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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

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Understanding the Experiences of Latino Community College Students on Academic

Probation: A Case Study

Maria Paula McPherson

Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Higher Education

Floralba A. Marrero, Ed.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

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2019

Abstract

The academic standards and policies of institutions of higher education consider student underachievement, among the other aspects of education. Academic standing addresses the probation status designed to intervene and inform students who are unable to meet certain academic institutional standards. However, there is a lack of research discussing the experiences of community college students on academic probation (AP). This qualitative case study explored the perceptions of Latino college students experiences with AP at a large community college on the west coast of the United States. Specifically, the transitions of Latino students to college as previous studies have demonstrated that their difficult experiences during their first year of college determine whether they are placed on AP or drop out. Transition Theory and Student Departure Theory guide this research. Moreover, the data collection and analysis characterize the participants' experiences from which recommendations for the academic community were developed. Findings reveal that students experience stress during AP intervention and do not receive either enough academic support or knowledge on institutional policies before the intervention takes place. These findings can help higher education institutions understand the obstacles of students, especially Latino college students on AP, in maintaining the required academic standards and consequently assist them to retain and persist to complete their degree like their counterparts.

Keywords: underrepresented college students, Latino, academic probation

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Gary McPherson, who challenged and inspired me. Thank you for your love, patience, encouragement, and support during the endless hours and days I spent working on it. You have always been with me, helping me realize my dreams. I love you!

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My parents for teaching me to be a resilient person and always work on my education to make my life better than theirs.

My brothers, Luis, Marcus even though they live in a different country, I felt they were on my side motivating me to finish this journey. Thank you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The number of minority students who lack academic preparation and financial resources to commence their education in colleges and universities has been a common problem in higher education (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 2012; Jenkins, 2015). Further, family obligations often compel minority students to attend institutions that offer the most flexible academic arrangements (Altbach et al., 2012; Jenkins, 2015). For students who work to support themselves and their families, time is a significant barrier to the completion of their educational goals. Many are not ready to transfer to college-level coursework, and for students in pre-college courses, this means they may not complete college at all (Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2015). These challenges for students from disadvantaged communities delay their education, given the few alternatives for achieving their degrees.

Studies suggest that minority students, many of them Latinos, are more likely to experience academic difficulties and consequently have a higher dropout rate than other students (Gandara et al., 2012; Marrero, 2016; Tovar, 2015). This academic gap continues to widen for minority students, many of whom are on academic probation (AP) due to multiple stress factors that can affect their academic preparation. Academic probation is used by institutions of higher education to help such students increase their grades over the course of a semester or quarter (Arcand, 2013; Houle, 2013). However, a significant number of them do not reach a satisfactory level of academic performance. Houle (2013) reports that approximately 25% of students are dismissed from higher education institutions for not achieving satisfactory academic standing. These stress factors not only affect students' performance in college but in the long term, they also affect these youths' job opportunities (Altbach et al., 2012; Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2015). Student attrition is a critical issue in higher education. Latino students make up a significant number of students who

enroll in college, but their educational attainment is far behind other groups of students (Excelencia in Education, 2017).

Background

Since community colleges offer open enrollment for students, many of the minority students arrive underprepared for the rigors of college and do not perform well in some of their courses (Jenkins 2015; Price & Tovar, 2014). Although the institutions provide academic support for these students, sometimes this support is not enough for them. The lack of academic preparedness and sustainable and ongoing support may increase attrition; students become frustrated and abandon their academic pursuit. These factors contribute to the low college completion rates among minority students. A Pew Research Center (2016) study reported that “Hispanics still lag other groups obtaining a four-year degree. In 2014, Hispanics age 25–29, only 15% of them have a bachelor’s degree or higher. By comparison, among other groups, about 41% of Whites have a bachelor’s degree or higher” (Para. 3). Open enrollment is important for many minority students, but the college must be prepared for the extra attention many of these students may require.

Studies show that Hispanics take more time to complete a bachelor’s degree than other groups because they do not enroll as full-time students and usually go to a 2-year community college (Pew Research Center, 2016). The need for improved access to education for the minority population has motivated community colleges to offer support for a diverse population by providing low-cost education and a variety, of course, options (Price & Tovar, 2014). However, promoting access alone does not ensure that students will graduate. The significant growth in the number of people looking for higher education over the last 150 years has brought about changes in education policy. There is a need to increase the number of qualified professionals, particularly in areas of industry and technology (Altbach et al., 2012).

There have been many changes in access to higher education. In 1945, the GI Bill started helping returning soldiers to earn their degree. The Civil Rights Act and the Financial Aid and the Higher Education Act of 1965 made college education more affordable for minorities, who were previously excluded from access to higher education (Altbach et al., 2012). Altbach et al. (2012) mentioned that the increase in the number of community colleges from 1960 to 1970 was more than one per week. Today, more students are looking to improve their education and their knowledge in the hope of bolstering their chances of employment.

Many institutions of higher education have addressed these issues by offering more support and programs to help at-risk students. An example of this type of initiative in community colleges are the TRIO programs. The TRIO Programs are federally supported programs designed to outreach and support participants from the disadvantaged student population (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2019, para. 1). The TRIO was started in 1964 and launched in 1968 with three programs to support students' access to pipeline opportunities (U.S. DOE, 2011, para.1). Studies show that retention of students and their degree completion are critical indicators for institutions to measure their quality of services (Bailey, 2017; Jenkins 2015; Tinto, 2012). The retention of at-risk students is an ongoing problem that educators have been studying for the past decade (Achieving the Dream, 2016; Lumina Foundation, 2015; Tinto, 1975). Many studies have demonstrated the importance of providing more support for students after high school to help them be better prepared for the transition to college. As already mentioned before, many Latino students do not complete the transition to college as successfully as ethnic-majority students (Excelencia in Education, 2017; Tovar, 2015).

The high cost of tuition and the increasing student loan debt have given rise to a situation where students look for open access in community colleges and public universities. The need for improved access to education for minority populations brought the Achieving the Dream (ATD)

initiative to many colleges. The Lumina Foundation started the ATD initiative in 2004, and it is based on an evaluation of the student's needs. The ATD wants to build values of equity and excellence in services among institutions of higher education. The Lumina Foundation believes that Federal policy could motivate changes in higher education. Today, the ATD is working with over 220 colleges to help students build a better future (ATD, 2016). The ATD is committed to providing academic opportunities to underserved students, in the hope that this will help the economy by creating a more educated population of potential employees.

Problem Statement

Many Latino students enter college academically underprepared and end up on academic probation (AP) or drop out of college because of the lack of preparation. This study addresses the problem of AP due to the low academic achievement of minority college students, specifically Latino college students. These students have a significantly lower graduation rate compared with other groups (Excelencia in Education, 2017). Unprepared college students have a lower possibility of completing college-level coursework, with a higher likelihood of being placed on AP. Studies have shown that access to higher education for minorities is not equivalent to their academic readiness, and this situation has contributed to the issue of attrition (Tierney & Sablan, 2014; Tinto, 1975; Tovar, 2015). The number of Hispanic and African-American students who completed high school on time is less than 60% (Gaertner et al., 2014). Also, about 60% of students at nonselective colleges and universities, and 30 % at selective colleges meet the required criteria for acceptance by the various institutions, but lack preparation for the college level. Even in selective institutions, 10% of the new students are still not ready for college (Gaertner et al., 2014).

A study about academic achievement among first-year university students demonstrated that almost “one thousand students each year of the two most recent cohorts of entering freshman

did not return for their second year” (Indiana State University [ISU], 2013, para.1). ISU (2013) relates the new student retention to students’ educational achievement. Students on AP are less likely to return to the institution than students who were not on AP. Students that were dismissed did not try to appeal (ISU, 2013). This study demonstrated that “while poor academic performance does negatively impact retention, over 80% of entering students meet university requirements for continued enrollment. Approximately 30% of those are not retained to the second year” (ISU, 2013, para. 7). This study also pointed out that during the fall of 2011, “85 of every 100 students were eligible to return, but only 71 of them returned” (ISU, 2013, para.7). This study demonstrated that although academic performance is essential, there are other issues also impacting the students’ decision to leave (ISU, 2013).

Studies have shown the importance of persistence as a motivational factor for students in pursuit of their degrees (Bean & Eaton, 2001; Price & Tovar, 2014; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Intervention programs can teach essential skills for students (Renzulli, 2015; Seirup & Rose, 2011). Yeager and Dweck (2012) stated that students could change their mindset and develop strategies to improve resilience in any area they want. However, unprepared college students face many challenges; studies show that improved self-efficacy skills increase students’ chances for better performance while on AP (Barouch-Gilbert, 2015; Houle, 2013). These studies demonstrated how students on AP adopted attitudes that guided them to persistence in college.

Study Topic

The intent of my study was to understand the experiences of minority college students who were once on AP. I aimed to identify how these individuals worked toward satisfactory academic standing and to develop targeted services that can be offered to these students. Much can be learned from this information, such as what did and do not work for the students, what services were most helpful, and how colleges can improve student support. Based on the responses from

the students, colleges might be better prepared for students on AP. The study tried to discover whether the college lacks resources, or if the resources were available and they were used to fit the students' needs.

This qualitative study aimed to attempt to discover, describe, and understand how these students managed the probation period. AP can happen anytime, especially when students are transitioning to college. Probationary status is indicative of attrition and longer college completion time, more than the traditional 4-year degree tenure (DePaul, n.d.). The probation phase demonstrates that students are experiencing academic difficulties, with grades falling below the minimum acceptable according to the standards of the higher education institutions, which is below "C" or 2.0 on a 4.0 scale (Bellevue College, 2018; Federal Student Aid, 2013; Pierce College, 2017).

The theories presented by Schlossberg, Walters, & Goldman (1995) and Tinto (1975, 1993) served as the theoretical framework for this study. The theories were the transition theory and Tinto's departure theory. Tinto (2012) studied actions that colleges and universities must take for students to complete their education. The author found that the retention initiatives start with the commitment from the institution to their students, followed by the students' experiences in the classroom, and on campus. My study sustained the theories presented by Schlossberg and Tinto, as I examined the attitudes and behaviors required of students to persist in their education. Students can have academic difficulties while adjusting to their college life, and the student is often placed on AP for reasons which could be connected to one or more factors. These problems are health issues, financial concerns, lack of family support, or students just being unprepared for the rigor of college courses (Barouch-Gilbert, 2015; Houle, 2013).

Tinto (1993) established that a lack of social integration could cause challenges in academic outcomes for an educational institution. Studies have demonstrated that this is true,

especially among freshman students (Burd & McGrath, 2012). In the past, minority students transitioning to college did not receive equal support as other students; this, in addition to their being academically under prepared, led to attrition. Many institutions try to help these students by improving programs, services, and creating new institutional policies; they offer services to help students meet academic challenges. However, they still have problems retaining unprepared students.

Many of the current studies focus on students attending 4-year universities, but underrepresented students often attend community colleges (Jenkins, 2015; Price & Tovar, 2014). There is a lack of studies on the needs of students in the community college system, especially when they are deficient in their academic performance. The Schlossberg transition theory was used in this study and illustrated the changes and challenges that happen in students' lives and how students might cope. Students might feel that college life is very intimidating, and the academic challenges and consequent low grades may result in dismissal (Burd & McGrath, 2012). Tinto (1987) referred to this process as an involuntary departure.

Research Questions

These questions were designed to provide an understanding of the lack of academic and social integration for students' academic progress. Tinto (1975) mentioned how essential it is for students to develop relationships with others (faculty, staff) on the campus for students to succeed. Existing theories suggest that students' commitment and readiness to learn (persistence) are critical skills that students need to develop to complete college (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995; Knowles, 1980; Tinto, 1975). Accordingly, the following four questions guided this study:

1. How do students describe their experiences with academic probation?
2. What experiences lead students to acquire an academic probation status, and what do they experience while on probation?

3. What factors do students attribute their transition into satisfactory academic standing to?
4. What happens to students after they leave academic probation status? What lessons do they learn from the experience?

Significance

This literature review explored issues faced by students on AP. This research will assist students, educators, and other professionals in Student Affairs to improve resources and develop best practices for underrepresented college students on AP. The dropout rate of students is still an ongoing issue, although the 10.9 % student dropout percentage declined to 5.9 % in 2015 (NCES, 2017). In 2015, the status of dropout of Hispanic students was the highest at 9.2%, for Black students it was 6.5 %, and for White students 4.6 % (NCES, 2016).

As a response to the increasing number of students on AP, scholars have tried to identify the barriers for these students and the means by which they could improve their grades and self-efficacy (Bailey, 2017; Houle, 2013; Jenkins, 2015). When a student experiences AP, they go into their first term holding an unrealistic performance expectation. A study that evaluated first-year students from 100 colleges and universities in the United States demonstrated that 34% of such students intended to improve their grades and exit AP (Skyfactor, 2017). In the second term, the behaviors of students that improved their grades were compared to the ones who did not improve during that term. The students that improved their grades were less likely to miss a class and had better academic habits during that second term than the students who did not improve. Students who did not improve did not appear or missed courses compared to the previous quarter.

Skyfactor's (2017) study demonstrated that all the students that were on AP during the fall quarter used more academic support. In the spring quarter, for students who had improved their grades, 6% attributed their success to changes in their academic habits, such as doing their

homework more diligently compared to their first term. The 6% of students who improved in the spring completed more of the required coursework than they had before in the first term. The students who did not improve were 3% less likely to finish the required coursework (Skyfactor, 2017). This study concluded that students who remained on AP had different behaviors and less motivation than the group of students that improved their grades and left AP.

The American Institute for Research [AIR] (2011) mentioned that approximately \$4 billion was spent by the government over five years on full-time first-year community college students who dropped out without finishing any certificate or degree programs. The number of students who did not return for the second year was 20%. This report mentioned that a significant amount of money was spent on students who dropped out in their first year, which was 35% more than years before. The report indicated the vital role community colleges have in providing support for the community. When the community colleges started, their focus was on retraining students for the workforce. The purpose of community colleges might not be only professional and technical courses, and the transfer degree option is also very appealing to many college students.

Community Colleges have developed initiatives such as Achieving the Dream (ATD) to reinvent strategies to support and improve access for minority students (ATD, 2016). The student population at colleges and universities have increased in number and diversity. Institutions have been trying to develop strategies to support students. Scholars have mentioned the importance of the amplified use of academic services and more student activities in the campus to support students. Studies show that student engagement is essential and could improve the institution graduation rates and consequently students' retention (Altbach et al., 2012; Jenkins, 2015).

Definitions of Terms

The following key terms relate to the experiences of the participants and phenomenon of interest used throughout this study; the expressions are explained below, for reader clarity.

AP. AP refers to an institutional intervention that a student is subject to when they do not possess an accumulative GPA higher than 2.0.

Community colleges. Traditionally, community colleges are 2-year post-secondary institutions of higher learning that offer options such as preparation for transfer to a 4-year college or university. With open access to post-secondary education, it provides a low-cost education offering a variety of workforce development and skills training courses and other noncredit programs such as English as a Second Language, community enrichment, and others (Homeland Security, 2012).

Underserved student. Underrepresented racial minorities in higher education, low-income, and low academic achievement (MCNC, n.d).

Minority. Part of the group that differs from the whole group and are frequently subject to unequal treatment from the entire group. These differences are race, gender, and national origin among others (Konkel, 2015; Merriam-Webster, 2018).

Academic Progress. Institution policy which requests that students keep a good standing in their coursework or a GPA higher than 2.0 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Retention. The capability of institutions of higher education to maintain students from admission to completion of the degree (Merriam-Webster, 2018).

Persistence. Most of the literature demonstrated a consensus that persistence is associated with students' motivation toward a goal (Tripodi, 2010).

Attrition. The student decides not to re-enroll in the institution in the following quarter or semester (Dictionary, 2018). A reduction or decrease in numbers.

Dismissal. The institution action of declining a student or students in their enrollment system.

Grade Point Average (GPA). Characterizes the average value of all the grades received

during a semester or quarter divided by the same number of grades (Education Reform, 2013).

Academic integration. Institution essential characteristics that help and impact students inside campus and in the surrounding areas of the campus environment. An institution's environment plays the part of a stimulant, supporting students to connect with its services; these services are peer interactions, the physical environment of the institution, academic support, and others (Astin, 1968, Tinto 1975; Tovar, 2015).

Latino(s). Refers to individuals or communities from Latin America and South America. There is a connection between the groups Hispanic and Latino (Diffen, n.d.).

Hispanic term. Relates to the Spanish culture and history. In South America, "Brazilians are an example of Latinos that are not Hispanic" (Diffen, n.d., para.1). Brazilians speak Portuguese. Both terms are related to ethnicity, but in the United States they are often confused to allude to a single race (Diffen, n.d.).

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

Assumptions. This study used a qualitative approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences of being on AP at a two-year community college. Latino college students present specific needs during the transition to college. Qualitative research allows for a holistic and flexible approach to studying a phenomenon in a real manner (Yin, 2009). Qualitative research also provides for an in-depth and productive investigation into the understanding and insights about people involved in certain situations or events (Creswell, 2013, Yin, 2009). This researcher assumed that the findings of this case study would extend the discussion on improvement of services for this specific population. Also assumed truthful answers from participants.

Delimitations. Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) explained case study delimitations control the parameters of a study. The discussion of the academic probation intervention experienced by

college students at a specific college in the United States are characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of this study. This study is also delimited by the recruitment of Latino students who experienced academic probation intervention.

Limitations. The data collected in this study represented students who experienced academic probation at a specific institution. The results may not be transferable to other institutions but perhaps to similar populations. I also assume that respondents answered truthfully. The lack of existing research on college students on AP presents a limitation to this study as well as an opportunity for expanding the discussion. Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) explained that the limitations of the qualitative study enable the researcher to suggest continued research.

Chapter 1: Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a background for the defined problem through a succinct overview of the literature. An examination of the existing research shows that there is currently a gap in the literature; to be precise, there is insufficient understanding of the experiences of community college students who have been on AP (Houle, 2013; Renzulli, 2015).

Chapter 2 contains the literature review and explains the foundational, conceptual, and theoretical framework that helps synthesize the research. It presents an organized theme of students on AP and community college initiatives for supporting unprepared students. The literature review represents the knowledge centered on the importance of academic support for diverse student populations. In examining studies of students on AP, little has changed about the poor academic performance of student. The dissertation includes Chapters 1 to 5: Chapter 1 is the introduction to the study; Chapter 2 is the literature review; Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to investigate this phenomenon; Chapter 4 includes the analysis and findings of the investigation; and Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature related to college students on AP. AP refers to a cautionary status that demonstrates that the students are experiencing academic problems and that they need to improve their grades as required by the specific institutional policy. Institutions are expected to track the GPA assessment of its students. Students must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress (SAP) at their institution of higher education (U.S Department of Education, n.d.). Most institutions expect its students to achieve satisfactory grades to complete their degrees, at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or a “C” grade (Fastweb, 2018).

The SAP is a policy that determines whether students might receive financial assistance under the Title IV and remain enrolled at the specific institution (Bartnicki, 2013). If students do not meet the minimal GPA required by the institution, then they will be placed on AP. After the students are on AP and they are unsuccessful in improving their grades, they are then dismissed from the institution (Bellevue College, 2018; Pierce College, 2017; University of California, 2017). The number of students dismissed is significant; Houle (2013) reported that approximately 25% students are dismissed from higher education institutions for poor academic performance.

While searching the literature for this study, the databases utilized were Education Database (ProQuest) and ERIC (ProQuest), to retrieve education articles, scholarly articles and books, and peer-reviewed reports. The keywords used for search to guide the research were: AP, self-regulation, time management skills, academic support services, academic persistence, retention, community college, success, graduation, minority students, academically underprepared, family involvement, and college access. These were accessed through the Concordia University Virtual Library and other internet sources.

Many minority students have attended community colleges in the past years (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 2012; Jenkins, 2014). Tovar (2015) mentioned that most of these

underserved students, generally Latino students, have increased their participation number in higher education. Tovar (2015) suggested that most of these students required more academic assistance as compared to other students, and were more likely to drop out of college. While examining the studies and comparing the findings regarding the students on AP, little has changed about the poor performances of students on the national, state, and local assessment levels (ATD, 2016; Jenkins, 2014).

The topic of this study, which is important and under researched, benefits the institutions, educators, staff that work with students who are on AP, and students. Although the national statistics for AP students are not tracked, it is estimated that about 20% of new students at four-year institution will finish the first year of college in academic risk (CCRC, 2018). Since students on AP make up a large percentage of the institutions' student population and have specific needs, the lack of research regarding this subject reveals the gap and the necessity for more studies in this area (Hougaard, 2013; Houle, 2013; Lundberg, 2014). This study might also help the institutions examine the services and types of support provided to the students on AP. It intended to highlight the experiences of minority students on AP and, by receiving feedback from students, educators, and institutions of higher education might better evaluate their services for their students. When colleges understand, know the needs of its students, they will be better able to assist and retain them (DeVilbiss, 2014; Tinto, 1993). Institutions might change and improve their services for the students who are on AP. The literature review investigates prior research on the topic of students with academic difficulties and factors that contribute to students' success.

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

Maxwell (2005) presented conceptual frameworks as something that is constructed and pointed out that theoretical frameworks "is something that you build, not something that exists ready-made" (p. 35). A description of a conceptual or theoretical framework contributes to a

research report by identifying the research variables and clarifying the relationships among those variables (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). The foundational conceptual framework of qualitative descriptive research underscores the premise of this study. The qualitative research study collects the descriptive data rather than the numerical data, and instead of starting with a hypothesis, the study ends with one. The collected data is based on the perceptions of the participants. In qualitative research, rather than trying to measure the students' attitudes toward school or something related to school, the researcher looks to discover what the students like or dislike about the school through the experiences and ideas that they themselves share. The students might be interviewed or be observed in class, or they might keep a reflective journal to write about a phenomenon under this study (Carrol & Morrell, 2010; Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

Transition theory: Chickering and Schlossberg's 4S. This theory focuses on the transitions that adults experience during their life and the way they cope up with these transitions (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995). When a transition occurs, a change happens in the way an individual act, thinks, and feels. This portion of the theory focuses on the impact a person experiences, the transition process, and the perception of the development. The second part includes their coping mechanisms. Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) named the changes that occur in individuals while experiencing transitions as "the 4S's which are resource system of support, situation, self, and strategies" (p.45).

Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012) mentioned that in the final component of the theory, the outcome takes charge of the transition that revolves around the individual strengthening the resources such as academic advisors, counselors and other institutional support. Depending on the way the individual views these resources, these can either help during this time or make the transition more difficult for him/her. Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) examined how changes are approached by adults in their transition to college through adapting and moving out of college.

A person is impacted by transition every time a new situation presents itself, such as a loss in the family, a new job, or a new challenging degree opportunity. The person might develop strategies to respond, in the form of actions to respond to transitions.

Professionals in higher education have used this theory to understand college students in their many different phases. Some studies applied this theory because it addresses the students' transitional needs (DeVilbiss, 2014). Some examples of these needs include: understanding the international students' transition to a United States' institution, first-generation students' transition to college, high school students, and military veterans transitioning to college. For students on AP, it might be a temporary transition phase that requires a new focus on time management skills to show excellent academic progress (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012; Tovar & Simon, 2006). A freshmen student attending college is an expected transition but being placed on AP by the end of first quarter or semester is an unexpected event. This might happen for different reasons: family issues, poor health, loss of a job, etc (Claborn & Kane, 2012; DeVilbiss, 2014; Houle, 2013; Tinto, 1993). Whatever the reason might be, the situation is stressful and will require a transition as a reaction, as a response, or in changes in behaviors to address it. The theory also describes the resources for academic advisors or counselors to use for helping the students to cope in this transition.

The transition theory assists students in multiple stages of their transitions, such as being on AP. Academic advisors help students identify the challenges and help to develop strategies to help them succeed through AP. The students might need to reflect and focus on alternatives.

Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012) named four categories to assist individuals in their transitions. In the probationary status, the students might reflect (self) on what contributed to the situations or behaviors that led them to the probationary status; what factors (situation) caused them to have low grades. The students might develop a support system or create a type of support

that they will need to move forward and which techniques (strategies) to use to resolve a stressful situation.

Preparing first-year students to be aware of the difficulties they may have in college and teaching them coping mechanisms are essential skills that academic affairs' professionals should possess. The students might self-advise and choose a major because of their parents or because of pressure from the current career trends. Stress in finding the best fit for a future career might cause the new students to let their grades slip. The changes that happen with these new students until they graduate might result in "changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles" (Schlossberg, Walters, & Goodman, 1995, p. 27). The transitions faced by college students (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006) is demonstrated below (Figure 1).

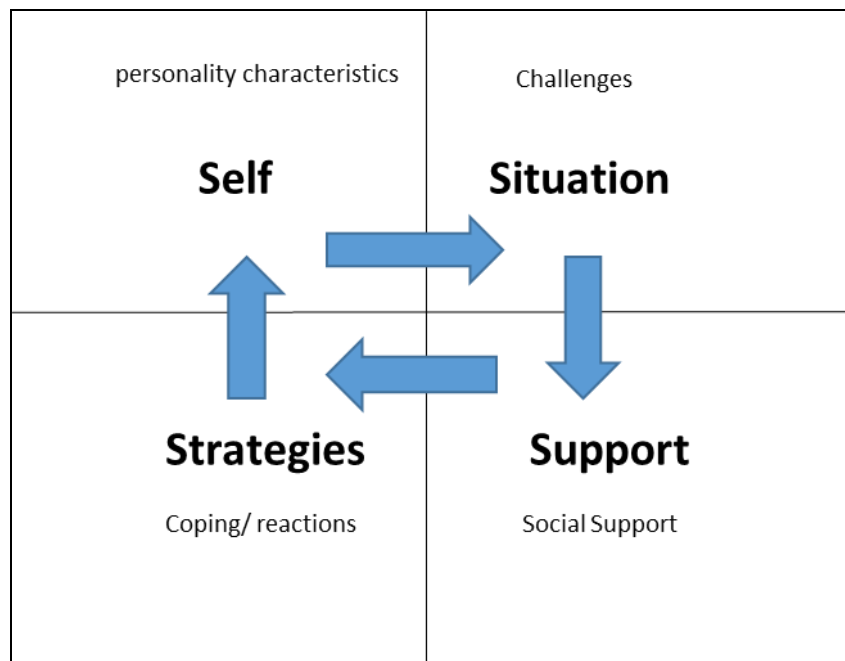


Figure 1. The Details of the 4S's Coping Resources.

