pittman and Tolman (2002) believed that improved student achievement requires attention on youths themselves. This focus is relevant because Yonezawa et al. (2009) contended that student experiences are an invaluable source of information; these experiences identify students' weakness and strengths in the educational setting.

Student voices may help educators understand and examine the many challenges and setbacks schools experience in regard to student achievement, and further inform educators on how to help students navigate coursework successfully (Bachman, 2013)

Having students voice and raise concerns about their learning is essential because students know what is pertinent for them to succeed in school (Cook-Sather, 2007; Gardner & Crockwell, 2006; Gardner, McCann, & Crockwell, 2009). Student voices are not usually included in the process of educational reform (Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003), even though scholars such as Thiessen (2007) advocated student voices contribute to new educational policy and structures, improve student teacher relations, and enhance school improvements (Alberta Education, 2009).

The need to listen and hear students' voices stems from perspectives and arguments that students' classroom experiences are disconnected from what students really need, which, according to Yonezawa et al. (2009), is the "understanding of students' developmental trajectory as adolescents" (p. 6). There exists a disparity between what students deem important and what educators teach in class. As the gap widens between teachers' and students' classroom expectations, students find themselves in remedial programs that rarely improve their chances in academia. These chances, as suggested by Mitra (2007), can be improved if "students are included in efforts that influence the core activities and structures of their school" (p. 727). Many of these efforts are realized through the use of student voices, allowing students' perceptions to guide and support learning.

Contrary to overwhelming literature supporting student voice initiatives, opponents such as Fielding (2004) offered in-depth opinions on the pretentious use of student voice in school reformations. Fielding (1999) proposed that "too much contemporary voice invites failure and disillusion" (p. 296) and researchers should

replace students' voices and incorporate their own opinions, suppressing student perception while exercising control and manipulation. Humphries (1994), suggested that the danger of speaking for others is manifested in three characteristics in which the more powerful exerts control over the less powerful. These characteristics include accommodation, accumulation, and appropriation.

According to Humphries (1994), *accommodations* are “insidious ways in which research undermines rather than enhances empowerment through accommodation of challenges” (p. 191), ultimately reinforcing and repeating existing prejudices and domination. *Accumulation* is the collection of “information about the lives of the oppressed groups, communicated through a specific language which in turn results in surveillance and regulation rather than empowerment” (Humphries, 1994, p. 198). Finally, *appropriations* are the continuance of an idea in a manner that initially maintains the approach groups are regarded, the endorsement of their situation, and the union of its influence (Humphries, 1994).

Alcoff (1991) identified several difficulties when speaking for others. The social location of the speaker influences the way he or she perceives the world. Unless the researcher develops epistemologies “grounded in white androcentric concerns, and rooted in values which are understood to be inimical to the interest of the silenced” (Lincoln, 1993, p. 32), efforts to capture these voices will fail. In essence, an individual cannot presume to speak on others' behalf because that individual lacks the means to fully comprehend their interests. Other viewpoints of Alcoff are closely correlated with issues of power and group identity. Different texts can mean different things to different people

in different settings, “how what is said gets heard depends on who says it, and who says it will affect the style and language in which it is stated, which in turn will affect its perceived significance” (Alcoff, 1991/1992, p. 13). Further opposition to student voice would have researchers represent people and imposes a concern for results rather than a concern for persons. As Bragg (2001) posited, needing speedy outcomes leads to listening to voices only to satisfy momentary desires while disturbing expectations and usual operations.

Schools have strived to assimilate student voices in academic processes. In smaller learning community (SLC) models, researchers have found that student voice is absent from the debate on high school reform. The SLC model provides not only a basis for high-quality education, but also a learning environment conducive to student learning (Armstead, Bessell, Sembianti, & Plaza, 2010). Armstead et al. (2010) conducted their study in a school district in Florida and examined the effective implementation of SLCs from students’ perspectives. A participatory method of data collection (data-in-a-day) was used to document students’ views on a daily basis. Photo language was a technique used by researchers to elicit students’ responses regarding their involvement in SLC. Students selected a black and white photo from 50 preselected photos that described their experiences with SLC, shared their choice, and explained the reason behind their choice. Findings indicated there was an uneven implementation of SLCs in Florida school districts, while the majority of students remained disengaged and dissatisfied with their experience.

A study similar to that conducted by Armstead et al. (2010) was conducted in a high school in Perth, Western Australia. Groves and Welsh (2010) sought information on the experiences and insights of Year 11 students. These experiences included diverse needs, relationships, teacher quality, and learning experiences. Findings from the survey administered by Groves and Welsh indicated students were interested in incorporating their needs into their daily lessons. The students also reported the significance of learning activities and relating classroom experiences to real life.

Young people are capable of perceiving articulated thoughts pertaining to schools and learning (Ainley, 1995). The prevailing construct of “adults know best” is no longer the norm (Education Evolution, 2005). Students have repeatedly demonstrated their capabilities to effectively enhance classroom instruction and learning. The problem may be that teachers are not listening. Saul (2005) posited that only when teachers listen to students’ voices will learning be enjoyable. Listening not only improves relationships with teachers and parents, but also develops a sense of learning in all aspects of education.

Relationships Between School Failure and Cultural Perspectives and Experiences

Culture, according to Sparapani, Byung-In Seo, and Smith (2011), is simply discourse. Students of different cultures exhibit different behaviors, which create miscommunications or discourses between teachers and students (Daley, Buchanan, Dasch, Eichen, & Leinhart (2010). To understand student discourse, effective communication is key (Clemmensen, Sparapani, & Booth, 2009; Ross Mclain, 2009; Silverman 2010).

Erickson (1997) contended that culture is the pattern that defines all that people are, including the air that we breathe. In essence, culture determines “order and meaning in our experiences” and is an indicator of how to predict an individual’s reaction and behavior in different situations (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002, p. 6). Finnán and Swanson (2000) asserted that *culture* is a complicated term to define because culture is so implicitly defined without knowing it is there. Finnán and Swanson further maintained that culture has six characteristics impacting schools and classrooms:

- It restricts objectivity and shapes preferences.
- It protects people from the unknown, providing limited answers to unanswerable questions.
- Cultures interact and influence each other.
- Culture is experienced through individual roles.
- Culture is transmitted, shaped and maintained through language and dialogue.

Culture can manifest itself in tangible and intangible ways. Culture can also have an impact on success for failure in school. Omidvar and Tan (2012) concluded, “learners from different cultures have different preferences for learning styles . . . being aware of the relationship between the two aspects of learning can improve the learner and classroom outcome extensively” (p. 279).

In the case of Samoan students at ASCC, the clash of traditional Samoan culture and Western culture might be a contributing factor to students’ failure. Cultural factors in the classroom play a key role in the education of Samoan students. According to Galea’s

(1980), culture in the Samoan context is a “pattern of thinking, feeling, moving values, and attitudes that is possessed by a Samoan” (p. 7). These patterns are completely different from Western expectations that are required in all schools in the territory. Tellez (2004) proposed all teachers have a unique culture that embeds traditions and values. Tellez believed that when the teacher and student do not share a common culture, it is difficult for learning to take place, thus resulting in school failure and students’ academic needs not being met (Monahan, Oesterle, & Hawkins, 2010). Sheperd et al. (2012) suggested “without meaningful education, students have little reason to connect with school and achieve academically” (p. 48). This cultural disconnect between teachers and students can lead to missed learning opportunities. According to Ladson-Billings and Henry (1990), the best method for solving cultural issues is to assign students to teachers who share similar cultural beliefs. If teachers fail to comprehend cultural factors impacting students’ intellectual and physical factors in the classroom, learning becomes problematic and “the mismatch between the individual’s learning style and the instructor’s teaching style may lead to failure of learners” (Omidvar & Tan, 2012, p. 273).

Until now, Samoans have been able to uphold, maintain, and conserve their unique and rich culture. This culture, known as the *fa’asamoa* (the way of Samoa), is the infrastructure of all Samoan activities, including those in the classroom. Samoan students bring with them to the classroom their own definition of school and learning. These experiences, combined with the distinctive yet dominant culture, have an impact on the classroom, where Samoan students who learn in Western school settings are expected to

conform to practices that were originally foreign to the Samoan culture. Faleali'i (1975) explained, "When a Samoan student takes his place at a desk in a "palagi" (White man's) school, he must play by the palagi's rules" (p. 16). By participating in a White man's school, discontinuity crept, in causing an imbalance with the culture. There is a struggle between upholding one's culture and of conforming to new practices. Samoan children are taught in the home to always sustain their culture.

Samoan students learn well when methods and pedagogy are interwoven within their own culture. Faleali'i (1975) explained that the Samoan culture provides no exceptions for breaking away from tradition; anyone challenging this concept and attempting to express his or her views is considered disrespectful because Samoan chiefs are believed to know more than the younger generation. Noncompliance with authority is regarded as disrespectful. Faleali'i expanded on this sentiment regarding the Samoan culture as follows. "First, the culture provides no condition for breaking away from traditional pattern. Any attempts at change made by someone outside of culture typically fail" (Faleali'i, 1975, p. 17). The assumption that other cultures bringing foreign ideas may have a negative impact on the Samoan culture leads to inconsistencies and taking away the Samoan people's ability to think creatively.

Galea'i (1980), a traditional Samoan leader as well as a leader of his clan, observed; Samoan students are given a different identity when they enter a modern western education system. Their cultural background prohibits them from asking questions or surpassing individually as it is not the way of Samoans; therefore, frictions occur.

In reality, the Samoan culture molds actions, thinking, and activities of the Samoan learner. When confronted with beliefs and concepts foreign to Samoan traditions, Samoan students are expected to shun other teachings and uphold their own cultural standards. In a Western school setting where many of the Samoan traditions are challenged, students are often confronted with decisions of complying with cultural practices or engaging in conflicting Western academic operations. Guild (1994) stated, “Generalizations about a group of people have often led to naïve inferences about individuals within that group” (p. 16). Seidman (2007) noted the following about Pacific Islanders: The academic experiences of Pacific island students decline as they are unwilling to share their perceptions because elderly wisdom is esteemed. Furthermore, access to scholarships is restricted as students reside in US territories. Because students hold full time jobs while taking full loads of college credits, their performance in school suffers.

According to Benseman, Coxon, Anderson, and Anae (2006), many Pacific Island students are not familiar with tertiary education and many of them lack the discipline to keep up with this new initiative. Many students emerge from families that have no tertiary educational experience and, as a result, these students are not motivated to develop and foster academic habits that will lead to achievement. Pacific Islanders believe the school system is out to fail them simply because the school system does not consider the uniqueness of their culture (Benseman et al., 2006), minority culture is marginalized or ignored in many school settings (Cavanagh, Macfarlane, Glynn, & Macfarlane, 2012) causing significant educational disparity.

Culture plays a pivotal role in the education of any child (Richardson, 2011). Cultural-based education was suggested to be an excellent model of best practice for Pacific Island students during a study conducted in Washington State (Takeuchi & Hune, 2008). Takeuchi and Hune (2008) argued many reasons related to culture contribute to poor performance of Pacific Island students. Some of these reasons include a curriculum insensitive to the learning styles of a cultural group, the absence of culturally relevant tasks, lack of respect for culture inclusion, and inadequate communication between schools and Pacific Island students. In the end, Takeuchi and Hune contended using cultural-based education “helps students to become engaged and connected to the content of their learning, which contributes positively to both socioemotional and educational outcomes” (p. 26).

Using Samoan Language to Teach English and its Relationship to School Failure

Using English language has been identified as one of the major factors contributing to students’ lack of success in passing remedial courses in the ELI at ASCC. Local law prohibits public school institutions from using the Samoan language for instruction, although “the Samoan language may be used when necessary to facilitate teaching the English language” (American Samoa Code Annotated, § 16.0551). The goal for education remains the same today as it was in the 1970s, to help each student reach his or her fullest potential as a unique individual.

The employment of the English language in the American Samoa public school system has come under scrutiny since the school system was established. Contentious issues have revolved around having students of Samoan ancestry learning and achieving

in a White man's classroom whose language was foreign and unknown to an indigenous people. One drawback of the primarily English-only language mandate was that it interfered with cultural practices of maintaining the indigenous language, another problem was that most teachers lacked the experience to teach English as a second language (Galea'i, 1980). Collier and Auerback (2011) posited that integration of student first language and culture in the classroom impacts not just the student but the family as a whole.

