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ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AND PERSISTENCE
IN THE CONTEXT OF HIGH-STAKES TESTING

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Nori Elena Sogomonian
March 2011

ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AND PERSISTENCE
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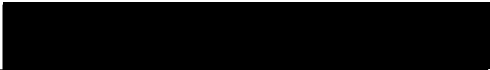
A Dissertation
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March 2011

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent academic self-efficacy and persistence contribute to academic achievement in the context of high-stakes testing. Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory indicated self-efficacy may act as a mediator in goal attainment. While the focus of previous studies has been on college participants, (Chemers, Hu, and García, 2001; Pajares & Miller, 1994), this study focused on participants who had not met their high school graduation requirement because they did not pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Academic self-efficacy was assessed in domain of the CAHSEE which tests reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Using a reliable self-efficacy measurement participants exhibited moderate to high levels of academic self-efficacy. Indicators of Persistence included the number of times a participant took the CAHSEE and college courses a participant either attempted or completed. Persistence levels were moderate. Academic Achievement indicators used in the final analyses included the sections of the CAHSEE a participant still needed to pass.

Interviews allowing participants to share their personal stories revealed individuals with high levels of persistence. Participants also exhibited high levels of self-efficacy and in most cases identified an academic and/or career goal. In this study a unique population is introduced: "CAHSEE persisters" who possess qualities conducive to academic success. Capturing the underlying traits producing such strong determination and persistence could contribute to closing the achievement gap and improving the college-going rate of traditionally underrepresented populations.

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To my Mom and Dad, who cared for me and were instrumental in instilling the importance of education in my belief system. To you I am forever grateful. Thank you, Larry for your unconditional love and supportive presence during this often lonely, grueling process.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The designation of the state-mandated California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) as a graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2006 has resulted in thousands of high school students finishing twelfth grade without obtaining a diploma. "Nearly 40,000 students did not pass by the end of the 2005-06 school year" (Wise, Becker, Butler, Schantz, Bao, Sun, Campbell, 2006, p. ii). State Superintendent Jack O'Connell authorized adoption of the CAHSEE as part of the state's attempt to strengthen standards-based reform in compliance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The California Department of Education (2010) provided the following purpose statement:

The primary purpose of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) is to significantly improve pupil achievement in high school and to ensure that pupils who graduate from high school can demonstrate grade level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics. The CAHSEE helps identify students who are not developing skills that are essential for life after

high school and encourages districts to give these students the attention and resources needed to help them achieve these skills during their high school years. (CDE, January 2010, para 1)

While skills in reading, writing, and mathematics are essential, social cognitive theory would suggest an important predecessor to obtaining those skills is high self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). A review of the literature included numerous studies based on Bandura's earlier work. These studies indicated self-efficacy has the potential to act as a mediating or direct determinant in predicting goal attainment (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997; Chemers, Hu, & García, 2001; Gore, 2006; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Kranzler, 1995; Schunk, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000). Pajares & Kranzler (1995) reported students' self-efficacy beliefs related to their abilities in math had strong direct effects on math performance as well as math anxiety when the researchers controlled for general mental ability. Pajares and Kranzler (1995) found high school students were over confident about their capabilities in math compared to college undergraduates. Pajares and Johnson (1996) found students' writing self-efficacy had strong direct effects on performance. Student confidence in their ability is

often obtained from previous achievements (Pajares & Johnson, 1996) or past performance (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984). In the instance of the CAHSEE, students' previous achievement has been that of pass/no-pass often by very few points. Nonetheless, even after grade 12 and after multiple notices of not-passing, some students persevere and are determined to pass the exam.

Bandura (1977) defined outcome expectancy as a person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to a certain outcome. In this case, students participate in a program designed to assist them to pass the CAHSEE and obtain their diploma - the outcome expectancy. Efficacy expectation was defined as the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcome. Bandura (1977) differentiated the two noting that while a person can believe certain actions will lead to certain outcomes, they may have serious doubts that interfere. These doubts may influence their behavior and thus influence the outcome. Where one would expect past failures on the exam would deter students from sustained effort (Bandura, 1977; Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984) the students from this study have decided to continue

in efforts toward obtaining their high school diploma demonstrating a resilient, persistent characteristic. Students high in academic self-efficacy make greater use of effective cognitive strategies in learning, manage their time and learning environments more effectively, and are better at monitoring and regulating their own effort. Academic self-efficacy is related to students' confidence in mastering academic subjects, which in turn predicted grades in school (Chemers et al, p. 56).

Previous studies have focused on college-bound students or students already enrolled in college. The current study focused on a different population - students who have not passed their high school exit exam yet persist in attempts to obtain their diploma.

Pass Rates Overview

Since 2006 pass rates for all students by grade 12 have ranged between 90.4% and 94.5%. (CDE, August 2010, Table 3, Para 8). Nonetheless, thousands of students each year do not pass the CAHSEE by their designated graduation date. Table 1.1 indicates pass rates and numbers of students who did not pass by the twelfth grade. The table does not include students identified as receiving special education services.