Tinto's theory of student departure. Student retention is an important subject investigated by several authors who have developed models and theories with different viewpoints. The student departure theory remains relevant even now. The theory illustrates the importance of

students being integrated into the college environment and that they have the necessary support from the institution to succeed (Astin, 1968; ATD, 2016; Bailey, 2017; Hoover, 2014; Tinto 1975). Hoover (2014) focused on student persistence which emphasized that students need to integrate into their academic and campus' social environment to persist in their degree goals. Tinto (1975) Bean (1983) and Hoover (2014) agreed that when students integrate into campus life, it leads to their academic progress and commitment to degree completion. The authors acknowledged that students entered higher education with personal characteristics and needs, such as socioeconomic level, family support, and cultural and social values; these also affect their social integration and academic outcomes (Astin, 1993; Long, 2012; Tinto, 1975). They also mentioned that student departure originates from three areas, specifically, academic problems, students lack of integration with the institution, and lack of commitment toward the institution (Astin, 1993; Bean & Eaton, 2002; Long, 2012 & Tinto, 1975). Tinto (1975) suggested the importance of these three areas for student college retention and, consequently, student success.

Campus events help students to commit to the institution. When students become attached to the institution, they feel valued in participating in campus activities and feel integrated with the institutional norms, such as SAP. Student connection with instructors and staff is essential for the accomplishment of their degrees and, to increase efficiency of the institution. As stated by many authors, it is critical that students feel that they are a part of the institution and feel welcome with the campus culture (Bowden & Garza, 2014; Long, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 2006). This process involves intellectual capacity but also helps in developing others skills, where the students can use them when they study and connect with others daily (Long, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 2006; Tinto, 2012).

Tinto (1975) noted that students' characteristics influence their commitment to an institution and their persistence in completing a degree. These characteristics include

socioeconomic status, family history, ethnicity, gender, and experiences in high school and pre-college. Student personal attributes, such as socioeconomic status and financial stress might result in academic difficulties (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 2012; Hoover, 2014; Jenkins, 2014; Tinto, 1993; Tovar, 2015). Demetriou and Schmitz (2011) suggested that institutions might require group-specific interventions and policies. When comparing Caucasian students with a minority students from different groups, such as Latino or Afro American, students from the latter group are more likely not to finish the degree (Tinto, 1975; Vega et al., 2012).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2017) reported the number of full-time students across racial groups who completed a bachelor's degree within six years. "The 6-year graduation rate in 2014 was 60 percent for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor's degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in fall 2008" (NCES, 2017, para.1). The Asian graduation rates were 71%, that is, the highest as compared to other ethnic groups (NCES, 2017). Minority groups often have lower socioeconomic status and, therefore, might leave college for financial reasons. Students who don't complete their courses with satisfactory grades along with the high cost of education has generated concern regarding students' college persistence (Burrus, 2013).

Studies have shown that race and socioeconomic status can be interrelated (Tinto, 1993; Tovar, 2015). Minority, low-income students have fewer opportunities to have a better quality of education and because of this, they may enter lower tiered colleges (Allen, 2010). Schools with unqualified high school teachers and limited resources do not prepare these students for the rigors of college. Studies suggest that these student populations often face difficulties in high school (Martinez & Welton, 2014). These challenges that students confront and how these challenges influence their motivation can result in academic failure (Bowden & Garza, 2014; Tovar, 2015). The students' motivation guides them to persist and can positively or negatively

influence their purpose in finishing their degrees (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012; Bean & Eaton, 2002; Bowden & Garza, 2014; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). The institutional support services and their commitment to make students integrate into the college culture (Tinto, 1994) is demonstrated in Figure 2.

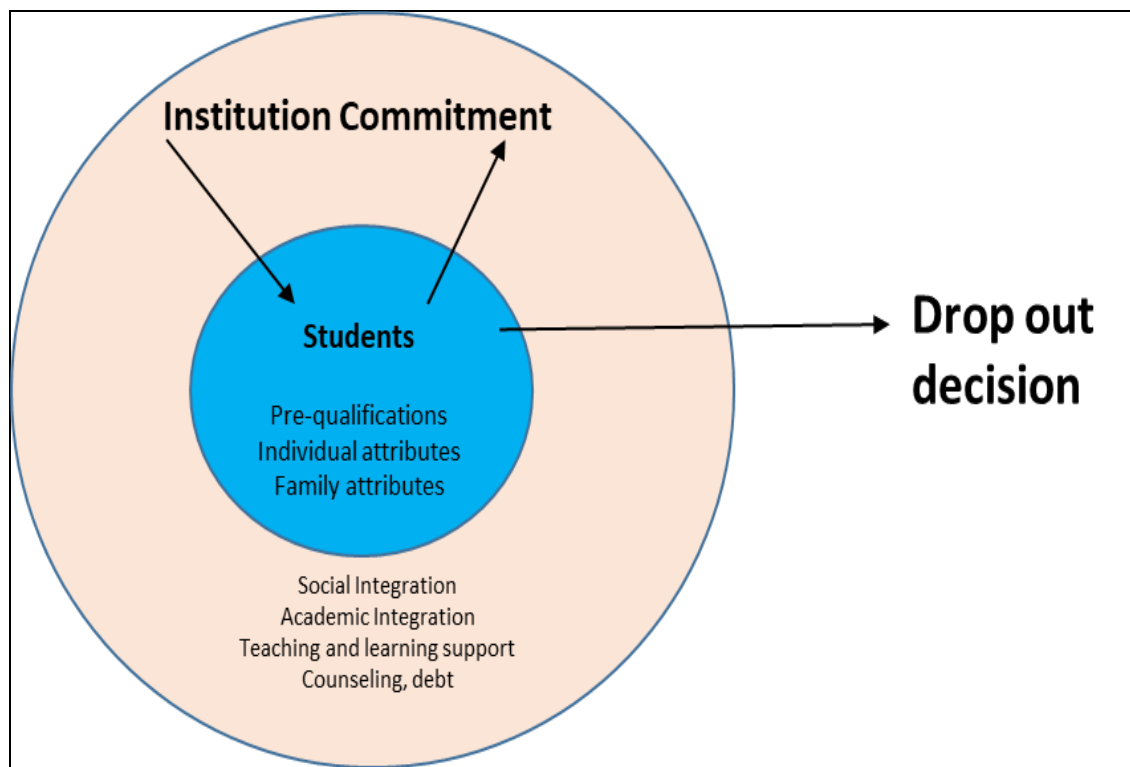


Figure 2. Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (Tinto, 1994).

Argument of Discovery and Advocacy

The argument of discovery provides findings of facts that represent the current state of knowledge regarding a research topic (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). In other words, this describes what we know about the subject of our study. The argument of advocacy is based on claims that have been proven (evidence) as facts and serve as the premises for logically arriving at a conclusion. Conclusions can be drawn as a response to the research questions (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). When starting the literature review, we build the argument of discovery. By

conducting the literature critique, we create a new thought that is the argument of advocacy. In this continuing process that “moves from identification to the explanation to the prediction to control” (Machi & McEvoy, 2016, p. 110), questions can be answered based on exact reasoning.

Review of the Research and Methodological Literature

Schlossberg’s (1995) transition theory is appropriate regarding the adult learners or for those returning students who had stopped their education and then decided to come back later to pursue it. Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) developed studies for first-year students within their transition to higher education and helped them realize the ways to work through the problems of transition. There are many minority students with issues, such as inadequate academic preparation and lack of financial resources in colleges (Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Tovar, 2015). Also, when family obligations are added to these issues they must work through, these students often look for institutions that offer a more flexible schedule (Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). For students who work to support themselves and their family members, time is a significant barrier to the completion of their education. For many college students who do not complete their courses’ sequences, enrolling in remedial courses does not guarantee that they will finish their degrees (Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2014).

Tovar and Simon’s study (2006) focused on minority students, particularly Latino students who were on AP when they started their transition to a community college. This study was guided by two research questions: (a) “Do students of different ethnicities and gender differ in their levels of academic success? (that is, probationary status?), and (b) Do probationary students from different backgrounds differ in reported levels of academic motivation, general coping . . . as measured by the College Student Inventory (CSI) (p. 554)?” This study used mixed methods of research which used descriptive statistics that were initially derived for the College Student Inventory (CSI) and a demographic questionnaire. Probationary students were measured in this

research on the effects of gender and ethnicity on readiness, commitment to college, students' academic motivation, coping mechanisms and other personal factors (Tovar & Simon, 2006).

The findings of this study suggested that Latino students were the most frequent group placed on AP, with 37% of the group on AP. This number was a significant and no other group of students on AP exceeded Latino students. These students stated that they would continue having academic difficulties and might even drop out. The African-American and Latino students were concerned with losing their financial assistance during their academic probationary status. This study relates to my topic as I am describing the difficulties that college students on AP face while pursuing their education and the strategies students used to gain SAP. This study also used the Schlossberg's transition theory to evaluate how students of different ethnicities described different motivations, coping mechanisms, and receptivity to academic support services. This theory addressed the students' transitional needs, especially for the underprepared community college students.

Students on AP. Institutions of higher education have policies that require a minimum of 2.0 cumulative GPA for students to advance academically and complete their coursework on the path to degree completion. The Higher Education Act states that students on financial aid system, to graduate, require "students to have at least a grade C or must have an academic standing consistent with your school's graduation requirements" (Department of Education, 2012, p. 8). When students are not in good standing, having less than 2.0 GPA, they might be put on AP and given a chance to improve their grades. Students with lower grades than the minimum college standards might be placed on AP; this is based upon a college's AP policy. Institutions of higher education expect students to be academically successful. If students are showing deficient academic progress, they might be suspended or excluded although, there are institutions that allow students to appeal and come back after time away (Bellevue College, 2018; Pierce College, 2017).

Flynn (2015) conducted a study focused on students who were on AP. Flynn (2015) wanted to evaluate the GPA of students before and after they received a semester of academic support. Flynn (2015) used quantitative methods, that is, a “two-tailed paired samples t-test to analyze the data” (p. 192). Flynn (2015) compared the mean and standard deviation (SD) before and after the students had academic support. The participants were separated based on demographics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and race. This study showed increased grades for all the students who effectively used academic support services. This study shows the importance of tracking students on AP and the importance of academic support services for the students that are having academic difficulties.

In another study, Renzulli (2015) investigated the relationship among college student’s academic accomplishment and their learning process. Renzulli (2015) used qualitative and quantitative methods along with interviews, discussions, and surveys with the participants. In this study, Renzulli (2015) measured the GPA of students on academic probation before and after the three weeks Learning Skills Course (LSC). The mandatory three-week LSC included teaching the students’ strategies for academic success.

Students learned rereading content, time management, and self-regulation. The self-regulatory processes and sense of self are essential for the students to improve themselves. Bandura (1997) noted that self-regulation is a process and involves the interaction of the person and the behavior as well as the environment. In other words, students’ beliefs and abilities interact with their actions along with how they observe and relate to their environments. The outcome of this study suggested that students enter higher education unprepared to manage themselves, interact with the environment or navigate the system.

The study indicated that students did not know how to study or to communicate with the instructors, who noted the students’ lack of self-regulation skills. This study is related to my topic

of study, which shows the importance of having more academic support for students and their relationship with advisors, faculty, and counselors that help to develop students' self-regulation skills. More connections from student services professionals and faculty will be essential for a better student outcome. When students are self-regulated, they respond appropriately to the situation, such as not getting too upset about a grade on a specific paper, advocating for themselves, or improving their grades (Onoda, 2014; Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Wood et. al, 2015).

Community Colleges Pathways for Success

A considerable number of colleges and universities are applying guided pathways reforms. The community college research center (CCRC) is a partner in the guided pathways project with “the Tennessee Board of Regents and the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, a statewide action project funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation” (CCRC, 2017, para. 3). Other community colleges and universities from different states are also participating in a guided pathway or similar models. Community colleges' guided pathway to a degree allows the students to complete their degrees promptly. From the time the student begins their degree journey at a specific institution, they are guided by academic support services to help them stay on track for the degree that they have chosen, or other options if they are undecided about a major, to know which courses, they should start at the institution.

The academic advisor develops a plan for the students to finish their degree without taking courses that are unnecessary for them. Many students dropped out of institutions because they did not know how to manage their schedules along with not knowing how to use the academic services to choose courses and degree options for them (CCRC, 2016). Based on the data assessment from institutions using this program, better student outcomes were observed.

The Guided Pathway program began this reform and suggested a more comprehensive and designed path for the students to complete their degrees. As an example, Florida State University

(FSU) had students who were graduating with considerable numbers of credits, which made them spend more time with more prerequisites courses and spend more money to finish their degrees (Kurzweil & Rossman, 2016). The university realized this was a problem and implemented an academic support program, that is, a roadmap for the students to ensure that they were on a path to the degree that they had chosen. Undecided students were provided more educational services to help them stay on track and explore career options. By implementing this program, the university realized that between 2000 and 2009, the retention rate for “freshman increased from 86 to 92 percent. The four-year graduation rate increased from 44 to 61 percent, and the percentage of students graduating with excess credits dropped from 30 to 5 percent” (CCRC, 2015, p. 7). The university’s efforts were intended to offer support to all the students. However, the institution has succeeded in guiding more at-risk students to succeed. “The university’s retention goal is broader: it aims to ensure that all students who enroll—from across the income spectrum, and with all different levels of preparation—want to and can remain at the institution and earn their degree there” (Kurzweil & Rossman, 2016, p. 2).

Developing new strategies in community colleges and accelerating improvements for students along with access to college and success for students has been the slogan for the guided pathways model and the Achieving the Dream program (ATD). Community colleges need to significantly increase the number of students who finish their courses’ prerequisites and, then, move them onto the path of their respective degrees. Colleges are trying to prepare the students better, so that they can get into their programs of study and enter the workforce (Complete College America, 2014).

In redesigning colleges for students’ success, Jenkins (2016) noted that community colleges were offering an unclear pathway and because of this, students often had excessive hours/credits. Most of these credits did not transfer to any other university. Some states have done

agreements between community colleges and other state institutions but there are still gaps and harm students. Students spent more time and money during their time in college. Also, the students' learning outcomes were not assessed by programs and lacked individual assessment.

Measuring students' outcome is still an issue in many community colleges (Jenkins, 2016). The new Guided Pathway community colleges model presents clear goals for the students. Students' progress is tracked individually and by a program of study. Colleges such as Valencia Community College in Florida state and Guttman community college in New York state are monitoring students when they begin the transition to their institutions. In these institutions, the First-Year Experience course (FYE) is mandatory (SBCTC, 2017).

Institutions provide the FYE course and Freshman Seminar and College Strategies to new students undergoing a transition into their colleges or universities. The students learn about resources available to them, policies and procedures, and how they can start their transition successfully to the institution with a clearly defined path to their degrees. The application of advising strategies helps the students find the most direct pathway to graduation. A critical approach is an academic plan that lists the necessary coursework scheduled from the beginning of the first year to the end of the degree (SBCTC, 2017). Students understand the courses that they need to move onto and complete their coursework on time, even as they balance work and school (Complete College America, 2014). These institutions provide advising support to students as soon as they begin their first years. Faculty and academic advisors guide the transition into the programs of their choices or degrees. Programs track students' graduation rates.

Community colleges are trying to improve the admission for traditionally underrepresented students with an emphasis on degree completion (Achieving the Dream, 2016; Bailey, 2017; Complete College America, 2014). However, retention and degree completion is a challenge for many college students (Complete College America, 2014). Policymakers are trying to find more

resources for the higher education system to help students graduate on time. Politicians are also looking for ways to lower the cost of education. Their goal is to ensure that the students can have prepared career coursework, which helps them to find jobs in their areas of study (Bailey, 2017, Complete College America, 2014; Jenkins, 2014).

College Students' Experience

Institutions of higher education are designed to be a place where individuals can meet others with different viewpoints and beliefs (NSSE, 2017). Community colleges are designed in such a way that the students can explore their worlds, where personal and intellectual growth can occur (NSSE, 2017). The college experience changes students, especially regarding self-esteem, self-concept, and their identity as a person (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Throughout their college careers, students develop an understanding of themselves and their academic and social competencies (Jenkins, 2014; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The institution of higher education helps students to establish their values and develop social skills for a better community (ATD, 2016; Bailey 2017; Jenkins, 2014).

The college experience can be stressful for many students. Houle (2013) mentioned Tinto (1975) stated that for many students the transition to college or the change from one community to another can be very challenging for students. Students' distress reveals itself academically in their grades. The institution will make the student aware if he is not meeting the college's required level of academic performance. Students that don't have proper academic standards enter on AP. If the students do not improve their grades according to the institution's requirements, then they might appeal or might be terminated from the said institution (Bellevue College, 2018; Pierce College, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Martinez and Welton (2014) investigated the challenges that students of color (SOC) experience and their needs in accessing and transitioning from high school to higher education.

The authors studied students' readiness for college and their pathways to college. The study defined readiness as having received an adequate K-12 education, so that the student will not require additional developmental courses for the college-level classes. The study identified three steps for students to enter to college; as the first one if they wanted to go, if students were academically prepared and if students had taken the required tests for college. These were presented as two qualitative studies, the first study was focused on students and their college choices, the second study focused on college resources (Martinez & Welton, 2014).

The study had challenges such as limitation and reliability in combining the data from each study, but the peer examination, cross-case analyses helped and were a strength of this study. The interpretation of the data had different perspectives for each of the reviews. The outcome of this study was that more resources are necessary for SOC to access and be ready for college transition. This study is related to my topic of study because it is about minority students making a transition to college. This study demonstrated that more resources are necessary for students to be ready for the college transition.

Academic Probation

Colleges and universities are offering students the opportunity to assist them in obtaining necessary resources to help them graduate. AP is a similar policy that institutions have in place to support the students who are not reaching their desired level of academic performance or academic progress and to increase their skills to achieve the necessary standard grade that the institution requires. Many factors contribute to students being on AP. These factors might include a possible lack of motivation, a lack of the needed skills for college, health problems, financial issues, and having negative personal belief systems (Bean & Eaton, 2002; Seirup & Rose, 2011; Tovar, 2015). Students on AP are usually more isolated, as they do not participate in activities like other students

(Seirup & Rose, 2011). Institutions work to help these students succeed and offer academic support services to them.

There is a lack of studies that focus on student experiences while on AP, almost all focusing on four-year institutions. Understanding student experiences is essential for institutions to continue to work toward student achievement regarding students that experienced unsatisfactory academic performance (Barouch-Gibert, 2015; Houle, 2013). The literature shows essential similarities between students on AP and institutional support with additional courses and mandatory advising. Bean (2005) mentioned that students are more likely to leave college because of their lack of academic abilities rather than for other motives. Bean (2005) mentioned that when students have low grades, this is not the main reason for students' departure. Sometimes students use poor grades as a reason to drop out. Institutions of higher education request the students to drop out, which seems to be more punitive than helpful and because their lack of academic progress that is not reflected in their grades.

A study conducted by Hoover (2014) aimed to understand the perceptions of undergraduate students on AP, who were pursuing 4-year degree courses. The study showed that the institutions strive to provide enough resources for their students. During this phase, some students used more of the available resources, while other students did not use enough resources to increase their GPA. Students were aware that they needed to work harder and learn new skills. They knew that they needed to be committed to improving their grades. Students agreed that the resources were helpful for them, but they also expressed negative feelings about a mandatory course instead of encouraging them to learn more about the Academic Probation Policy (APP). The study showed that new students were unaware of the APP, even though it was accessible to them on the institution's website and via other institutional materials. The study concluded that the students were not aware of nor understood the policy the way that they should have. The institution should

find other alternatives to raise student awareness of their Academic Probation Policy and the implications of the policy.

The financial aid (FA) offices track the academic status, or grades, of the students. The FA office of each institution measures the GPA of students quarterly or semester-wise, depending on what is defined by the institution policy. Students' academic progress measured by the GPA is a way institution assess their students. Students that are not reaching the academic achievement in a quarter (2.0 GPA) might receive a warning letter from the FA office. After the warning, if the students do not increase their GPA in the following quarter, they are placed on AP. The quarter or semester in which the students are on AP is decisive for the institutions to determine the student's progress. Depending on the institution policy, students that do not reach the minimum grade in more than two quarters might be dismissed. The students have the rights to appeal against this process, whereas the institutions have the rights to accept or deny the appeal. (Federal Student Aid, 2016).

The National Student Clearinghouse's (NSC) (2014) annual report mentioned that the completion rates for all the students in general are in decline. The completion of a four-year degree is at best 6 years and in many cases, longer. The completion rates for community college students have declined and the time to complete a degree is more than six years. The NSC (2014) report states that community colleges are still an essential entry to many students to a post-secondary education and the importance of the partnership between community colleges and universities for students' accomplishment. Institutions of higher education identified the importance of excellent classroom experiences with students, as it positively or negatively impacts the students' achievement. The institutional policies are created and defined as a part of the students' learning process (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Policies should be carefully planned and applied to create a positive place for the students to grow, learn, and engage with others. Policies are essential in strengthening the values and integrity of the institution and supporting the students in their community life (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto 2012). There are limited studies that examine the undergraduate students' academic deficiency and how they experienced the AP phase. In a study from Barouch-Gilbert (2015), the phenomenological research was used to discover the experiences of students who were considered academically deficient because of their probation status. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were provided to the participants. The patterns across the interviews were identified through the saturation of the data, which shows that participants were expressing the same facts. Barouch-Gilbert (2015) mentioned that the interviews were transcribed "and analyzed through two levels of coding" (p.104). The first level of coding observed the data using lengthy statements. The second level of coding, which was explanatory, gave the opportunity to analyze and classify themes. Peer examination was used to provide credibility. During the coding process, Atlas.ti software was used to support the qualitative data analyses (Barouch-Gilbert, 2015).

The findings of this study suggested that students had limited information about the academic performance policy. Barouch-Gilbert (2015) mentioned that students had the feeling of "being academic deficient" during the AP phase, which should be reviewed by institutions because this feeling played a negative role during the student's transition (p. 109). Students wrote that they were unaware of the institution policy. They went on to share that the institution should have approached them before the AP, so that they would be better prepared for academic success.

College Student Retention

Institutions of higher education should be able to comprehend students' experiences and help them to build their motivation to persist (Tinto, 1997). Additionally, institutions can also enhance that motivation (Long, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1997). As the student

population at the universities and colleges have different needs, institutions are trying to create targeted support for the students to assist them in timely completion of their degrees. Retention rates are related to graduation rates, institutional rankings, and alumni giving (The Alumni Factor, 2012; Tinto, 2012). The excellence of services that institutions of higher education provide for its community increases their reputation, power, and chances for acquiring more resources. More funding is needed to acquire resources to offer students to support their success. More opportunities for the institutions to employ qualified faculty and more competitive students, which reflects on their graduation rates (Altbach et al., 2012; Tinto, 2012). However, when students drop classes where the enrollment is low and when retention is an issue, colleges try to invest more resources in recruiting students (Johnson, Pagget, & Pascarella, 2012; Tinto 2012).

Studies have shown factors that influence students to be effective in their academics. A study conducted by Roderick (2016) confirmed the importance of how family influences the access to college for the minority students. The study also recognized the importance of familial capital, such as the performance of first-generation students regarding academic preparation and the change from public school to college. In this qualitative study, Roderick (2016) confirmed the that schools and families should work together supporting students to be better prepared in school and for the college transition.

Additionally, another study conducted by Wood, Newman, and Harris (2015) was designed to confirm the importance of self-efficacy in students' success. This study relied on the theory of the psychological model by Bean and Eaton (2001). This theory shares similarities with the framework from Astin (1993), Schlossberg (1995), and Tinto (1993) in that ideas focused upon student characteristics, experiences with transitions in social and academic settings. Wood et al. (2015) confirmed if the "students' self-efficacy increased it was reflected in students' academic and social integration, which increased their commitment to the institutions and persistence in their

education” (p. 5). Community colleges offer opportunities for students to develop academic and social skills through social events, campus activities, and clubs. Strengthening the support that facilitates the development of self-efficacy for students will positively increase the students’ outcomes. Wood et al. (2015) demonstrated that community colleges offer opportunities for students, but it is not enough, and, thus, it is necessary to advance self-efficacy for SOC which will increase their educational success.

Barbatis (2010) wanted to confirm why some students were in college without enough preparation to be there. Barbatis (2010) mentioned “The perceptions of graduate students and students who earned at least 30 college-level credit hours were compared to their students who did not persist in their studies and had dropped out of college” (p. 14). Barbatis (2010) used the theories developed by Astin (1984) and Tinto (1975) for his study. The study had reinforced these theories that social involvement and integration are factors that influence the underserved students’ persistence.

Review of Methodological Issues

Researchers apply the scientific method to explain a phenomenon or type of behavior (Bhattacharjee, 2012). In a scientific study, the methodology defines the specific procedures and techniques used to analyze the information within the lens of a research problem. These procedures allow the reader to critically evaluate a study’s validity regarding qualitative studies by using triangulation, thick description, peer reviews, and external audit support (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In reviewing the methods and tools, a researcher chooses a methodology to investigate a problem, which in turn allows the reviewers to learn how to more efficiently evaluate issues, data techniques, strengths, and weakness among other matters. According to Creswell (2013), the scientific method is a rational process that connects data to research questions, findings, and

conclusions. Creswell (2013) mentioned that “we always bring some of our beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research” (p. 15).

College students that do not meet SAP are placed on AP (Flynn, 2015; Pierce College, 2017; Tovar, 2014). If academic difficulty continues for a determinate time, which is usually three quarters at a community college, the student might be suspended or dismissed from the institution (Pierce College, 2017). In a quantitative study conducted by Flynn (2015), college students on AP have an opportunity to improving their grades by participating in an academic support program.