Although strict policy requires students to learn in English, many teachers still teach mainly bilingually or in Samoan only. Given that teachers do not adhere to the language policy in the classroom, learning and teaching in the English language remains an unsettled issue for teachers, administrators, policy makers, and parents of students in the territory (Sanchez, 1956). Cummins, Mirza, and Stille (2012) argued that students' performance improves when school settings consider their unique backgrounds and culture. This study is unique in a sense that Samoan students are not migrating to other environments or countries where they are required to learn in English, but rather English has come in to their island school setting requiring them to conform to its practices.

A timeline of events recorded by the American Samoa Department of Education in 1940 leading to the adoption and subsequent reinforcement of the English language in public schools is highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2

Timeline of Events Contributing to Problem

Year	Event
1921	English was taught in public schools as a second language.
1925	The Superintendent of Education suggested conducting the education of the Samoan people on a bilingual basis preserving the Samoan language, at the same time extending the use of English until every Samoan can read, write and converse in English.
1928	Some textbooks in Samoan covered only primary subjects; it was therefore necessary for schools to elevate themselves to the Western Civilization standard to read the Literatures of the world.
1933	English was enforced in schools.
1936	Dr. Gordon Brown, principal of the Barstow Foundation, argued the English language was taking students away from their culture.
1940	Recommended changes were made to the medium of instruction.

Note. Adapted from *Annual Report*, by the American Samoa Department of Education, 1940, p. 43. Copyright 1940 by the American Samoa Department of Education. Reprinted with permission.

As late as 2013, local laws still prohibit public school systems from using the Samoan language for instruction (American Samoa Code Annotated, §16.0551). In the ELI at ASCC, Samoan instructors use the Samoan language sporadically to facilitate English

instruction, enhancing comprehension for Samoan students who have little command of the English language. The Samoan language is not used at all in other classrooms where instructors are non-Samoan. Using the Samoan language in a lesser scope is necessary because many Samoan students find it challenging to converse, respond to inquiries, initiate group discussions, or conduct presentations because they are all administered in English.

In classrooms where English is an obstacle, students have been observed sleeping during instruction, leaving the classroom several times, talking with peers instead of doing class work, engaging in some other assignments, fidgeting and moving around instead of paying attention, and rarely volunteering to answer questions. Other similar observations note students sitting at the back of the classroom listening to music, coming in late, and procrastinating with their assignments. Man-fat (2012) believed English is hard to learn because it is a language of medium difficulty, ESL learners lack confidence in speaking it, there is usually a mismatch between teachers and students perceptions, and there are limited opportunities for students who try to learn it. Students who can grasp the concept of English can be found immersed in their studies, in sharp contrast to students who have a weak command of English. These and other related problems have all contributed to failure in school.

Providing English-only instruction has generated criticism and opposition from supporters of bilingual education, especially immigrants of various ethnicities. One of the most critical observations is that English-only is favored over bilingual education because a conservative political agenda is designed to oppress racial and ethnic minorities (Arce,

1998). The notion seems to suggest that subordinate groups should assimilate to the dominant culture and reject their native languages and customs. The effect of English-only use is often damaging to the student who is not a native speaker of English. Many of these students who exhibit a limited command of English become withdrawn, frustrated, or discouraged by this transition. They express their frustration, saying, “Just write that down, who cares? Let’s just finish up” (Zehr, 2006, p. 2). According to Cross (2009), languages other than English are categorized with relative issues such as socioeconomic disadvantage, poverty, geographic isolation, disability, and family difficulties.

Too many students who are English language learners are confronted with similar situations. According to Wedin (2006), this will “undoubtedly lead to inequality of pupils’ chances of education and to a low level of achievement of academic content in schools” (p. 1). Other opponents of the Samoan language restriction contend that English-only instruction is a purely racist movement to silence both the teacher and student by imposing restrictions on their primary language. This perceived racism “produces segregation, isolation, and cultural marginalization” (Berriz, 2006, p. 13). Gündüz and Özcan (2010), in their study involving Turkish, Arab, and Cypriot students, found students’ indigenous languages severely hindered their learning styles. Because English is perceived as the language of power, anyone who speaks a language other than English is perceived to be “culturally and intellectually deficient and inferior” (Garza, 2006, p. 22). The number of Samoan immigrants increases every year. The possibility of challenging political control that dictates educational policies and national elections will no doubt influence legislation in the future.

English Only: A Component of Failure

A measure to support English-only instruction, Proposition 227, was initiated and financially sponsored by monolingual business mogul Ron Unz (Arce, 1998). Unz proposed to eliminate bilingual education in California schools, and received overwhelming support from the dominant White community. On June 2, 1998, his perceptions and views turned to law, igniting heated debates from opponents of English-only instruction, not only across California, but also across the entire country (Arce, 1998). Several reasons were given to support the English-only policy. Many claimed bilingualism was creating too many problems. Using too many languages in school required materials, teachers, and community support that, in many cases, were limited. Some argued that bilingual education unnecessarily slowed down students' learning and divided the community. Proponents of English-only instruction contended that bilingual education is more often inconsistently applied, further confusing instruction for English language learners. Bilingual programs are costly and the funds are not always available to support these language programs (Rossell, 2004).

These perspectives may not be popular in American Samoa. Most students in Samoa, with the exception of a few minor ethnicities, speak the Samoan language, live and grow in a Samoan culture, and converse fluently every day, whether in the classroom, community, or family setting. Reflections and discussions of school failure with students taking remedial math and English at ASCC are not only common in lawmakers' deliberations, but also in placement testing at the college and college data (ASCC, 2009). According to Omidvar and Tan (2012), "Since language is a medium for

transmitting and internalizing culture, culture and language are embedded in each other” (p. 281). This disconnect is demonstrated every semester, when grades are released by the ELI at ASCC.

In 1968, President Johnson signed into law the Bilingual Education Act (BEA). Padilla, Fairchild, and Valdez (1990) explained, “The intent of this legislation was to re-evaluate historical evidence of discrimination against school-aged students whose first language is not English, this also provided financial aid and developed innovative programs to meet the needs of low income minorities” (pp. 29-30). Krashen (1994), a strong opponent of sheltered English instruction programs, was convinced that developing literacy in one’s primary language promotes literacy in the second language. This perspective, embraced by many supporters of bilingualism, suggests that students who have the abilities and skills to read and learn in their native tongue can quickly transfer these same skills to English, thereby stimulating intellectual development and creating valuable knowledge they can understand in English (Krashen, 1994).

Proponents of bilingualism have asserted that there are other factors that influence the decisions whether or not to teach bilingually in schools. Politics, socioeconomic status, and culture dominance are a few factors that suppress bilingualism because they seek to address the needs of minorities who are all immigrants and have made no significant contributions to the community. Often, the English language learner is seen as either having a problem or being the problem (Arce, 1998). The *Pacific Daily News* (2011) reported that colonial education systems are not congruent with Pacific Island values that are “the high failure rate of Pacific islanders to a mode of education which

does not relate to their culture or way of life” (p. 17). School failure as a result of a language barrier is an unyielding problem at ASCC.

As for academic instruction, many have insisted that bilingualism embraces the levels of cognitive abilities of students who are not proficient in English. Teachers differentiate instruction based on the diverse experiences of students from various backgrounds, enhancing comprehension in subject matter and promoting learning using two languages (Short & Echevarria, 2004). An individual who speaks and understands more than one language can communicate with more people, read more literature, and travel to more places without restriction of communication. Individuals who can speak more than one language become useful assets to their country, both locally and internationally, and can avail themselves of more job opportunities. They can further develop a close connection in school positively impacting student engagement (Fitts & Gross, 2012). Language defines identity, and schools are institutions that should provide support for a student’s sense of identity. Language is also a resource; it allows social interactions and empowers communities to reach beyond their limits.

Role of Motivation to Avoid School Failure

Motivation refers to the structure of recommended attitudes students hold while performing activities and/ or pursuing goals (Robbins et al., 2009). If everyone were motivated to learn, problems in schools would diminish, there would be less poverty, and many more students would find jobs and become successful individuals in their communities. Motivating students to complete an academic task while holding interest in the task is a monumental endeavor, similarly, trying to motivate students who have lost

all interest regardless of reason is a tiring and frustrating experience (McCombs & Pope, 1994).

The word *motivation* is broadly used to define and refer to the reason for the action or an internal condition that activates behavior and gives it direction (Franken, 1994). Tileston (2004) defined motivation as the drive that gets us to do something, while Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006) believed motivation is an internal state that controls and maintains behavior. Covington (1992) believed motivation incorporates the why of behaviors and why people choose to behave the way they do.

Motivation involves the learner's habitual inclination to be engaged in meaningful activities; this engagement is learned (Cooper & McCaslin, 2005). The dynamics of motivation are complex and involve a process that "determines how much energy and attention the brain and body assign to a given stimulus—whether it's a thought coming in or a situation that confronts one" (Ratey, 2001, p. 247). Motivation connects emotions with actions, and creates and guides behavior associated with different systems and structures in the brain and body (Ratey, 2001). According to Wlodkowski (2008), being motivated means being determined to complete goals, make choices, and initiate direction in learning.

Motivation is a strong predictor of student achievement (Ames & Ames, 1984; Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003; Dweck, 1986; Elliot, 1999; Schunk, 1989); amotivation undermines that same achievement. Many students find themselves in situations where they do not have the desire to complete academic tasks required of them (Green-Demers & Pelletier, 2003). Because some students lose or lack motivation and

fail, it is vital for educators to understand deficiency factors, excuses, and setbacks hindering learning and causing huge numbers of students to fail.

There exist different reasons for students' lack of motivation, the absence of interest or pleasure (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndoff; 2002; Deci, 1992; Renninger, Hidi, & Krapp, 1992), and dubious self-efficacy (Patrick, Skinner, & Connell, 1993). Motivation has also been defined as low-perceived competence (Wigfield, 1988) and poor academic achievement (Battlin-Pearson et al., 2000; Cairns, Cairns, & Neckerman, 1988). Johnston (1992) believed as students construct a sense of themselves as readers, writers, and thinkers, they develop motivation. Concepts relating to the lack of motivation are affiliated with Cullen's (1985) identification of the four types of student responses to failure: (a) strategy-oriented, (b) action-oriented, (c) anxiety-oriented, and (d) anger-oriented.

Researchers have attempted to explain in theory and in practice the concept of student engagement and disengagement (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Parks, 2004). When student motivation is low, the enthusiasm to learn anything in school decreases (Wlodkowski, 2008). With motivation playing such a key role in students' ability to achieve goals and excel academically, it is imperative for educators to understand the compelling reasons causing the excessive and continuous lack of motivation in students.

Murphy and Alexander (2006) wrote, "The educational system will need to consider not only learners' general needs, desires, self-perceptions, and emotional states or orientations but also their specific interests, goals, and desires" (p. 21). Understanding that no student is equally motivated in all subject areas (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) and

that there are various reasons for students' lack of motivation, educators can use innovative activities to build students' potential and empower students to believe in their own abilities. When students learn in a foreign language and in a school system that is alien and distant from their own culture, students perceive education as adding to the complexities of school failure (Guild, 1994).

Method

In achieving the purpose for this study, interviews were used for collecting data, "Interviewing is a flexible and powerful tool to capture the voices and the ways people make meaning of their experiences" (Rabionet, 2011, p. 563). Specifically, a semistructured, one-on-one interview was conducted because while I want to cover specific topics, I also wanted to listen to participants' stories revolving around the issue of failure in class. Creswell (2007) postulated that one-on-one interviews are ineffective if interviewees are shy and hesitant to share ideas; however, given the nature of most Samoan students who articulate less in group settings, a one-on-one scenario would most likely elicit meaningful and adequate data.

Creswell (2007) explained that five varied approaches are necessary to examine the typologies of research; these include phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, and narrative. Creswell asserted that these operations are important as they employ systematic procedures for inquiry including stringent data collection and analysis methods. This study does not specifically conform to the use of phenomenology because although I strove to describe the experiences of several students, all these students are

Samoans belonging to one cultural group and are confronting similar struggles with learning and passing English courses.

It is understood that challenges with learning the English language is not specific to the Samoan people only. For instance, Kubota (2011) emphasized that learning the English language in Japan was critical as it enhances skills necessary for growth in the knowledge economy. However, the goal for this study was to understand students' perception of their learning experiences at the local community college and how these experiences relate to their repeated failures to pass courses.