Table 1.1 Overall Pass Rates 2006 to 2010

Overall	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Percent	91.2%	93.3%	90.4%	90.6%	94.5%
passed					
# not	38,574	28,981	45,991	45,015	24,615
passed					

Source: California Department of Education (CDE, August 24, 2010)

Of concern, some subgroups passed at lower rates than the overall rate. "When examined by subgroup, the results show the persistence of the achievement gap" (CDE, September, 2009, para 5). From 2006 - 2010 estimated cumulative pass rates for African American and Hispanic students were lower than for Asian and White students. Other affected subgroups include English Learners (EL), Economically Disadvantaged, and Students Receiving Special Education Services.

Table 1.2 provides the number of students who did not pass the CAHSEE by their graduation date, followed by the percent of students from that subgroup who did pass by their expected graduation date.

Table 1.2 Subgroup Pass Rates from 2006 to 2010

Subgroup	2006 n	2007 n	2008 n	2009 n	2010 n not passed
	not passed	not passed	not passed	not passed	
Asian	2,081 (95.3%)	1,578 (96.3%)	1,929 (95.7%)	2,107 (95.3%)	1,147 (97.4%)
Hispanic or Latino	24,636 (85.5%)	18,971 (88.6%)	27,321 (86.2%)	27,863 (86.6%)	16,819 (91.6%)
African American	5,472 (83.7%)	3,801 (88.4%)	7,628 (80.5%)	7,157 (81.4%)	3,371 (89.7%)
White	4,407 (97.3%)	2,593 (98.4%)	6,785 (96.0%)	6,712 (95.9%)	2,706 (98.1%)
English Learner	16,989 (76%)	15,358 (77.1%)	18,230 (73.5%)	18,861 (73.6%)	11,513 (81.2%)
Economically Disadvantaged	23,302 (85.7%)	19,333 (88.3%)	28,089 (85.5%)	29,175 (85.6%)	16,925 (91.3%)
Special Education	20,790 (47.8%)	18,330 (48.8%)	17,123 (54.5%)	15,924 (56.6%)	16,161 (53.4%)

Numbers in parentheses represent percent passed.

Source: California Department of Education (CDE, August 24, 2010)

Pass rates remained somewhat steady the first four years illustrating the achievement gap. By 2010 there is a slight improvement in pass rates for subgroups other than Asian and White students indicating a narrowing of the achievement gap.

Attempting to resolve the persisting achievement gap, researchers sought to determine when students would benefit from interventions to improve pass rates. Zau and Betts (2008) investigated reliable indicators of students who have trouble passing the CAHSEE and whether specific interventions make a difference in test success. Zau and Betts sought to determine what factors most strongly correlated with student failure. They also investigated what happened to the first cohort of the class of 2006 who failed CAHSEE; however, given poor tracking systems the follow-up data were difficult to find. In a 2009 News Release by the State Superintendent, the following additional data were reported by the California Department of Education's Independent Evaluator, Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO):

An estimated 658 additional students from the Class of 2006 (the first graduation class that was required to meet the CAHSEE requirement) persisted in taking the test and successfully met the CAHSEE requirement between July 2008 and May 2009; an estimated 1,113 additional students from the Class of 2007 passed the exam by May 2009; and an estimated 5,233 additional students from the Class of 2008 passed by May 2009.

(CDE, September, 2009, para 8)

It appears if given the opportunity, students will persist in meeting their high school graduation requirements.

Other research on the achievement gap and the CAHSEE has explored fairness (Callet, 2005), student well-being and academic success as a result of the CAHSEE (Hollingsworth, 2007), the influence of high-stakes testing (CAHSEE) on student achievement (Chabrán, 2008), and the impact of high-stakes testing on California high school students (Billinger, 2004). However, the research is scarce on exploring the academic self-efficacy and persistence of students who do not pass the CAHSEE yet go on to college.

The CAHSEE, along with standardized, high-stakes entrance exams such as the ACT (formerly American College Testing program) and Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), is supposed to indicate preparedness after high school. However, Cavanagh (2003) noted although the number of students taking college entrance exams such as the ACT and SAT increased, many of the 12th-grade students, particularly minorities, are not prepared for higher education. Given the findings of prior research on the impact of high-stakes testing in general relative to

college readiness, it is important to explore student attitudes and motivation to pass the CAHSEE.

This study represents one attempt to address underrepresented populations and to identify what variables contribute to some students' success with subsequent interventions and with competency testing, specifically the CAHSEE. At the time of previous research studies, prior to 2006, the decision to make CAHSEE a graduation requirement had not been finalized. Now test data are available for the classes of 2006 and beyond. Since it is unclear as to what motivates students to persist by taking the exit exam after numerous attempts, this study contributes to assessing student persistence and academic self-efficacy in the context of high-stakes testing. Given the CAHSEE assesses reading, writing, and mathematics skills a study on academic self-efficacy related to the CAHSEE is of value in determining student beliefs about their ability to pass the exam. This study contributes to the body of research on academic self-efficacy as the focus is on the relationship between academic self-efficacy, persistence, and performance in the context of high-stakes testing such as the CAHSEE.