Methods/ Design. Flynn’s (2015) monitored the methods employed for students on a weekly basis to record their engagement in the support activities. Using a two-tailed, paired sample t-test, Flynn (2015) analyzed the students’ GPAs before and after the freshman seminar program. All the 62 participants had a crucial difference between their pre-test and post-test GPAs. Flynn study (2015) focused on students who used the college’s support services with faculty support and tutors assisting them with their assignments. This study evaluated an academic support program and other aspects, such as the sociocultural and psychological factors, that contributed to the program’s success. This study showed the importance of tracking students on AP to ensure access to the support services necessary for academic success. The study also showed the importance of an academic support and the need for programs like freshman seminar to be available to the struggling students or perhaps even made mandatory for all the new college students. Flynn (2015) concluded that the students on AP were not ready for the college transition because they did not have the necessary skills needed to succeed and did not know how to utilize the academic support that was available to them. The researchers in this study identified an increase in the GPA for most of the students who effectively used the academic support services.

Renzulli (2015) used a mixed method design to examine the relationship between college students’ academic accomplishments and their self-regulation and learning strategies. Self-

regulation is an essential skill that students can develop to be more resilient. Yeager and Dweck (2012) mentioned that self-regulation “could be the consequence of a person’s interpretations of the adversities they are facing” (p. 312). Onoda (2014) stated that “Self-regulation involves the learner proactively and reactively managing his or her learning processes cognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally” (p. 358). Studies have shown that self-regulation is significant in academia (Bandura, 1991; Onoda, 2014). When students enter college or university, they evaluate their previous experiences, reflect on new challenges and their abilities and then, actively engage in a new learning process (Bean & Eaton, 2001; Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Zimmerman, 2001). Hsieh, Sullivan, and Guerra (2007) mentioned that students on AP had lost their confidence and they used to set strategies that were not proper for their academic achievement.

Renzulli (2015) measured student success in a mandatory three-week course. The LSC taught students the strategies, such as time management and study habits, such as more time studying and having a tutor to be effective and available to students. Renzulli (2015) used a mixed method design to demonstrate how the learning strategies that students were taught supported the academic performance of nine students placed on AP. A mixed method is used when researchers need to explore different perspectives or a better understanding, the combination of qualitative and quantitative method research provides strengths of each approach and, thus, the researchers use both methods to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

The qualitative coding model was used in is study, which data analysis helped to organize and analyze the amount of data collected in observations, surveys, and interactions during personal interviews with the students. Creswell (2013) mentioned that coding is a process that summarizes what is happening with the data “reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes and finally representing figures, tables” (p. 180). Researchers can link data and interpret it by using the coding process (Creswell, 2013).

There were three levels of qualitative coding used in this study. The fact that Renzulli (2015) used three levels of coding means that the data analysis used three different coding techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 33). Renzulli (2015) used the opening coding, the axial coding and selective coding. The opening coding helped to organize the data into categories. The axial coding helped to review the data and identified essential aspects of data. The third one, selective coding identified categories that could be associated to each other.

The author of this study, Renzulli (2015), made every possible effort to ensure the credibility, transferability, and reliability of the study. Reliability means that the data is consistent from study to study. If someone tries to repeat a study, the data should present the same results every time. Validity refers to the credibility of a research. Qualitative researchers have different standards for judging the quality of a research. Creswell and Miller (2000) stated that, in a study, qualitative researchers have a participant and an evaluator who checks the details and helps with the “triangulation, thick description, peer reviews, and external audits” (p. 124).

Renzulli (2015) used observations and triangulation to ensure that the outcome reflected the participants’ experiences and to get validation of findings through the integration of different perspectives (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012). Triangulation is a key process to understanding what is going on in a research setting. It can help to identify the areas for additional work, which involved getting the data and analyzing it using more than one method. This analysis had multiple views points and diverse sources of data. During the analysis, the use of a different framework was an alternative to being explored by the scholar to assure the validity of the research. Yin (2009) suggested revising the data through triangulation and using an investigator or evaluators for the purpose.

The research assessment procedure and reliability to limit bias was examined. In this process, the researcher was able to reread the participants answers, reflected on those answers and

took notes to avoid bias. The researcher wanted to make sure the voices of participants heard were heard correctly (Renzulli, 2015). By reviewing the inquiry processes, Renzulli (2015) ensured that the data was authentic. These tasks are equivalent to establishing the trustworthiness of an inquiry and the confirmability of its data and conclusions (Ying, 2009; Wadembere, 2012). The qualitative findings of the study supported the use of the advising approaches and included specific study skills plan for the identified academically deficient student. This study confirmed that students needed help to complete their coursework, as they were not ready for the course requirements without academic support (Renzulli, 2015). This study also demonstrated a benefit to all the student participants, as they could increase their self-confidence and GPAs.

Roderick (2016) presented an ethnographic study about Black and Latino students. In this qualitative study the approach was the cultural aspect. Roderick would like to understand the high school students' preparation for the college-going culture. In this study, a case study of students was added to have a better understanding of the educational experiences of these students. Creswell (2013) stated that an ethnographic focus means "describing and interpreting a culture-sharing group" (p. 104). Roderick (2016) used two students for interviews and conducted four semi-structured interviews with them. The author observed the participants in the school area and examined the relevant documents. The qualitative data presented came from the experiences of these two students, that is, one Latino and one African American.

The findings came from the observations and semi-structured interviews. These findings provided critical understandings of the collected data. Roderick (2016) used data sources that are a list of resources that are specific to planning in general, and more specifically to the study. Roderick (2016) also used the triangulation method in which qualitative research addresses the validity and reliability of findings. In this process, Roderick (2016) used the Atlas.ti software,

which was a strength that helped to find the codes that came from the interviews, observations, and artifacts among other documents.

In the triangulation process, scholars use multiple data to confirm the outcomes of what they want to learn from a study. Roderick (2016) transcribed, double-checked, and edited the interviews. Participants had the opportunity to correct the mistakes in sentences and express any concerns. As Roderick coded each participant that was interviewed, more codes came were identified in the process. The Atlas.ti was utilized in this qualitative analysis and supported the complexity of data and the need for a successful outcome.

Roderick (2016) was engaged in “the process of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning” (p. 730) after the data was taken from interviews and observations among other documents. The deductive reasoning tests a theory with evidence to see if it is accurate. With inductive reasoning, after analyzing the data, the theory is built explains the research findings. In a study, using the combination of these two approaches helps to have a better idea of the conclusions from the results (Crossman, 2017). In this study, codes such as college and family, in the beginning, were deductive, but other iterative codes were identified. Roderick (2016) noted “Sub-codes such as father influence and other influences from a family member emerged, and similarities between participants brought new themes and were analyzed” (p. 730). These approaches are the strengths that the researchers use for a study.

Roderick (2016) used a critical race theory (CRT) model of education as a theoretical framework for this study. This theory became a foundational part of educational research when explaining the dynamics of racism and race in school settings. CRT addresses how SOC were marginalized and consigned to an inferior school or one with a less prestigious reputation (Allen, 2010). Roderick (2016) presented strengths to avoid ethical dilemmas in this study. The

participants voluntarily consented and were recruited transparently. Students had the opportunity to choose pseudonyms to participate in this study.

After recording the interviews, the author uploaded the interview conversations onto a secure server and transcribed them with the help of a professional company. The participants had an opportunity to correct their sentences and clarify issues from the interview. The implications suggested the need for more support for the academic aspirations of Black and Latino students. The study confirmed that the schools and families must work together in achieving the educational goals of the students (Roderick, 2016). This study illustrated self-efficacy as a decisive factor for students' outcomes. The study showed how important it is to have educators, families, and administrators working together to help the SOC in pursuing their education.

Additionally, in another study, conducted by Wood, Newman, and Harris (2015) presented a longitudinal study that took considerable time, whereas the data assessed involved the students in high school through their college transitions. Clark, Anderson, and Wertz (2014) stated that “researchers combine qualitative and quantitative approaches with longitudinal research” (para. 1). Longitudinal studies allow the researchers to view how the self-efficacy of the students changes over time as they move into transitions or learn new things. Wood et al. (2015) wanted to confirm the importance of the self-efficacy theory for Black male college student success. Several studies have shown that students could be successful when they believe in their ability to reach a goal (Bean, 2001; Hsieh, Sullivan & Guerra, 2007; Martin et al., 2014; Onoda, 2014; Wood et al., 2015; Yeager & Dweck, 2012).

Wood et al. (2015) presented a literature review that included similar studies on self-efficacy for Black male college students. This study relied on the theory of the psychological model of college student retention by Bean and Eaton (2001). The theory in the Wood et al. (2015) study shared similarities with a framework developed by Austin (1993), Schlossberg

(1995), and Tinto (1993); that is, that students experienced transitions in their social and academic lives that influence their academic performance. These evaluated experiences happened both inside and outside of an academic institution (Wood et al., 2015). In using the Bean and Eaton's (2001) theory, the authors wanted to confirm whether Math and English self-efficacy affected this population's academic outcomes. Wood et al. (2015) relied on an Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS) and assessed the students' outcomes. There were many variables measured in the survey, such as academic habits, school involvement, and long-term goals during the base year. The students in this study were followed after their second year of high school to their entrance into college. Another survey administered to the same group years later showed that that students had a better understanding of the students' college and work experiences.

This study mainly was determinate regarding the academic integration of these students. The measures included whether students had more contact with instructors and advisors, or if they asked for internal institutional support. The responses were individually coded as “never, sometimes, and often” (Wood et al., 2015, p. 8). There were five other variables that included high school grades, degree goals, and degrees of family support. Using quantitative analysis, Wood et al. (2015) used an analytical process for investigating the data, specifically a “three-stage analytic design, focusing on the study the variables” (p. 7). By evaluating means, errors, and percentages in stage one, authors compared the different variables and found the answer to the first question. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) measure relationships among variables and a multinomial logistic regression (MLR), which supports the interpretation of the variables (IDRE, 2017) and assists in determining the effect of self-efficacy separately for both English and Math (Wood et al., 2015). They confirmed that when comparing Math and English self-efficacy, Math held secondary importance regarding academic integration to English. The authors felt that this was due to the contact that students had with the faculty and advisors, positively increasing the

students' self-efficacy.

Wood et al. (2015) attributed the success of students was associated with the guidance that they had from advisors and faculty. "Students with higher levels of self-efficacy were more likely to meet with teachers and advisors than those with lower Math and English self-efficacy" (p. 14). They concluded that if students' self-efficacy increased, it also increased their social integration, which is reflected in their academics. Also, when the students are self-regulated, it increased the students' commitment to the institution and their persistence to finish their degree. There were some limitations of this study, such as the analysis could not be made on the variables of self-efficacy in the expected way.

Tovar (2015) examined how interactions with academic support influenced students' grades and how these interactions affected the way Latino college students persisted in their education. Tovar (2015) used the social capital theory for examining the pre-college students' transitioning process to college. Social capital refers to the essential connections between individuals that serve as a valuable support system for these students. This study indicated academic support, such as advising and counseling programs that influenced the students' persistence in completing their degrees. The positive influence of relationship with faculty and academic staff lead to successful student outcomes.

Tovar (2015) utilized the hierarchical multiple linear regression. The multiple linear regression (MLR) is used to describe "the relationship between one continuous dependent variable and more variables" (Statistics Solutions, 2018, para. 1). Tovar (2015) examined how interactions or academic support influenced the students' grades to determine how Latino college students persisted in their education. Tovar (2015) used the Social Capital theory for studying the pre-college students transitioning to college. Social capital refers to the essential connections between individuals that serve as valuable support for these students. Tovar (2015) used two research

questions that guided this study.

While using the hierarchical multiple linear regression, Tovar (2015) wanted to control the order of the variables or to establish control for some variables. Variables were described in tables with four blocks. The first block: Pre-college student characteristics required variables such as gender, age, and immigration status among other experiences that impacted these groups of students. The dependent variables were GPAs and the persistence that students showed while completing a degree. The second block described the transitions and adjustment to college. The third block included the academic and social factors, such as consoling and tutoring support being used by the student. The last block included the interactions between students and institutional agents.

Tovar (2015) provided details and coding schemes used in this study. The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses were used in these four blocks. The OLS allowed the readers to observe the effects of a specific variable. Descriptive analyses were involved in inspecting the relationship between variables. Tovar (2015) directed statistical tests and an assessment of normality and linearity.

The evidence of multicollinearity was found in two variables: support from family and support from friends. The multicollinearity presents itself when the same variable is introduced or is similar; however, the data might be inconsistent (Statistics Solutions, 2017). “These two variables were averaged, and then the author created a single variable (support from family and friends) and entered into regression model” (Tovar, 2015, p. 57). Thirteen cases were considered univariate, whereas other two were identified as multivariate. However, these 15 cases were removed from the dataset. Tovar (2015) demonstrated, in this study, that some Latino students struggled to pursue their education; however, with the positive influence and guidance from faculty and the academic staff, they began to believe that they were essential community members,

which aided them to become successful students.

Limitations. Flynn (2015) did not provide the details of other services, such as counseling assistance or academic staff, which might have changed the outcome. Future studies might consider specific services such as advising and counseling support, more academic support for English and Math for students on AP. Additionally, Flynn (2015) neither mentioned the reason behind selecting a sample of 62 students nor the reason for choosing the six-month timeframe for the study. Flynn (2015) also did not discuss the ethical standards for collecting data and the methods to secure the data collected.

The findings should not be generalized to other institutions or a different group of students. The study occurred during a limited time, during a semester and there was no mention of the student's academic performance in the following semesters. The study did not indicate how much psychological and other additional support students were used during the semester. Future research might analyze if the additional support for students influence their grades, and, also, if students maintain their academic performance in the subsequent quarters.

Renzulli (2015) did not discuss how to minimize the risks and maintain the ethical standards and why the study had a sample of nine students. Creswell (2013) stated that in a qualitative research, samples could be “at the site level, at the event or process level and participant level” (p. 156). The sampling in a qualitative research needs to be identified and described. Creswell (2013) mentioned that the data collection process depends on the sample size and the research questions. Depending on the type of study, specific sample size should be considered. In a grounded theory study, Creswell (2013) recommended to include “20–30 participants who help in developing a well-saturated theory” (p. 157). Morse (2014) mentioned when “the researcher has continued sampling and analyzing data until no new data appear, and all concepts, in theory, are well-developed” (p. 2). Creswell (2013) suggested, “a single case study,

no more than 4 or 5 case studies” (p. 157). In a case study, should be able to have the chance to find common themes, similarities, and differences in this number. These are mentioned as a “cross-case theme analysis” (p. 157).

Roderick (2016) did not include why or how he selected only two students (and their characteristics for this study). Roderick mentioned that the data was collected from a school that had a very diverse group of students. The timeline was from November 2013 through June 2014. This study was limited in one school area and, so, the author stated that more studies were necessary regarding the college-going familial capital.

Wood et al. (2015) study had some challenges regarding the analysis of data limited the generalizations of the findings. More than 5% of the missing data showed inaccurate estimates. The authors investigated this issue by using other options, such as variance, t-test tables, and cross-tabulation. The data showed that “full-time students 86.6%, which means that only 29.3% of the Black male were full time and 58% part-time” (Wood et al., 2015, p. 8). The study was limited to a specific population of learners transitioning from high school to college.

Other studies might consider investigating the students who are not in transition, who are in pre-high school or who are already in college. Future studies might also consider using the same analysis part, but reflect different variables, for a better comprehension of the self-efficacy regarding the measures of academic integration (Wood et al., 2015). Another limitation of this methodology is that it does not include a discussion on how to minimize risks and maintain ethical standards. Wood et al. (2015) did not mention how they stored the data, how they chose these students, or how they achieved an informed consent from the participants or their parents.

Tovar (2015) limited his study to Latino college students. The fact that they were volunteers might have biased the study. When using only volunteers, a valid sample of students might not be maintained. Using randomly selected students might help to reduce this bias. Yin

(2009) acknowledged that researchers must be responsible and avoid ethical issues toward by protecting research participants, which includes not knowing the participants or avoiding preferences. In preparation for data collection, it is essential that researchers respect the participants and the research site (Creswell, 2013). Privacy and confidentiality must be guaranteed as a precaution against annoying exposure. All the data from the participants must be protected, and when the participants' information is used in public, it must be anonymous. Other variables that were not present in the study might have affected the results, such as the intent to persist in their pursuit of a degree and a higher GPA.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Reviewing literature provides us new knowledge, ideas, and frameworks. Through synthesis we combine information, composing the evidence with the main points from each article and, thus, we can find new perspectives. When we critique an article, we emphasize the article's strengths and weakness along with its application to use. It is crucial to evaluate a study, and to be able to identify issues is an essential skill. Machi and McEvoy (2016) noted that when scholars critique literature, they recognize what is known and add other important points. This understanding generates new knowledge. The synthesis and critique of a research work together in outlining the salient points from each study makes the foundation for a new study.

Most studies demonstrated that students on AP need more academic support to succeed in college. Identifying strategies and resources in supporting these students was the primary emphasis of these studies. The difference of student's GPA when students started college and after the first quarters garnered the attention of scholars that argued that most of the students are not academically prepared for college. Gay (2013) mentioned that this performance is not due to a deficit in the student, but rather a deficit in the instructional and curricular approaches taken by the classroom teachers. Martinez and Welton (2014) came to a different conclusion and stated in their

study that there is a mixture of both a lack of preparation by the intuition and that other minorities, such as Latino students, have a different academic opportunity as related to White students.

Martinez and Welton (2014) presented two studies; one with the high school students and the other with college students. In these two studies, the similarities were resources that are needed to help the students succeed, one at the high school and the other at the community college. Martinez and Welton (2014) recommended to high school instructors and staff, that serve a considerable number of SOC population, that the school must invest resources to ensure that these students graduate college ready. Martinez and Welton (2014) mentioned that focusing on the quality of the courses, providing academic support and building relationship with SOC students are a priority for their academic achievement. For helping the SOC, this collaborative support should be from all the personnel of the school.

Martinez and Welton (2014) stated that the preparation for college should begin earlier; high school students should have the college preparatory information across the curriculum, so that they are able to have equal access and opportunities when they attend college. In a similar study, Tovar (2015) examined the pre-college students transitioning to college. Tovar (2015) examined how the interactions or academic support influenced the students' grades to determine how the Latino college students persisted in their education. Tovar (2015) demonstrated in this study that some Latino students struggled to pursue their education; however, with the positive influence and guidance from faculty and the academic staff, the students began to believe that they were essential community members, which aided them to become successful students. "Understanding the actions and relationships that foster achievement for Latino students within their families, communities, and schools will help to develop behaviors, expectations, and policies that can potentially narrow the achievement gap and contribute to Latino student success" (Marrero, 2016, p. 180).

Flynn (2015) and Renzulli (2015) agreed that students on AP were not ready for the college transition because they did not have the skills needed to succeed and did not know how to utilize the academic support system that was available to them. Studies showed that the nature of positive relationships with the college faculty, advisors, or mentors can help the students in achieving academic successes (Bean, 2001; Seirup & Rose, 2011; Tinto, 1975; Wood et al., 2015). In an additional study, Roderick (2016) confirmed the family's influence on college access for minority students. Roderick's (2016) study found that schools, families, administrators, and others must work together to help students and their families through the college education process, which, in turn, leads to social mobility.

The literature does have evidence from the students' perspectives that demonstrates an increase in self-confidence and GPA for all the students who effectively used the academic support services. Self-regulation is the capability to monitor and oversee emotions and thoughts and is linked to the person's level of motivation (Bandura, 1991). Onoda (2014) stated that "self-efficacy beliefs predict self-regulation strategy use" (p. 357). Self-efficacy promotes academic learners by changing the individuals' way to perceive themselves and their capacity of performing a duty. Instructors and advisors often encourage self-regulation within their students by reviewing the students' progress, setting a goal, suggesting improving grades that facilitates the students' self-evaluation. Students might use self-regulation strategies to change, or improve their attitudes or behaviors (D'Souza, Orville, & Renzulli, 2015). Onoda (2014) agreed that self-efficacy confidences and self-regulated learning are essential for students' academic achievement.

Developing self-regulated student skills is essential for their growth not only in school but their lives. Onoda (2014) said that students can learn effectively when they develop the self-efficacy skills, consequently they have clear goals and high level of motivation. Several studies show that students can be successful if they are confident and believe in their skills, such as when

the students think that they can reach a goal (Aguayo et al., 2011; Bong, 2011; Garza & Bowden, 2014; Gore, 2006; Majer, 2009; Vuong et al., 2010; Zimmerman, 2000). In a study related to self-regulation, Renzulli (2015) investigated the connection among the college students' academic accomplishments and their self-regulation and learning approaches. This study confirmed that the students could increase their self-confidence and GPAs with the necessary academic support.

Additionally, in another study, Wood, Newman, & Harris (2015) wanted to confirm the importance of the self-efficacy theory for students' success. Wood et al. (2015) identified the perseverance and achievement of students to be related to the positive connections that they had with the faculty and advisors. They concluded that if students' self-efficacy increased, it was reflected in their coursework grades and integration with others on campus. The authors mentioned that this also increased the students' commitment to the specific institutions and persistence in their education. This study relied on the theory of the college student retention model by Bean and Eaton (2001), which have similarities with Astin (1993), Schlossberg (1995) and Tinto (1993) frameworks. These studies evaluated the students' experiences during their transition on their social and academic lives.

Wood et al. (2015) confirmed that comparing self-efficacy related to Math and English showed that Math held secondary importance regarding academic integration when compared to English. This study demonstrated that due to contact, a relationship that students had with the faculty and advisors, increased the students' self-efficacy skills. The authors noted that "students with higher levels of self-efficacy were more likely to meet with teachers and advisors than those with lower Math and English self-efficacy" (p. 14). Wood et al. (2015) attributed the success of the students was associated with the guidance that they got from their advisors and faculty. These studies presented evidence pertaining to a lack of resources for students in making the transition into college. Students should be better prepared when they start college. More guidance for

students, especially minority students, seems essential for their success. Tinto (1993) mentioned that most new students transitioning to college do not know about their goals, courses, or an appropriate major and necessary skill sets. Tinto (1993) mentioned the importance for the students to integrate socially and academically in an institution, and which educators are essential in this process to help the students to be self-regulated learners.

Critique of Previous Research

In this section, the research articles regarding the students on AP are critiqued. Coughlan, Cronin, and Ryan (2007) mentioned that it is crucial to critique research, which is a process of evaluation with positives and negative points of any study. These studies presented the significance of the problem discussed in relation to the literature review with the data supported by other studies. The research questions were expressed appropriately in most of these studies. In the ones that did not have research questions, it was understood what the scholars were trying to confirm in their research. Research articles were peer-reviewed and had a strict evaluation process to ensure that the article adhered to the necessary academic standards (Machi & McEvoy, 2016).

Flynn (2015) used a quantitative study that has strength in providing data that is descriptive instead of numeric, which is difficult when it needs to be interpreted (Petit, 2017). By using the two-tailed- simple t-test, Flynn (2015) compared the GPA of students on AP before and after the academic support program. “The paired sample t-test is a statistical technique that is used to compare the performance of a sample of participants before and after completing a program, and then, analyze the differences” (Madrigal & McClain, 2012, para. 4).

Flynn (2015) did not mention why she chose the sample of 62 students, when she might have invited more students, but these 62 students had confirmed to participate in this quantitative study. Quantitative studies has a more significant sample and more data quantity, whose results can be used to generalize the entire population. In quantitative studies, the more varied the data is,

the larger sample size will be essential to achieve the same level of precision. However, this is a strength of this methodology that it has a good sample of students, that is, a large sample size represents better data of the participants. In qualitative research, the sample size is on the idea of “saturation,” which when happens, the researcher has the information, or the ideas are repeated. The timeline of a semester was also one of this study’s strength. The students had more time to improve their GPAs. More time gives more opportunities to obtain more quality data. Increasing the sample size, increases the data or findings but sometimes, there is a point where the statistical significance is hardly meaningful, and then, it is vital to check how strongly the variables affect the variance (Madrigal & McClain, 2012).

Flynn (2015) mentioned that some additional academic support for students were provided if they needed. The weakness of this study was “no assessments to measure the independent variables” (p. 193). A variable can be a person or an event with different values. For example, a student (person) can be female or male. An independent variable is a variable that a researcher manipulates or uses in the intervention. Some students improved their GPAs more than others. Some students showed no change in their GPAs, but many students improved their GPAs. Some students had additional contact with the faculty and advisors. Carrol and Morrel (2010) mentioned that an independent variable could be tested using an experimental design. Flynn (2015) also admitted that considering the psychological support with counselors supporting students’ stress level might had influenced the research outcome.

None of the studies conducted by Flynn (2015), Wood et al. (2015), and Martinez and Welton (2014) mentioned how to minimize the risks and maintain ethical standards, which is an essential part of the research, as the data comes from human subjects. There is a possibility of increased risks to the researcher and students if ethical standards are unmet. In peer-reviewed journals, it is impossible to state all the information that is required in a study. In a similar study,

Buzzeta, Lens, and Kennelly (2017) compared two groups of student athletes and discussed the ethics standards. Before participants started the study, they knew about the propose of the study, research risks and then, participants signed the consent form to participate in the study.

Renzulli (2015) and Roderick (2016) suggested in their findings that some students are unprepared for their college transition and that students needed more academic support to succeed. Both the authors used triangulation, which was their studies' strength. Renzulli (2015) and Roderick (2016) wanted to ensure that their research presented validity, the reliability of findings, and introduced steps that they took to avoid the ethical problems. Roderick (2016) and Renzulli (2015) confirmed the value of self-efficacy as a decisive influence regarding the students' accomplishment in their degree.

Wood et al. (2015) wanted to confirm the importance of self-efficacy for students' courses' achievements. This longitudinal study focused on high school students in transition to college over a specific period. Specific measures for these students included variables, such as academic habits, long-term goals, and students' experience, which is a strength of this study. The study utilized individual measures of integration, such as faculty contact, having appointments with academic advisors, and using resources on the school library (Wood et al., 2015). However, the authors did not include a discussion on how to minimize the risks and maintain ethical standards. Wood et al. (2015) were cautious in collecting and storing the data, and ensuring that the variables reflected in the outcome, which is a strength in this study. This study provided suggestion to support self-efficacy in Black male students transitioning into college.

Martinez and Welton (2014) mentioned that they faced challenges in combining the data from two qualitative studies. These challenges were reliability and limitations. Martinez and Welton (2014) mentioned that the cross-case analyses were a strength because they could have different perspectives and interpret the data of each study from a different perspective. The study

presented similar recommendations as other studies regarding the necessity for more resources for students of color to be ready to be admitted for college. Tovar (2015) limited this study to Latino college students. The sample of students ($N = 397$) was a strength in this study, which also was looking for a specific population and focusing on this group to provide accurate information for this group. The fact that they were volunteers might have biased the study. When using only volunteers, a valid sample of students might not be maintained. The volunteer students are the ones willing to do a little extra. Using randomly selected students might help to reduce this bias.