According to Balduf (2009), students who were achievers in high school sometimes find themselves struggling in college because they were never taught to take challenges; consequently, they enter college and are unable to deal with college work. The phenomenon sought to be understood is students' inability to pass their Basic English classes. I did not attempt to explain a theory, as there is an absence of prior research done on this particular cultural group explaining their attitudes and actions regarding learning and failure in their Basic English courses. Finally this research is not a case study because I did not seek to make comparisons of several cases, nor did it require extensive data collection through varied data collection methods such as documents, archival records and physical artifacts. Ethnography is interwoven in this study because I wanted to understand stories from students who all live in Samoa and attend the only community college on island for at least two consecutive semesters

Summary

Samoan students attending ASCC must overcome many challenges as they struggle to pass their Basic English courses. This longstanding problem has plagued educators, administrators, students, and students' parents. It is vital to obtain a holistic understanding of causes and remedies to the problem. Many issues contribute to Samoan students' inability to succeed academically. These factors correlate with cultural beliefs, language barriers and presumptions, and motivation issues.

Before a Samoan student can learn in a Western system of schooling adopted by the islands, he or she has to conform to a system practiced only in a school setting, distant from indigenous daily living. This system was designed for students who live and learn in the United States. Samoan students must master a curriculum that has no parallel with their native upbringing and often, the result is school failure.

I evaluated the effect of various factors associated with scholastic failure through the lens of student perception. Using student voices and points of view will inform instructors, ASCC administrators, policy makers, families, and the Samoan community as a whole. Results of this study will be pertinent to the reconstruction of the ELI curriculum, its support services, and other related activities empowering students to succeed. It was important to hear student's voices, views, opinions, and recommendations to guide learning and ensure success in schools for all Samoan learners.

Section 3: Research Method

Introduction

The increasing number of students not passing Basic English courses at ASCC is a problem for students, their parents, educators, and administrators. Ultimately, it is a problem for society at large. These setbacks, if not eliminated or mitigated, can lead to Samoan students dropping out of school, being suspended from taking courses, being prevented from receiving financial aid, or acquiring a probationary status. Failure in school has been identified by researchers and educators as a complex issue. Whiting (2006) believed that students are disengaged and unmotivated because they lack confidence in schools, and asserted poor achievement is a direct impact of students' low self-efficacy. Bailey, Hughes, and Karp (2003) concluded students underachieve because they are not academically prepared. The concept of student motivation or lack of it is sophisticated because it correlates with other cognitive views including goal-setting, self-efficacy, individuals' thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and expectations. To examine the issues related to students failing to achieve scholastic success, I established a foundation of information from which understanding of the root challenges of this phenomenon is gained.

Research Design and Approach

Given the nature of this research and my attempt to understand the reasons why Samoan students repeatedly fail many of their developmental English courses, the qualitative paradigm of a narrative analysis was selected. A qualitative approach, according to Schram (2006), implies that all knowledge is interpretive and researchers

who comply with this perspective are able to define meaning of the phenomenon through data collected. The integration of narrative inquiry in this qualitative paradigm helped me, the researcher, and the participants interpret and determine how students' beliefs, actions, and views shape their learning at ASCC. Schram posited that narrative inquiry "builds upon people's natural impulses to tell stories about past and personal experiences" (p. 104). Narrative inquiry assesses how and why a story was told as well as the context in which these stories are narrated. These stories told by students attending ASCC had shed some light onto the experiences of not passing English courses or having to repeat. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) explained that stories give people a way to communicate a coherent identity to others. Through their stories and narratives, students communicated the challenges and obstacles they encountered that cause them to discontinue and eventually failed an English course.

Smith and Sparkes (2006) contended that narrative inquiry might be considered an umbrella term for research campaigns because it embraces empirical research methods, theories, principles, and/or philosophical assumptions. Narrative inquiry is used for several reasons, first, "we organize our experiences into narratives and assign meaning to them through storytelling" (Smith & Sparkes, 2006, p. 18). Next, to understand one's self and others, it is necessary to understand meanings that make up the world (Bruner, 2002). Narratives can clarify much about people; these narratives often impart useful information about how different people internalize their beliefs, thus allowing researchers to make sense of their experiences (Crossley, 2003).

Riesmann (1993) suggested narrative inquiry is social and cultural because narrative inquiry is created from people's minds, and because people are born into a culture from which they are drawn. Listening to students' stories not only opened communication barriers that had prevented meaningful interaction with them, but also identified opportunities and services within the institution that are vital to the successful completion of classes or courses being continuously failed and repeated. The ultimate goal of narrative inquiry in this study was to advocate for change, whether it is in the curriculum, instruction, teacher perception, or institution services. Stories help assess the past while creating an anticipated outcome in the future; they assist people in making informed and intelligent choices, and stories shape our active roles in our professional growth (Joshi et al., 2009). Stories often affect us in ways that are moderately connected with knowledge per se. They impact our perceptions, attitudes, sense of awareness and inform us of facets of life that were previously unknown (Jackson, 1995).

Narratives, according to Hays and Wood (2011), are expressive in several distinct ways. They "provide a method for examining meaning from within the context of the story as well as in the 'how' of the story and the 'to whom'" (Hays & Wood, 2011, p. 293). Narrative concerns not whether it was told before, but whether it was heard, and it relays experiences and conveys meaning in a story form. I used narratives to collect data because Samoans have a history with storytelling. Samoan ancestors used storytelling to document and pass down history to generations because there was no written language and formal education until 1900, when the London Missionary Society occupied the islands (American Samoa Department of Education, 1940).

Research Question

The research question for this proposed study was: What are the stories of a select group of students about school failure?

Context of the Study

The site for this research study was at the ASCC campus specifically ELI Building. The school compound was appropriate because all participants attend classes there, and the ELI Building was fitting as they also take remedial English courses. The faculty conference room was an ideal place to conduct interviews and collect data as it was a comfortable area where students felt invited and belonged to a group instead of an office where they might have felt summoned or targeted. Students were scheduled at their convenience to visit the reference room at different times during school hours depending on their availability. Participants were allowed to choose whether to complete their interviews at a single sitting or spread out the process across multiple days. With participants' permission, the interview sessions were recorded using audio recording equipment, an iPad 2. These recordings allowed me to revisit the interviewees' comments and tone, after the interviews concluded.

Measures for Ethical Protection

Students were selected according to their academic status indicating repeated failure of remedial English courses in the ELI. All participants were over the age of 18. Documentation of each student's academic status is submitted to the chair of the ELI after each semester, and then to the Admissions Office, where the grade is added to students' transcripts. These private academic records are released only when students

request transcripts for placement. The ELI chair prepares charts and graphs for each academic semester and informs instructors during department meetings of students' performances. During these meetings, the department discusses strategies and tactics to improve learning. Through these meetings, faculties were aware of the number of students who have repeatedly failed to pass remedial English courses. Before the start of every semester session, teachers are given roster lists of each class, from these rosters, students are identified as new, or repeating. Repeaters were targeted for the study, but only after they were approached and their consent was given. Rubin and Rubin (2005) advised researchers to treat the interviewee with respect because "wasting their time is disrespectful" (p. 98).

This study can be repeated because all data relating to the problem of students not passing their remedial English courses can be found not only in the ELI at ASCC, but also at the Institution Effectiveness Office that handles data for the institution. As of late 2013, no collaborative study has been conducted to determine if students taking courses in other content areas are experiencing the same setback. The results from this study can inform stakeholders, the students, their parents, the educators, and administrators at ELI and ASCC, as well as the general public, of adjustments that can improve learning and teaching.

To ensure validity, this study was conducted with a clear and specific purpose: to understand the nature of a problem. Janesick (2004) remarked, "Researchers come into a setting not to correct a problem, but they should come into a setting to appreciate a situation" (p. 151). The careful selection of my words, particularly during the interviews,

contributed to the validity of the study. I used the format of an opening statement and a few general questions to elicit conversation. Establishing rapport and easy communication yielded truthful comments from participants. A well-planned but flexible protocol was employed during the interview process to allow both researcher and interviewees to pose questions and receive responses. The results of the study will be shared with participants, colleagues, the administration, policy makers, interested community members, and high school teachers. Student participants did not include anyone previously or currently in any my classes or those of the instructor. I did not insert my opinion in the outcome of the research but rather allowed the data to reveal themselves.

I kept an interview log to document all interview activities for the 12 participants (Appendix A). In this log, I recorded times, dates and lengths of interviews, participants' reactions to questions, participants' questions, and notes related to opinions and explanations or expressions of feedback. The interview log is stored in a password-protected computer file on my password-protected computer for at least 5 years after conclusion of the study. Other researchers may want to continue or repeat the study, and the availability of this information might help another researcher to compare student performances in different time frames and locales.

Role of the Researcher

The decision to explore the stories of remedial English participants in ASCC was taken within the context of continuous failure. This failure was manifested in students repeating their developmental English courses and in most cases result in dropping out of

college every semester. Although student support services were rendered including student services tutorials, technology assistance with extended lab hours, peer-mentors, and embedded tutors, there remained a significant number of students who do not pass. Since there was no previous study conducted in ASCC about the attitudes, behaviors, perceptions and failures of students taking remedial English, I decided to solicit the stories of students to compensate the dilemma.

What propelled me to adopt this narrative inquiry design was the notion presented by Farber (2006), to begin with wonder, and end up discovering something different. This narrative tradition is a necessary component to evaluate the trustworthiness of students' stories (Kline, 2008). The narratives were a source of data from which I had interpreted and extrapolated meaning in why this problem remained a consistent reoccurrence for students at ASCC.

I was responsible for developing an approach and methodology appropriate to the study, soliciting participation, obtaining approval, collecting data, analyzing collected data, interpreting those data, and reporting on the findings. Administrators of ASCC conditionally granted approval of the study; formal approval was requested when the Walden University Institutional Review Board (Approval # 07-07-14-0131946) approved the study. Once written approval was obtained from both the university and ASCC, I recruited a purposeful sample population and sought written consent from those individuals.

Creswell (2003) explained, "A qualitative researcher conveys to participants that they are participating in a study, explains the purpose of the study, and does not engage in

deception about the nature of the study” (pp. 141-142). Part of the informed consent process requires to the researcher to explain to all the potential participants the goal of the study, their role in the study, what and how data will be collected, where and when data will be conducted, the potential risk of participation, potential benefit of the study, and how the results will be shared.

Maintaining confidentiality of interviewees was my primary responsibility. Participants were approached in a fair and ethical manner, and allowed to ask and receive answers to as many questions as they wish to ask, before their informed consent was requested. I sought the opinions and advice from my colleagues regarding potential candidates for the study. These other educators have taught failed and repeat students in their courses. I knew participants only because they are students in the ASCC remedial English program; no formal relationship of any kind existed between the participants and me.

Given the small size of the island of Samoa and its villages, the possibility exists that students and I may be casually familiar with each other. No students in my past or present classes were approached for participation in the study to avoid obligation or bias. The nature of the study and the data collected within the study was not discussed outside the scope of interviews. Interviews served as the only instrument of data collection and no information from outside the interviews was introduced into the study.

Rabionet (2009) posited that while conducting interviews, researchers need to reflect on whether the inquiries are respectful and culturally sensitive. Because many Samoan students are not comfortable talking in front of a group, one-on-one interviews

were conducted in the privacy of the departmental reference room and scheduled during the regular school day, at the interviewee's convenience. Based on observations as an instructor, I believe Samoan students have not learned to be resilient to failure and therefore continue to struggle in their efforts.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that to elicit meaningful responses, the researcher must be sympathetic to participants' situations, build a trusting relationship with them, be fair, honest and open, and identify his or her role in the study. To ensure quality responses from students, a researcher should "explain to them what (the) research is about . . . and ensure them that their involvement is voluntary, while convincing them to be helpful" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 93). I explained the purpose of the study, which was to understand the experiences that are hindering them from passing their Basic English courses. Because the purpose of the study is to identify students perceptions regarding their failure, the results would inform interventions and help students to achieve scholastically and pass their English courses, I expected minimal difficulty in engaging students in the study.

Participants

Creswell (2007) stated that purposeful sampling "informs an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). Purposeful sampling involves making informed decisions about who will participate, how many will participate, and whether the sample will satisfy the design of the study. A purposeful sample was appropriate for this study as I sought to understand the perspectives of only those who have failed their English courses, not the general student population. Henn,

Weinstein, and Foard (2006) posited that researchers should pay attention to the characteristic of sampling strategies so other researchers can repeat the study. Kemper and Teddlie (2000) recommended that sampling strategies should originate from the conceptual framework and research questions, and should clarify results from the data.