In addition, this study provides insight into student resiliency and persistence when it comes to passing the CAHSEE. Bandura (1977) noted, that when a person possesses appropriate skills and adequate incentives, "Efficacy expectations are a major determinant of people's choice of activities, how much effort they will expend, and how long they will sustain effort in dealing with stressful situations" (p. 194). If it is possible to identify some of the characteristics students possess which motivate them to sustain effort toward a goal, perhaps this information can be used earlier in their academic pursuits so students succeed on the exam at the expected grade level. This way, students can concentrate their efforts on progressing rather than catching up.

Lastly, this study along with others, which reveal potential problems with high-stakes testing, may influence educational policy and as in other states, California may decide to have exit criteria options other than the CAHSEE. Until then, the CAHSEE remains a high school graduation requirement. While educators are required to teach content objectives, they may consider revisions to the curriculum to address influences such as self-efficacy. As exemplified by the participants in this study, persistence

is an assistive characteristic in obtaining a desired goal. Similarly, educational leaders would benefit from a persistent effort in developing programs not only to improve student achievement, but to address other areas of student development such as academic self-efficacy. Professional development seminars addressing the implications of self-efficacy, persistence, improved communication and relationships between students, faculty, and staff are recommended.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

High school exit exams are not a new feature of the United States educational system (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Bond & King, 1995; Dorn, 1998; Warren & Edwards, 2005).

States for many years have been accumulating testing requirements which their legislatures, state officials, or local administrators have chosen.

Despite considerable evidence that high-stakes testing distorts teaching and does not give very stable information about school performance, test results have become the dominant way states, politicians, and newspapers describe the performance of schools. (Dorn, 1998, p. 1)

The Center on Education Policy (CEP, 2008) reported 23 states require students pass a high school exit exam to receive a diploma. There will be 26 states by 2012, as more are expected to adopt exit exams (CEP, 2008).

In 1994 most states requiring exit exams were located in the eastern coastal and southern United States (Bond & King, 1995). Bond and King (1995) explained policymakers of

east coast and southern states were compelled to use exit exams as a means to implement program improvement plans addressing student achievement. The objective was to improve the states' national standing as those states traditionally ranked near the bottom on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, college entrance tests such as the SAT, and other indicators of educational status. Between 1990 and 2002, California's NAEP rank was 48th in the nation (Carroll, Krop, Arkes, Morrison, & Flanagan, 2005). States with higher percentages of African Americans, Hispanics, racial/ethnic minority students, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to require high school exit exams (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Warren & Kulick, 2007). Nearly half of the 483,199 students who took the 2006 CAHSEE in tenth grade were Hispanic/Latino or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Wise, Becker, Butler, Schantz, Bao, Sun, Campbell, 2006). Therefore, California demographics reflect the characteristics of states likely to require an exit exam.

Historical Overview

Often an event or set of events trigger the call for educational change. The CAHSEE came about in California in

response to NCLB mandates, improving student achievement and accountability. On a broader scale, the Soviet Union's launch of the *Sputnik* space satellite in 1957 marked a pivotal point in America's attitude toward education in relation to other nations, which resulted in the National Defense Education Act of 1958 to address fear and competition with other countries. Emphasis was placed on funding development and improvement in math, science and foreign language curriculum.

The 80's: A Nation at Risk

In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk* which addressed concern over the decline in academic achievement in science and math as indicated in international test scores. The Commission expressed much concern over how students in the American education system compared to students in other countries and how the nation was progressing as a whole in education. Basing its findings on site visits, forums, interviews, roundtables, discussions and surveys from schools, colleges and universities throughout the nation, the Commission reported American schools were underperforming. "Although history has not found the report to be accurate, it argued persuasively that schools in the

United States were performing poorly in comparison to other countries and that the United States was in jeopardy of losing its global standing" (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 233). Though it offered very little concrete data to support its claims, the report piqued interest in and alarmed educators about issues of standards and accountability.

Citing losses in national and international student test scores, deterioration in school quality, a 'diluted' and 'diffused' curriculum, and setbacks on other indicators of U.S. superiority, the national Commission on Education triggered a nationwide panic regarding the weakening condition of the American education system. (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 233)

Amrein and Berliner (2002) added, although *A Nation at Risk* lacked scholarly credibility it produced "massive effects" (p. 233). Many of the problems revealed in the 1983 *Nation at Risk* report exist today, including the need for funding in basic skills. One might analogize the *Nation at Risk* report is to the United States as the CAHSEE exam is to California; both instilling a sense of fear, urgency, and competition.

The Commission decided standardized tests "should be administered at major transition points from one level of schooling to another and particularly from high school to college or work" (p. 28). The Commission identified three purposes of standardized tests: (a) to certify the student's credentials; (b) identify the need for remedial intervention; and, (c) identify the opportunity for advanced or accelerated work. Today standardized tests function as means of evaluating schools, teachers, and administrators.

A Nation at Risk served as a precursor to the challenges in education which would eventually lead to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and high-stakes testing. High-stakes testing became widespread in the mid-1980s after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (Bond & King, 1995; Dorn, 1998; Warren & Edward, 2005). The number of states requiring high school exit exams has steadily increased since 1983.