The method and measures that Tovar (2015) used are a strength in this study. The researcher specifically used student's characteristics that the study was looking. The methodology was well defined, there were details about the variables used and the coding process that was used. The study suggested that Latino students need positive influence or guidance from faculty and staff to be successful students. In most of the studies presented, the authors suggested the need for more research on different variables. These studies demonstrated evidence, which had commonalities such as the need of supporting the students, most of them, minority. All the studies hit on a fundamental belief that they can improve themselves, that all students can learn. All these studies focused on the power of relationships with the students. Through these relationships, building connections, we all can gain.

Chapter 2: Summary

The literature review presented two theories that were interrelated with the student development theory, that is, the Student Departure and the Schlossberg's theory. The Schlossberg theory established the foundation needed to examine the college students' transitional needs, mainly for the students on AP. The college experience for most of the students is highly challenging, as the student change their behaviors, discover different learning styles, and might connect or not with the campus resources. This study will investigate the impact of this phenomenon, that is, the students

that are transitioning to college, beginning the first quarters or semesters and fail in their academic progress. Institutions of higher education have a similar policy for students that do not satisfy the academic achievement, the students who have an accumulative GPA lower than 2.0 on a scale of 4.0 are on AP.

Tinto (1993) mentioned that students leave college if they do not feel committed to the institution. Students should be integrated with the institution with the social and academic choices. The literature indicates that when students feel more integrated, they will probably persist. On the other hand, most colleges and universities suspend students who do not meet the academic standards and, thus, diminishing the chances for student integration. Traditionally, minority students, mostly Latino students attending community colleges face more academic and financial challenges than those challenges faced by other students (Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Tovar, 2015; Tovar & Simon, 2006). These students confront difficulties that make them less successful than other students. These students should be better prepared to have their needs fulfilled (Tovar, 2015). Community colleges strive to encourage students from various backgrounds to apply and keep them enrolled, so that they persist and complete their degrees (AACC, 2017).

Colleges and universities must identify the need of its students and encourage them to take action and improve their grades and overall academic performances. This study satisfies a need area of understanding the college students' experience on AP. The researcher acknowledges and attempt to find the gap in the literature, through a qualitative study using a case study method, which explored the experiences of students on AP. Researching the impact of students identified as deficient in their academic performance and experienced the AP, perhaps, allows for the modifications of institutional practices. This study addresses an important issue, that is, the need for help to improve the retention and persistence of students on AP.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This project is driven by the belief that all students benefit from services which target their academic needs. This chapter explains the methodology that was used to understand the experiences of minority college students on AP. The students' academic standing frames the challenges and changes that they experience while in college. This research method is tied to my topic and framework because it uses the experiences of the students during AP to understand how they managed to work toward satisfactory academic standing. Underrepresented students confront unique challenges when transitioning to college; factors such as academic readiness, motivation, social status, and support programs affect the students and their ability to persist in college (ATD, 2016; Bailey 2017; Bean & Eaton, 2001; Tinto, 1975). Therefore, this study focused on the experiences of minority students on AP to further understand the types of activities and support that helped them achieve satisfactory academic standing.

There are two theoretical frameworks related to student development that help explain why attrition occurs among college students. The first theory is the Schlossberg transition theory which demonstrates the students' challenges and coping mechanisms in the transition and adjustment to life in college (Lazarowicz, 2015; Tovar & Simon, 2006). The second theory, the student departure theory, illustrates the importance of the integration of students into the college environment and the availability of the necessary support to succeed provided by the institution (Astin, 1968; ATD, 2016; Bailey, 2017; Hoover, 2014; Tinto, 1975). Both theories are interconnected; they demonstrate the challenges that new students may encounter when beginning college and identify factors in the classroom and campus that impact student attrition. The decision to drop out depends on many factors, including a student's characteristics, academic preparedness, financial capability, and other external commitments such as family and job which may affect student persistence (Bean & Eaton, 2001; Marrero, 2016; Tinto, 1994). The

relationships that students develop on campus and their access to campus support also play a critical role according to both the theories (Astin, 1968; Price & Tovar, 2014; Renzulli, 2015; Tinto, 1993, 2012). As this study focuses on the experiences of students who were on AP, student engagement assumes a critical role in these theories.

The researchers found that engagement is a subject of interest by many institutions of higher education and educators. Many studies identify the benefits of improving student outcome. Kuh (2007) identified involvement and the participation of students in the campus as an essential key to positive student outcome. The research recommendations mentioned methods in which the institutions should encourage students' interactions with faculty, course content, staff, and other students. Lester (2015) stated that institutions of higher education are looking to promote the student outcome in the classroom and in outside activities; he cited several studies and captured the importance of institutions of higher education to assess students' level of engagement on appropriate activities. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (2018) offers initiatives to improve students' experience in colleges or universities. The NSSE demonstrates the results of institutional engagement of students and its impact on college readiness, effective instruction, student learning, grades, students' persistence, and the faculty's influence on students' engagement.

Social science researchers study real-life experiences. Often, a case study is used as a research method; a case study may include a single case or multiple cases. Stake (1995) stated that in a single case study, the focus is on an issue, and the researcher needs to select scenarios to illustrate the problem referenced in the study. A single case study was chosen for this research because of its focus on the impact of the AP experiences on a specific population of students. In this qualitative case study, I examined the perceptions and understandings of students on AP and focused on their descriptions of their experiences of AP.

This chapter focuses on explaining the use of a case study qualitative research design and its specific details which are relevant to this study. This chapter considered the epistemology, purpose, and design of this study; it examined instrumentation, data collection, identification of attributes, data analysis, and its procedures. Then, it enumerated the limitations of research design, validation, and expected findings. The last section focused on ethical issues and was concluded with a chapter summary.

Research Questions

The literature review cited quantitative and qualitative studies on students who were underperforming and therefore placed on AP (Flynn, 2015; Hoover, 2014; Houle, 2013; Renzulli, 2015; Tovar, 2006). These studies demonstrated that academic support was very decisive in increasing students' GPA. The development of these study questions is guided by the premise that a group of students on AP should be allowed the opportunity to describe their experiences with the policy.

Research questions are essential in distinguishing various research approaches. Yin (2009) mentioned that in a case study method, the research question preferred is "how" and "why" (p. 2). The "what" questions may be used for conducting an exploratory study or an exploratory case study (p. 10).

Four questions guided this study:

1. How do students describe their experiences with academic probation?
2. What experiences lead students to acquire an academic probation status, and what do they experience while on probation?
3. What factors do students attribute their transition into satisfactory academic standing to?

4. What happens to students after they leave academic probation status? What lessons do they learn from the experience?

Case-Study Proposition

Qualitative research impedes hypothesis creation (Yin, 2014). However, Yin (2014) explained case-study propositions and stated that rivals create a frame to guide the researcher. For this case study, there are two opposing propositions. The first proposition states: Strategic resources, such as academic support and a better relationship with faculty, staff, and peers, are an essential resource for students on AP. Yin (2014) further explained that researchers should allow for rival propositions. The opposing proposition for this case study was as follows: Strategic resources are not an important resource for students who are on AP.

Purpose of Study

The goal of this qualitative study was to understand the experiences of minority community college students who were once on AP during their academic journey but were later able to work to achieve satisfactory academic standing. This study addresses the problem of AP due to the low academic achievement of minority college students. I investigated students who self-identified as either Latino or Hispanic. I initially planned on recruiting a minimum of eight students, which was the minimal number requested by the Concordia Ed.D. program. According to various studies, SOC underperform and are more at risk than other students (Houle, 2013; Martinez & Welton, 2014), especially Latino students. They have a significantly lower graduation rate than other groups (Krogstad, 2016; Martinez & Welton 2014; Tovar, 2015). Many Latino students are not academically prepared for college and struggle with their coursework; many have a higher possibility to be on AP (Arcand & LeBlanc, 2011; Houle, 2013; Tovar, 2006).

I recognized that a case study was the best methodology to answer the research questions of the case of college students on AP. Case studies are efficient when is the investigation involves an

interesting story, such as the students' experiences during AP and the strategies they discovered that worked to help them improve their grades and that did not work. Through a case study, I was able to obtain a better understanding of these students' experiences—it offered a complete picture of what happened and what changed in college and their life.

Design of the Study

I selected a single case study based on my desire to examine the viewpoints, real experiences, and strategies that students used during this specific time of their educational journey. The literature review provided insights into the problem and helped in developing the research questions. These questions demonstrated the problem or issue to be studied by a group of people. The single case of students who were on AP permitted the use of multiple methods for data collection and analysis. A single case study helped me to develop a description with strong details of these college student's experiences.

Byrd (2017) presented a case study and examined “students of color who had transferred into a White teacher education program” (p. 6). This study confirmed the importance of recruitment, retention and the graduation rates of underrepresented students. This study found that there is a need for more teachers of color in institutions of higher education. Its research questions — the theoretical framework about the perceptions of students in their transition to college, through the course, and moving out (transferring to other institutions) — relates to my conceptual framework. A case study helps to demonstrate the students' experiences in the college in detail. This study also used a phenomenological approach to investigate the data of these students with their relationship with the institution and more specific factors regarding their transition to university. This study collected data from interviews, participants' journals, observation of the participants, and other documents (catalog, degree plans, and others).

Byrd (2017) used the transition theory as a theoretical framework. The transition theory

helps to further understand the process of transition and how individuals adapt and other factors that might influence this transition (Schlossberg et al., 1995). Triangulated data helped with the assessment of findings into a theory. In the data analysis, this study used the standardized method of comparative analysis as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These are essential methods that provide reliable and valid outcomes.

Similarly, my study was based on the framework of Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory and Tinto's (1975) departure theory. These theories supported my study because they relate to the students' development phases or changes and challenges that the students face since they start college. These theories have been used in various studies for a better understanding of the transition process that students, such as veterans and student athletes among others, experience when they start college. For example, Lazarowicz (2015) used the transition theory to describe the experiences of community college students transferring to a university. Hoover (2014) used the departure theory to illustrate the importance of promoting engagement in its students for institutions of higher education.

The academic achievement of the students depends on their engagement in campus activities and the culture of the institution. The institution and students need to be involved and engaged with each other. Students might adapt and build resilience and move forward, or they might decide to stop or leave the institution. The transitions that students face when they start college and their ways of learning to adapt and grow during the college transition are essential for their growth. The decisions that students make, such as if they continue or not to pursue their degree, depend on them.

Hoover (2014) mentioned that students arrive in college with personal characteristics such as academic skills, motivational factors, family support, and socioeconomic status which play an important part in students' persistence (as cited in Tinto, 1993). These student characteristics

interact with other aspects of the institution to impact the students' success. If students adapt and integrate into the campus community, these characteristics can support the students' commitment to be persistent in acquiring their degree (Hoover, 2014; Price & Tovar, 2014; Tinto, 1993).

Student engagement plays a critical role in both theories. This research assists educators and other higher education professionals in Student Affairs by providing them insight into student experiences and behaviors while on AP to understand how to best support them, and it informs them about the best practices to adopt for underrepresented college students.

Research Population and Sampling Method

I used purposeful and snowballing sampling methods to recruit a minimum of eight participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Purposeful sampling is a technique used in qualitative research which includes identifying and selecting participants or groups of individuals that are particularly familiar or experienced with a phenomenon. Snowballing sampling was used because often students identified with other students who shared similar experiences (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, participant availability and willingness to communicate their experiences were essential for this study.

The participants for this study consisted of college students, both male and female, who were at least 18-years-old and had successfully achieved satisfactory academic standing. I recruited students who self-identified as either Latino or Hispanic and experienced AP in the past two years of this study. Upon approval from Concordia University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and site approval, the research site's student affairs staff was informed about this study. They were responsible for inviting the participants to contribute to this study through college email. This department manages a monthly report with the students' names and GPA available for staff and counselors; they usually follow this list to notify students of their academic situation. This monthly report is an important assessment of students whose performance is unsatisfactory. I

recruited nine students for completed study. During the summer quarter, the college has fewer students than other quarters; therefore, I decided to include a gift card with the value of 20 dollars to motivate students to contribute to the study. This study had voluntary participation and all participants were provided with a consent form before participating (see Appendix A).

Instrumentation

My study combined characteristics of data procedures from two research studies — Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, and Pino (2016) and Byrd (2017). The instrumentation that I used included interviews, surveys, and artifacts. Regarding validity and reliability, like Donaldson et al. (2016), I asked participants check their interview transcriptions and presented the findings to the participants for confirmation. Saldaña (2009) has explained qualitative coding assigns symbols to capture the essence of the data. The interview transcriptions and other data were coded through three different methods: exploratory coding, affective coding, and in vivo coding.

Donaldson et al. (2016) analyzed the relationship of community college students and academic advising using a single case study with twelve students through interviews and review of other college documents (catalogs and syllabi). Two layers of coding analysis were applied to the interview data, and the categories were organized based on its analysis. The data analysis process was reviewed by peers to confirm final themes. The results confirmed several positive and negative themes. As a strength, students agreed that mandatory participation in the intrusive academic advising was essential for their success. Among weaknesses, the need for efficient support to help students in transition, a lack of adequate advisor availability, and a need for more options of courses was reported.

Byrd (2017) used a case study to present Schlossberg's transition theory for underrepresented transfer students in a community college, and therefore provides precedence for this research. Byrd's research questions and theoretical framework aligned with the Schlossberg's

transition theory in this research as I seek to understand the experiences of students while on probation and their process of transition to satisfactory academic standing. Both studies analyze crucial transitional moments in underrepresented students' college experiences that impact and influence their academic success. These studies directly relate to this research with regard to the topic: underrepresented transfer students at a community college, the research questions, and the theoretical framework.

Byrd's (2017) study used a phenomenological approach to investigate student transitions from community college to university. In this qualitative study, documents such as degree plans and college catalogs were analyzed; data was also collected through interviews, participant journals, questionnaires, and participants' observation. In collecting several types of data, comparing data helped to validate emerging themes; this is known as the constant comparison method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition to the study by Donaldson et al. (2016), I conjectured whether interviews with administrators and academic advisors might change the presented findings. Accordingly, the combination of my research questions, analysis of related studies, and contesting the need for strategic support to college students drove the data collection of my research. Participants reviewed the interviews to ensure that their views were correctly conveyed; transcripts, clarification questions, and follow-up interviews were provided to them if needed. Similarly, the documents collected were reviewed by participants to ensure that my research methods, data collection, and coding methods represented their views accurately.

Data Collection

In this qualitative research, I utilized data from a demographic survey, an in-depth interview, and artifacts to ensure better understanding of my investigation. I was responsible for collecting the data from the interviews and surveys of the students for this study. The

demographic survey was provided to each of the participants to fill out at our meeting. The survey provided comprehensive and accurate data such as gender, age, race, and other information from students who helped me to efficiently assess the students who experienced AP intervention. Collecting demographic information helped me to cross-tabulate and compare students to see how responses varied among them. I recorded the interviews and took notes.

Demographic survey. The 10 questions helped regulate the favorable characteristics of the target population. These variables included the students' age, gender, ethnicity, and marital status; moreover, school background, employment status, and others were also recorded. The demographic survey helped me to start a purposeful sampling base with information based on the participants' background. This general information helped me fulfil the standards of the study (Creswell, 2013). After participants were recruited, the consent forms were signed. The participants had the demographic survey which was completed on the same day as the interview (see Appendix B).

One-on-one interviews. Before conducting the interview, the participants had signed the permission to participate in this study. Participants were introduced to the interview process, and they chose their pseudonyms. I made notes, observed, and digitally recorded the interview. Participants were permitted to review the notes and request changes if necessary. Unlike a simple conversation, qualitative interviews require the interviewer to develop questions suitable for the study as well as demonstrate active listening skills (Yin, 2014). Participants had an hour-long individual interview (semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions). The identities of participants were not revealed in any publication or report. The interview questions were designed to guide and lead the discussion to reveal the details required for this case study. Interviews are the most efficient form of data collection in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009, p.87). Its purpose was to understand the opinions, experiences, and ideas of the participants. The interviews

focused on the research questions, student's perception, and experiences; they were not biased by the researcher's views. The interview questions are displayed below.

1. How would you describe your academic experiences during your first year of college?
2. Did you feel as if you were academically prepared for college when you arrived on campus and began your courses during your first year?
3. Did you use any academic support services before you were on academic probation? If so, which ones and how did you discover those services?
4. Can you describe your experiences while you were on academic probation?
5. What do you think led you to be on academic probation?
6. In which quarter(s), were you placed on academic probation?
7. Describe your thoughts and feelings about being placed on academic probation. Did someone help you during this time?
8. What services does your college offer to students on academic probation?
9. What support services, if any, did you use while on academic probation? How did you know about those support services?
10. Were the academic support services you used helpful to you?
11. Were you assigned an advisor while on academic probation?
12. Do you believe your advisor understood your academic needs? Why do you believe this?
13. What did you know about academic probation before you were placed on it?
14. What have you learned about academic probation after having been placed on it?
15. Can you describe some of the strategies you used to help achieve satisfactory academic standing?
16. What would you like to share with other students who may be placed on academic probation?

17. What other information about your experience of being on academic probation would you like to share?

These interview questions provided me with the participants' information about their experience during the AP intervention. Research shows there are many reasons that students fail and contribute to their departure from college (Renzulli, 2015; Tinto 1975). Questions 1 and 2 gave me an overall idea of the participants' general background. Questions 4, 5, and 7 exposed the stress that participants experienced and their methods of coping with the situation (self, transition theory). These related to specific events and internal and external factors. Questions 8 and 9 are similar — they helped in understanding and reflecting further regarding the participants, including their efforts to persist. This involves the Self, Situation, Support, and Strategies (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995). Students are in many different transitions throughout their lives. The 4S's transition theory can help students to understand their transition to college, through the 2–3 years in the college, and for moving on from college. This process can be used in Student Affairs to help students to understand and adapt to their college experiences.

Hoover (2014) and Reisinger (2016) used the departure theory (Tinto, 1975) for their study. They mentioned that to be competent in college, students need to succeed academically and socially. Questions 8, 10, 11, and 15 helped in understanding whether the students were able to connect (personal support) and use the academic support services. Studies show that academic engagement is essential in increasing the students' learning and social skills (Astin, 1968; Tinto, 1993; Tovar, 2015). These include a relationship with teachers, staff, and peers. Students, specially underserved student population can benefit from a positive relationship (Astin, 1968; Bean & Eaton, 2001; Martinez & Welton, 2014; Orth et al., 2012). Question 7 requested some reflection from the participants, their process of coping during this time, and their persistence through their experiences.

In questions 15, 16, and 17, participants were able to give feedback about their learning experiences and help other students who may be facing the same intervention. These questions demonstrated what students learned about their persistence, commitment, and enthusiasm to learn during this period. They can also help colleges to develop or improve academic areas for students' learning experiences. In the final question, participants had the opportunity to reflect and add additional comments.

Artifacts. Yin (2014) stated that documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts qualified as artifacts. For this study, I focused on the materials the Student Services department provided, website information, and any documents that they sent to AP students. These documents were obtained as the third level of provision for my study.

Data Analysis Procedures

This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (individual), a demographic survey, and artifacts for data collection and analysis. The use of qualitative research allows the researcher to use a small study sample (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005) and rich description (Yin, 2009). The data came from students who experienced AP intervention and based on their responses, the research questions were answered. The general process of data analysis started by identifying parts of the data that were relevant to the research questions (Merriam, 2009). By their nature, qualitative studies tend not to generalize; the limitation of qualitative studies is that “the sample size is small and is not a random sample” (Carrol & Morrell, 2010, p. 111).

Once the data was collected, coding strategies were used for data analysis. Qualitative data investigated through a coding process which recognized themes; these themes were the basis for the decisions of the study. This data analysis was also written, and its results were summarized

and presented in a report for others to review. Saldaña (2009) explained that qualitative coding assigns symbols to capture the essence of the data. Exploratory coding is defined by Saldaña (2013) as an introductory method that permits the researcher to review the data, looking for repetition of patterns (p.3). I reviewed and transcribed interviews to identify words or phrases that were repeated or that were emphasized on by the participant. I noted the similarities and differences in each interview and then reviewed the data for themes. The demographic survey helped me understand the student' background.

My goal was to create as many themes as possible by marking the key phrases and words in the text with colored pens (Sandelowski, 1995a). Bernard (2000) stated that the visual scan method is called eyeballing. To identify emerging themes, I used the words that participants used the most. I generated a list of the frequency of words that the participants used and counted the number of times the words were used. I used the MS Word document to help highlight the frequency of these words or phrases while I looked for themes. The interview was coded through three different methods: exploratory methods, affective methods, and in vivo coding. This initial coding permitted me to be aware of words, phrases, and other concepts that were repeated in more than one interview. After coding the data through exploratory coding, I coded the interviews again with affective coding. Most of the interview answers highlighted that the emotions of these participants which made it easier to identify these words after the initial coding. The affective coding was used to investigate the “subjective qualities of human experience” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 105), and it allowed for an investigation into the participants' emotions and other important values (Saldaña, 2013). I chose to concentrate on the feelings revealed during the affective coding process. Finally, I used in vivo coding which helped me understand the participants' experiences revealed through their own words.

Triangulation method was used to ensure that the data was accurate and could be verified

or validated. “Triangulation using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking data collected from follow-up interviews with the same people” (Merriam, 2009, p. 216). For this study, the layers of the student development theory (Schlossberg transition theory and Tinto’s departure) were utilized to code the data. Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) listed the changes that occur in an individual experiencing transition. The application of the 4S’s theory — student’s characteristics (Self), challenges (Situation), social (Support), students coping (Strategies) — allowed patterns to emerge, establishing the operationalization of variables (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995).

Participants were able to review the interview notes after the interview was finished. The participants views were correctly conveyed and they were able make changes if they needed. The clarification questions, and follow-up interviews were provided to them if needed. This data analysis was written, and its results were summarized and presented in a report for others to review. These results have been discussed in Chapter 4.

Limitations of the Research Design

This research focused on a specific population: college students who experienced the AP intervention. This study reported a gap existing in the literature, which confirmed that there is insufficient understanding of the experiences of community college students who were placed on AP. However, studies claim that students need more academic support (ATD, 2016; Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2016). The lack of existing research on college students on AP presents a limitation to this study as well as an opportunity for expanding the discussion. The results of this study were specific to college students who faced AP in a definite campus and geographic region.

Validation

Internal validity. Internal validity concerns in qualitative case-study research fall within the domain of making logical inferences regarding the events which have not been directly

observed. The application of strategies of pattern-matching, explanation-building, addressing rival explanations, and the use of logical models supports the researcher in establishing external validity (Yin, 2014). Anney (2014) stated that trustworthiness of research is essential, and he listed its four factors as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The credibility of findings indicates that the study can be trusted. Transferability is described by Anney (2014) as a means of reaching an external validity using enough details to explain a phenomenon so that the conclusions can be transferable to other settings. Dependability suggests that the study will derive the same results on repetition. The last one—confirmability—indicates that the study findings have been presented without researcher bias; they are directly from the respondents.

Qualitative research is participatory. In this study, participants reviewed the interview notes to ensure that their views were correctly conveyed. Clarification questions, and follow-up interviews were provided to them if needed. Similarly, the documents collected were reviewed by crucial members to ensure that my research methods, data collection, and coding methods were represented correctly. The triangulation method was used to ensure that the data was accurate; this was a cross-checking process that used multiple data sources to guarantee that the data represented in the study is correct (Merriam, 2009). This process helped in improving the validity and reliability of the findings (Carrol & Morrell, 2010).

Credibility. The importance of trustworthiness in research indicates that credibility is an essential criterion in research. It connects the research findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research findings. Credibility focuses on the two most important techniques used in qualitative research—triangulation and participant checking (Statistics Solutions, 2018).

Qualitative researchers provide detailed and in-depth analysis of the data to build a case based on evidence (Yin, 2014). Presenting logical rival interpretations of the data can strengthen their

argument. The development of a comprehensive review further develops an analytic frame to ground the study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described seven essential techniques to conduct credibility. These techniques are as follows: spending sufficient time in the field to learn or understand the culture, observation, triangulation, and peer debriefing which help in uncovering the biases which would have been taken for granted. Moreover, an analysis of unusual cases may revise, broaden, and confirm the patterns emerging from data analysis. To increase the credibility of my research, I included measures such as researcher reflection, member checking, and triangulation in this study.

Dependability. Similar to credibility, dependability is imperative for trustworthiness. Dependability establishes the research findings as reliable and repeatable. If other scholars choose to repeat the research and analyze the data, they will come across similar results and conclusions (Statistics Solutions, 2018). In other words, to establish dependability, it is essential to have an outside researcher or an external audit (committee members), which was necessary to evaluate all the processes of data collection, analysis, and findings of this research.

Expected Findings

The literature review confirmed that students need more support while transitioning to college. Academic support and relationship with faculty and staff on the campus are essential for students' progress. The AP status that students may face in the first or second quarter (or semester) of the institution might negatively affect their outcomes. I expected the findings to support the critical issues raised by the lack of support for students transitioning to college. Different students have different needs, especially the minority students in the community college system.

The literature review also concluded that college students bear significant burdens. The number of dropouts have been increasing among students who experience inefficient progress in

college. I expect the case study findings to address this issue as well. The proposition that more resources (or strategies) are necessary for students when they transfer to community colleges could be a tool for alleviation and to find a better strategy to support these students before going into AP. In this case study, therefore, I expect to develop a broader discussion on this topic.

Ethical Issues

Conflict of interest assessment. This research did not anticipate any conflict of interest. I did not benefit financially from this study. Conducting studies ensures the results present a fair and honest interpretation of the data. Before beginning the data collection process, this study required the approval of Concordia University's IRB. I began my research at the institution which I had selected after receiving approval from the Concordia University IRB and permission from the institution. After the participants read, they signed the informed consent form congruent with Concordia University and the college (site) IRB requirements. The informed consent clarified the interview and survey protocol, outline foreseeable risks, and ensured confidentiality for the participants.