Twelve students were involved in this study who were currently enrolled and taking courses with the ELI Department. English developmental courses were separated into three levels of reading and three levels of writing: Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. Students targeted for this study were those who have taken English developmental courses and had to repeat the same course due to a variation of circumstances. Students' ages ranged from 19-25. Using purposeful sampling, two students were to be selected from each level of reading and writing, two from Beginning Reading, two from Intermediate Reading, two from Advanced Reading, two from Beginning Writing, two from Intermediate Writing, and two from Advanced Writing. This goal was not achieved and details are found in Section 4. A total of 12 participants were anticipated from six males and six females to ensure equal participation from both sexes; this too was not attained as explained in Section 4. All participants were Samoans who had been students at the ASCC for at least two consecutive semesters.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using individual interviews. According to Westdijk, Koliba, and Hamshaw (2010), data collection should not only bring meaning to the research, but also be used to “inform decisions” (p. 14). To attain meaningful results from interviewing, interviewers need to ask in-depth questions, avoiding ones that will

elicit simple “yes” or “no” or black and white responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). When participants recount their experiences, “there are no right or wrong answers” (Hatch, 2002, p.108), and a researcher must be sure to communicate this understanding to participants. Rubin and Rubin (2005) recommended interviewers should avoid asking why questions, passivity, interruptions, being emphatic, and exploiting participants, because these behaviors undermine trust.

Finally, I communicated techniques in subsequent interviews based on interviewees’ responses to questions, body language, tone, or timing. Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins (2011) concluded that “nonverbal communication also can be important for attaining a deeper shared meaning, in which both the interviewer and interviewee increase their awareness of the contextual nature of the voice” (p. 199). Additional insight can be gained, according to Onwuegbuzie et al. (2011), from noting variations in communications such as communication of attitudes, length of silence during conversation, body movements, and quality of voice.

An interview guide was the sole data collection tool used in this study. The guide consisted of 10 open-ended questions, the aim of which was to generate responses from students regarding their experiences (Appendix B). Using an interview guide and asking open-ended questions provided the research the option of asking more probing questions, if the need arises, to gain a more thorough understanding of students’ experience with failure. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested, interviewing allows you to see life from different viewpoints. It encourages a refined analysis rather than hasty suppositions.

Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis, as Hatch (2002) explained, is to provide “a clear understanding of . . . what you did, why you did it, what you found out, how what you found out fits with what else is known about the subject, and what it all means” (p. 222). I developed a data analysis plan in keeping with the suggestion of Miles and Huberman (1994), who believed writing detailed steps, preparing marginal notes, drafting summaries of field notes, and noting relationships was important in data analysis. Wolcott (1994) suggested “forming a description from data and relating that description to the literature was necessary” (p.49), while Madison (2005) argued a researcher needs to create a point of view toward the phenomenon studied. Janesick (2004) summarized these sentiments, simply saying that “your job is to be as persuasive as possible with the evidence to support your interpretation” (p. 123).

Data analysis began by repeatedly listening to the recorded interviews detailing raw descriptions written and documented to identify the emerging themes. At the conclusion of all interviews, I started the process of coding. Coding is a “systematic procedure for managing and analyzing the data” (Winters, Cudney, & Sullivan, 2010, p. 1415). Coding usually involves identification of categories, the understanding of themes from raw data, and the determination of more specific categories from themes and details. Raw data were firstly coded then analyzed to find common themes based on the codes. The themes derived from participants’ responses to questions posed as part of following the interview guide. All similar responses from the 12 participants were clustered together under a single code.

Themes surfaced from several key factors including repetitive usage of terms, comparing and contrasting of ideas in texts, and the use of transitions and connectors. Repetitious terms signal ideas that were important to the interviewee, and this network of ideas were translated into themes. All interviewee responses were categorized into four themes. These themes are thoroughly explained in Section 4. I addressed in detail the discussions, reactions, questions, and opinions and concerns that have stood out for each theme. These elements emerged from field notes and the interview log I kept from the interviews (Appendix A). After discussing each theme, I summarize the outcome of the whole interview and presented the findings in rich details from the scripts of the interview.

Specificity of themes and categories is important; poorly articulated themes and categories tend to overlap and cause confusion for the researcher. Similarly, the number of codes has to be reasonable or the large number of codes may pose a challenge when conclusions must be drawn. Rather than color-code themes I used acronyms and a key during analysis. It was difficult to predict with certainty the key terms that were needed for coding until the interviews were completed but themes generated from data collection in this study included student positive experiences (SPE), student negative experiences (SNE), student suggestions (SS), and student confusion (SC).

While coding the interviews, a researcher can analyze whether and how student responses resemble or differ from each other by querying the texts to. Charmaz (1990) contended that querying the texts allows the focus of the study to remain on the data and not on any theory generated by the researcher. Finally, by focusing on the transitions and

connectors, including change of tone or pauses and words or phrases signaling relationships between ideas, I was able to distinguish between ideas focusing on shifts in topics. These linguistic approaches were used to uncover hidden themes generated from the interview questions and eventually understand the dilemma students face while learning English.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) explained that when coding, “you seek to answer your research question in ways that allow you to draw broader theoretical conclusions” (p. 201). Even after I had drawn broader theoretical conclusions, I still needed to “put these concepts and themes together, show how they answer your research question, and pull out broader implications” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) p. 223). Whiston and Li (2011) underscored the importance of maintaining “a meticulous coding manual that reduces the chances of variables being miscoded and, therefore, improves the legitimacy of the results” (p. 277). After coding and identifying themes, a rank order was identified about which students felt strongly. The analysis of the results of the interviews included student opinions and interpretations using their own words.

Typological analysis was used to understand the phenomenon of this study. Typological analysis according to Hatch (2002) is the separation of a phenomenon into groups or categories. The analysis of the overall data is segregated based on typologies such as research objectives, common sense, and theory that are decided in advance. Later, categories and groups materialize from the data as a whole.

Typological analysis was used to code students’ responses in the following categories based on the interview guide (RQ = Research Question):

1. Positive experiences with English courses (RQ1, RQ4, RQ7, RQ8).
2. Negative experiences with English courses (RQ1, RQ4, RQ7, RQ8).
3. Student challenges (RQ2, RQ3, and RQ10).
4. Student feelings (RQ3, RQ4, RQ7, RQ8, RQ9, RQ10).
5. Student sacrifices (RQ6, RQ10)
6. Description of services rendered by ASCC (RQ5, RQ7, RQ8).
7. Student preferences (RQ5, RQ9, RQ10).
8. General discussion (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, RQ5, RQ6, RQ7, RQ8, RQ9, RQ10).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated (Merriam, 2007, p. 27). Merriam (2007) asserted that the reliability of studies depends on four strategies: triangulation, peer examination, investigator's position, and the audit trail. In triangulation, the investigator collects data through multiple sources and data collection methods. Triangulation in this study involved the perceptions of females and males regarding failure, and different levels of students' ability pertaining to reading and writing. With peer examination, peers are invited to become involved in assessing data and offer opinions where the findings are reasonable based on data. Peer-debriefing was not used in this study; I collected data and analyzed and interpreted it to show meaning of students' experiences. This study can be repeated because a different researcher in another context can take the detailed descriptions from this study and pursue a similar one.

Validity

The careful and cautious selection of my words particularly during the interview contributes to the validity of the study. I used the format of an opening statement and a few general questions to elicit conversation. The establishment of rapport and easy communication undoubtedly resulted in truthful comments from participants. A well-planned protocol was employed during the interviewing process including allowances for questioning from the interviewees and respect and sensitivity of the participant observer to all responses. The results of the study will be shared with participants, colleagues, the administration, policymakers, interested community members, and high school teachers. All audiotapes recorded were destroyed once the analysis was compiled and the study was completed. Student participants did not include anyone previously or currently in any of my classes. Students were informed there were no restrictions in the interview as far as expressing their responses and that their opinions would not impact their grades or performance in their English classes. I did not insert my opinion in the outcome of the research but allowed the data to tell its story.

Summary

I engaged in a rigorous analysis of scripts and meaning from the interviews conducted. Time was spent reviewing the scripts to deduce meaning from phrases, inquiries, and general responses from participants to elicit a clear and precise interpretation of thoughts. Much effort was required in implementing this study with honesty and integrity to merit valid results and finally understand the reasons why students behave the way they do while taking remedial English courses. It was worth the

effort of the study to understand the multiple reasons why learners repeatedly fail remedial English at ASCC, particularly if the challenges they face with language, cultural, and personal problems can be resolved through understanding. For students who have experienced failure, especially those who have failed repeatedly, they will encounter real challenges with taking college level courses, and also with finding jobs.

This section opened with an introduction and an explanation of the research design, which was qualitative narrative analysis. This design was fitting as I was exploring the stories and experiences of students to find answers to the problem of school failure. The research question was: What are the stories of a select group of students about school failure? In the context of the study, the purposeful sampling of participants was explained in terms of the criterion of repeated failure in remedial English courses, and the levels of reading and writing where students were recruited. The site for the study, instrument used for data collection as well as a description of the interview questions were detailed in this section. Ethical protection was attained through the confidential nature of the study where participant identities were protected, all data being confined in a secure and safe place, and adherence to all aspects of the consent form before data collection began.

The role of the researcher was dictated by compliance to the required processes of data collection and analysis. Themes and codes were identified and corresponded to appropriate student responses throughout the whole data collection process. A detailed discussion of the actual data collection process with parallel tables will be found in section 4 of this study. A brief description of data analysis was also included with an

explanation of emerging themes from the interviews, further discussion of data analysis will also be found in Section 4 with specific quotes, reactions, questions and responses of participants. This study is reliable because findings can be replicated in other pacific islands remedial programs, or other researchers can replicate a similar study from the results of this one at a different institution.

Section 4: Results

Introduction

This section includes descriptions of how data about Samoan students who were not passing their remedial English courses were gathered, generated, and recorded. This section includes the problem, research design, and findings from data collection that responds to the research question. I explain discrepant cases, patterns, relationships, themes, and codes used to analyze data. Subsequently, themes corresponding to participant's feedbacks are organized in tables for comprehension and clarity. Detailed summaries of participant comments are inserted in the various subsections coinciding with questions from the interview guide. Participant's actual responses to the interview guide are also included to illuminate findings and report genuine outcomes of the study. This section includes the process by which participants were recruited and the incongruences that have appeared conflicting with the original plan of participant selection. The problem identified in this study is school failure. The purpose of the study was to obtain an understanding of students' experiences at ASCC that caused failure. All relevant data are accounted for in this section.

Data Collection

Data collection was completed in the English language Institute Department at ASCC. Instructors were informed about the proposed study during a meeting involving the students and how the results could help improve service. Student participants were identified through class rosters given to instructors where each student was categorized as repeating, new, or continuing. Teachers were asked if they could approach their repeating

students and ask if they are willing to be involved in a study I was doing. Students who agreed to participate approached me individually and the purpose of the study was explained, the anonymous nature of the study was assured, they were informed there was no compensatory reward for participation, and the length and other protocol of the interviews were presented.

The details of the consent form were reviewed. Before the actual interview, participants were given a consent form to sign and date; they were also asked if they would consent to have their interviews recorded for accurate transcription purposes. I was aware that writing all responses would be a challenge and I might misinterpret meaning. I had to request student consent to audio-record in case they were not comfortable with the process. As all participants take a minimal number of developmental English courses; this information was mentioned earlier in the study.

Students have a lot of free time to choose for their interviews, all students taking remedial courses are only allowed to take a reading, writing and a math course until they pass and move on to college level courses. Some take two courses if they had passed the recommended level for other courses, some take one course, and some take three. Most students interviewed were available multiple times. With the exception of one participant who did her interview in the summer, all 11 participants opted to be interviewed in the same week but on different days and times depending on their availability. All consent forms are filed and locked away in my filing cabinet. Given the problem of many Samoan students failing their remedial courses, the paradigm of a narrative analysis was chosen to better understand this failure. Through this qualitative narrative model, the English

department at ASCC can interpret students' beliefs and actions collected from their interview responses, and ultimately implement a plan to combat failures encountered by all students at the developmental level.