The 90's: Goals 2000

In 1989, President George H.W. Bush, established the *Goals 2000 Program* to create a framework for implementing educational goals by the year 2000 (Goals 2000, 1998). Goals included school readiness and school completion by

decreasing the dropout rate. Teacher education and professional development were also emphasized. In an effort to shift the focus from a quantity of courses to course quality, in 1994 the Clinton administration signed into law *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*. The *Goals 2000* (1998) website summarized the act stating:

Goals 2000 supports the development and implementation of State standards for student learning and achievement that drive systemic improvement at the various levels. *Goals 2000* therefore supports the development of comprehensive reform plans for adopting high student standards and for aligning assessments and accountability, professional development efforts, and broad community involvement and coordination.

(*Goals 2000*, para 4)

Goals 2000 attempted to assist states at the federal level by forming supportive partnerships with states and communities to work toward improving student achievement. However, as a result of NCLB and new leadership, by 2002, the focus of *Goals 2000* turned from community-based efforts toward heavily weighting student assessments.

The 21st Century: No Child Left Behind

In January of 2002 President George W. Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* act into law. NCLB emphasized four principles: (a) accountability for results; (b) more choices for parents; (c) greater local control and flexibility; and, (d) emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research (ED.gov, July, 2004).

The purpose of NCLB is "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments" (Ed.gov, Sec. 1001, September, 2004, para 1). NCLB required states to implement assessments for grades three through eight and in high school. The CAHSEE was selected as the exam of choice for California high school students.

High-stakes Exams

Not passing the CAHSEE poses consequences for students, teachers, and administrators and therefore qualifies as a high-stakes exam. There are consequences when performance is low and rewards when performance is high (Callet, 2005; Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Nichols &

Berliner, 2007; Warren & Edwards, 2005). The consequences of the CAHSEE are less well known given the newness of the exit exam. What is known is that California has had five graduating classes since the adoption of the CAHSEE and thousands of students did not receive their high school diplomas due to not passing all sections of the CAHSEE. Reardon et al (2009) estimated overall graduation rates in California declined by between 3.6-4.5 percentage points concluding the CAHSEE had large negative effects on graduation rates. Reardon et al (2009) calculated a class of about 500,000 students may result in anywhere from 18,000 - 22,500 students who fail to receive diplomas. There is no consensus on whether exit exams cause students to drop out, although much of the research prior to CAHSEE indicated high school exit exams disproportionately affect traditionally underrepresented students such as Hispanic/Latino, African American/Black, and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Adam, 2004; Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Carnoy, 2005; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Warren & Edwards, 2005), English learners (Adam, 2004), and students with disabilities (Gaumer Erickson, Kleinhammer-Tramill, & Thurlow, 2007). Reardon et al (2009) found the

CAHSEE adversely affected not only underrepresented races and minorities but also female students.

Although the intent of CAHSEE is to improve student achievement, the exit exam raises other issues such as the effects of high-stakes testing on students, teachers, and administrators. The CAHSEE is used in the same way other high-stakes tests are used at the state level: to measure student academic competence as well as teacher and district performance. Callet (2005) identified positive outcomes as monetary bonuses for school personnel and negative consequences such as loss of jobs, loss of funding and in the worst cases, government takeover of schools consistently demonstrating low performance. Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, and Ness (2008) further articulated the consequences of high-stakes exams as performance tests that "deny promotion to the next grade, withhold a high school diploma, label schools as failures, determine if teachers and administrators keep their jobs, or decide if schools get more funding" (p. 2). Students are also affected; instead of a high school diploma they may receive a certificate of completion which does not hold the same value as a diploma. Teachers may be withheld bonuses or terminated for lack of student progress. School districts

suffer consequences if they do not meet their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) comprised of the following criteria: student participation rate, percent proficient, measure of academic performance index (API), and graduation rates (CDE, 2007-2008). Schools must meet their AYP requirements or they may be designated Program Improvement schools (PI) which could result in the withdrawal of funding or school closure.

NCLB holds students, teachers, schools, and districts accountable, sometimes to the extent of anxiety-producing conditions (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). The legislation claimed more choices for parents; however, in California the choice for high school students is pass or not-pass; diploma or certificate of completion. Unlike other states, California does not have alternatives to passing the high school exit exam (CEP, 2008). NCLB promoted emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research. In the instance of CAHSEE, the exam was adopted concurrently with the requirement of an evaluative research panel; the research has yet to be completed and the objectives to be assessed.

Proponents and Opponents of High-stakes Testing

Nichols and Berliner (2007) hypothesized high-stakes testing contributes to lower levels of college preparedness of high school students and also adds pressure for students, teachers, administrators and families. Focusing attention on student achievement tests for the purposes of quantifying academic performance, such as California's Academic Performance Index (API), has led to the narrowing of curriculum toward test preparation (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). Other issues of concern include whether student learning occurs as a result of attention to test preparation programs, narrowing of the curriculum by increasing the amount of time spent in class on test preparation (García & Calhoun, 2002; Nichols & Berliner, 2007), exclusion of certain students, and high levels of anxiety (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Dorn, 2003). Furthermore, García and Calhoun (2002) asserted narrowing curriculum and emphasis on test preparation is more prevalent for students of limited English proficiency. Opponents of such exams claim the added graduation requirement incites anxiety and contributes to reasons for dropping out (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). Prior to the state mandated testing requirement, some researchers viewed the CAHSEE as "yet one

more barrier in the way of lower-performing students completing requirements" (Carnoy, 2005, p. 19). The barrier could be contributing to the persistent achievement gap in California rather than narrowing it.