Researcher position. As an educator working with students, most of whom make a successful transition to college and then transfer to universities, my role is that of an advocate for my students; this drives my research efficacy. An additional perspective that I bring to this study is my own experience as a new immigrant. The need to learn a new culture in a short time motivated me to start my life in the U.S. in a community college. My parents did not have the opportunity to pursue their education; they did not have the resources, but they always encouraged me to pursue my degree. I learned to be a resilient person, and this drives me in everything I do today.

In this study, I was responsible for collecting the interviews and the survey data of the participants. To avoid bias, the participants were students with whom I did not have a relationship.

Yin (2014) stated that case-study research can be biased and hence warned the researcher to allow the data to lead the investigation. Centering the interview questions around Schlossberg and Tinto's theories, I investigated students who experienced AP intervention; I also investigated other situations that they experienced.

Ethical Issues in the Study

The ethical issues associated with this study were reviewed and approved by the university and the institution's IRB. Participants had the opportunity to sign up to voluntarily be a part of this study. After the participants signed up, an informed consent form was given to each participant of this study. Appendix A presents the consent form.

Risks. There were minimal risks to participating in this study. I sought to understand student experiences during AP. Due to the intrusive nature of some of the questions in the interview, there was a risk that the participants could become emotional when describing their experiences. If the participants needed more time to talk, they were allowed more time. If they chose to withdraw from the study, they were assured that it was fine as it was stated in the informed consent form.

Confidentiality and protection. Participants' real names were not published, pseudonyms chosen by the participants were used and any personal information about the participants was coded so it could not be traced back to them. Any name or identifying information participants gave was secured via electronic encryption or stored in a locked cabinet for three years and then destroyed.

Data protection and security plan. The data collected during the interviews and survey was stored in the researcher's password-protected computer. The notes from the participants, the letter to the participants, and the permission to tape record the interview and other necessary documents were stored in locked file cabinets. The researcher was the only one with access to this

data. Participants were asked to choose an alternate name so that their identity remained private. The digitally recorded data was destroyed once it was transcribed into written narratives. All other data will be kept for three years and then destroyed. The name of the institution was not shared so that the privacy of the students was protected.

Minimization of discomforts. Participants were informed that participation in this study was voluntary and they could leave or not participate if they did not feel comfortable. They were aware of the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, interviews, and demographic survey. They knew about their time commitment before they started the study. It was ensured that the participants were aware of the benefits and potential risks of participating in this study. Necessary precautions were taken to minimize the risks; participants could use the counseling department or other services (referrals) which were suggested to them.

Chapter 3: Summary

This chapter justified the purpose of selecting a single case-study design to investigate college students who experienced AP. Using this design model, further understanding of the issues faced by AP students and the role of academic support in community college for these students emerged. Students who experienced this probation participated in face-to-face interviews. Further insights into the transition theory (Schlossberg, 1995) and departure theory (Tinto, 1993) expanded the discussion about challenges that students face during this time.

The researcher utilized various strategies to ensure that the study is credible, such as member checking. Moreover, the documents collected were reviewed by crucial members to ensure they were represented correctly. The triangulation method was used to ensure that the data was accurate and could be verified or validated. These procedures established further credibility, dependability, and validity of the collected data that was reported. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to

relay the results and findings of this study. The emergent themes and a narrative approach were used to provide a better insight into the details acquired from the participants.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

This study was designed to understand the experiences of Latino or Hispanic students while on AP in a college located in the West Coast region in the United States. This chapter describes these students' experiences and the factors that influence the recovery of their academic standing. It describes the data analysis, its results, and the findings of this study. In this study, I used a qualitative case study method to pursue the participants' view or their interpretation of it when they had this intervention (Merriam, 1998). This method was also used because it is the most efficient one to answer the research questions regarding the college students who experienced AP. The data collected from the interviews provided the foundation to answer the research questions.

Case studies are proper when there is an exciting story to be investigated (Yin, 2009), such as the students' experiences when they were on AP and their realizations of the strategies that helped them improve their grades and the strategies that did not. These participants came from the same institution, and I was able to understand their experiences and offer a complete picture of what happened and what changed in college and their lives. A bounded case study helped me to challenge a theory and find a new way to explore these participants that came from the same college. Merriam (2009) defined a case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40).

In this case study, my role was to interview participants during the data collection, transcribe their interviews, measure the meaning derived from the participants' answers, and produce qualitative inquiries and the final report of the study findings. As a researcher, I reflected during these interviews and monitored my years of experiences as an academic counselor and first-year instructor by guiding questions which influenced my understanding of the participants' experiences. I have been working with a diverse student population and providing support for

students going to college, focusing on at-risk students. However, my background and educational experience did not influence how the findings were interpreted in this study.

In this study, through the analysis, the researcher intended to discover the students' experiences when they were placed on AP. My role as a researcher was to provide awareness regarding the meaning of AP for these students by understanding their coping mechanisms and the strategies, they used to be successful during this intervention. Additionally, the researcher expects that these findings will help institutions of higher education and students to recognize the necessary support required for Latino college students.

Research Questions

The four questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. How do students describe their experiences with academic probation?
2. What experiences lead students to acquire an academic probation status, and what do they experience while on probation?
3. What factors do students attribute their transition into satisfactory academic standing to?
4. What happens to students after they leave academic probation status? What lessons do they learn from the experience?

All the interviews were agreed to by each participant and each signed consent a form.

These interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded into categories, and then assigned to themes.

These transcripts were analyzed, and any new information that helped to build categories and themes were evaluated. A second reading of the transcripts was essential to confirm the categories and themes. After reading them more, I had the chance to clarify the data and add it into the database. Subsequently, I was able to find different patterns and themes which permitted me to find information and general themes connected to the research question.

This chapter describes the sample, research methodology and analysis, conceptual framework and methodology, case study research design, and summary of the findings. The data analysis results section demonstrated the themes that emerged. Finally, a summary finalizes this chapter.

Description of the Sample

The West Central Community College (WCCC) is a public college, one of the largest institutions in the West Coast region in the United States. The open enrollment policy makes easier for students to enroll in their quarterly courses throughout the year. The institution serves high demand of students per year and offers a diversity of certificates degrees, two-year Associate Transfer degrees, and Bachelor's in Applied Science, BAS degree in the fields of Business and Healthcare programs.

The participants of this study were Hispanic or Latino students and were over 18 years of age. These students were beginning their second year of college. Most of them had undeclared majors, and many of the students had started thinking about their major during that time. Most of the students were considered to be second year students because of the number of credits they had earned, even though they have been in the college for more than three years. Some of these students had come back to the college after a gap of at least a year. A total of nine students confirmed interest in the participating in the study, met the criteria, and were selected to participate. These participants included five male and four female students. I used purposeful sampling methods to recruit the participants: participants who had experiences or were familiar with the problem were included (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Most of these participants were born in the United States; however, the parents of many of the participants are from Mexico, and they speak Spanish at home; many of them were first-generation college students. One of the participants arrived in the United States from Mexico

recently. These participants did not live close to the college, which is in an expensive technological area with companies, such as Microsoft and Google, near the college campus. The group sample's age was 20–30 years old. Only one participant was between 30–40-years old. I have used pseudonyms for the participants; their descriptions are as follows.

Individual Participants' Descriptions

Angel. He had the opportunity to be in an excellent high school. He mentioned that he had a good transition to college. The high school prepared him to be in a college; he learned specific courses that helped him make a good transition to college. Angel is from Mexico, and since high school, he always worked part-time to help his family. He wants to graduate and be a lawyer. Angel mentioned that he better understands the college life now compared to his first college quarter. He knows about the academic support, and he can work better by managing his time. He will finish college in a year. During this period of AP, he learned a lot about himself and what he needs for his future.

Pedro. He worked part-time when he started college. He is a first-generation Latino student, and during the summer quarter, he needs to work full-time. He said that his transition from high school to college was shocking and difficult for him because he had problems focusing on his classes. His grades lowered, and he did not feel prepared mentally for college. Pedro mentioned that he needed more time between high school and college.

Cecilia. Her transition from high school to college was very overwhelming. She is a first-generation college student, and her family is from Mexico. She always worked part-time during college and had a child during the transition. She felt embarrassed to ask for help. She was a good student and had a lot of things going on when she started college. She wants to transfer to a university, preferably a business school, as soon as possible but she knows that it will take more time for her to finish her associate degree because she must manage family and work.

Gustavo. He felt his transition to college was difficult. He started having problems with his grades when he started working full-time. He is a first-generation immigrant and came from Mexico years ago. He mentioned that he had an obligation in financially support his family. He always felt exhausted and could not focus on his classes. Gustavo had two jobs during the summer, one during the week and another one on weekends. Gustavo was trying to be able to have a better management of his family and workload. Gustavo expected to work less or have a part-time job when fall quarter starts.

Antonio. His transition from high school to college was very difficult. He always worked part-time or full-time, depending on the quarter. He is not a first-generation immigrant, but his family came from Mexico. When he got the AP notification, he felt embarrassed and sad and did not to tell his parents. He was afraid of being judged as a bad student. He was surprised when he told his parents and they supported him. Antonio's father and mother had a good education in Mexico, and he thought that he should be like his parents who worked hard to get their education. He is aware that his associate degree is going to take more time.

Roberto. He is the oldest in the group; while the other participants are in their 20s, Roberto is in his 30s. He is a first-generation college student; he returned to college and wanted to pursue a technical degree. He used to work full-time and had given up on college. When he came back after years, he did not know about his AP intervention. He always worked full time, but now, he wants to focus on finishing his certificate. He mentioned he has more time to study now because of his unemployment and he can use the college resources to get better grades.

Mariana. Her father was deported when she started college. Mariana's family is from Mexico. She is a first-generation college student. She always likes to study but the stress during this time distracted her from her studies. She needed to take care of her three younger sisters because her mother had to work full time. Mariana worked on the weekends to help her mother

with the household expenses. She mentioned that high school did not prepare her for the college transition.

Maria. She always worked full time and was dealing with several personal and family issues when she was placed on AP. She said college was “hard” and she did not have time to study. Maria did not plan to reduce her working hours, but she was aware that she needed to study more and improve her time management skills to be a successful student.

Gisela. She is a first-generation college student from her family. She always worked full time, but since she was on AP, she had stopped one quarter, and came back to college and used more educational resources. She is already at the college for five years and wants to finish her associate degree by next year.

These participants worked full time, one of whom worked during the weekend as well—more than 60 hours a week. Two female participants reduced their work hours to be back to college this fall quarter after being on AP. Most of these college students experienced AP when they started college, during their first year, first quarter, or the third quarter. Some of them dropped out after being notified of their AP status, and after one year, they returned to college (the exception was Roberto who returned after four years). These students spent time focusing on improving their GPA and now, they are all off the AP. The participants demographic are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics of the Sample (N = 9)

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Work status	College level	Marital status	Household income
Angel	20–25	M	Mexican	PT	Second year	single	0-10,000
Pedro	20–25	M	Latino	PT	Second year	single	0-10,000
Cecilia	25–30	F	Mexican	PT	Second year	single	10,000-20,000
Gustavo	20–25	M	Mexican	FT	Second year	single	30,000- 40,000
Antonio	20–25	M	Mexican	PT	Second year	single	20,000-30,000
Roberto	30–40	M	Latino	UN	Second year	single	0-10,000
Mariana	20–25	F	Mexican	PT	Second year	single	20,000-30,000
Maria	20-25	F	Mexican	FT	Second year	single	10,000-20,000
Gisela	25–30	F	Mexican	FT	Second year	single	30,000-40,000

Note. Latino participants were from Latin and South America. The word “Mexican” stands for individuals who are from Mexico, and Hispanic relates to the Spanish culture and history, all Mexicans are Hispanic, but not all Hispanics are Mexican (Pediaa, 2017). PT= part-time; FT= full-time; UN= unemployed.

Research Methodology and Analysis

The research method aimed to understand the experiences of college students who experienced AP at WCCC. The literature review helped to identify the problem and research questions. These questions demonstrated the problem to be studied in the group of students. This study focuses on the descriptions of students’ experiences.

A single case study helped to develop a description with strong details of these students’ experiences. The IRB approved the consent forms for the participants. Before conducting the interview, participants signed the permission form to participate in this study. They had 10

questions from the demographic survey (Appendix B), and 17 interview questions were asked; following which, the participants verified their responses. The interview questions were developed to lead and guide the discussion toward the focus of this case study. In the semi-structured interview, as a researcher, I had more control over the topics; its purpose was to understand the participants' opinions, ideas and experiences when they were on the AP.

The interview questions were formed to obtain information about the participants' experiences with AP; guided questions were used. All the participants were given the same interview questions, and at the end of the interview, they were allowed to review the interview notes and add any additional information, if they wanted. Member checking was the opportunity given to the participants to review the notes and clarify their answers. In this qualitative research, I utilized data from the demographic survey, an in-depth interview, and artifacts to ensure better understanding of my study. I focused on materials provided by the Student Service department and website information related to the Academic Probation Policy and students.

This qualitative study analyzed a case study based on the experiences of nine students. The interview transcripts were examined and emerging meanings were identified. Each interview had the same process and themes were processed, thus forming the findings of this study.

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

This study is based on the framework of Schlossberg's transition theory (1995) and Tinto's departure theory (1975). These theories support this study because they relate to students' development phases or changes and challenges they face since they start college. These theories were used in many studies, for better understanding of the transition process that students, such as veterans, student athletes, and others, underwent when they started college. Lazarowicz (2015) used the transition theory to describe the experiences of community college students transferring to

a university. DeVilbiss (2014) and Hoover (2014) used the departure theory to illustrate the importance of engagement in students academically deficient.

The students' academic achievement depends on their engagement in campus activities and with the culture of the institution. The institution and students need to be involved and engaged with each other. Students might adapt and build resilience and move forward, or they might decide to stop or leave the institution. The students' transitions when they start college and their ways of learning to adapt and grow during the college transition are essential for their growth. The decisions that students make, such as whether to continue or pursue their degree, depends on them.

Students join college with personal characteristics, such as academic skills, motivational factors, family support, and socioeconomic status, which play an important role in their persistence (Hoover, 2014; Tinto, 1993). These student characteristics along with other aspects of the institution impact students' success. If they adapt and integrate into the campus community, these characteristics can support their persistence and their commitment to their degree (Hoover, 2014; Price & Tovar, 2014; Tinto, 1993). These theories show the importance of student engagement. Studies agreed about the importance of the academic support, and this support included relationships with family and friends and others essential for their academic and social progress (Martinez.& Welton, 2014; Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012; Tovar, 2015; Wark, 2015).

Gershenson et al. (2018) mentioned that increasing the number of teachers of color in schools makes students of color more likely to progress and conclude their degree. Gershenson et al. (2018) mentioned that Black students that had Black teachers were 32% more likely to go to college than other students that did not have Black instructors (JHU, 2018, para. 9). Studies agreed on the importance of the academic support, and this support included relationships with family and friends and others essential for their academic and social progress (Martinez.& Welton, 2014; Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012; Tovar, 2015; Wark, 2015). Wark (2015) stated the

importance of institutions to guide their students to understand the culture and learning communities and the importance of teacher and student interaction. The interaction of students and faculty in the classroom, the more campus activities (and outside of campus), students will feel more connected and engaged with the campus culture.

Demographic survey. Ten questions were asked to the participants. This survey was essential to control the favorable characteristics of the target population. These characteristics include the students' age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, employment status, etc. The demographic survey helped me to collect information regarding the participants' background. This general information helped me fulfil the standards of this study (Creswell, 2013) and help me to assess the students who experienced the AP intervention. The participants filled the demographic survey (Appendix B) and the interview on the same day.

Artifacts. Yin (2014) states that documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts qualify as artifacts. I focused on the information provided by the website and other documents, such as the email that the institution sent to AP students. These documents helped me understand the institution policy of AP further. The information on the college website stated that the academic standing policy was updated in 2015 was defined a good academic standing and was considered by the grade standard of the institution. The college website did not mention the procedure for students who were unable of reaching a satisfactory GPA, and the actions that the institution would take if the students do not get a minimum GPA.

The artifacts in this study included the information that the college displayed for students on the website and the letter sent out to the students on AP; the information that students received did not offer further details or who they should contact. I reviewed and compared them with the interview qualitative data from participants; this method improved my understanding of the

reasons the academic standing policy was not clear to these participants. Yin (1994) mentioned that essential principles of case study have multiple sources of data and maintain a chain of evidence. In this data analysis, my data reflected the ideas that I categorically organized by using three different types of coding. These artifacts served as an important source of qualitative data and validated the evidence collected from other sources which helped me to decide the themes.

The data from the interview transcripts' and artifacts helped in acquiring the result. I compared the information and emerging themes and explained the meanings of the participants' responses based on the phenomenon. As more themes emerged, I revised the data and grouped them. The rich text descriptions and their relationship demonstrated the reliability of the study. As a researcher, my own experience and the reviewed literature permitted me to evaluate and interpret the perspective of these participants with reference to the phenomenon.

Interview process. In this qualitative research, I utilized data from the demographic survey, an in-depth interview, and artifacts to ensure a better understanding of participants for my investigation. Participants were invited by email by the Student Affairs staff to participate in this research. Participation in the research project was voluntary. In this study the participants were interviewed once. All participants answered the same interview questions, and they received a printed copy of the questions immediately before the interview started. Participants were given pseudonyms to protect them and ensure the confidentiality of their answers.

I audio-recorded each interview. At the end of the interview, participants had the opportunity to share additional information, and they had a chance to make the necessary corrections to the interview notes, if necessary. They were asked to verify the interview answers for accuracy. The interviews were an hour-long and individually conducted (semi-structured interviews with seventeen open-ended questions). In the semi-structured interview, as a researcher, my aim was to understand the participants' opinions, ideas, and experiences when they

were placed on AP. The participants also filled a demographic survey (Appendix B) before the interview started.

Member checks. Participants received the interview questions before the interview started. They had time to read and ask questions if they did not understand any question. After the interview, they could make the necessary changes in the interview notes or suggest changes. Members checks establish the validity of the qualitative study and increase the validity of the text, narrative, and its interpretation (Angen, 2000; Morse, 1994; Moustakas, 1994; Sandelowski, 1993).

Case Study Design

This research consisted of a qualitative study approach. A qualitative study investigates a phenomenon that is a field of interest which seek to describe and interpret the meaning of the people participating in it. Mostly, it tries to explain “[H]ow people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). The literature review provided insights into the problem and assisted me in developing the research questions. These questions demonstrated the problem or issue to be studied by a group of people. A qualitative case study permits the researcher to examine the participants’ perspective who are involved in the study.

This case study reinforces the purpose of the qualitative approach by focusing on the descriptions of the students’ experiences with a detailed description of them. The investigation of the literature review, the method of data analysis, and the way in which I could answer the research questions made me opt for the case study research design. In qualitative research, the data was analyzed in a manner through which the researcher could understand the experiences of this group of college students with AP intervention in a specific Northwestern area in the United States. During the data analysis, the data could sometimes demonstrate different meanings, new ideas, and themes; these are important in responding to the research questions.

After the interviews were done, participants checked the interview notes and then the interviews were transcribed. Data from all the interview questions and answers from the nine participants were copied in the same Word document. Moustakas (1994) mentioned that the researcher analyzes the data using the participants' answers, establishing horizontal meaningful statements, and grouping this information into themes. This qualitative study investigated the experiences of nine Latino students.

The interview transcripts were examined, and the emerging meaning of each of the interview was processed into themes and then, the study findings. I let the themes arise naturally from the data. Repeated concepts that emerged were gathered in the Word document. These codes were not defined; I listened to its richness, transcribed carefully, read thoughtfully, reread analytically, and coded the data as I thoroughly reflected on it.

I read the participants' answers and started coding through three different methods: exploratory coding, affective coding, and in vivo coding. These coding methods were used to obtain information from different viewpoints. The investigation of the interview transcript was essential in understanding the participants' experiences during the AP intervention. The coding and thematic procedures were used to provide context in answering the research question. Data from the interviews and questionnaires was validated by comparing the responses against field notes and observations that the researcher had recorded. The triangulation process provided meaning for establishing the credibility of the data.

Coding Interviews

As defined by Saldaña (2013), the exploratory coding allows the researcher to review the data of the interviews for words and phrases that were repeated or highlighted by participants during the interview. This process allowed the researcher to identify words with an open mind.

As I started coding, I became mindful of the repetition of these words such as “hard,” “very challenging,” “terrible stress,” “my parents,” “I did not have help,” and “work.”

These data sources were analyzed line-by-line and paragraph-by-paragraph. The researcher used different colors to highlight the common ideas. These color-codes provided more clarification of concepts and repetition of the similar ideas from participants. The statements that were not consistent with the research topic or question were removed from that data permitting only the comments that provided textural meaning and varying structures of the experience. This process brought several categories, and after the exploratory coding, I chose to code the interview with affective and in vivo coding. After reading the interview transcripts, I developed more themes because I realized that the participants’ emotions needed further examination.

The affective coding provided me with words such as “sadness,” “depression,” “I lost weight,” and “stress” among others. The in vivo coding provided participants’ voices and their own experiences. Some of the phrases that the participants provided were as follows: “I am proud of myself, where I am now,” “I felt pressure, I never thought this could happen with me,” and “He always tells me not to give up, told me to move forward.” In this analysis, I found similarity with a concept and comparable categories were added to it. During this, I found similar answers, some of which were the same for some of the participants. Understanding the same information from participants made it easier to build categories which helped me define the themes for this study.

A review of the data was necessary for finding patterns. Qualitative investigation demands attention and time to reflect on the meanings of the human experiences. Coding is a cyclical process, so it was essential the researcher recode not once but multiple times and review the data and repeat this again. As I progressed in the second cycle of coding, some reclassification of coded data opened new categories. The last coding process resulted in similar data as the one I had got during my second cycle.

Some categories were incorporated into others based on their similarities. Several categories were identified during the analysis of the interview transcripts. I compared these categories, and the themes which were developed during this process helped in answering my research questions. These themes were analyzed, and a report of the results with a description of these participants' experiences with reference to the phenomenon is going to be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Coding the data with different perspectives increased the information derived from the data collected.

After I analyzed the interview of each participant, I observed similarities and some differences in them. Some categories contained groups of codes that were refined into subcategories. The major categories were compared with each other and consolidated in different ways to make the data relevant to my study (Saldaña, 2008). The participants expressed the experiences which defined their lack of success when they started college. Also, they did not feel socially and academically motivated to integrate into the college environment.

The interview transcript led to the emergence of themes and sub-themes. These themes contained: (a) factors of AP, (b) emotional consequences of AP, (c) interpersonal significances of AP, (d) positive experiences as a result of AP, and (e) development of new behaviors. At the end, students' recommendations provided by the participants. Each theme and sub-theme are described in Table 2, and more information are described in figure 3.

Table 2

Themes and Sub-themes from Student Interviews

Descriptions
Factors of AP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integration into the college environment/transition• Financial difficulties• Family support• Reluctance to seek for help• Full-time job (some students worked during the weekends for more than 60 hours per week)• Knowledge and use of academic support services• Unprepared for college• Lack of guidance• Overwhelmed/stressed• Poor choices in the course's selection/self-advised
Emotional consequences of the AP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation and disconnection from the college (gave up?)• Depressed and lost• Shame• Sadness, embarrassment, ashamed• Loss of weight• Stress• Loneliness• Anxiety over how others perceive them• Loss of focus• Feeling like a loser• Tired• Afraid• Given up
Interpersonal significance of AP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family• Guidance• Employment• College support• Finance• Stress

Table 2 (continued)

Positive experiences as a result of AP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connection to the college• Connection to academic advisors and instructors (Student Affairs staff as a whole)• Desire to learn• Meaningful advising and mentoring (Federal Program, TRIO; Multicultural Office department)• New experiences—Church, making new friends• Campus resources: Using the library, labs and students lounge
Development of new behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change in course load—two courses per quarter instead of 3, no courses during the summer quarter because of their full-time job.• Full-time job to part time for most of the participants except during the summer quarter.• Internal changes: Self-efficacy.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ask for help○ Finance○ Job○ Family○ Major changed○ Better time management○ More time to study○ Connected with resources○ Going to church○ Making friends
Students recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of the Academic Probation Policy• Guidance: early identification of students that are struggling in their coursework and provide support• Allow students to continued involvement with campus activities (even dismissed students)• Provide clear expectations and goals (mandatory orientation and advising for first-year students?)• Consistent follow up from an academic advisor, counselors• Campus resources available for students that work full time (flexible hours)• More connections with faculty, staff and campus resources• Teach students that they can ask for help• Make friends – peer support (friends in the classroom that are good students)• Try to identify and be a major as soon as the student starts college• Find outside support during AP: church, friends, family

Summary of the Findings

Six themes emerged from the nine participants' interviews which have been described below. The participants' pseudonyms were Angel, Pedro, Cecilia, Gustavo, Antonio, Roberto, Mariana, Maria, and Gisela. Their stories highlighted their engagement in community college and their support and distractions when they started college (family, full-time job, and culture). The participants' experiences included the narratives of emotional, intellectual, and academic support they received during their AP. They also included recommendations from these students for those students who experience the AP intervention. The responses have been discussed below.

Theme 1: Factors of AP. Participants, for each question, reviewed the interview transcripts multiple times; following this, I observed that some words and phrases were repeated. During the interview, the categories and the emergent codes helped to understand the view and meaning of the participants' real experience. The participants had unique stories for how they got on AP.

Integration into the college environment/transition. Most of the participants used similar words to describe their transition to college. Most of them used the words: "very challenging," "hard," and "stressful." They felt they were not prepared for the transition to college. Some of them needed to stop when they graduated from high school and get a full-time job to help their parents. When this participant returned to college, she felt lost; she reported, "College was a fast-pace, and I got used to the high school where I had guidance."

Most of these participants resisted adaptation which is required to succeed in college. They mentioned that they did not feel integrated into the college environment. Programs and efforts could be created to help this issue such as the new student orientation, mandatory for new students; a more structured service for students that experience the AP intervention and more awareness of the barriers of these students starting college will help instructors and Student Affairs staff. Out of

these nine students, only two had participated in the mandatory orientation. Most of them neither asked for help nor knew about the academic support services. Those who knew about the academic support services did not use them because they were not offered in the hours they needed.