Systems Used for Keeping Track of Data

All recordings were completed using an iPad 2. The recordings were immediately transferred to my personal computer and saved under a file named *Research Study*. The transcriptions for all recordings were saved in the same file. An interview log was printed and I manually filled in the participants' names, the dates and times of their interviews, length of interviews, participant questions if there were any, their reactions to the interview questions, and their opinions or expressions of feedback. This log was kept securely locked in my filing cabinet until I was able to transfer it to my password protected computer.

Being a visual learner, I further created a poster board with grids showing names of all participants written vertically on the left side and aligning them to their responses written under the 10 categories of the interview questions inscribed horizontally at the top. The male participants were printed in green, the females in red, categories of the 10 interview questions in blue, and all responses in black. This poster board made data analysis transparent and it was for my use only and not shown to students. On a separate yellow writing pad, I wrote my field notes of student's physical reactions and expressions, pauses during the interviews, number of times they asked for translations, and the number of times responses were bilingual, It also included the different levels of reading and writing alluded to earlier in the study; beginning, intermediate, and advance,

students' gender, questions some participants asked me in the beginning of the interviews, questions from the interview guide (Appendix B) students were having difficulty answering, and the number of times I had to rephrase or translate the questions for comprehension. These items and the poster board were all locked in my filing cabinet along with the manual interview log.

Findings

The research question that guided this study was: What are the stories of a select group of students about school failure? Students' failing their remedial English classes at the ASCC is a continuous problem. The notion of employing a qualitative narrative analysis is so students who are failing could have an opportunity to express and succinctly determine themselves through their stories why they are failing their developmental English courses. The typological codes used for this study included Student Positive Experiences (SPE), Student Negative Experiences (SPE), Student Suggestions (SS), and Student Confusion (SC). Students' positive experiences are affirmative stories, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the program, teachers, and support services offered by the institution. In a like manner, students' negative experiences comprised of their opinions, stories, feedback and attitudes about the ELI program. Student suggestions are their recommendations and endorsements, while student confusion is the state of misperception or the lack of understanding students have towards ASCC, the ELI program, and support services offered.

Interview Question 1: Experiences

Describe your experiences with your Reading and Writing courses in the English Language institute Department, for example, the curriculum, teacher delivery, assignments, or simply your interactions with other students. All participants retorted positively at the question; however, some opted to elaborate briefly on the meaning of their replies while some are content with one or two word responses. Table 3 reflects student's answers about their positive experiences with the program, in their feedback, although all students had positive experiences with the program some suggested the reasons for their failures affiliated with friends, living far from college, sports, or staying out late.

Table 3

Positive Experiences With ELI

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA	✓			
AB	✓			
AC	✓			
AD	✓			
AE	✓			
AF	✓			
AG	✓			
AH	✓			
AI	✓			
AJ	✓			
AK	✓			
AL	✓			

Table 3 presents the results of student feedback to interview Question 1. In analyzing data, my first task was coding the responses. Students responded in an array of affirmative answers, for example, Participant 4 stated, “very good,” Participant 6 indicated, “it is enjoyable, it makes students think,” and Participant 11 recalled, “it was interesting and I was comfortable.” Some responses have some contrasting implications even though participants stated something positive about their experiences. For example, Participant 7 reiterated “good learning, but some of us have bad grammar”, Participant 2 remembers, “its ok, but I get mixed up,” Participant 3 echoed, “experience is great, but I turn in work late,” and Participant 1 asserted, “it’s alright, not hard, but sometimes I’m lazy.” Diverse responses regarding students’ experiences about their learning in reading and writing at the ELI Department suggests their opinions, beliefs, and judgments about the program, as well as factors they propose are hindering their performance at the developmental level.

It was observed and noted that all of the participants interviewed focused primarily on answering the first part of the interview question: “Describe your experiences with your Reading and Writing courses in the English Language institute Department,” and not elaborating to confirm details. Although they were prompted concerning the second part of the question which was, “for example, the curriculum, teacher delivery, assignments, or simply your interactions with other students,” they remained silent or simply nodded to confirm what was said before, or they would repeat the same answer they had just given. Being a remedial teacher in this department for 8 years, this is not an unusual occurrence. Students feel uncomfortable to dialogue in a

lengthy discussion in English; short answers are always the response from most students in classrooms.

Interview Question 2: Challenges

What challenges do you face as a student? (Challenges may include language barrier, not having the appropriate materials, distance from the college, or feelings of inadequacy resulting from being placed in developmental courses). Can challenges be continuous?

Samoan students face challenges with learning and other affiliates of education, such as basic Reading and Writing. Participants were more vocal with this question than with any other question in the Interview Guide (see Appendix B).

Table 4

Student Challenges in ELI

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA		✓		
AB		✓		
AC		✓		
AD		✓		
AE		✓		
AF		✓		
AG		✓		
AH		✓		
AI		✓		
AJ		✓		
AK		✓		
AL		✓		

The challenges articulated varied from student to student. For example, Participant 1 recalled, “I was too lazy, I didn’t take school seriously and my parents forced me to come to school.” Participant 2 stated, “I was coming from far away, I was always late and there were too many family issues I had to deal with.” Participant 3 affirmed, “I was busy with friends, I turned in homework late and I was not good in Reading.” Finally Participant 4 declared, “I don’t listen to the teacher, I ignore the teacher because I don’t understand instruction, I am ashamed and embarrassed to ask, and I am also a golfer.” Participant 11 recalled, “Sometimes I want to ask questions, but I am ashamed of other students, I think that if I ask questions, something is wrong and they laugh.” This student is ashamed of himself because he is asking questions and therefore he is perceived as “dumb”.

Samoan students in many school settings beginning from preschool to high school are always asked by teachers after teaching a lesson if they understand. It was a widely common question that in many school conditions children are taught to respond respectively saying “yes I understand” when in reality many of them do not. In many situations, students will reply in a chorus of “malamalama faafetai” translated “we understand thank you” and anyone who reacts differently is shunned, ridiculed or teased by the community of learners. This repetitious response has been a practiced tradition in many Samoan schools not included in policy but an inherent exercise to ensure discipline and formality in a learning environment.

Participant 6 explained, “Some problems I guess are making friends. It doesn’t make you concentrate on your work. I think that’s the problem every student is facing;

they get dragged away from the right direction.” Participant 12 replied in Samoan “O le igilisi lava, kele o isi upu palagi, e kau le malamalama ai kele” (The English translation is, I do not understand many of those words). The challenges students face involve home life, instruction, peer pressure, the use of English language in Reading and Writing, sports, behaviors such as laziness and shame, absenteeism, and turning in work late. Observations in this question reveal many students taking time to explain both with hand gestures, sad facial expressions and slow soft speech.

Interview Question 3: Impact of Challenges

How do these challenges impact your learning and ability to pass your English courses?

According to field notes, this was the most difficult question of the whole Interview Guide (Appendix B). I repeated this question with every participant and there were some whom I had to translate for comprehension. Even after receiving the student feedback, I still had to probe further because some of the answers did not adequately address the question asked. For example, Participant 4 replied, “If I don’t ask the teacher what I don’t understand, the teacher will move forward because he didn’t know that I don’t understand. So me, I just sit there even if the teacher is far away, I just sit there and try to figure out what the teacher was trying to say.” Quizzical eyebrows were a common gesture; there is a long pause before responding and the next words uttered are, “can you repeat the question?”

Table 5

Impact of Challenges

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA				✓
AB		✓		
AC		✓		
AD				✓
AE		✓		
AF		✓		
AG		✓		
AH		✓		
AI		✓	✓	
AJ		✓		
AK		✓		
AL		✓		

Feedback from most participants was reflective of negative responses except for Participant 4 and Participant 1 who did not know the impact of challenges and answered “I don’t know,” Participant 9 suggested, “Communications are unclear between students and teachers.” Student 12 had a bilingual answer “E le o lelei ai lo’u kogi, o lae alu I lalo, it’s not increasing” (Translation: my grades are not good, they are lowered). Participant 6 responded definitively, “So if you feel like you’re coming to class and your mind is out there, it’s no use for you to be sitting there, you won’t enjoy it, and you won’t feel like learning.” Other comments, such as Participant 3 recalled, “When I’m reading in class, it’s more different than when I’m reading to myself, I can read faster, but when I read in class, it makes me more nervous.” Participant 10 was convinced of the impact of her challenges. “Every day I always come in late to class, it affects my attendance, if you

give students like me homework, there is always more homework.” This student is implying her being late to class negatively impacts her grade because homework is piled up.

The goal of Question 3 in the Interview Guide (Appendix B) was to encourage students identify the reality and impact of receiving an NP grade. When students realistically grip the consequences of failure, hopefully they will make intelligent decisions to take their English courses seriously. No student made eye contact with me when asked this question, many pondered over the question while bowing their heads and speaking slowly as if reminiscing how things could have turned out differently had they not received an NP grade.

Interview Question 4: Help from the Institution

How would you like the institution to help you combat these challenges?

Asking this question was important because it informs students help was available from the institution if they needed it. The majority of participants indicated they needed tutoring to pass their classes; a few however, had simple suggestions to improve the program. Table 4 replicates student’s opinions regarding how they want the institution to help them academically. These opinions are voiced deafeningly through the codes of Student Suggestions (SS) and Student Confusion, rather than Student Positive Experiences (SPE) and Student Negative Experiences (SNE)

Table 6

Institution Support

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA		✓		
AB	✓			
AC			✓	
AD			✓	
AE				✓
AF				✓
AG			✓	
AH				✓
AI				✓
AJ				✓
AK			✓	
AL			✓	

Participant 3 stated, “They could help me stay focus on what I’m reading without friends knowing that I’m a bad reader;” he was referring to the teachers. Participant 4 explained, “Teachers should force us and encourage us to go and take some tutoring.” Participant 7 who repeated a writing class concluded, “I’ll talk to my advisor or my counsellor and find someone to settle things down with my problems and most of my school works.” Participant 12 said, “I needed to go get tutored, I never did it before.” Through my field notes, of the 12 students interviewed, four students sought tutoring services, but not immediately after earning the NP and finally passed their classes; the rest of the participants did not attend any tutoring sessions offered by the institution.

Other students seemed to be confused about their experiences, such as participant 8 who believed, “It’s really hard for me to get up in the morning...I’m trying to do

something about it, and trying to come early.” Participant 6 reiterated, “I prefer to have somebody who will roam around campus and talk to each student like security helpers.” Another example of a confused response comes from Participant 10, “the only way I know is tutor,” I asked, “Since you seem to be coming late to class, will you have time to see a tutor,” she looked at me for a long time, shrugged her shoulders, and did not reply.

Besides tutoring services which include embedded tutors and other tutoring programs offered by the Student Services Division, ASCC offers lab services and peer mentors. While teachers encourage and propel students to take advantage of these tutoring services, they also remind them they are adults and college is an important time to make lifelong decisions that impact their lives. Tutoring programs at ASCC run from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm in the evening. Most students in the ELI department do not have other obligations such as jobs or children to take care of; they have sufficient time to see support services because under school policy, they will only be able to take college level courses once they exit remedial math and English programs.

In relation to the study, it is observed students do not take advantage of many support services in many cases, due to a lack of awareness, many do not know where these services are found, thus contributing to student failure. In essence, it becomes very hard for students to determine the exact support from the institution when they are not clear and informed of what it is available. When the ELI department became conscious of this problem, the instructors were encouraged to require students take tutoring sessions, and also inform them of tutoring time schedules and facilities where this is service is accessible.

Interview Question 5: Preferred Support Service

What specific assistance or support do you feel will be most helpful to you?

Tutoring from the Student Center provided by the Student Services Department, tutoring from the Student Support Services (SSS) or direct conferencing with your teachers?

This question was necessary to inform students they have a choice in the tutoring programs they select. The SLA Center is a tutoring service for all students attending ASCC. The Student Support Services is a tutoring program initiated specifically for students taking developmental English and Math. Conferencing with instructors is available provided they are not teaching, or not attending faculty meetings.

Table 7

Student Opinion of Preferred Intervention

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA				✓
AB			✓	
AC			✓	
AD				✓
AE			✓	
AF	✓			
AG	✓			
AH		✓		
AI	✓			
AJ	✓			
AK			✓	
AL			✓	

This question solicited stimulating data because although all suggested one or another form of student support service, only one of the 12 actually got tutored

immediately after she failed the course. Moreover, data generated reveals more students prefer to have a one-on-one conference with the teachers than being tutored in any center. Participant 8 recalled, “I like one-on-one with the teacher because other students are shy, I saw one tutor, and she didn’t know anything.” Participant 10 had the following rationale, “I don’t want to interrupt teachers from doing their work ‘cause I can only ask questions in class, but after class, the teacher’s time for me is done.” Participant 12 whose interview was conducted entirely in Samoan is translated, “Face to face is better because I can tell the teacher things I don’t understand.”