Weisberg, Chisholm, Kawazoe, Moore, Roth, & Siri, (2006) contributing authors of The California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) acknowledged positive effects of the CAHSEE. They found schools were held accountable for ensuring students were taught the material thereby ending social promotion. Students would continue to their next grade level possessing the skills from the previous level rather than being promoted because of age. As a result of CAHSEE implementation, teachers addressed state standards. Researchers found positive effects on curriculum articulation between middle and high schools. As the exam results confirmed the achievement gap, it increased importance in addressing this inequality.

Weisberg et al (2006) reported high-stakes exams hold students and schools accountable to meet state mandated standard and high-stakes testing may motivate students to do well in school. Callet (2005) acknowledged the implementation of a high school exit exam may motivate students to perform better; however, at the same time, the

stress associated with high-stakes testing may contribute to student dropout rates. Other arguments in favor of high-stakes testing include teacher motivation and collaboration to improve student learning (Weisberg et al, 2006).

While acknowledging the potential benefits of high-stakes testing, Nichols and Berliner (2007) identified more problems that may arise as the result of high-stakes testing. Citing previous research on NCLB the authors defended the argument that the use of high-stakes testing as a result of NCLB has not produced noticeable gains on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests or other achievement tests used to audit state performance. Nichols and Berliner (2007) also argued the achievement gap remains for traditionally underrepresented students and dropout rates increased.

On the other hand, Warren and Edwards (2005) did not find an association between high school exit exams and diploma acquisition. Warren and Edwards (2005) examined school, state, and student-level covariates using hierarchical regression to assess nested data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) and concluded there was not a significant relationship between high school exit examination requirements and high

school diploma acquisition. The authors noted their study included data from 1988 to 2000 and during that time state standards were less complex. Warren and Edwards (2005) concluded the use of an exit exam made no difference on student progression rates. Those destined to progress via General Education Development Test (GED), drop out, or graduate would do so with or without an exit exam, leading one to wonder about the usefulness of an exit exam.

Reardon et al (2009) hypothesized stereotype threat phenomenon as a negative outcome for minority students and female students who take the CAHSEE. "When a stigmatized person finds him/herself in a stereotype-relevant situation, the burden of the stereotype adds unique performance pressure to what might already be an anxiety-provoking experience" (Brown & Lee, 2005, p. 150). Reardon (2009) identified existing stereotypes as those based on varied races and ethnicities. The already existing stereotypes related to underperformance are perpetuated when the exam is repeated and students fail multiple times.

Given the pressure and consequences of high-stakes testing are so high, other dramatic sociological phenomenon have occurred (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). Districts found strategic ways to exclude students from the rosters just in

time for test day so the school's performance would appear favorable. Teachers and students exhibited anxiety and depression in many instances as a result of testing which in some cases lead to unethical practices of cheating on the part of both students and teachers.

Description of the California High School Exit Exam

The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) a comprehensive standards based exam, assesses California content standards in Mathematics competency at grade levels six and seven and the first part of algebra and English Language Arts (ELA) content standards through grade ten. A high school exit exam panel composed of teachers, principals, school board members, parents, and the general public met to determine the appropriate content and rigor of the newly adopted exam (Wise, Taylor, Wang, Becker, & Thacker, 2006). The State Board of Education required an independent evaluator to assess the impact and quality of the exam. The CDE contracted the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) as the CAHSEE independent evaluator to determine the appropriateness of the exam and to analyze CAHSEE pass rates (Wise et al., 2006).

Students first take the CAHSEE in the tenth grade. If students pass both sections of the exam (Math and English

Language Arts) they have met the graduation requirement and do not retake the test. If a student does not pass one of the sections, they may retake that section at various intervals in 11th and 12th grade until they pass.

Educational Testing Services (ETS) developed an exam with scale scores ranging from 275 to 450. A passing score is 350 and above (CEP, 2006). A passing score and a proficient score are not the same. As part of the requirement of the NCLB Act, CAHSEE cut scores had to be set for the purposes of classifying students as proficient or advanced because the data were required to assess California's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a set of academic performance goals established for each school. Originally a proficient score was set at 381 and an advanced score at 405 and over. As of 2008, a score of 388 was proficient for February and March tests and a score of 385 was deemed proficient for the May test. The test items and content did not change; however, cut scores were lowered (ETS, 2005).

In addition one of the goals mandated by NCLB was that all students tested on statewide assessments in ELA and Mathematics performed at the proficient level or above by 2014. As a result AYP targets are to increase annually. If

schools do not meet AYP targets, they are identified as Program Improvement (PI) schools and cannot receive NCLB: Title I funding.