Most of them worked full time during their AP. All the participants mentioned that they needed to help their parents, send money to their family, or pay for their classes in the following quarter. Most of the participants struggled to integrate into the college environment socially, academically, or both. Cecilia's academic struggles began when she started her first course at the college, during her transition to college. She explained it as follows:

My transition from high school to college was very overwhelming. During my first course in college, I was working part time. I did not know about the students' orientation or other information about the college. I was pregnant at that time and had a child during the transition. This was a stressful time in my life because my family did not want me with a baby and without a husband... (paused, cried).

Cecilia did not ask for help, and she felt ashamed of the situation. She wished someone could come and help her. "I did not ask for help, the only thing I knew... I needed to work more to support my family." Cecilia continued, she said she did not know about the Academic Probation Policy, by the end of the quarter when she realized that she was on AP, she was very unhappy with her, and decided to give up of school.

These students who were placed on AP experienced difficulties in adjusting to the college environment. However, unlike the other participants, Angel adapted to college life practically well. He was able to balance academics with social life and his part-time job responsibilities. He had an opportunity to be in an excellent high school which, he said, prepared him to be in college.

During the first three quarters of the first year, his grades gradually dropped until he scored a

GPA lower than 2.0 and went on AP in the spring quarter. He felt that he could repeat the same Math course over the summer and improve his grades. However, he still failed the class. He retook the class over the summer, but he did not have academic support over the summer. As Angel mentioned the following:

Summer quarter is a very short quarter, and Math is a difficult subject to take online. I did not know about that. I am a good student, and I thought it should be easy. I remembered when I needed to retake this Math for the third time, I went to the Multicultural office, and I asked for someone to help me.

Angel stopped his full-time job and reduced for a part time. He mentioned he was afraid, and he just focused on Math at that time. "I wanted to be back in good standing. I improved my grades after that, but I did not know about the academic support during the summer is considerably lower than other quarters." Angel and other students mentioned they were not aware that the summer quarter had less academic support than other quarters.

Roberto, the oldest of the participants, is a returning student who, like others, worked full time. Now, he has returned to college for a new certificate degree. As a returning student, he mentioned he never has time to interact with friends and use the academic support provided by the college. They were already closed during the time he could use this academic support. As he is a returning student and has been receiving help from the work-retraining program, he wanted to be a full-time student, finish his degree, and go back to the workforce. Roberto mentioned the following:

I felt unprepared for college when I came for the first time, a long time ago. I returned after years. I chose a certificate program if the work-retraining program offers me for free. The instructor told me I have courses to take before starting the program. I thought I had taken these basic courses before; I did not know any of this before when I studied here.

Roberto said that staff from the work-retraining program told him he was on AP. He thought that grades from years ago did not interfere with the new program, he thought he did not need anything to start the new degree.

Financial difficulties. Participants mentioned they needed to work to help their family. Participants worked full time during the summer quarter, and one of them worked during the weekends as well. Students who were placed on AP intervention lost the FA and could not apply for any grants or scholarship. Some of these students decided to work more hours over the summer to be able to pay for their fall courses. Gustavo mentioned the following:

For me, it was very hard to manage family, school and work. I was very tired all the time with my work, and I could not stop helping my parents. They needed my financial support. Now, I saved some money for school and I am happy I can reduce my work hours during the fall quarter. I do not need to work in two jobs anymore. I am working 60 hours this summer. I am happy I helped my family, and now, I can focus on my studies.

Gustavo said that family is everything for him. He mentioned this several times during the interview. He said he wants to have a family like his family, be a good father and have kids that can support the family.

Family support. All the participants worked full time before they were on AP. Some of them still work full time and reduced their college workload, some of them take only one course per quarter, others try to take two classes and work part -time. Gisela mentioned that she needs to work to provide support for her parents, but her associate degree is taking too long to complete. She believes that she will finish it within six years. Gisela mentioned the following:

I did not have any support or guidance to come to college. I am the first-generation, and it is very difficult to be in college. When I finished high school, I needed to stop college and work full time to help my parents.

Gisela joined college at the age of 21. She always did things by herself because she could not count on anyone. Gisela wants to finish her degree, but she is aware that it will take more time. Like other students, her priority is to help her family then, her studies.

Reluctance to seek for help. Most participants mentioned they did not ask for help, and this was noted as a common sub-theme that emerged from the interviews. Some of the male students did not try to find any support and the female students, three of them drop out from college. One participant asked for help only when she did not have any alternative, following which, she started the AP intervention. Institutions of higher education offer additional support for students if they are facing challenges, this is a commitment made the institution to its students. It is essential for students to improve their GPA.

The participants mentioned that they felt ashamed and were intimidated by others, such as instructors, students, advisors, and parents. They did not talk to instructors about their hardship. Additionally, they expressed their fear of being judged by others. For many participants, asking for help was a huge obstacle to overcome. Cecilia mentioned as follows:

College being so ambiguous and, however, there are a lot of resources, but as an individual, you need to look for those. I was having a hard time in my life. My personal life made me neglected my studies (started crying). I was never encouraged to ask for help. Like I should know how to do things (silence . . . growing up, I was not encouraged to ask for help (cried... paused).

Most of the male participants discussed the sociocultural value of independence; they felt that looking for help suggests weakness. The feeling of being judged or feeling like a loser was deep-rooted in several of these participants. After being placed on AP, they sought their advisors' and tutors' help. Gustavo confirmed the following:

I lost 10 pounds because of the stress I had. The Multicultural office staff helped me a lot. I looked for HA to help me. He is like a brother for me; he is Latino. He spends time with me. He helps me with my homework. He told me not to worry about things. He always tells me not to give up, told me to move forward. The participant was thankful he could find the support he needed during the AP intervention.

Full-time Job. All the participants in this study worked full time when they started college. They changed their workload after placing on AP. Most of the students who began the AP intervention took only one course each quarter. Those who dropped out were out of college for more than a year, so they decided to focus on working full time. When they returned to college, they did not know whom to ask for help. Some of them changed their full-time job to a part-time job. Some of them continued working full time and took courses at night. Participants mentioned that they hope to finish their college degree one day. This was the case for Cecilia for whom her family obligations were a competing demand; she noted as follows:

When I got the email saying that I was on AP, I left the college. I did not use any services after that. I was feeling very bad, and I did not try to use any academic support services after that. I needed to work full time. My parent's culture contributed to having more stress that time. I did not have a choice, and I needed to work. I knew that when I would be back to college, I would be better.

Cecilia was aware that college will take more time for her, now is more than four years. She mentioned her parents want her to graduate as soon as possible. Cecilia had and still have family pressure from her parents. Since she had a baby, she needs to wait for my father to get back from work to watch my kid, so, she can study.

Knowledge and Use of Support Services. Most of the participants were not aware of the variety of academic support services provided at their institution. Additionally, some of them did not

understand how these services work regarding hours and the needs of each student. Moreover, some participants found about the availability of the academic support services when it was already too late to impact their grades. During the AP, some of them used the Math lab and Writing lab. Most of the them used an academic advisor from the TRIO program and the Multicultural department.

Gustavo mentioned as follows:

I tried to use the Writing Lab (silence) . . . Math lab during this time. I was busy with work. I decided to ask for help because I could not go in the hours the lab was opened. I needed to work, and then, I went to the Multicultural office, and the staff there helped me to find alternatives to study.

Another participant found a way to manage his need for academic support. Antonio explained as follows:

I knew about the academic support, but I did not have time to use because of my work. I had to have more and more to do during this time. I did not have a way to use any support services. I sent emails to instructors and asked for more time for my homework. I asked for help.

Antonio felt that asking for help in case he needed more time or being proactive was an important matter that he did not used before. He learned to communicate with instructors and if he needed to have an incomplete grade for the quarter.

Unprepared for the College. Almost all the participants mentioned they were not prepared for the transition to college. They mentioned that their college courses, such as Math and English, were difficult, and it was a very demanding experience. They agreed they could have been better prepared before they started college. Maria mentioned the following: “It was very challenging, a different experience from high school. I was new (young), and I needed to be very independent in college. It was stressful, but after, now, I feel I am on track.”

Mariana added that the high school did not prepare her for college. This time was very overwhelming for her. She did not have time and college was very fast (courses delivery). She said she had guidance in high school. She said as follows:

I had family issues, three sisters that I needed to take care and lots of homework. My father was deported, and I needed to take care of my family. I needed to bath them, preparing food and I needed to try to do my homework. My mother worked, and I also needed to work part time over the weekend and helped my sisters at home. I did not have time. In high school, I had a teacher that tells me what to do, but the college does not work this way.

Marianna confirmed that the transition to college was a hard transition. The difficulties in managing family, school, the financial need and her own personal needs was very demanding during the transition from high school to college.

Lack of Guidance. Most students mentioned that when they started college, they self-advised and took courses that they thought were good and important for them. Mostly, they thought the course would be easy. They thought was going to be a good option for them. Angel had taken Math in spring but got a bad grade; he felt that retaking the course over the summer quarter would be an easy option. However, he got worse and needed to retake over the fall quarter. He said the following:

I had an online course during my first year over the summer. Math was a wrong course I took over the summer because of us a short quarter. I am not good at Math, and I did not have any help over the summer because there are a few staff to help. I needed help, and I did not have it. I needed more time; it was my second time taking Math.

Angel was not aware of the summer quarter schedule, and If he knew, he would not have taken Math course over the summer. He mentioned it was a very short time for a difficult subject.

Math was not a good choice for summer. For a first-time college student, he mentioned he was not aware the academic support, tutors were reduced over the summer.

Roberto mentioned that when he came to the college ten years ago, he did not have any academic advising support. He took courses that he liked, and then, he needed to take a break from college because of his full-time job. When he returned to college, the staff from the work-retraining program told him that he had bad GPA, and he was on AP. Roberto mentioned as follows:

I returned to college after years. I had some courses before and never completed a degree.

As before, right now, I felt completely new, I did not have any person helping me before. I took courses that I found was good for me. I did not know about the AP. When I heard that, my stress level increased because I did not know how to pay for my courses.

Roberto was waiting for his unemployment card and he was expecting not pay for classes until I start a new job. He also confirmed he did not know what to do and learned to advocate for him during this time.

Overwhelmed/Stress. Throughout the interviews, students discussed their level of stress in managing their job, school, and family. Most of them thought that this period was an unforgettable time in their lives, but they also confirmed that they learned about themselves and discussed the ways in which being on AP changed their lives. All participants agreed the AP was a terrible experience and they do not want to be on it again. Gisela, who could not have family support, found that going to church was the support that helped her during this time. Another participant, Cecilia confirmed as follows:

Nobody helped me with the AP. The college email was sent to me, and I felt so embarrassed about my AP, I did not want to talk about anymore. I thought I was good, but

I was not. I decided to take time off. I started working more and told my family I was at the college, but I was not. I felt pressure, overwhelming.

Cecilia said she never thought this could happen to her. She always worked hard to help her family and improve her education which was pay by her herself. She felt that someone could talk to her and helped her during this stressful time.

Antonio did not expect his family to support him, he mentioned the following:

I was afraid to tell my parents I felt miserable I was on AP. After some time, I told them. I got surprised to know they encouraged and motivated me to do better. I did not have time because of my work, but my parents helped me with my time management. My dad helped me a lot.

Antonio could find help from his parents but most of the other students did not have support from their family members. Most of them did not tell their family they were on AP or had dropped college.

Poor choices in the course's selection/self-advised. Students, such as Angel, Roberto, and Gisela, self-advise when they start college. Angel thought that Math was an easy subject to take online during summer, which is a short quarter. Gisela mentioned that “I did not have guidance, in the beginning, I did not know which courses to take... I took the wrong courses. I am here already five years, and I need one more year to complete my associate in arts degree.”

Theme 2: Emotional consequences of the AP. This study demonstrates the effect of emotions, such as shame, sadness, feeling isolated, and embarrassment, in students who have experienced AP. College is a period of significant changes and challenges in students' cognitive, emotional, and social areas. Preparing first-year students to be aware of the problems of college life and teaching them coping mechanisms are essential skills that academic affairs' professionals should possess. If the students self-advise, the stress of finding the best fit for their future career

could cause them their grades. The changes that occur in the new students until they graduate might affect other areas, including their personality.

The participants in this study felt disappointment and some of them dropped out of college without knowing about the AP intervention. Different people's methods of dealing with failures is different, and some of these students cried during the interviews because they remembered this episode. As per Barouch-Gilbert (2015), students had limited information about the academic performance policy. They had the feeling of "being academic deficient" during their AP which played a negative role during their transition (p.109). The participants wrote that they were unaware of the institution's policy. They expressed that the institution should have approached them before the AP, as a warning, so that they would be better prepared for the academic coursework.

Most of the participants believed keeping their academic failure hidden from family, academic support, and friends would protect them from shame, embarrassment, and other problems. The importance of a supportive network toward students' pathways, especially for minority students, has been well-documented (ATD, 2016; Marrero, 2016; Martinez & Welton, 2014; Roderick, 2016; Tinto, 1993; Tovar, 2015) and has found that a connection with the students and an academic support system has positive influences in their persistence in their education. Student Affairs professionals should develop strategies that strengthen the student-faculty and student-academic advisors relationship.

Tovar (2015) examined how interactions with academic support influenced students' grades and how these interactions affected the way Latino college students persisted in their education. This study indicated academic support, such as advising and counseling programs, influenced the students' persistence in completing their degrees. The positive influence of their relationship with faculty, academic staff, and professional resources on campus for emotional support and coping mechanisms led to successful student outcomes.

Theme 3: Interpersonal significances of AP. Throughout the data collection process, students discussed things they learned about themselves and how being on AP changed their lives. Some of them mentioned how it affected their career because they changed their majors. Some found that their relationship with the people in their support system changed, and most of them realized that there was the support offered by the institution. This section explores the participants' reflections on the people who helped them and their choices about their academic priorities.

Most students did not tell their parents that they were on AP; some of them simply told them that they would help their parents by working for a year and then, they would be back in college. Antonio said that he was afraid to tell his parents that he was on AP, he said: "After some time I told them. I got surprised how they encouraged and motivated me to do better." All the participants were aware that a degree is essential for them to find better jobs and better quality of life.

Roberto mentioned the importance of knowing about a degree path and taking the right courses to finish the degree, he said the following:

I know the importance of understanding the degree you want as soon as your start college. You can take the classes for the degree without losing time and money. Be clear major as soon as you start college, relate to people that can help you. If you do not know you may take classes here, there and spend more time to discover what you want to do.

Gisela became aware that the college offers resources to students after her AP (like other students). She mentioned as follows:

Use academic and emotional resources. I am grateful for what I am, I wish I could have this mindset before. Now, I know what is going to cost to me to reach my goal. My goal before the AP was to be a medical doctor because of my father health issue; now, I changed to graduate as a Biology major.

Pedro, Maria, and Gisela were also aware that the AP helped them with their time management and their priorities. Pedro mentioned the following:

I try to stay on focus. I used all the school resources, and now, I am communicating more than before. Go and talk to teachers and support services about your needs. Another important thing is doing my homework on time. I just had KC (Multicultural office staff) to help me, nobody before helped me . . . I needed to figure out things by myself (said he felt sad, miserable).

Maria noted as follows: “No matter what circumstances focus on your education, it affects your career and lifestyle. It is very important.” Participants confirmed they learned to communicate more with others and advocate for themselves during the AP intervention.

Theme 4: Positive experiences as a result of AP. Internal Changes. Throughout the interview process, all participants found themselves during personal development. Many students reflected upon the lessons they learned about themselves and their values when they were on AP. It seems that the participants would not have reflected in the manner that they did had they not been placed on AP. AP positively impacted the self-image of all the participants. They also confirmed that they were more connected with the faculty and staff of the institution.

Many of them became more vocal, asked more questions, used more academic support services, and made more friends. Most of them are aware that they may need to change to a different major which would be more flexible for their work schedule and cost. Angel said the following:

I wanted to be in a Business major, but because of my Math skills, I was advised to change my major and pursue a different one. Now, I want to be a lawyer. I need more time for Math, and because I had repeated the same course, Math three times, I changed my mind for a different major. I always worked, I was working full time, and now, I work part time.

Roberto mentioned: “It is important to have a friend in the classroom because you always can count with them to help in case you need to miss the class.” Mariana said she is using the multicultural services academic support more now. “I used the multicultural department, and once a week I meet the advisor, which worked directly with me. Every week, he advised me and wanted to confirm my goals. He helped a lot.”

Maria did not use campus resources before and did not ask for help. She said “I am going to communicate more with instructors. I will be making more time so, I will be studying more and make sure this is my priority.” Gisela also revealed the following:

Besides studying more and using more campus resources, it was a good change for me to go more in the church. I went to the church since I started this time (paused... cried), it has been helping me a lot and was my relief, only relief that time. I could be more focused in school after that.

Gisela is close to finish her degree and she is thankful for learning and meeting new people during this stressful time in college. She has managing her work and school and plans to work part time starting the fall quarter.

Theme 5: Development of new behaviors. After the AP, participants reflected on their intentions to return to college. Each participant made a conscious and cautious decision to return to college. They reported being able to identify factors that contributed to their AP and to rectify them by developing their habits to make them more conducive to success in the college courses. While students often suggested that their feelings about being on AP were negative, the emotions they articulated resulted in many positive behavioral changes. All the participants discussed at length the modifications they were making to their behaviors, and how they perceived these behaviors would relate to their academic performance. Certainly, their emotional and relational experiences impacted their modification choices, but a variety of other factors also influenced

them.

This section considers the positive behavioral modifications that the participants exhibited because of AP. Furthermore, it details the changes the students made. Through an effective understanding of the ways in which students' emotions impact their behaviors, Student Affairs practitioners and faculty can serve these students more effectively.

Changes in course load. All participants acknowledged that for them to improve their study skills, they needed to work on their time management. They knew that they needed to change their academic habits and make sure their studies were their priority. They realized that their success depended on the time they spent on studying; they needed to increase their knowledge by avoiding distractions.

Full-time job to part-time. Participants previously worked full time, but now, after the AP intervention, some of them are working part time. Most of them are taking less course load to keep their GPA in good standing.

Internal changes: Self-efficacy. Students mentioned that they were avoiding distractions; some of them described how they managed and offered study tips. The distractions students cited ranged from spending too much time on other priorities, such as partying, making friends, and work; they also stated that having to deal with issues with their family or in their own life also posed as distractions. The participants mentioned the importance of taking courses that were necessary for their major to avoid wasting time and money on taking unnecessary courses. They agreed that they learned a lot during the AP, and they have become more self-effacing. Antonio stated as follows:

For me, to find friends that are better than me or being better academically than me is great. My friend got "A"s and helped me during the quarter. Now, I try to avoid distractions; I think electronics can help us to study but also, I cannot study with my cellphone close to

me or having music or television turned on. I know I am spending four years to complete my associate degree in Criminal Justice because of this terrible time, I spent with the AP. I felt I could get better grades, but I need more time to get better grades in hard courses.

Antonio stated he tried to get his finance aid, and he could not get because of his AP status. He decided to work and pay for his classes until he graduates. Right now, he is working part time. He mentioned he misses high school; the college is very hard and the time in college has been very stressful for him.

Students Recommendations

The students who participated in this study presented suggestions to help future students who might experience AP. Most of the suggestions are described; they were responses to these final questions: Would you like to share with other students who may place on AP? What would other information about your experiences of being on AP you like to share? These recommendations provided the opportunity to collect information that could be used by new students who are placed on probation.

Students who are not in good standing (on AP) need to recover their GPA in a span of three quarters otherwise they are dismissed from the institution. Students who are dismissed are not allowed to attend or be involved in campus activities for a year. However, the new updated information from the institution states that petitions to appeal this decision can be evaluated and must be sent to the institution. Some of these students who were interviewed dropped out as soon they found that they were placed on AP. Only one participant reported that she connected with an academic advisor who suggested to the participant to be out for a year to solve her problems before returning to college. Most of the students had not used any academic support or campus resources until they were placed on probation.

Students confirmed that they did not know about the AP policy and when they were placed on, they did not know what to do. The knowledge and understanding of the policy are be essential for students. According to Pedro, “You lose your social life, is hard to regain when you are back.” He

said he felt miserable and affirmed that “Someone should have explained this to me before.” Some of the participants tried to connect with the campus resources, such as Math lab, but the timings were not feasible for those who work full time. The testing center also closed after 5 p.m., so the participants had to miss work to be able to use some of the campus resources.

They agreed that they should be aware of the policy, and Pedro, said he should have received a warning before being on AP. When he realized that, he did not know what to do and did not have time to go back. An early identification of those struggling with their GPA might be helpful to assist them. Another recommendation was the availability of someone from the college who could support students who are getting poor grades and the AP intervention. An academic advisor or a counselor who could provide the necessary support for students when they are in warning and on AP might help them get back on track.

These Hispanic and Latino students relate to advisors from TRIO and Multicultural services which provide support for the underserved population. Most of them confirmed that they did not want to ask for help; some participants claimed that someone should contact them and help them. Other participants thought they could efficiently do things on their own. When students started the AP, they started connecting with an academic advisor. Most of the students used the same staff at these both departments. Antonio, spoke with a counselor from TRIO, he said: “He is great! He always encouraged me. I remembered I spent more time with this advisor than anyone in the college. I learned so much with him.”

Another student, Gustavo shared: “My advisor shared his experiences with me. That way he does things that inspires me. Our culture is very similar, we are Hispanics, and I feel comfortable with him.” Participants agreed that it is very important for them to use campus resources, and now, all of them use more resources since their AP is done. Currently, students contact their academic advisor and instructors weekly. These students are spending more time on the campus (reduced

their work hours) and making more friends. They are more connected to the staff from the library, Math lab, and other academic resources in the campus. They mentioned that it would be important to know how college works before they transition to it.

Only two of these nine participants had participated in the orientation before. They were aware of the importance of clear pathway, and goals since they started college. They would like to know more about majors and opportunities. Another important point that was noted was that the participants wanted to find support groups outside the campus. One student said the only resource that helped her during the AP was going to church. Many students mentioned that they should know or learn to advocate for them or have someone who can teach them so that they can ask for help.

Presentation of the Data and Results

Themes and sub-themes emerged from the analysis of the nine participant interviews. Participants knew the importance of the study and were asked to respond the interview questions honestly. The research questions were aligned with these themes and sub-themes. They described their experiences when they were on AP. Figure 3 demonstrates these themes that emerged from the interview transcripts.

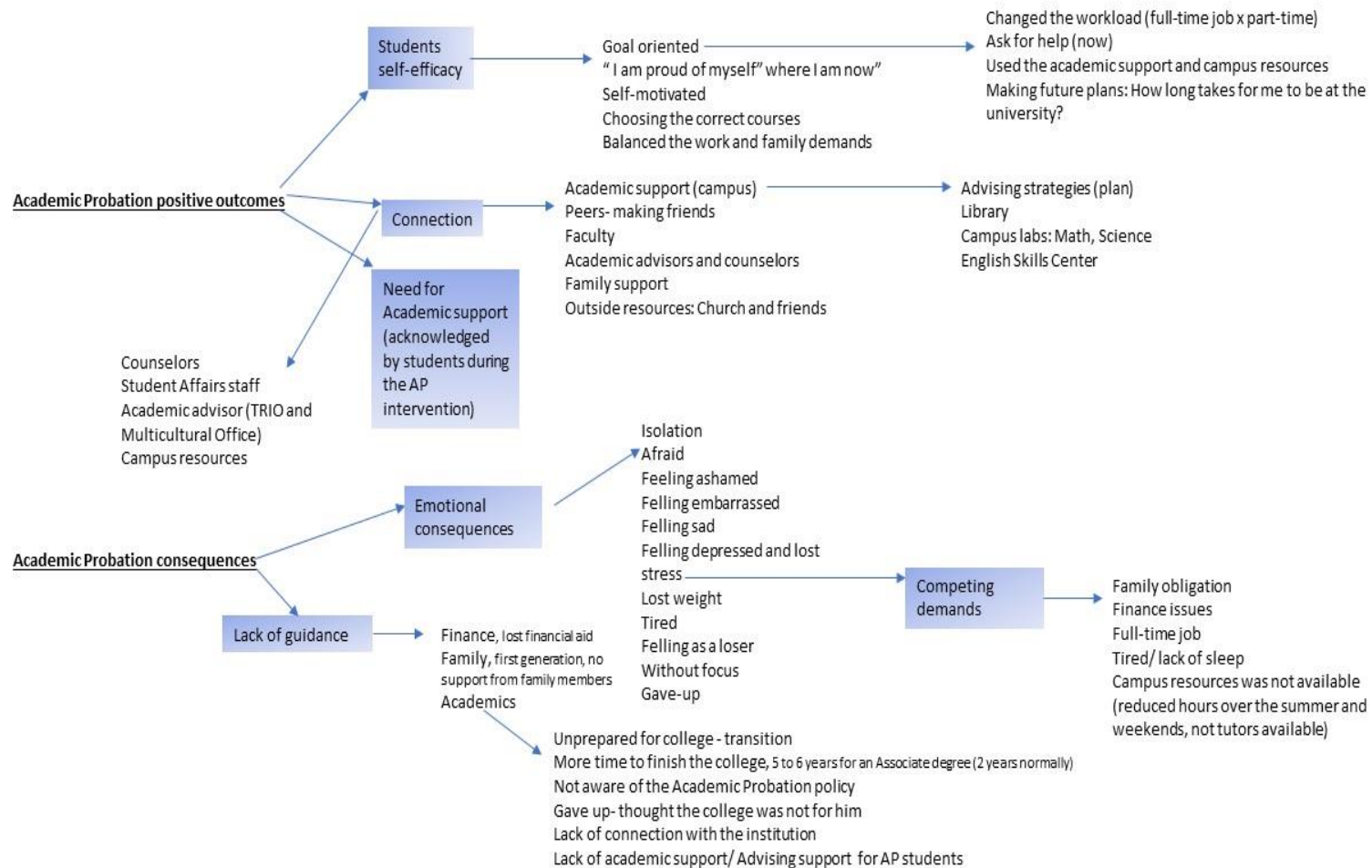


Figure 3. Interview Transcripts Data.

Note. The figure outlines the data emerged from the participants' interview.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the transition experience of Latino and Hispanic college students who experienced AP when attending a two-year institution in the Northwestern region in the United States. This study referred to Schlossberg's transition theory and Tinto's the student departure theory. During the analysis of the interview transcript, emergent themes and sub-themes appeared, I included the answers for each participant in accordance with the research questions. Participants described their experiences with AP to be very hard, intense, and stressful. Some of them gave up and came back to college after one year. Participants described this time as a demanding transition. Their claims have been transcribed as follows.