Four students sought assistance from the tutoring services and they encountered positive involvement there. One student felt the tutors were incapable of tutoring students, five had suggestions, such as the one echoed by Participant 5, “It’s better because the teacher will have time to go over the stuff we learned.” All suggestions were reasons why teachers are preferable than any tutoring service. Participants 1 and 4 were coded under Student Confusion (SC) because both had no answers for this question. My field notes reveal both responded with quizzical facial expressions while their immediate response to the inquiry was “none.”

Interview Question 6: Sacrifices to Pass

Do you need to make sacrifices to pass your classes? If so, what are they? Are you willing to stay after hours to be tutored? Are you willing to use the library services to improve your grades? Are you willing to partner with other students to complete a project?

Field notes divulge this query was the second hardest question for all 12 participants. Most students did not know what the word *sacrifice* meant. Throughout the interview, I consistently referred to sacrifice as something students give up in order to concentrate on school, or an effort that needs to be identified in order to pass a class. This question was either translated or rephrased in very simple English for student comprehension. For example, “what is something you are spending time on that you need to give up so you can pass your class?” or “what other things can you do to pass your class other than what you have done in the past?”

Table 8

Student Sacrifice to Pass Class

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA				✓
AB			✓	
AC			✓	
AD			✓	
AE			✓	
AF			✓	
AG			✓	
AH			✓	
AI			✓	
AJ			✓	
AK			✓	
AL			✓	

Of the 12 participants, Participant 1 was not convinced that he needed to sacrifice anything in order to improve on his courses. When asked if he needed to make any sacrifices, he replied, “Certain sacrifices? No, not really.” When I probed further and

rephrased the question assuming he did not quite understand the first time, he responded, “That’s what I’m trying to find out for me to get better.” Participant 11 immediately replied by saying, “My phones, Facebook, and games that we play at the village.” This student is saying he needs to give up playing games using his phone, social networking on Facebook and attending sports such as cricket and basketball in the village, sports competitions are common in Samoa between youth groups or villages. When asked if he could stay after school if needed to pass his classes, his instant reply was “no”. During the course of the interview he was rubbing, turning, and kept checking his phone to see if he had any recent e-mails. One student was very literal when adding,

If you’re planning to pass all your English classes and you have a job on the side, you know the lines between the two are very important. I prefer to sacrifice most of the time that you are fooling around doing nothing and just focus on doing everything that you got to do for your classes.

Most participants rendered advice as a means to combat the challenges they have encountered in the program. Participant 8 said, “I should stop staying up late at night and spending time with my brothers watching sports.” Participant 3 stated, “Take tutor after class and stay after school to complete my homework.” Finally participant 12 responded in Samoan and translated “I need to give up sports when I go home, especially playing rugby on the field at the village.” The goal for this question is to help students consider old habits and develop new initiatives to help combat failure. Although one student was confused about the sacrifices needed to earn a passing grade, most concurred that changes are compulsory to success.

Interview Question 7: Help for a No Pass Grade

Have you sought help from anyone here at the college concerning your grades? If yes, what was the outcome if no, why not?

Seeking help after failing a course is a very important step at the developmental stage, it reflects responsibility and it provides students an avenue to combat failure. It further probes into the outcome or help rendered by the institution and forces students to acknowledge why they did not seek additional academic assistance when they failed. This was the simplest question in the Interview Guide; it required a yes or no answer and the reasons behind the yes and no responses were thought provoking; the answers indicate the department needs to make students aware there is help available on campus.

Table 9

Seeking Help for Failed Course

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA	✓			
AB	✓			
AC		✓		
AD				✓
AE				✓
AF	✓			
AG	✓			
AH				✓
AI	✓			
AJ				✓
AK		✓		
AL				✓

Six participants claimed they did not seek any help from the institution because they did not know they were failing, five said they did seek help from either a counsellor, advisor/ teacher, or tutoring center, and one said she asked her mom for help. Participant 12 feedbacks translate as follows, “I didn’t know I did not pass, I went and asked the teacher but she told me I missed too many days of class.” Participant 3 added, “No, I looked for anyone because I’m so shy,” and Participant 11 concluded, “No, because my NP happened when I was sick.” On a positive note, Participant 1 concluded, “I seeked help from my teacher, she helped me a lot...when I didn’t understand a chapter, I’ll go to her and she’ll help me out.”

Although support services were available throughout campus, students do not see the relevance of utilizing them. Sometimes being busy with friends and coming from far away, they do not have time to visit any of these tutoring sites. All five students who have used tutoring and experienced positive feedback claimed they passed their previously failed course because of tutoring interventions.

Interview Question 8: Description of Quality Service by the Institution

How do you describe the quality and effectiveness of the assistance, service, and help rendered to you by your teachers or the college as a whole?

It was important to ask this question so students could evaluate the quality of teaching and services at ASCC. Moreover, their responses could generate dialogue among faculty for instructional improvement, or advocate for internal variations in services rendered. This question brought positive remarks from all participants; however, a few had suggestions and one was confused.

Table 10

Student Opinion of Institutional Services and Instruction

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA	✓			
AB	✓			
AC			✓	
AD			✓	
AE	✓			
AF			✓	
AG	✓			
AH				✓
AI	✓			
AJ	✓			
AK	✓			
AL			✓	

Even though I knew no one in the interview personally or socially, and none had taken a course with me before, I could not differentiate whether the responses were genuine or generous because I am the interviewer and also a teacher. Participant 2 was pleased with how bilingual language was used by teachers. “The stuff that teachers say is very clear, she uses both languages English and Samoan and we understand.”

Recommendations participants made to ensure quality outcomes include a comment by Participant 4, “Their delivery is great, but sometimes, they teach us fast and we can’t stop them”, or this statement by Participant 8, “Teachers are good...they give us too many work that we don’t have enough time, sometimes they want us to write an essay in five minutes, I can’t even think that fast.” The reply from Participant 11, “The teachers are making a good job with the students, but you know the bandwagon, students only come

to school because of their friends and to get their financial aids.” In reference to this reply, many Samoan students receive a refund from financial aid after their tuition and courses are paid, almost all students are eligible for this financial assistance because of social economic issues.

All of the suggestions deal with teachers either teaching or speaking fast. Classes are conducted on a daily schedule, are mostly bilingual, and are 1 hour and 20 minutes each. All courses are now condensed from 16 weeks to 6 weeks. This is the second year this new schedule was implemented and the semester now has two 6-week sessions. The intent of this transition was to accelerate students into college level courses instead of spending too much time in remediation.

Interview Question 9: Source of Motivation

What motivates you as a student and how would you like to be motivated for example to study, attend class, read and comprehend novels, or write various modes of essays?

According to Wlodkowski (2008), the desire to learn decreases when motivation is absent. Opinions regarding motivation involve people whom students are closely associated with and activities they believe will strengthen their motivation. People are friends, family, and teachers while activities refer directly to classroom events.

Table 11

Motivation Initiators

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA				✓
AB	✓			
AC	✓			
AD			✓	
AE			✓	
AF	✓			
AG			✓	
AH			✓	
AI			✓	
AJ	✓			
AK			✓	
AL			✓	

All students assert their families are the number one source of motivation; this is not surprising as Samoans have a very close knit relationship with all extended family members. However, the basis for family motivation differs slightly in participants responses. For example, Participant 3 said, “My father and mother motivated me, they wanted me to come back here and finish my education.” Participant 9 replied.:

I wanted to pass this class and move on; I’m tired of being here in ELI. When I didn’t pass, the first thing that came to my mind was, I don’t wanna go back to school. But then I think of my parents and how they’re struggling right now with me, it motivates me to do my best and I’m the older one. So I should do my best and set an example for my younger brothers, so that’s why I’m back in school.

Participant 11 proclaimed, “To see the students that are passing and graduating, that motivates me.” A few students declare their teachers motivate them while student 8 announced, “Other teachers, if we don’t do our work, they tell us to withdraw, it makes us feel, I shouldn’t be in school.” Teachers tell their students to withdraw classes if after 3 weeks they have not shown improvement, this will prevent them from getting an NP in their transcripts, and they would receive a “W” instead for “Withdrawal”. If students exhaust 30 credits in the developmental level, financial aid will no longer pay for their tuition, preventing an NP grade reduces the chance of these consequences. These and other related academic issues are explained to students during first day of class orientation. Participant 1 answered this question simply by saying “I don’t know, sorry to say I don’t know,” although the question was repeated in simpler English and finally was translated in Samoan he shrugged his shoulders and did not offer any more responses.

Interview Question 10: Achieved Goals

Did you have any goals for this class, if so, what are they? Did you feel you have achieved those goals at the end of the semester?

Table 12

Student Opinion Regarding Achieved Goals

Subjects	Student Positive Experiences (SPE)	Student Negative Experiences (SNE)	Student Suggestions (SS)	Student Confusion (SC)
AA			✓	
AB	✓			
AC			✓	
AD			✓	
AE			✓	
AF	✓			
AG			✓	
AH	✓			
AI	✓			
AJ	✓			
AK	✓			
AL	✓			

All 12 participants had goals for the semester they did not pass their English courses, the second part of the question above merited different answers with different reasons, Participant 7 replied, “Not really, because I kinda slacked off during my ELI classes, but now I’ll try my best.” Participant 12 replied in this translation, “To achieve my goals, I need to do my work and come to class on time.” Participant 4 reiterated,

Oh, well I was having a goal for this class, I tried to pass this class on this semester, I can’t move on to regular college level courses because I’m a golfer and I want to go overseas. But my mom told me if I don’t pass this class, I don’t go off island and continue school over there.

All 12 participants assured me that they will try their best to pass their English courses. Participant 1 who seemed to be confused with most questions in the interview

suggested, “I am almost there to achieving my goal, its right there, I just gotta get off my feet and stop being lazy.”

All suggestions pertain to the participants themselves, they concluded the need to change in either perception or behavior in order to pass, two participants believed receiving the NP prevented them achieving; they have since transformed after tutoring interventions and are now more focused to avoid failures. Asking students regarding goals was important because it identifies whether they are focused and have a clear plan of moving towards a higher cause. Through class orientations, teachers find many students have undeclared majors, some in other academic programs are there not because they have passion in that area but because of their friends and parents. Streamlining student priorities and getting them to see the end from the beginning helps them make sound and reasonable choices as they progress through all our English courses.

Discrepant Cases and Nonconfirming Data

The initial intent of this study was to interview two students from the six levels of reading and writing; Beginning, Intermediate and Advance. It was determined that there would be an equal representation from females and males to represent students taking developmental courses at ASCC. As students volunteered, via instructors from different classrooms, more males were inclined to participate then females were.

A further investigation was followed as of this occurrence, and it was revealed through class rosters more males did not pass their respective courses than females. Of the few females who are repeating their courses, four responded to the invitation to participate. Moreover, as this was a fall semester and the majority of students were from

high school, many of the students who did not pass their courses from the previous semesters were not attending classes this fall. Reasons may range from financial aid suspension, late registration, not being able to enroll in an overcrowded course, or taking a break from school.

In essence, eight males and four females participated in the study. I was not able to recruit two students as intended from other levels of reading and writing. No repeaters from the Beginning levels of Writing and Reading were involved in the study. I searched through all rosters of the seven teachers excluding myself, and could not find one student from the beginning level. Five students were repeaters from the Intermediate level, two from writing and three from reading. Of these participants, there were two females and three males. In the Advance level, there were two females and five males. I tried to find more females, but there were more males with repeating statuses than females of repeating statuses. Even if participants were qualified to be interviewed, their participation depended solely on their consent to participate; one student refused after explaining the consent form and he was free to leave.