Students who pass the CAHSEE are expected to possess 8th-grade Mathematics and 10th-grade English Language Arts (ELA) competency. After the first year the CAHSEE was administered, the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP), a program designed to aid low-performing schools in preparing students for college reported, "While these schools are making progress on improving their student's CAHSEE pass rates, the schools are not making progress on raising the number of students eligible for four-year colleges and universities" (Weisberg et al, 2006, p. 1). For some students, "life after high-school," as stated in the CAHSEE purpose statement, may include college; however, colleges and universities must provide remedial coursework for underprepared students (Cavanagh, 2008).

Assembly Bill (AB) 347 dictated failure to pass the exit exam resulted in the denial of a high school diploma even if all required coursework had been successfully completed. If a student does not pass the exam, school districts are required to provide additional instruction to facilitate passing. Additional instruction may include

tutorial programs or extra classes in content areas. Students who do not pass the exam by their senior year of high school have the option to receive additional intensive instruction and services for up to two consecutive academic years after grade twelve or until they pass both parts of the exam (CDE, Assembly Bill 347, 2008).

Spring 2001 was the first time the CAHSEE was administered. The test was to become a requirement for the class of 2004; however, due to modifications made in 2003, the state deferred the CAHSEE graduation requirement until 2006, principally because the high school exit exam panel determined students were not ready and schools needed more time to instruct and to remediate in an effort to prepare students for the test. One of the main concerns was the inclusion of algebra on the exit exam because taking algebra was not previously a requirement of high school graduation. Modifications to the exam included: testing administration reduced from three days to two days; the number of essays on the ELA section was revised from two to one; and, the number of multiple choice questions was changed from 82 to 72. The math portion remained 80 questions but the content and questions were slightly revised (Wise et al., 2006).

Legal Disputes

Adoption of the CAHSEE has not experienced a purely smooth transition. In 2005 the Chapman versus California Department of Education lawsuit (also known as the Kidd et al versus O'Connell et al lawsuit) settled that students with disabilities (SWDs) would have a year to meet the CAHSEE requirement by taking the test numerous times and by taking remediation courses to aid in test taking. The lawsuit began in 2002 and settled in May 2008. Courtney Kidd, et al sued the California Department of Education (CDE), the California State Board of Education (SBE) and the Superintendent of Public Instruction in California, Jack O'Connell alleging the CAHSEE requirement violated the rights of students who were eligible for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students who receive IEPs are typically students with delayed skills who have difficulty in learning, other disabilities or special needs. "The application of the CAHSEE graduation requirement to public high school students with disabilities constitutes a violation of California statutory and constitutional law" (CDE, Notice of Proposed Settlement, 2008, para 6). The CDE denied such violations were made. As a result of the lawsuit, IEP students would still be required to take the

exam. IEP students or SWD could apply to have the CAHSEE requirement waived or request testing accommodations such as extra time, having the test read orally, or instructions in Braille. Similarly English Learner (EL) students may be allowed accommodations, such as instructions read orally by compact disc or using American Sign Language, and using a calculator for the Math portion.

The Kidd versus CDE lawsuit required the CDE to provide an independent evaluator of the exam to determine the appropriateness of the exam for students who required accommodations. If they determined students learned the material but were unable to demonstrate it by taking the exam, these students would be allowed alternative measures to fulfill their diploma requirement (CDE, Notice of Proposed Settlement, 2008). Still, some students who are not of the IEP, SWD, EL subgroups who may have received extensive tutoring, and have completed grade twelve are still ineligible to graduate with a high school diploma as they did not pass the CAHSEE. The concern was that SWDs would not pass the exam (CDE, 2008, September). The Superintendent was determined to include these students and make them to meet the exit exam requirement.

The 2006 case of Valenzuela versus O'Connell challenged the fairness of the exam contending the CAHSEE unfairly penalized "students who have not received adequate resources" (CEP, 2008, p. 22). This suit led to the decision that students from the class of 2006 and beyond who struggle with the exam will continue to receive up to two years of assistance to acquire the critical skills measured on the exam. Assembly Bill (AB) 347 outlined what districts that receive funds for intensive instruction must do:

- Two consecutive years of additional instruction after completing grade 12 or until students pass both parts of the CHASEE, whichever comes first;
- Two consecutive years of intensive instructions to improve English proficiency for English language learners after completing grade 12 or until students pass both parts of the CAHSEE, whichever comes first;
- Notification and counseling to students about the availability of instructions and services, and of their right to file a complaint if they are not provided these services (CEP, 2008, p. 23)

Students in California can attend community college without having met the CAHSEE graduation requirement. Not having passed the CAHSEE, many are not prepared to take on college-level coursework. In an effort to remediate, colleges design and offer more courses in basic skills so students develop the necessary foundation they were expected to have achieved in high school.