It was "a very hard time!" Very hard time being on AP. It was my first-year college; I had one course per quarter. Education that was my priority before seemed not anymore. I felt lost. I was a full-time student and wanted to be focused on school, and then I was on AP.
(Angel)

My first year, I was not so well. I was not focusing; I was distracted, and not paying attention because of my work schedule. It was hard to manage; I was not ready for college.
(Pedro)

I never heard about the AP before... I guess I had received an email from the college. . . . I did not want to see my GPA. I did not know about the AP before and realized that it was a serious situation. I felt embarrassed and terrible stress. I had an online workshop for students on probation. I felt lots of pressure because I needed to be better, very stressful!
(Cecilia)

When the multicultural staff told me that I needed to have only one course because my GPA was not good, I was on AP. They wanted me to have one course and do well. I took one class as they told me to do but I did not go well again. I stopped school for two

quarters, made some money. I got a full-time job because my parents needed my help. My focus was to help my parents then later; I could come back to school. I needed to help my parents. (Gustavo)

Terrifying! First, I thought about my parents. My mother had three kids; my parents had a lot of school. They both are good. My mother is a psychologist, and my dad graduated in Criminal Justice. I thought I screw up. I got in this situation, and I needed to find out how to be out! (Antonio)

When I came back to college, I did not know they measured my actual GPA with the old one. I did not know about the AP. I was with stress because I did not know how to get the unemployment card and I was expecting I would not pay for my classes until I started a new job. I remembered in the past when I was taking classes and a full-time job, I did not have time to do my homework and get the grades I needed. I gave up, and now I want to get the way to update my skills and after that, find a better job. (Roberto)

I did not know about the AP. I heard that I needed to take fewer classes. I discover things by myself. I started my AP with one course. I was very focused in my studies when I start the AP. However, I had so much going on at home; I understood if I had less workload, more time, this was a process to be successful. I understood that, and I knew that I needed to be organized and focused and taking only one class I was able to be successful. The AP helped me to increase my skills (academic). I lost my FA support, and I know that to finish my associate degree I will spend more time than others. AP helped me to increase my skills. I learn to talk to my professors; I was able to pay more attention when I started talking with them and asking for help. I was shy, and I discovered that I needed to ask for help. I needed to do by myself so, my teachers helped me when I needed more time because of my issues at home. (Mariana)

When I was placed on AP, I left the college. I was working full-time, and I was taking three courses per quarter, and my grades were getting worse, so, I got on the AP. (Maria)

I felt depressed, unmotivated that time. The TRIO was so supportive of me. They helped me a lot . . . they said was ok to take breaks, they encourage me to take time off if I needed. My father was in the hospital I started working there because of my father health issues at that time. I started full time and then now, I am part time. (Gisela)

Participants attributed factors, such as having someone to guide them, for their transition into satisfactory academic standing as. They mentioned the connection with an advisor from TRIO or the MCS. They used the same department of the college and related to three staff members who helped them get out of the probation: the Multicultural office and TRIO department that works with students of color, Latino, and Afro-American students.

The consoler and the MCS advisor made me rethink about my major, think about me and evaluate my needs. They helped me in making a change; I changed my major now, I want to be a lawyer. Before I thought to be a Business major but now because of the Math, I changed to be a lawyer. (Angel)

The MCS staff was the only support I used. (Pedro)

I did not use any support services that time. I gave up (shook her head). (Cecilia)

The MCS support/advisor and labs. (Gustavo)

After a time when I was getting better, they were helpful to me. I started working less, and I could have more help than I needed. (Antonio)

They are very qualified and helped me during this time. All the questions I had they were very helpful and helped me to have a better grade (academic departments). (Roberto)

The resources were available, but I needed to have someone to guide me. I needed someone that knew the college system that could help me to understand the college.

(Mariana)

I left the college (silence... paused). (Maria)

They helped me 100%. Then, I used the Math lab most of my time last time, so I passed in Math. (Gisela)

Participants mentioned what led them to be on AP. The hardships they experienced were related to the Academic Probation Policy—they did not know about it. They did not know about the college resources. These participants were working full time and self-advised the wrong courses. The full-time job, family, personal issues, and financial issues together caused a stressful time in their lives. They did not have time to study, could not focus on their studies, and had family obligations. The participants confirmed the AP was a difficult time and they experienced isolation, and they felt sad, and stressed; some said that they felt ashamed and miserable. They had difficulty in focusing on their studies, and they were exhausted because of the workload: working full time, family obligations, and school.

I had an online course during my first year over the summer. Math was a wrong course I took over the summer because of us a short quarter. I am not good at Math, and I did not have any help over the summer because there are a few staff to help. I needed help, and I did not have it. I needed more time because I was taking Math for the second time. I was not aware of the summer quarter schedule, and If I knew, I would not have taken Math course over the summer. It was a very short time for a difficult subject. Math was not a good choice for summer. For a first-time college student, I did not know a lot of things that now I know. I did not know I did not have tutors over the summer. (Angel)

The lack of focusing on my studies. It was hard to manage my work and school and came back at 11 pm every day. Very tired and I could not concentrate on my studies. (Pedro)

College being so ambiguous and however there are a lot of resources, but as an individual, you need to look for those. I was having a hard time in my life. My personal life made me neglected my studies (started crying). I was never encouraged to do/ask for help. Like I should know how to do things (silence)... growing up, I was not encouraged to ask for help... (cried... pause). (Cecilia)

I stopped caring about school. I did not care about my future anymore because I needed to help my parents. (Gustavo)

Honesty, getting older, hanging out with friends. I could not manage my time. I did not spend time studying, and I worked full time. I worked from 1–10 pm, and my classes were in the morning. I did not have time to do my homework. (Antonio)

In the past, I worked full time, and I did not have time to do my homework. I was tired and missed classes. Now, I know that I need to maintain a GPA higher than 2.0 GPA. Now, I expect to get more time to study and find a better job as soon as I finish my Marketing certificate. I can learn better if I do not need to work full-time. (Roberto)

I had too much going on. My father was deported. This summer was my graduation in my high school. I was transitioning to college. I stayed with my mother and three little sisters. I became the mother for my sisters. I was 18 at that time. I took care of them, shower them, prepared food and take care of the school. I worked part time over the weekends. My head was not good that time. I think I was on depression! I thought I could not do this, and I had so much to do... I thought college was not for me. I did not focus on my homework. I put school work by the side. Even having HA (staff), I felt that I needed to figure out by myself (what to do). I could not do my homework, my assignments (few) that

I turned in was ok grades, but I was not able to send most of assignments. I felt defeated!

(Mariana)

I could not focus on my studies, I did not look for resources, and I know that I could study more. Knowing about the courses were hard for me, and I did not ask for help. (Maria)

I needed to work full time to pay my bills, so, coming to college, the pressure of balancing life made my grades went down. I could not balance well my life at that time. When I realized that school was my priority, I changed my mindset, and I started looking for my options for a better future. (Gisela)

Participants commented on what occurred with them after leaving the AP status and the lesson they had learned from the experience. As they mentioned, their self-awareness increased, and they became goal-oriented; they can manage their workload better and know about the major they want to pursue. Most of them are thinking about their transfer application and the most appropriate degree for their career goals. Students shared their experiences as follows:

I spent one year working hard. A year ago, everything happened. Now I chose my time wisely. I am in good standing now. The college, the meaning of college student, is different for me now. I had time to focus on other things. Being on AP depressed me, but I feel better that I will be back in good standing now. I worked part time, stopped and I am started working again. (Angel)

My first hand was my MCS advisor. I found out by myself. If you do not figure things out, nobody helps you. Nobody is going to reach you out. (Pedro)

Not sure... (silence). For me, I think is not to be afraid, you know, not hide from others your problem. Confront the situation, work through wherever difficulties you are having.

(Cecilia)

For me, it was very hard to manage my family, school, and work. I was very tired all the time with my work, and I could stop helping my parents. They needed my financial support. Now, I saved some money for school, and I am happy I can reduce my work for fall quarter. I do not need to work in two jobs anymore. I am working 60 hours during the summer. I am happy because I helped my family and now, I can focus on my studies. One day, I will be in the same position and be a father with kids. I want to have kids like me. My dad is a good person, and I needed to help him, my family. (Gustavo)

For me, to find friends that are better than me or being better academically than me was great. My friend got “A”s and helped me during the quarter. I try to avoid distractions; I think electronics can help us to study, but also, I cannot study with my cellphone close to me or music or television turned on. I know I am spending four years to complete my associate degree in Criminal Justice because of this terrible time I was on AP. I felt some classes I get better grades and other courses I need more time to get better grades. I tried to get FA, and I could not get because of that. Then, I decided to work and pay for my classes until I graduate. Now I work part time. I missed my high school; the college is very hard, and this four year here has been very stressful. (Antonio)

When you are in college, try to focus more in school. Be ready, find the concentration to do what you need. Please, do not be on AP, I did not know about this before and took time for you to get back on track. I am a good student, and I did not know that my past could reflect in my present GPA. I learned, and I know that is important to have time to study. (Roberto)

I learned to be a patient person. By being on AP can be terrible but is part of the process. We are different (and react differently?). Be patient; AP is not a bad thing . . . I think is a resource for you to be a better student. Now, I feel I am a good student. AP showed me a

lot to be a college student. I learned a lot from me (during this time). I am thankful to learn new skills; I learned a lot. This fall I plan to sign for two courses and keep working part time. (Mariana)

Personally, the AP opened my eye. I am better than before when I went on AP... I had Personal issues, and I was working full time at that time. (Maria)

The college offers you resources to be a better student. The educational . . . (academics) and emotional resources. Use these resources. I am grateful for what I am, and I wish I could have this mindset before. Now I know what is going to cost me to reach my goal. My goal before was to be a medical doctor because of my father health issue, and now I change to graduate in a Biology major. (Gisela)

Most of these students changed their major for other more realistic option as Angel mentioned—instead of the Business major, because of his Math skills, the counselor advised him to think about being a lawyer because it would be an excellent option for him. Participants are aware of the time commitment for them to transfer to a four-year institution. Many of them mentioned they go if they receive a scholarship or additional financial support.

Chapter 4: Summary

These study findings demonstrate significant emotional and social consequences of being on AP. AP significantly impacted these students regarding their behaviors, conceptual thinking, and experiences. Finally, the AP motivated most of the participants to work toward being successful. Most considered it a lesson which they never want to repeat.

The embarrassment of being on AP was so profoundly humiliating for most of the participants that they severely limited the number of people with whom they shared this critical challenge. As a result, they felt isolated and restricted themselves from seeking support. Some of them dropped out of college and returned after at least a year. Moreover, they started connecting

with the academic support services to return to college. It was clear that they took pride in their academic capabilities and used their negative experience as motivation to continue with their academic coursework by returning to the institution.

The relationships upon which these participants relied influenced their motivation as well. For them, their parents were not identified as the significant persons of support outside of the college, but other classmates and church was mentioned as excellent support. When facing problems or issues, they believed individual circumstances were to blame. Most admitted to being at fault about taking responsibility and were not able to seek help at the time of academic difficulty. They experienced stress, sadness, confusion, anxiety, and eventually shock over the consequence of their failure. AP finally forced them to face the facts they had been denying or ignoring. Participants felt isolated and embarrassed, and the AP forced them to reflect on their purpose of joining college and commit to change their habits which are necessary to succeed in school.

Further, the purpose of Chapter 5 is to comprehend these findings and recommendations. The AP was a lesson that students do not want to go through again. This study can help one better understand how to assist those who find themselves in the same situation or similar situations. The researcher expects to use these findings to help institutions of higher education and students to recognize the necessary support required by Latino college students.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to learn about the experiences of students who were placed on AP and the strategies that helped them improve their grades and move to good academic standing. A qualitative case study was used, and nine Latino college students were interviewed during a summer quarter at WCCC (pseudonym), a four-year community college. Participants were recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling techniques; each had experienced AP at some point during their undergraduate program. As explained by Creswell (2014), qualitative case studies use interview data, observations, narratives, and other forms of data collection that help the researcher identify patterns in the data to discover themes.

The following four questions guided this study.

1. How do students describe their experiences with academic probation?
2. What experiences lead students to acquire an academic probation status, and what do they experience during probation?
3. What factors do students attribute their transition into satisfactory academic standing to?
4. What happens to students after they are no longer under academic probation? What lessons do they learn from the experience?

The case study allowed participants to explain their experience in this intervention and the strategies they used to improve their grades and continue in their degree goals. Nine Latino students starting the second-year college were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling techniques to discuss their academic probation intervention. Data collection included a demographic survey, a one-on-one in-depth interview and artifacts. Participants shared their experiences about their transition to college and their experiences on academic probation. These

students were just beginning their second-year of college and expected to graduate the following year with their associate degree.

Summary of the Results

Data was collected from the participants through one-on-one interviews, a demographic survey, and artifacts (Creswell, 2007). Each participant shared experiences they attributed as leading them to poor academic standing and what strategies or experiences motivated them to persist in college. Data analysis included layers of coding; a constant comparison technique that helped reduce the data to themes and sub-themes. Review and interpretation of the data determined the categories of factors related to AP. Quotes from each participant illustrated the case findings. The students' voices contributed to the descriptions of themes and explained the findings. The transition theory (Schlossberg, 1995) and the student departure theory (Tinto, 1993) provided a framework for this research.

The themes and sub-themes identified through data analysis, explained in Chapter 4, included: (a) factors of AP, (b) emotional consequences of AP, (c) interpersonal significance of AP, (d) successful experiences as a result of AP, and (e) development of new behaviors. Chapter 5 begins with a summary of the results and discussion as they relate to the research questions, literature, and theoretical framework. This is followed by the limitations of the research and recommendations for further study. Finally, the implications of the results for practical application, policy recommendations, and theory for further improved studies are discussed.

The college transition includes Student Affairs professionals helping to identify the needs of students when they start college. DeVilbiss (2014) cited Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012) explained the first phase, as a time of new roles and relationships, a time of learning, adapting in the college. Anderson et al. (2012) clarified the moving-through time as an establishing relationships, routines, and confusion. Finally, they described the moving out phase

as one of separation or endings from existing relationships, routines, and assumptions (Anderson, Goldman, and Schlossberg, 2012 as cited by DeVilbiss, 2014, p.8) .

The nature of the interview answers displayed similarity, and out of which were identified the following issues, which are prevalent to the study's findings: a lack of institutional support to foster social integration, the necessity for the institution to promote policies that students can understand, and academic support. These themes talked about what works and what doesn't work, demands such as stress level, family obligation, and leaving the institution but keeping the hope that things could be better and be changed by them one day.

Gap in the literature. An examination of the current research showed a gap in the literature specific to community colleges (Wark, 2015) and the experiences of students on AP (Houle, 2013; Renzulli, 2015). Since students on AP form a large percentage of the student population and have specific needs, the lack of research regarding this subject reveals the gap and necessity for more studies in this area (Hougaard, 2013; Houle, 2013; Lundberg, 2014). Therefore, this study benefits educational institutions, educators, staff, and students on AP. Efforts are made nationally to improve the enrollment of minority college students as a pathway of their education and better jobs opportunities (ATD, 2019). While studies reported a steadily increasing enrollment by Latino students in higher education, they also demonstrated that most of them do not finish their degrees compared to other students (Pew Research Center, 2016; The Economist, 2015; Tovar, 2015). *Excelencia in Education* (2018) stated that graduation rates increased equally for White and Latino students over ten years; therefore, the gap in educational attainment remained the same; from 2005-2014, the gap is showed as 11% (para. 5). Latino students' completion rate—including part time, transfer, drop out, and students from both 2- and 4-year institutions—was 47% compared to 63% for White and Asian

students. Latino students are more likely to be still enrolled six years after enrollment than other groups (para.6).

National rankings demonstrate persistent disparities in opportunity and achievement, separating low-income students and students of color from their peers (Ushomirsky, Williams, & Hall, 2013, para.1). The overall completion rate for students who started in 2-year public institutions was higher for White and Asian students (45.1% and 43.8%, respectively) than Hispanic and Black students (33% and 25.8%, respectively) (National Student Clearinghouse, 2017, p. 2). These students typically spend more time in college and, consequently, cause more financial disruption to complete their education (ATD, 2016).

I expect this study to help institutions, educators, and students. Since this population characterizes more than half of the college-going Americans, their college access and completion will be essential for the nation (Excelencia in Education, 2016).

Student departure. The risk of student departure may increase, Tinto (1993) asserted, if students lacked the necessary skills to integrate into the institution socially. Ziemak (2018) cited Tinto (1993), the student integration theory. The theory states that students voluntarily withdraw from an institution when their academic or social needs are not being met; students must feel engaged in the institution to progress academically and socially (p.6). The themes identified in this study included the need to develop the academic ability, recognition of heightened academic demands, greater difficulties with collegial expectations, lack of support systems, and lack of safety. These themes fell under the social integration identified by Tinto (1993). The management of emotions relating to the theme of not completing college was also evident in the data. The theme of developing mature relationships was a part of both finding new support and of dropping out (or leaving the institution or their dream). The development of a purpose, even though

temporary was found in the theme, a way by which students achieved their needs, family, and degree completion.

The need to understand students' characteristics. The transition and student departure theories provided the theoretical framework to review the data and arrive at meaning. Identifying and supporting the transition for the individual involves understanding how much degree completion will change people's lives. The resources for coping are identified and described in four categories, namely the 4 S System (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). Tinto (1993) mentioned institutions as responsible for helping first-year students to accomplish academic and social integration.

Positive experiences and engagement with academic and social activities integrate students and lead to higher levels of retention to the institution. The need to understand students' as a whole, with their different needs and characteristics, such as psychological, social class, culture, gender and other values, help the institution and students (Becares & Priest, 2015; DeVilbiss, 2014; Tinto, 1993). Student Affairs professionals provide different academic support services to help students for their successful transition into college. Different kinds of academic advising and counseling support can help students increase their self-efficacy skills (Wernersbach et al., 2014). Also, the emotional support from family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, organizations, and so on (DeVilbiss, 2014).

Discussion of the Results

Student retention presents an important subject of study for many researchers (Achieving the Dream, 2016; Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2016; Tinto, 1975, 1993, 2012; Tovar, 2015). Further, student retention holds significant interest for institutions of higher education. Growing enrollment trends require the development of persistence and degree completion strategies to ensure successful outcomes for students. Moreover, the economic futures of families and the

power of the country depend on the success of students (ATD, 2016; Jenkins, 2016; Pew Research, 2016).

While each student experiences distinct difficulties and challenges, recognizing patterns allows for pre-planning strategies to occur. For the Latino population, unique cultural challenges influence academic and social integration during the college transition as well as persistence with the program (Tovar, 2015). As shown in the literature, students require self-regulated practices, management of demands, and stress during their first year (Awang, Kutty & Ahmad, 2014; Houle, 2013; Wernersbach et al., 2014). A sustained effort from the institution to engage the students into their campus (ATD, 2016; Bailey, 2017; Jenkins, 2016) and ensure that the new students, especially Latinos, successfully and effectively navigate the college experience will be imperative for institutions (ATD, 2016; Tovar, 2015).

Findings. The findings related to and affirmed the results of previous studies such as that of Lester (2013), Tinto (1993), Tovar (2015), Wark (2015), and so many others who revealed that engagement with the proper coursework, faculty, and staff and informal campus activities with peers matters. Latino students need more academic support and relationship with faculty, academic advisors, and many others in the college campus to progress on their college pathways (Barabe, 2017; Marrero, 2016, Tovar, 2015). Therefore, institutions should prioritize student engagement to support students' retention and its graduation.

The administrators may be attempting to listen and be available; however, the students are not aware of those attempts. The participants of the study did not know about the Academic Probation Policy, and those who had heard about it did not understand it. More guidance and clear goals for the students undergoing transition into the college were essential for their success; according with participants, intervening with a warning system will allow students to be aware of the necessary grades—when they are not satisfactory, and when they need to make essential

changes to progress in their courses. All participants in this case study believed that finding a way to alert students without seeming punitive might prove helpful for long-term success.

Tinto (1993) and Tovar (2015) mentioned the importance of students sense of belonging in the institution campus. The development of an institutional sense of belonging provides a crucial component for students to feel comfortable in other areas of the college, these participants felt comfortable only in two departments: These two departments have similarities in providing support services for students of color, first-generation and low-income. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019), “the Federal TRIO Programs are educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds” (para. 1). The TRIO was started in 1964 and launched in 1968 with three programs to support students’ access to pipeline opportunities (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, para.1). Like the TRIO, the Multicultural Services Department offers academic support for a diverse student population by increasing multicultural student experiences in the college with staff and other peers.

The participants confirmed the academic support during the AP intervention was significant challenged for them. As studies show, the cultural competencies should meet the needs of a diverse population (Gaytan & Moreno, 2013; Martinez & Welton, 2014). Access to academic support for these specific student population was deficient, and the participants confirmed that they lacked the academic preparedness demanded by the rigors of college coursework. These participants who were not ready, they needed more pre-college courses.

This research study confirmed what the literature review demonstrated for four-year institutions. However, community colleges (two-year institutions) lack resources for substantial open enrollments and the diverse needs of students. The participants identified being unprepared for college and struggled in their first and second college quarters. They also recognized that K–12 failed to prepare most of them for further academic success. Therefore, these students required

more time in college for their goal completion. Some of them spent five to six years to obtain an associate degree while others spent two years. These participants identified the need for academic support and more connection with people.

Institutions of higher learning must improve their services for their unprepared student populations, especially if they are institutions that desire to support this population in their degree completion (Agayo, Ojeda, & Flores, 2011; Bailey, 2017). Developing a greater collaboration between support services, having more staff and faculty aware of the barriers and challenges this population must endure to attain academic success (Achieving the Dream, 2019). The importance of knowing students' barriers and struggles and being available for students are mandatory (Tovar, 2015). As the literature review demonstrated, a significant number of students do not return after dropping out. The need of understanding students' transition, their first year experience to better know the reasons of withdrawing will help institutions to work effectively with K-12 administrators, parents, and students (Martin, 2015). In this case study, those who were able to return confirmed that they enjoyed having someone looking out for them, someone who took the time to talk to them and get to know about their difficulties and supported them in their endeavors.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

The findings of this study aligned precisely with the transition theory (1995) and student departure theory (1975). These theories support this study because they relate to students' development phases or changes and the challenges they face when they start college. DeVilbiss (2014) wanted to understand the transition from high school to college using the transition theory. Lazarowicz (2015) used the transition theory to describe the experiences of community college students transferring to a university. Hoover (2014) used the departure theory to illustrate how essential it is for institutions of higher education to promote engagement with their students. These are also confirmed by other research in Chapter 2.

All these theories show the importance of student engagement in course curriculum, with faculty and staff, and in campus activities. Kuh (2007) identified involvement and the participation of students in the campus as an essential key to positive student outcome. Colleges will better serve and retain students when they understand their needs, experiences, and support them in their progress. My study thus confirms that it is essential to understand the students transitioning to college and offer them academic support for them to complete their degree. The institution has a responsibility toward its students.

Students were unprepared to college. Flynn (2015) researched the effects of AP on college students. The study results highlighted the importance of programs such as freshman seminar to be available to struggling students or perhaps even made mandatory for all new college students. This study showed the importance of tracking students on AP to ensure they had access to the supportive services necessary for academic success. My study findings are aligned with Flynn study. They demonstrated that students were not ready to transfer to college and did not have enough information about college experiences. Only two participants out nine had the new student orientation.

Flynn (2015) concludes that students on AP were not ready for college transition; they did not have the necessary skills and did not know how to utilize the academic support available to them. She identified an increase in the GPA for most of the students who effectively used academic support services. My study confirmed that students needed more academic support to increase their grades and be out of probation.

The positive influence of relationships. Tovar (2015) examined how interactions with academic support influenced students' grades and how they affected the way Latino students persisted in their education. Tovar (2015) utilized the Social Capital theory for examining the transitioning process of pre-college students to college. This theory refers to the essential

connections between individuals that serve as a valuable support system for the students. This study indicated that academic support, such as advising and counseling programs, influenced students' persistence in completing degrees. The positive influence of the relationship between faculty and academic staff also led to successful student outcomes. My study had similar findings. It confirmed that students' outcome increased when they started using more academic services, such as advising and having a counselor helping them. They felt more connected with the campus when they started talking more with faculty and peers and other departments.

Understanding the college policy. The study conducted by Hoover (2014), designed to understand the perceptions of undergraduate students on AP, showed that institutions strive to provide enough resources for their students. During AP, to increase their grades, some students used more of the available resources, while others did not use them enough. These students understood that they needed to work harder and learn new skills. They knew that they needed to be committed to improve their grades. The academic resources, the students agreed, though helpful, did not encourage them to learn more about AP, and they expressed negative feelings about a mandatory course.

New students, as the study showed, were unaware of AP. Even though information regarding the same was accessible to them on the institution's website and via other institutional materials, the study concluded that the students were not aware of nor understood the policy. Therefore, the institution should find other alternatives to raise student awareness of their academic probation policy and its implications. These findings are aligned with my study. The participants stated that they did not know about the AP. Some of them knew about their dropping grades and the need to ask for help. But all of them confirmed that they did not understand how long their probation was and what would happen to them if their grades did not increase in two or three quarters. Students who dropped out did not know what to do to be

reinstated. The WCCC website was not clear of the academic standing process for students and was available only in the counseling department website. It was also available if someone searched for the policy.

College students' transition. Barouch-Gilbert's (2015) phenomenological research was used to discover the experiences of students who were considered academically deficient because of their probation status. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were provided to the participants. The findings of this study suggested that students had limited information about the academic performance policy. Barouch-Gilbert (2015) mentioned that students had felt "being academic deficient" during AP, and this should be reviewed by institutions because this feeling played a negative role during their transition (p. 109). Students claimed that they were unaware of the institution's policy. To be better prepared for academic success, the institution, they shared, should have approached them before placing them on AP.

This study has similarities with Hoover (2014) and the findings of my study. The participants were not aware of the academic standing policy and mentioned that they should know about this information when they started college. They felt that the institution should ensure that they had support before their grades decreased. As most of them felt, the AP should not be punitive or shameful. Students need to understand their need for more support when they are on AP.