Summary of Findings

Figure 1 represents the combined visual of themes and codes used in this study. While analyzing data, four strong, salient themes emerged from the findings. These themes encompassed SNE, SPE, SS, and SC. I found that every response from the 12 participants embodied one of the four themes. The most common theme emerged was SPE. These positive experiences were noticeable in their plans to achieve goals,

experiences with ELI, the support service offered by the institution, and finally the quality of service offered by the English department

The next common theme appeared in the study was SS. Students voiced their concerns, anxieties, and suggestions for better performances not only with the institution as a whole, but also with teachers and instruction. These suggestions were prevalent in the areas of sacrifices they will need to complete before passing, how they want to be motivated to succeed, and help rendered by the institution. The third most common theme was SNE. All 12 participants had negative experiences with the challenges and the impact of these challenges with their grades. In addition, there were a few undesirable experiences with help and support services offered by the institution. The least common theme materialized from the data is SC. Although it appeared to be the minimum concern, it still merits attention as it is an important outcome derived from students' interviews. These concerns were mutual under the category of help for their grades and their experiences in the English department

Key: **SPE** (Student Positive Experience), **SNE** (Student Negative Experience), **SS** (Student Suggestion), **SC** (Student Confusion)

STUDENT:	A A	AB B	A C	A D	AE E	AF F	A G	AH H	AI I	AJ J	AK K	AL L
Experiences	SP E	SP E	SP E	SP E	SP E	SPE	SP E	SP E	SP E	SPE	SPE	SPE
Challenges	SN E	SN E	SN E	SN E	SN E	SNE	SN E	SN E	SN E	SNE	SN E	SN E
Impact of Challenge	SC	SN E	SN E	SC	SN E	SNE	SN E	SN E	SN E	SNE	SN E	SN E
Help from Institution	SN E	SP E	SS	SS	SC	SC	SS	SC	SC	SC	SS	SS
Support Service	SC	SS	SS	SC	SS	SPE	SP E	SN E	SP E	SPE	SS	SS
Sacrifices	SC	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS
Help for NP grade	SP E	SP E	SN E	SC	SC	SPE	SP E	SC	SP E	SC	SN E	SC
Quality Services	SP E	SP E	SS	SS	SP E	SS	SP E	SC	SP E	SPE	SPE	SS
Motivation	SC	SP E	SP E	SS	SS	SPE	SS	SS	SS	SPE	SS	SS
Achieved goals	SS	SP E	SS	SS	SS	SPE	SS	SP E	SP E	SPE	SPE	SPE

Figure 1. Patterns, relationships, & themes.

Repetitive terms that appear throughout the interviews are *peers pressure* in relation to challenges students face *family* when queried about source of motivation, *shame or shy* in reference to seeking help from the institution or help after receiving a no pass grade. The other mutual phrase used by students is simply *I don't know*. When asked why they think they did not pass, four students claimed they did not know because they

thought they were passing. Students are also redundant in comparing and contrasting their high school experiences to college life. Some described the big difference in instruction between high school and college, “I’ve enjoyed being in class, working with the teachers and also learn the steps of writing an essay because we haven’t do that in high school.” Other students do not know what motivates them, or what kind of help they can get from the institution or where to go to find help when an NP grade is received. Observations from the data finds most participants blame themselves, not the institution or the teachers for failure in class, for example, “I was too lazy”, “I was too busy with other things,” “I turned in homework late,” “I didn’t listen to the teacher,” and “I couldn’t ask questions, I was ashamed.”

Relationship of Research Question to Interview Questions

The RQ asked about the stories of students who fail their classes and the interview questions address students experiences, the challenges and the impact of these challenges on grades while taking remedial courses, and their opinions and beliefs about the services offered by the institution to pass classes. In addition, the interview questions also probed into the sacrifices students can make to pass classes, how they want to be motivated, and how their achievements of goals are hindered by failure. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of student failure through the stories of students taking English remedial courses at ASCC. The problem, which was the lack of understanding concerning this failure, was understood through the research process and data collection conducted at the English Language Department at ASCC. Emerging themes reveal

students had positive and negative experiences, they were somewhat confused about the program and many suggestions were offered in regards to improving the program.

Summary and Conclusion

Through these findings, a strategic plan would be implemented to inform the department and the institution of alternative methods and interventions to successfully render services to all students. It was revealed through student's stories their concerns, preferences, challenges, anticipations, fears, anxieties, beliefs and attitudes regarding learning and failure at the ELI department at ASCC. It was further revealed while teachers expect students to conform to college expectations; many are facing challenges at home, with their peers, and sometimes with themselves hindering achievement.

Important questions emerging from this study include the following:

- How can teachers facilitate inclusive learning environments fostering skills necessary for each student to pass?
- Should the institution collect data on its support services to measure its effectiveness against students who are failing?
- How can parents and the community become more involved in alleviating remedial student's challenges?
- How can remedial English instructors use findings from this study to inform change and intervention strategies?
- Why are students confused about many processes at the community college?

- What tangible evidence can be provided to ensure student's voices are heard?

It was realized that many aspects of education other than the student is responsible for student failure. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of student failure through their experiences. These experiences are speaking in volumes of poor tutoring services, deprived instructional strategies, high influences of peer pressure, rampant confusion of services available, pitiable study habits, negative perceptions of self and achievements and lack of focus and direction. It is important to note that while many students do experience positive learning in ELI, it is more important to realize that there is a need to improve in every aspect of learning in this department. Pertaining to the discussions from the interview, students are feeling ashamed, embarrassed, confused, isolated, and some are clearly lost due to the lack of English comprehension. Student's short answers are indicating their English vocabulary is very limited, or they are afraid I might inform their teachers of their feedback, although I had already explained to them the conditions of the consent form. Having students share these stories could be the most powerful assessment ever implemented in the ELI program. For years since the start of ASCC, stakeholders have presumed the causes of student failure, these presumptions of course targeted students as the primary source of their failure because they were in remedial English to begin with, and not about the institution, support services, instruction and other sources of motivation as realized in this study.

My immediate plan, once this study is approved and published, is to call a department meeting, disseminate the findings, discuss alternative methods of teaching the

curriculum, and identify all students potentially failing courses to be sent to me for counseling. I will enforce tutoring and follow-up plans for tutoring, and include a discussion of all services available during course orientations. A copy of the study will be disseminated to the Dean of Academic Affairs, and another to the Vice President of Academic Affairs to advocate for future studies or accommodations for all students taking remedial English courses.

Section 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This section begins with an overview of the study revisiting the issue of school failure, and a summary of the findings. It includes a discussion of the relationship between the findings, literature review, and conceptual framework as outlined in Section 1. I propose how social change is realized through the combined efforts of students, stakeholders, parents, teachers and administrators. I am advocating that specific parties pay close attention to the findings as positive educational changes are inevitable once collaborative efforts are exerted to help all students experiencing challenges with learning reading and writing in the ELI department at ASCC. I will recommend further study in the issue of school failure for Samoan students in related areas such as tracking, accountability of support, students with disability, gender, and administration perception.

Overview

This study was initiated to address the problem of failure students at the American Samoa Community college were experiencing with their remedial English courses. This study was conducted in the English language Institute Department where 12 participants who had received an NP with an English course or courses responded to 10 questions from the interview guide (Appendix B). The research question that directed this study was: What are the stories of a select group of students about school failure?

This inquiry was explained and clarified through a qualitative narrative analysis where participants expressed their stories and feedback regarding failure in school. Issues such as student's experiences, challenges, student's opinions about the impact of

challenges, support services that are available from the institution, sacrifices students needed to make to avoid failure, motivation sources and setting and achieving goals were examined and deliberated during the interview. From the data analysis, it was perceived students had both positive experiences with the program as a whole, negative experience with many challenges teenagers face hindering prioritizing school, many confusions about the support services offered by ASCC, and suggestions are voiced to improve the remedial program.

Interpretation of Findings

Conclusive findings revealed that students' positive attitudes and experiences towards the English remedial program (Table 3). However, their judgments shifted to negativism when queried about the challenges they face as students (Table 5). In addition, participants contended when challenges materialize, the results are generally compatible to negativity (Table 5). When students were forced to realize they needed support to pass their courses, they were asked to infer which support was preferable; the tutoring services or direct conferencing with instructors (Table 6). Students were informed of all accessible support services offered by the institution, a few had positive experiences after utilizing them, two were confused, and many others suggested conferencing with instructors is preferred (Table 7). When asked what sacrifices were needed to be made to pass a course, all participants except one who was confused made suggestions pertaining to a change of attitude or behavior on their part to achieve the desired grade (Table 8). Inquiring whether students sought help or not from the institution was important to identifying initial steps towards combatting the problem of failure.

It was revealed most students were either confused when receiving an NP grade or had received support and had something positive to say (Table 9). When students were asked to describe the quality of experiences they received in the program, the word “good” appeared intermittently throughout the interview in reference to teacher delivery, use of bilingualism, and quality of work expended. However, suggestions were also common in the areas of reducing the amount of homework, speaking slowly, and taking time to talk with students afterwards (Table 10). Students were very specific when queried about how they want to be motivated, opinions vary from home influences, seeing peers graduating, and teacher instruction and delivery (Table 12).

Receiving this feedback from students was an excellent resource to pass on to instructors for reflection and improvement. As the interview concludes, students were asked if they had goals and if they felt these goals were accomplished. Many of them had since made changes to their study habits and have passed their courses while others articulated the desire to implement relevant adjustments to their learning habits to achieve expected goals (Figure 1).

The findings of this study relate to the literature review to a large degree in the following areas: definition of failure (Whitted, 2011), accepting student voices to inform and guide learning (Toppel, 2012), the cultural differences between Samoans and western practices applied in schools (Sparapani, Byung-In Seo and Smith, 2011), bilingualism (Auerback, 2011), and the absence of motivation (Robbins et al., 2009). Failure as referred to in this study is attributed to the majority of students taking remedial English courses at ASCC and receiving an NP grade. Since there are multiple circumstances

contributing to this concern, this study seeks to identify through students stories why they failed.

There has not been a prior study done on this subject in this institution and while time progressed, stakeholders such as lawmakers, parents, administrators, and community members are expressing increased interests as to why this problem is recurring with students at ASCC every year. One notable component of failure for Samoan students is the conflict between their culture and the culture of western schools they attend on island. An example noted in this study involved students not comfortable speaking in large groups because they were taught as young children to remain quiet in the presence of guests, or not to speak out of rank. This cultural practice does not conform to school settings as students were expected to speak and respond at all times to the teacher. In essence, even if students know the answer, most likely they will not offer a response and oftentimes will not ask questions. Since questions are almost never asked, the end-result is always failure.

Other key elements highlighted in the literature are related to language. While conducting the interview, one participant had his interview entirely in Samoan. I wondered how this student was advancing in a course that uses an English text with a teacher who speaks English most of the time and assessments operated in English. Other participants reverted back and forth between English and Samoan, if students were unable to succinctly express opinions in a 30-40 minute interview, what was the real outcome in a course taught mostly in English 1 hour and 20 minutes long? This dilemma tied to the mandate of using of English only because as previously stated in the study,

more and more students are being left behind not comprehending content in school. The new governor's administration has now launched a massive effort in American Samoa to make the teaching of Samoan language and culture a priority and a requirement for all students in public schools.

The lack of motivation is attributed to a variety of factors, these factors clearly revealed through data analysis the struggles students face as teenagers. Peer pressure was a common motif with students who have experienced failure. Family, friends, living far away from college, other obligations and teacher instruction play a vital role in motivating students to avoid failure. While others were able to identify how they could be motivated to initiate change, there were still others who do not recognize they need motivation to achieve. Collectively, students are confused and this confusion later translates into failure.

The theoretical frameworks of this study were constructed from, first, Weiner's (1972, 1974) attribution theory. Weiner argues students can identify the causes of their failure and successes through their efforts. When they believe in their efforts, transforming them to completing tasks is possible. As seen with the findings of this study, many students do not know why they failed; they are unable to diagnose this failure to anyone because they are unable to identify the cause of failure.

Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory was equally relevant to this study because it contends behavior affiliates with the environment and with the people one associates. Peer pressure was a strong indicator of challenges students face contributing to failure; students modeled the behaviors of their peers who share the same attitudes and

beliefs while their self-efficacy is greatly diminished resulting in failure. Covington's (1985a, 1985b, 1987) self-worth theory claims an evaluation of self is closely related to ability exerted. Self-believing plays a vital role in influencing behavior whether it is positive or negative. It was important to have students believe in themselves because that is the first step in avoiding failure.