Many criticize high-schools for not preparing students adequately for college, the workforce and the military (Warren & Kulick, 2007). Though not conclusive, some researchers have found high school exit exams lower high school completion rates and could influence dropout rates (Callet, 2005; Warren & Kulick, 2007). The UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA) report found commonalities in Low Pass Rate schools (LPR) which included non-certified math instructors, low socioeconomic regions, and schools with limited programs to assist students in the content areas of the exam (Rogers, Jellison Holme, & Silver, 2006). California's Teaching Force (CTF) 2008 report on *Teaching and California's Future* found California to have an excess of underprepared teachers (Guha, Shields, Tiffany-Morales, Bland, & Campbell, 2008). It follows logically if you have an underprepared teaching force,

students will not receive the preparation needed to succeed academically. The CTF report stated the following:

Current levels of achievement do not portend future success. Of particular concern is the status of the secondary school population. More than one in five students entering ninth grade do not graduate from high school. Of those who do graduate, only a little more than a third are prepared to go on to a 4-year college, and many of those need remediation once they get to college. The statistics are far worse for the state's Latino and African-American students—they continue to achieve at lower levels and drop out at higher rates than their white and Asian peers. (Guha et al., 2008, p. 51)

The Center on Education Policy (2008) reported although California experienced an increase in four-year university enrollment there was a decrease in community college enrollment. Not passing CAHSEE could add to the low post-secondary education attendance rate in California. The addition of the CAHSEE has required California to address not only the high-school dropout rate, but also a new group of students comprised of CAHSEE non-passers.

When a student decides to attend college, ideally their K-12 education has prepared them. But if the CAHSEE tests 7th and 8th grade Math skills and 10th grade ELA skills, the likelihood of the exam indicating preparedness beyond grade 12 is minimal. In their study on predicting CAHSEE academic success, Zau and Betts (2008) were surprised at the non-pass rates given the grade level of skills on the exam. Students, by the end of 12th grade were unable to meet the requirements of 7th, 8th, and 10th grade.

Achievement Gap

Brown and Conley (2007) noted college remediation rates "remain stubbornly high, particularly at community colleges" (p. 138). Students can attend college even if they have not passed CAHSEE. Callet (2005) cited Lillard and DeCicca (2001) as critics of high-stakes testing because it increased dropout rates among teens aged 14-17 years. Lillard and DeCicca (2001) looked at course graduation requirements (CRGs) rather than specifically exit exams. The authors argued higher standards and increase in graduation requirements could likely correlate to student dropout rates.

Researchers also have found high-stakes testing does not improve student learning (Callet, 2005) and in some

cases may suppress it (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). Nichols and Berliner (2007) acknowledged some students easily pass an exam due to their inherent intelligence, social class standing or luck and therefore feel no academic motivation.

Becker and Watters (2007) reported Spanish speakers had the most difficulty on both sections of the CAHSEE among linguistic minorities. Speakers of more complex languages such as Chinese had some difficulty with the ELA portion of the exam and minimal difficulty with the Math section. The authors pointed out that rather than limited English proficiency as a factor, the discrepancy among learners of English could be attributed to economic conditions or parent education level. The authors also found students who received instruction in their primary language had the lowest ELA passing rates however this was not true for their Mathematics passing rates.

In the 2008 HumRRO report, CAHSEE researchers addressed whether the new forms of the CAHSEE still covered targeted content standards completely and in sufficient depth and whether the exam was fair and accessible to EL and students who receive special education services. Becker, Wise, and Watters (2008) reported, "We observed an administration of the CAHSEE in a school with a substantial

number of English learners. No significant problems were encountered. A few suggestions for improving test administrator training are offered in Chapter 2" (p. 166). It seems odd to base a conclusion on one observation of a school test administration in a state with thousands of schools. Schools throughout the state are very different. The researchers were more concerned with training in test administrations than with English learners.

Becker et al. (2008) also reported approximately 46,000 high school seniors in the class of 2008 did not pass the CAHSEE. Over a third of the students (approximately 17,000) were Students with Disabilities (SWDs). 2008 was the first year SWDs had to meet the CAHSEE graduation requirement; 54.5% met the requirement.

The passing rate for students who were not in special education was 93.7 percent this year, compared to 93.3 percent in 2007 and 90.4 percent in 2006, both years when special education students were exempted from the requirement. Passing rates were lower for English learners (73.5%) and students with disabilities (54.5%) and for low-income (85.5%), African American (80.5%), and Hispanic (86.2%) students. Note that these passing rates exclude students who dropped out

prior to 12th grade and that low-income and minority students had higher dropout rates than the general student population. (Becker et al., 2008, p. 166)

Given these statistics, better preparation not only on the part of test administrators, but also on the part of teachers preparing students is needed.

Earlier literature claimed findings similar to Becker et al. (2008). African Americans and Latinos suffer most from poor preparation in high school (Carnoy, 2005; Dorn, 2003). "High school is where economically disadvantaged young people - many of them African Americans and Latinos - make it or break it educationally" (Carnoy, 2005, p. 19). Carnoy (2005) argued high school serves as an 'acid test' for students. If they succeed, they have better chances of transitioning into work and social structures. If, on the other hand, they do not, they are likely to be "marginalized from the mainstream and to become a social liability" (p. 19). Furthermore Carnoy (2005) stated, "Reforms aiming to improve education quality must ultimately be evaluated in terms of improving high school completion rates" (p. 19). Carnoy noted overall high school completion from 1970 to 2000 remained about the same. Graduation of 17 year olds in the US fell from 76% in 1970

to 71% in 2000. Graduation rates remain low for racial/ethnic minorities.