Family support. Roderick (2016) confirmed the importance of the family's influence on minority students' access to college. His qualitative study also recognized the importance of familial capital, such as the performance of first-generation students regarding academic preparation and the change from public school to college. The study confirmed that schools and families should work together in supporting students to be better prepared in school and for college transition. In my study, most of the students did not get any support or could not count for any

help at home. One student answered that, in the beginning, he felt embarrassed to tell his parents about the AP intervention, but later, his parents began helping him and, consequently, his confidence increased.

Self-efficacy. Additionally, another study conducted by Wood, Newman, and Harris (2015) was designed to confirm the importance of self-efficacy in students' success. This study relied on the theory of the psychological model by Bean and Eaton (2001) and shares similarities with the framework of Austin (1993), Schlossberg (1995), and Tinto (1993) in that the ideas focus on student characteristics and experiences with transitions in social and academic settings. Wood et al. (2015) confirmed that if the "students' self-efficacy increased it was reflected in students' academic and social integration, which increased their commitment to the institutions and persistence in their education" (p. 5).

In my study, the participants learned new skills during their AP, and this increased their confidence, which reflected in their grades. Students improved relationships with faculty, student affairs staff, campus support and peers. These connections made them feel part of the college community. Community colleges offer opportunities for students to develop academic and social skills through social events, campus activities, and clubs. Strengthening the support that facilitates the development of self-efficacy for students will positively increase their outcomes. Helping students from marginalized groups, such as low-income families and students of color, to persist in their education is a critical issue today. Thus, it is necessary to advance self-efficacy for students of color to increase their educational success.

Community colleges. Sometimes community colleges are the only pathway for most of the minority students, and it is still changing lives and opening opportunities for so many of them. Studies show issues in educational equity and the challenges it faces. Achieving the Dream (ATD, 2016), created and advocated for equity in education, is a national leader in institutional

improvement for more than 220 colleges by improving student achievement (ATD, 2018). The key challenges faced by institutions include: increasing the graduation rates for underserved students—which must involve an assessment of its students, enrollment data, graduation rates, and employment after finishing their degree —changing policies to expand support, providing financial support for students and other work-students, and making grants and more resources available for low-income students (ATD, 2018).

Limitations

In this research, participants offered their experiences, which contributed to rich insights into the Latino college students who were on AP in the WCCC. Though it did focus on a specific population and region, the results may be transferable to similar students in similar contexts. For other similar studies, other groups of students, besides Latino college students, as well as different types of institutions and in other areas, would enhance the research base. The geographic area possesses a unique White population, but in the past 10 years, with the arrival of more immigrants, the demographics have changed.

I started my research during the summer. Summer enrollment in most institutions is very challenging because only a few students enroll; therefore, regarding other quarters of the year would make it more accessible to recruit students in a different quarter system or time of the year. A challenge of having few enrollments, for instance, involved most of the participants working full time. However, a \$20 gift card did incentivize them to complete the interview and demographic survey. All of them worked full time, and it was difficult for them to make time for the study.

The gender representation of students in this study was imbalanced; I recruited more male than female participants. In comparing the data, I realized that most of the students who dropped out were female; and they were the ones who had found it difficult to come for the interview and who cried during the interview. I realized that I had individually spent more time with the female

students as they struggled to move out (dropped) to the moving in phase (coming back to college), which did not happen with any of the male participants. The male students had a flexible and general way to see the transition. They managed to obtain time off and return during a quarter to restart their courses faster than most of the female representants. However, the study is limited by the fact that only four females participated. An equal number of males and females would have been valuable.

Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

This study provides information that will increase knowledge about the existing barriers and institutional support for the Latino college students who experienced AP. Studies demonstrated a growing number of Latino students enrolling in colleges, but their educational attainment is still very low compared to other White students (Excelencia in Education, 2018; Gaytan & Moreno, 2013). In many parts of the country, Latino students constitute many diverse populations, and studies show they will be the majority population in the U.S. (Gaytan & Moreno, 2013; Excelencia in Education, 2018). Research indicated a distress to meet these student needs: “As a group, they have historically experienced overrepresentation in disability categories, received a disproportionate number of disciplinary actions, and evidence high dropout rates” (Gaytan & Moreno, 2013).

The findings of this study are related to the improvement of retention and persistence of Latino college students who experienced AP. There are many reasons, studies demonstrated, for students to not do well in the transition to college, such as being unprepared for the college (ATD, 2016; Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Renzulli, 2015; Wood et al., 2015), not having confidence or motivation, the transition itself, and the need to adjust to a different environment (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993) has expansively studied causes of the departure of students from institutions of higher education. He mentioned that adjustments or the way students adapt to college was one of the

reasons for their departure. Students who do not adapt may leave in the first year, which is critical for most of the new students doing a transition from high school to college.

Implications for practice. The finding of this study indicates a few impacts on the practice of institutions of higher education that admit a diverse student population, especially community colleges that fits all with their open enrollment. One important note is that students are very different; they bring several coping assets with them, such as family obligation, values, timing, health issues, and so many other assets. The institutions will serve better its population if they know what assets their students bring, and if they acknowledge these assets and try to improve their academic support services and assist them better during their transition (DeVilbiss, 2014).

As many academic difficulties of college or other concerns could be reasons for attrition, students may have a brief time of difficulty and not be ready to stay at school. This corresponds to the transition theory and student departure theory. The connection with the institution is a fundamental method to find ways by which the institution and students can connect, how the students invest in the institution, feeling comfortable and seeing it as a home. Ways of doing this could vastly vary with institutions.

Early intervention. One crucial area for improvement in the current institution would be tracking the students who have a 2.0 GPA before the AP and by increasing communication with those who experience academic difficulties or are already on AP. Early intervention will be essential for students to be on track regarding their coursework and other necessary support, such as counseling or more advising during this time should be provided if needed. The Latino student participants mentioned that they would like to have someone to talk to, and they wanted the institution to have someone who would offer them individual attention. All the participants experienced stress and different levels of emotional consequences during AP.

Students' coping strategies. Coping strategies are critical for students as they provide support. Most students experienced anxiety and stress. During this period of struggle, students develop positive coping strategies that help them through the transition. For one student, it was going to the church. Coping strategies can also be achieved using courses, workshops, or individual meetings. The coping strategies are used for students who struggle; these strategies help them develop strength during a difficult transition. Students would identify this resource as available for them when they start college.

Campus engagement. The students' academic achievement depends on their engagement in campus activities and with the culture of the institution. The institution and students need to be involved with each other. Students might adapt and build resilience and move forward, or they might decide to stop or leave the institution. The students' transitions when they start college and their ways of learning to adapt during it are essential for their growth. The decisions that students make, such as whether to continue or pursue their degree, depends on themselves.

Academic support. Another significant improvement would be to enhance the academic advising support for students who experience deficient grades, especially when they are on AP. Also, of the academic resources available on campus for them, it should be ensured that students connect with these opportunities, that they are made welcome, and that someone will be available for them (at flexible hours). Most of the students in this sample reported that they did not have advising or an advisor before, and they looked for someone when they were already on AP. They did not have guidance when they started college, and most of them did not use the academic support services; some of them started using them only on probation and when the advisors from TRIO programs and the Multicultural Services Department requested them to.

Participants did not feel integrated into the system. They did not feel connected to the college campus. Four participants mentioned that they looked to meet an advisor from the TRIO or Multicultural Services Department. They needed to talk to someone. One advisor began talking with them and helping them every week. They felt like having someone who knew their barriers, who believed in them, someone would help them persist. They felt confident when they met someone who could understand them, someone from the same culture, which enabled them to have a better schedule and a clear academic goal. But some of these participants, instead of looking for help, decided to leave college. They did not know what to do, they confirmed, and after the AP happened, they, like the other students, went to the same two departments of the college to find support.

The engagement of these participants only in two areas of the college was noted in all the interviews. Participants mentioned that the interaction they had with the advisors helped them with their self-efficacy skills. However, not all of them had similar experiences; others were able to change their work schedule and decided to use the college resources to improve themselves. These students were able to find a mentor in the Math lab or Science lab and connected more with their instructors. Two participants mentioned they felt good when they started having friends and peers in the classroom who could help them achieve better grades.

The Guided Pathway Program. This reform began suggesting a more comprehensive and designed path for students to identify their career, major and complete their degrees with less time. As an example, the Florida State University (FSU) had students who were graduating with a considerable number of credits, which made them spend more time with more prerequisites courses and spend more money to finish their degrees (Kurzweil & Rossman, 2016). The university realized this problem and implemented an academic support program, that is, a roadmap for students to ensure that they were on the correct path to the degree they had chosen. The

undecided students were provided more educational services to help them stay on track and explore career options. By implementing this program, the university realized that, between 2000 and 2009, the retention rate for “freshman increased from 86% to 92%. The four-year graduation rate increased from 44% to 61%, and the percentage of students graduating with excess credits dropped from 30% to 5%” (CCRC, 2015, p. 7). The university’s efforts were intended to offer support to all students. However, it has succeeded in guiding more at-risk students to succeed: “The university’s retention goal is broader: it aims to ensure that all students who enroll—from across the income spectrum, and with all different levels of preparation—want to and can remain at the institution and earn their degree there” (Kurzweil & Rossman, 2016, p. 2).

Implications for policy. Institutions use their Academic Probation Policy to assist students in improving their grades. Institutions have policies and procedures, and they vary from one another. The data collected for this study suggests that institutions should examine the factors that make students be on AP. They should also consider how the students understand the policy of academic standing. If they do not understand the policy, they will not have a clear path of what they should do in case of AP. Considering the timeline that students do not reach the GPA necessary during the probation period, it is essential that the students who were dismissed from the institution be aware of their timeline if they want to come back. After the dismissal process, students should be mindful of the steps they should follow to be reinstated.

Students who experienced AP confirmed needing more support. It seems like there should be more effort from the institution to explain and assist these students. AP seems unusually punitive and not focused enough on helping them improve. These findings could be used to support institutions of higher education and help them better understand the transitioning students. They could also contribute to inform higher education administrators, Student Affairs professionals, faculty and others who make policies and decisions related to students, especially

minority students who experience AP.

Dismissal reinstatement process. The students who had dropped out of the institution did not know how to be reinstated after being out for a year or three. They did not know who to talk about this, still feeling shame about the situation; they decided to look for support in TRIO programs or the Multicultural Service Departments. None of the AP processes were clear, they stated, and it took some time for them to re-enroll in the institution. One student stated that when he came back after three years, though he would be reinstated, the staff mentioned that he must be on AP intervention for three quarters of the year and increase his GPA. Another student came back after a year, and the system allowed her to start again as a new student entering the institution. She just needed to talk to the advisor and ensure that she could manage her workload better this time.

Implications for theory. The transition theory and the departure theory are in line with this study. These theories show the importance of student engagement. Colleges will better serve and retain its students when they understand student needs, their experiences, and provide the necessary resources for them to develop their skills (DeVilbiss, 2014).

Students work at a different social and intellectual level; and the commitment to be in the institution depends on the excellence of services they receive (DeVilbiss, 2014). The institutional academic support is a priority for students to be efficient. If they feel integrated into a campus environment, they feel comfortable and supportive, and they are more likely to be retained. Students undergoing a transition in college are expected to have the necessary support to complete their education. For new students, especially minority students who are unprepared for the college transition, the connection with the campus academic resources, and family support are essential for their persistence in college (Tovar, 2015).

Lazarowicz (2015) used the transition theory to describe the experiences of community college students transferring to a university. Hoover (2014) used the departure theory and illustrated how essential it is for institutions of higher education to promote engagement with their students. Moreover, DeVilbiss (2014) used the transition theory in a qualitative phenomenology study to understand the students' transition experience who were attending a four-year public institution. What the findings of these studies have in common is the need for understanding the students as a "whole" and, related to their transition experience, understanding if they are or not a traditional student, of a traditional-age, or a full-time or part-time student.

The findings of this research support the studies that connect the persistence of students to the institutional efforts in assisting student integration. The transition to college is the time that students need more academic support than at other times while at college. The beginning of the first or two college quarters is decisive for students to continue in college. The transition is essential for students that come unprepared for college. My study added a new viewpoint regarding the need of students to understand the college policy and the importance of the institution to listen to their students. My study also confirms that more academic resources are necessary for the underserved student population.

Assisting Students with Academic Strategies. Based on the data from students, when they started college, most of them did not have a new students' orientation, where they could learn about the support services, such as career services, tutoring, advising, counseling and other such assistance around the campus as well as policies and procedures. Most of them did not know about the Academic Probation Policy, and the ones who knew did not understand it. Students claimed that these academic supports were not available during the time they could use them.

Mandatory probationary program. A mandatory probationary program or course for students who experienced academic difficulty will be crucial for them to understand the process and avoid dismissal from the institution. This program could address the challenges that these participants reported during college transition, such as lack of guidance and communication, social issues, time management, health issues, advocate for themselves, or how to voluntarily seek for help. Also, this probationary program could be presented and understood by students as part of their college experience and not only when students are in academic hardship. Flynn (2015) conducted a study which demonstrated a successful outcome in a mandatory intervention for students who were on AP. She wanted to evaluate the grades of students before and after they received a semester of academic support. The results showed increased grades for all students who effectively used the academic support services, thus demonstrating the importance of tracking students on AP and the importance of educational support services for students who face academic difficulties.

Engagement opportunities. The institution did not mention the period for which these students should be dismissed from the institution. It seems that the college wants to adopt only one quarter off for students who did not recover their grades during the AP. Students did not know how long they should be out and if they could use campus resources during the time they were dismissed. Most of the participants did not have time to engage in campus activities, but those who took part-time jobs were able to use campus resources and connect more with other faculty and students.

An essential resource for these students will be to establish a practice to connect classroom support and academic affairs support. By increasing the collaboration between areas of student's support will be crucial for educational and social development in the institution. Studies

demonstrated the importance of the student-teacher relationship and a positive outcome for students' achievement (Barabe, 2017; Marrero, 2013; Tinto, 1993; Tovar, 2015).

Wark (2015) suggested that the transfer students exhibited higher rates of persistence if the institution (two- or four-year) collaborated and engaged them with appropriate and prompt academic support during the transition. He stated the importance of institutions to guide students to understand the culture and learning communities and “focusing on engaging students in the classroom” (Wark, 2015, p. 3). The classroom interactions between the students and faculty and activities inside and outside campus will make students feel more connected and engaged with the culture of the campus. When students relate to the academic and social opportunities offered by the campus, they are more expected to persist toward their degree completion (Barabe, 2017; Houle, 2013; Lester et al. 2013; Marrero, 2013; Tinto, 1993; Tovar, 2015; Wark, 2015).

Community college open enrollment. Colleges are open for a diverse body of student's population to enroll. To support the needs of the Latino community, it is critical to offer programs responsive to this student population. The knowledge of the culture and the barriers faced by these students is a priority. In addition, there should also be programs and services available for this population to help them persist through the completion of their degree. The challenges related to academic, family, cultural, emotional and social issues for this population demonstrated that the institution under study was not quite ready to support these students. The administration must review the access of this population if they want to enroll a specific student population; it must provide more support to them. Further, the need to understand the student-family culture should be mandatory.

Cultural competence training. For the faculty and staff who will be working with this population to be aware of its cultural barriers, it will be necessary to offer cultural competency

courses. Culturally competent individuals are the ones who respect and appreciate others. They interact with other cultures by identifying and valuing their differences (Miller & Mikulec, 2014).

The sense of belonging. The institution will need to increase the sense of belonging in the campus, and not only in the two departments reported by the participants. Developing strategies to integrate the Latino community into the campus smoothly is crucial. If an outreach student is vital for the institution, building a relationship with this population and offering academic support is imperative.

Teacher-student relationship. The teacher-student relationship is another critical issue which results in a positive academic outcome for students. It should be required for full time and part-time teachers training. Building a relationship is essential for students' achievement, especially for minority students to succeed in college. By developing their sense of belonging and connection to the campus, the institution can better engage and retain its Latino students (Barabe, 2017; Lester, 2013; Marrero, 2013; Tovar, 2015; Tinto, 1993; Wark, 2015).

The findings of this research support the studies that connect the persistence of students to institutional efforts in assisting student integration. Students need to learn new skills and engage with social activities successfully and necessary academic support necessary that will help them persist in their education. Increasing knowledge, building relationship support, and social networks will help them feel comfortable in their environment and inspire a sense of belonging in them (Barabe, 2017; Lester, 2013; Marrero, 2013; Tinto, 1993; Tovar, 2015; Wark, 2015).

Recommendations for Further Research

More studies should continue to focus on solutions to increase the persistence and college completion of Latino students. As mentioned before, a new methodology could benefit from specific explorations and focusing more on experiences and issues related to college-transitioning students. A different methodology, such as a longitudinal study that looks for students' perception

when they experienced AP, is also recommended. A study that incorporates more data with the participation of more students, and another which adds more information—such as the GPA over a period, starting the intervention and after for a time, a quarter or semester, where students can use the academic support—would add important information. A better assessment of the perceptions of students over the different stages of the probationary period would grant more opportunity for students to reflect on the intervention. A student who experienced AP just once would see things differently than another who was placed for more than one quarter. Additionally, data should also be connected about students who were dismissed for a year and came back to the college.

Conducting a new study focusing on the experience of traditional college students or others who had different experiences would be beneficial. Another larger study integrating the effects of college policies on first-year students with questions related to a specific student policy would also be beneficial. The researcher could gather different information during a certain time, which would allow for more student reflections at different stages. Using the phone and video interviews (personal computer) could be another way to interview participants. A study focusing on transition phases could provide greater depth on each element within students' challenges, support, and used of strategies or the dropout issue.

Conclusion

As studies demonstrated, Latino students experience difficulties in starting college and not completing their education. There is also insufficient research on community colleges (Wark, 2015), and a lack of understanding of the experiences of college students who were on AP (Houle, 2013; Renzulli, 2015). Many studies mentioned the need to increase the graduation rates of students, mostly Latino students (ATD, 2016; Excelencia in Education, 2018; Opportunity & Achievement, 2018). Moreover, many students experienced difficulties from the first year and were placed on AP or dropped out. Moreover, institutions of higher education need to increase

graduation rates for community college students, especially for the underserved student population (ATD, 2016, Jenkins, 2016). It is a priority that institutions of higher education write understandable policies that guide students on their academic pathway.

The results of this research obtained a greater sense of meaning and clarity regarding the student population and their educational goals. Community colleges offer open enrollment, but according to the data presented for students' transition into college, there are several barriers to overcome. In their first year of college, some students excel, and some do not; some give up and do not come back to the institution.

Key points and significance. Institutions of higher education want to increase the graduation rates of Latino college students, but it is essential that the students understand the institutional policies. Most of the students in this sample stated that they did not know, or they did not understand the policy of academic standing. They mentioned that they should have been advised before the college letter about AP was sent to their homes. Two students had an idea that their grades should not be below 2.0. This demonstrated that the students did not know or understand the institutional policy.

The website of the college, in the area concerning counseling support, mentioned the academic standing policy. This information was accessible while searching for college policies. The institution defined AP as an intervention where students will need to increase their GPA to 2.0 to be in satisfactory grades standards. It appeared that the policy is an opportunity for students to get better grades and move forward, but for all the participants in the sample, this was a terrible experience, one that was hard to overcome. One of them mentioned that he should have had someone warning him before he went below the required grade.

Students did not understand the policy or steps to follow when the GPA went below 2.0. Some dropped out when they received a letter from the college about their probation status. Some

looked for academic support, and some decided to take time off from college and returned (while one student returned after a year, two students returned only after three). Students were not clear about the dismissal process and the period for which they should be out of the institution or why they should be dismissed at all—because it was clear that they needed more support than others and they confirmed they did not have guidance.

Most of the participants were aware of the academic support, but most of them could not use these resources because of their work hours during the day. If they needed a tutor, they needed to be available during the daily hours. Some of them were also ashamed to ask for help until they needed it. Colleges struggle to provide good educational support for its diverse student population. For most of the Latino students, the community college is the only opportunity for them to pursue their degrees. Once they start college, their engagement with instructors and support services that assist them in completing their degree is demanding and critical.

Students who experienced AP, they connected with only two departments of the college. These departments, the TRIO programs, and the Multicultural Service Department, are departments that work with the underrepresented and minority student population. They felt comfortable in speaking with and supported by the staff in these departments.

New knowledge and innovation. Community colleges have been increasing the population of students they serve and providing support for them in several ways. The institutional site must continue to work in developing an inclusive campus for all students, one that can provide guidance and academic support to retain its students. Based on the student data, the following key points should be included: a) a development of a sense of belonging in campus, b) increase the diversity of faculty and staff, c) engagement of Latino students and family, d) increasing academic support for new students to avoid academic issues such as AP for first-year students, e) cultural competence training for faculty and staff to understand the challenges faced by Latino students, f)

more pre-college structures to accept students who are not ready for college or more work regarding K-12 to help the transition of unprepared students, and g) more communication between departments and students; collaboration between areas of the institution that can support students, such as between instruction (classroom) and Student Affairs department (advisors, counselors)—these will be essential for students, especially minority students who experience AP.

The institution should include student participation in its policy discussion (new policy and updates), and these student leaders can help deliver information to students. Also, two student participants said they participated in the new orientation when they started college, but the others did not. Therefore, this orientation is required for students beginning college as it will prove to be an excellent opportunity for them to access college information such as academic standing policy and academic support contacts. The institution should also find other alternatives for students to access the policy and understand it.

Guiding students undergoing transition into college is crucial for their degree achievement. Most of the Latino students confirmed feeling disconnected with their institution, but when they started the AP, they utilized the educational resources. Students confirmed that they did not have any guidance and they did not know what to do during this transition. Most of them thought college was not for them, and some of them did not tell their parents that they were out of college. All the students felt very stressed, and most of them had different health problems during the intervention.

The power of advising and mentoring these students by the two departments made them reflect on the necessary changes and helped them return to college. The participants who had dropped out came back and reconnected with the institution. They were able to manage their workload and family obligation better. Most of them changed their degree for another, one that

offered a more realistic option. They improved their self-confidence and resilience, and they are aware that it will take more time for them to finish their degree.

This chapter reinforced the argument that Latino college students will need more academic support and better relationships to be effective and be retained in college. Since the findings of this research aligned with its propositional framing, more resources are necessary to assist this student population. During this study, I recognized many of the struggles and difficulties faced by the students being the same I had experienced as a first-generation immigrant student. Though this study demonstrated the most basic needs of Latino students, all diverse students need the same amount of attention, encouragement, and resources from institutions of higher education, administrators, and educators.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

Research Study Title: Understanding the Experiences of Community College Students on Academic Probation
Principal Investigator: Maria Paula McPherson
Research Institution: Concordia University–Portland
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Floralba Arbelo Marrero

Purpose and what you will be doing:

You are invited to participate in a research study examining the experiences of minority college students who were once on Academic Probation. This project is looking for volunteers and after expressing interest in participating, you will be given a registration form and I will explain the risks and benefits of the study. You may choose to leave the study at any time without penalty or consequence. The study is looking for up to eight individuals to participate in this study. No one will be paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment in June 2018 and end enrollment in October 2018. To be in the study, you will fill out a survey and complete an interview. By participating in the interview will take approximately one hour and the survey additional 15' min of your time.

Risks:

There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. I will record interviews. The recording will be transcribed by me, the principal investigator, and the recording will be deleted when the transcription is completed. Any data you provide will be coded so people who are not the investigator cannot link your information to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption on my password-protected computer locked inside the cabinet in my office. The recording will be deleted as soon as possible; all other study documents will be kept secure for 3 years and then be destroyed.

The study specifically reviews the experiences of students who were once on AP. Based on some of the questioning associated in the interview, there is a risk that you may be emotional when describing your experiences in the traditional classroom and how you experienced situations.

Benefits:

You could benefit from this study through a discussion about your experiences while working toward graduation which could influence behavior or study habits that will support your success. You will also be contributing to others who may be on AP and help the college understand those experiences so as to better serve this population. You will receive a \$20 gift card to the college bookstore after answering the interview questions and survey.

The participation in this research is completely voluntary. There will be no penalty if you choose not to take part. You may choose not to answer specific questions or may stop participating at any time.

Confidentiality:

This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us abuse or neglect that makes us seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation is greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, we will stop asking you questions.

Contact Information:

You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principal investigator, Maria McPherson at email [redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

Your Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

Participant Name

Date

Participant Signature

Date

Maria Paula McPherson

Investigator Name

Date

Investigator Signature

Date



Investigator: Maria McPherson Email: [redacted]
c/o: Professor Dr. Floralba Arbelo Marrero
Concordia University–Portland
2811 NE Holman Street
Portland, Oregon 97211

Appendix B: Student Demographic Survey

Pseudonym: _____ **Date:** _____

1) Please circle the answer that describe best yourself:

What is your age?

Less than 18-----

15- 19 -----

20- 25-----

25- 30-----

More than 30-----

2) Gender, which category below includes you?

Male-----

Female-----

Other-----

3) Ethnicity

Please, specify your ethnicity

White-----

Hispanic or Latino-----

Black or African American-----

Native American or American Indian-----

Asian/ Pacific Islander-----

Other-----

4) What is your level of education?

First-Year college student-----

Second-year college student-----

Running start -----

First quarter student-----

Transfer student-----

Other-----

5) Do you live in this neighborhood?

Yes-----

No-----

- 6) How long does it take for you to get to the college?
- less than one hour-----
 - More than 1 hour -----
 - Other -----
- 7) What method to transportation to come to the college?
- Car-----
 - Carpooling-----
 - Bus-----
 - Other-----
- 8) Employment status, do you work?
- I work part time-----
 - I work full time-----
 - I have volunteer job once per week/month-----
 - Other-----
- 9) What is your marital status?
- Single-----
 - Married-----
 - Divorced-----
 - Separated-----
- 10) Household income- How much money did your personally earn in 2017? This includes money from jobs, pensions, others.
- 0- \$10.000 -----
 - \$10.000- \$20.000 -----
 - \$20.000- 30.000 -----
 - \$30.000- \$40.000 -----
 - More than \$40.000 -----

Appendix C: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University- Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*



Digital Signature

Maria Paula McPherson

Name (Typed)

02/13/2019

Date