It was observed if more students believed in their abilities, they would not have earned an NP grade. The last component of the conceptual framework in this study was critical race theory (Calmore, 1992; Delgado, 2000; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002). These theorists assert white supremacy has oppressed among other themes, ethnicity, ability, race and religion. It further suggests the subordination of all cultural practices and conforming to the predominance of white which is believed to be normal and natural. This is very true in all Samoan schools and ASCC, the only college in American Samoa because all practices, instructions, activities, and assessments are done in accordance to standards of the U.S. As federal dollars are poured into the territory in the form of financial aids and various grants, the US expects its territories to comply or else lose funding. In the process, rigorous efforts are implemented, such as the strict teaching of the SAT test as a practicum while a simple element such as comprehension is generally ignored. Many students in the ELI come to college with extremely limited English; the critical race theory confirms the ambient influence of western practices in an indigenous classroom where students are failing to learn.

Implications for Social Change

The significance of gathering student's stories was so they would have a voice in their own learning at ASCC. These stories of failure as analyzed in Section 4 tell the process of why and how students believe they have failed and steps they foresee will help them out of these situations. This feedback is vital in informing curriculum, instruction, and support services for all students so they could pass all their ELI courses and move to college level courses.

One example of an important revelation from students in this study is teacher instruction, their concerns of "speaking slowly, or speaking too fast" so they could understand clearly will definitely be disseminated in a department meeting informing all instructors to assure content comprehension. The focus or the goal of finding and listening to students stories is to ultimately find the cause of failure and eliminate it to bring about positive change. Data revealed challenges students face, their recommended source of institutional support, motivation that works for them, and instructional methods employed by teachers that are contributing to this failure. It is my dream to now bring about these necessary changes not only for students in our department, but also for instructors who are tasked with the responsibility of teaching our remedial English students.

Samoa is a very small island in the South Pacific, changes usually start small and if effectively administered, it can impact people on a very large scale. Students in the ELI program need a change in their behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. When they believe in themselves, their attitudes of not doing homework or coming late to class will change.

Similarly, there will also need to be a change with their friends, their scheduling to avoid late arrival in school and sometimes a change in teacher so they would have preferences in which they feel comfortable learning from.

When students adopt these changes and start accomplishing in their courses, communities will be more receptive of a quality workforce coming out of ASCC. There will be fewer teenagers on streets dealing with drugs and alcoholism, fewer teens staying home coping with teenage pregnancy, and more in the workforce contributing to the economy of this island. Organizations will have a handful of skilled workers to fill different trades, the island will no longer have to hire off-island construction companies that are now prevalent because we are unable to secure students to do the job, and generally, there will be more people employed rather than staying home doing nothing.

The institution, legislative branch, and the community at large will no longer see them as a problem, but able students who can make a big difference in a very small place. Students will be so hungry for knowledge and teachers will be so eager to teach everyone will strive to be in school on time every day. Parents, teachers, and administrators will no longer cluster them as underachievers, but will execute sincerity and faithfulness in teaching these students well even before they reach college. These students will excel just like any students in any other culture, their whole perception of learning and life would enable them to promote rather than shun simple life in the Pacific Islands. They will use their indigenous knowledge to inform others about the importance of reserving natural resources, caring about the islands, and living healthier life styles by consuming local

plant-based diets. These and so much more our students are able to do as they bring about social change.

Recommendation for Actions

The results of this study shows a need in contesting problems causing failure such as peer pressure, living far away from college campus, family affiliations, teaching styles, embarrassment, comprehending the English language, being lazy, not turning in homework, and generally no sense of direction. College administrators need to pay attention to these results so appropriate support measures like materials, technologies, tutoring services, funding to hire more teachers, and accessible classrooms for students with disabilities are dispersed for student's success. Lawmakers also need to pay attention to these findings because they have accumulated an interest in the high rates of students entering the remedial program at ASCC since the last 5 years. As students are now telling their stories and some have actually made reference to not having learned much from high school, they should be interested in what really goes on in those high schools classrooms and how those activities are impacting students entering college.

All instructors teaching at ASCC should be aware of these findings because these students will be transferring to different disciplines or majors in college and instructors would have a better grasp of challenges students face so students could be accommodated academically. The ELI department would be the first group of people receiving these results as they deal directly with these students and the initiation of change in curriculum and instruction develops at this level. A thorough discussion of the outcomes of this study

will be the only topic of discussion in future meetings to dialogue on the necessary alterations to make to improve services to all students.

A copy of this study will be kept at the college library for students, a soft copy of the manuscript will be sent electronically to all ELI personnel, the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the VP of Academic Affairs for institutional distribution if need be. A hard copy of the study would be given to the chairman of the Education Committee in the House of Representatives for their review and discussion while another hard copy would be given to the Director of DOE to inform her of changes needed at the high school level.

Recommendation for Further Study

As the focus of this study correlates with the stories of students who have experienced failure with their remedial English courses, there remains other issues connected with failure that still requires close examination. Questions have emerged recommending further study in the future, these questions relate to the following issues:

- Gender
- Family and teacher impact on student failure
- Tracking students
- Providing quality services to students with disabilities
- Remediation in South Pacific schools
- Administration perception regarding remediation

As this is the very first study done on this group of students, I hope if I am not able to do another study on this topic, someone else will continue to seek answers to avoid failure for all our Samoan students having challenges with the English language.

Reflection

While the experience of researching in the same department in which I am now the chair is rewarding and the same time informative, I continuously wonder about the biases and my preconceived ideas going in to data collection and analyses. Although I have excluded any student who had me as a teacher to be in the study and all participants were reminded the interview had no bearing on their grades, I still felt some participants were trying to please me with their answers because I was a teacher here. For example, when I asked students about their experience in the ELI department, some said “good” or “very good” and stopped there. I did not understand whether they offered this answer and did not care to explain because I was part of the department or because their English was limited they did not want to elaborate. Other biases I had stemmed from the fact that I taught in this department for now 8 years.

English remediation is a topic I know so well and I am able to debate aggressively with anyone on this subject because it has become my passion. Before the study, my beliefs remained grounded on the fact students fail because of themselves, not anyone else. Given they are adults; they are able to make responsible choices that achieves or hinders success, we teachers, are only facilitators. After hearing students describe to me their lives at home, the challenges they face with parents, their child, or even the ridiculous expectations of teachers, my former beliefs shattered to pieces. I listened in awe as I began to picture myself in these students’ situations. As a result, I am more determined than ever to start implementing changes in the department. Even before the dissemination of the result of this study, I find myself thoroughly checking in with

teachers especially in classrooms of students with disabilities, asking students randomly around the halls how they are doing in their classes, contacting the tutoring services if students are there, checking teacher's assessment tools if they are aligned to courses outcomes, and requiring teachers to spend quality time simply talking and getting to know their students. I am reminded daily that I have a job because of the students, doing that job well determines the direction students take, when they strive for excellence and make a difference in the lives of other people, only then did I accomplish my work as a teacher and my way of thinking and behaving will continue to change for the better.

Concluding Statement

Students whether high achievers or low achievers are comparable to plants, when they are nurtured and cared for, they grow and produce, when they are neglected, they wither and show no signs of life. Remediation is not a problem specific to one culture or people, it is global and it merits attention because it adds to greater problems in education, society and life. Students who participated in this study are wonderful and bright people who are confused and are faced with many challenges in life.

The results of this study educated me that teachers have the power to change a life for good, or change a life for the worst. Teaching is a profession where tangible rewards are not seen immediately; it takes time to realize complete and fulfilling potentials reflected in the lives of students we touch. Failure in school like many other problems can be reversed; it takes a skilled and compassionate teacher to identify the source of the problem and gradually work to produce continuous positive changes, It takes a caring administration to ensure support necessary for student success, it takes concerned

lawmakers to determine actions to improve learning at all levels. The African proverb is literally truer in Samoa than probably in many places around the world, “it takes a village to raise a child” (Igbo & Nigeria, 1998).

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Appendix A: Interview Log

Interview Log					
Name(s) of Participants	Dates & Times	Length of Interview	Participant's Questions	Participant's Reaction to Question	Opinion, Explanation, Expressions of Feedback.
AA Eng 80	8-21-2014 12:40-1:25pm	45 Minutes			Takes time to explain response with hand gestures.
AB Eng 80	8-22-2014 2:30-3:00pm	30 Minutes			Answers with soft slow speech
AC Eng 80	8-21-2014 2:00-2:20pm	20 Minutes			Responses with slow facial expressions
AD Eng 90	8-20-2014 1:45pm	30 Minutes	Can you repeat the question please?		Long pause with confused facial expressions
AE Eng 91	8-20-2014 2:30-3:12pm	32 Minutes		Takes time to think of response	
AF Eng 91	8-20-2014 11-11:36pm	36 Minutes		Takes time to respond	Replied slowly with head bowed
AG Eng 91	8-20-2014 12:05-12:40pm	35 Minutes			Pauses a lot, makes small movements with her hands fidgeting
AH Eng 91	8-21-2014 11:11-42pm	42 Minutes			Negativity towards teachers
AI Eng 91	8-21-2014 12-	36 Minutes		Quick to respond Receptive of	Sometimes confused about questions

	12:36pm			questions	
AJ Eng 81	8-22- 2014 12- 12:40pm	40 Minutes		Willing, open, lacked the right words to describe response	Looked confused, shrugged shoulders with no reply.
AK Eng 91	8-22- 2014 1- 1:32pm	32 Minutes	Is the interview long?	Very receptive, thinks it's entirely student's fault for failing.	Very accommodating, open to discussion, informative
AL Eng 81	8-22- 2014 11:06- 11:40pm	34 Minutes	Can we speak Samoan?	Slow response, he thinks carefully about his answers	Slow response, takes time to think about his response.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Describe your experiences with your Reading and Writing courses in the English Language institute Department. For example, the curriculum, teacher delivery, assignments, or simply your interactions with other students.
2. What challenges do you face as a student? (Challenges may include language barrier, not having the appropriate materials, distance from the college, or feelings of inadequacy resulting from being placed in developmental courses). Can challenges be continuous?
3. How do these challenges impact your learning and ability to pass your English courses?
4. How would you like the institution to help you combat these challenges?
5. What specific assistance or support do you feel will be most helpful to you? Tutoring from the Student Center provided by the Student Services Department, tutoring from the Student Support Services (SSS) or direct conferencing with your teachers?
6. Do you need to make sacrifices to pass your classes? If so, what are they? Are you willing to stay after hours to be tutored? Are you willing to use the library services to improve your grades? Are you willing to partner with other students to complete a project?
7. Have you sought help from anyone here at the college concerning your grades? If yes, what was the outcome if no, why not?
8. How do you describe the quality and effectiveness of the assistance, service, and help rendered to you by your teachers or the college as a whole?
9. What motivates you as a student and how would you like to be motivated for example to study, attend class, read and comprehend novels, or write various modes of essays?
10. Did you have any goals for this class, if so, what are they? Did you feel you have achieved those goals at the end of the semester?

Curriculum Vitae

SIAMAUA ROPETI
s.ropeti@amsamoa.edu

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I have been teaching for a total of 19 years, I am bilingual and enjoy working with students. My passion is reading and I am always looking for opportunities to learn and interact with students and teachers. I am committed to my profession, work well with my supervisors and am very influential in my own work place.

SKILLS

- Course planning
- Creative instruction style
- Charismatic
- Fluent in Samoan and English]
- Best practices in on-line instruction
- Clear communicator of complex ideas
- Culturally-sensitive
- Enthusiastic

WORK HISTORY

College Accelerated Preparatory Program Chairperson, 08/2014 to Current
American Samoa Community College – American Samoa

- Fostered students' commitment to lifelong learning by connecting course materials to broader themes and current events.
- Taught introductory and upper level courses in English.
- Served on Assessment and Curriculum college committees and am the chair of the College Accelerated Preparatory Program
- Demonstrated a continued commitment to undergraduate teaching through full participation in the college community.
- Developed and delivered engaging lectures to undergraduate and graduate students.

Middle School Teacher, 08/2003 to 08/2005

American Samoa Department of Education – American Samoa

Taught levels 7 and 8 students

Worked as a mentor for Bachelor candidates with the University of Hawaii, Manoa.

Served in English Department committees

Presenter in Workshops during Professional Developments for teachers

Conduct after school tutoring programs for students

EDUCATION

Ed.D: Teacher Leadership, Current

Walden University - Minneapolis, MN

M.Ed: Curriculum and Instructions, 2006

University of Hawaii, Manoa - Honolulu, HI

B.Ed: Education, 2000

University of Hawaii - Honolulu, HI

Associate of Arts: Liberal Arts, 1988

American Samoa Community College - American Samoa