State Accountability

Carnoy (2005) found high-stakes exams yielded mixed results in relation to graduation results. Some research suggested a strong correlation while others indicated none (Carnoy, 2005). One way that some schools handle low performing students is to hold them back in the 9th grade until they are ready to take the exit exam. These students end up taking test preparation classes. While holding students back may make schools look better, Carnoy (2005) argued it is more likely to cause student drop out. Carnoy (2005) found weak relationships between accountability and progression through high school. He did find some indication that accountability may hinder progression especially for Hispanic students. Carnoy (2005) found the stronger the state's accountability system, the lower the increase in progression rate using 2000/2001 data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

Carnoy's (2005) data did not show a relationship between measures of high school progression and the implementation of high school exit exams, though there is tangential evidence that state accountability strength

reduces 8th to 12th grade progress rates and increases 9th grade retention rates. Strong state accountability does not systematically raise graduation and progression rates. Given these mixed results, Carnoy (2005) concluded the education system poorly prepares students for high school and beyond.

In their 2007 historical study of the 26 states which have enacted high school exit exams, Warren and Kulick (2007) found "states with higher unemployment rates and higher proportions of racial/ethnic minority youth are more likely to have adopted high school exit exam (HSEE) policies than otherwise similar states" (p. 215). They believed state-level factors related to individual-level outcomes including high school dropout rates, student achievement and job market success. Warren and Kulick (2007) determined it was important to consider unemployment rates and racial/ethnic compositions: "Analyses of the impact of HSEEs on dropout rates, academic achievement and other outcomes may be biased if they do not incorporate such state-level variables" (p. 227). Warren and Kulick (2007) concluded, "The decision to adopt an HSEE policy appears to largely arise from states' desire to improve economic circumstances and -- perhaps more importantly --

from efforts to educate racially/ethnically diverse student populations" (p. 227). During the transition from no exit exam requirement to the CAHSEE, California must act responsibly for improvement to occur.

California High School Exit Exam Studies

In a study conducted in a southern California school district, Zau and Betts (2008) found the district CAHSEE pass rates of the class of 2006 were comparable to statewide pass rates. By grade 10 when the exam is first administered statewide, the state ELA pass rate was 76%, while the district pass rate was 75%. For math, both state and district pass rates were 74%. Grade 10 EL students passed below state levels (39%) while in the district 28% passed. In math 49% of EL students passed statewide while 41% passed in the school district. By grade 12 the statewide overall passage rate was 91% while the district pass rate was 90%. Some of the researchers' main concerns included the level of the test: meeting 8th grade standards for math and 10th grade standards for English Language Arts and the findings that large percentages of students who did pass did so at a narrow margin with a score of 350. Not only are the content standards low, but students are passing with low scores.

Using a series of regression models to predict student passage of the overall exam and separately for Math and ELA, Zau and Betts (2008) found they could identify students who are at-risk as early as fourth grade. They found classroom behavior was as important a predictor as academic GPA was for CAHSEE passage. Zau and Betts (2008) developed a "behavior GPA" measurement based on teachers' comments. They used the following four specific areas to comprise a behavior grade: "begins promptly;" "follows directions;" "classroom behavior;" and, "self-discipline". Teachers then rated students with the following responses: excellent; good; satisfactory; needs improvement; and, unsatisfactory. Ratings were translated into numeric grades: 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0, with 0 corresponding to an F and 4 an A. The behavior GPA measure was found to be a positive predictor of success on the CAHSEE in grade 10. Behavior GPA predictive power increased by grade 12.

As a result, Zau and Betts (2008) favored early intervention rather than waiting until grade 12. "It might be more appropriate to focus on remediation closer to the grades in which these skills are being taught, rather than waiting until grade 12 to help students who have yet to master the skills taught in earlier grades" (Zau & Betts,

2008, p. v). Zau and Betts (2008) favored intervention in the later elementary years or in middle school. They acknowledged problems of funding and the potential for early intervention for students who are not in need of it to be held back by unnecessary tutorial programs. Zau and Betts (2008) noted currently as a result of Assembly Bill (AB) 347 schools are provided two years of funding to assist students who did not pass; however, funding was not available for the class of 2006.

The study conducted by Zau and Betts (2008) raised concerns which other California districts face. Though Zau and Betts (2008) argued for early intervention, the fact remains students may make it to grade 12 and still not receive their high school diploma because they do not pass the CAHSEE.

García and Calhoun (2002) conducted a study in a large urban central California school district the first year of implementation of CAHSEE in 2001. Their study considered student attitudes toward CAHSEE, the extent of classroom and student preparation for the test and the effect of test results on subsequent student performance. The researchers found EL students experienced increased test preparation in class. Though increased test preparation may be seen as

positive, it could also be an indicator of narrowing of the curriculum and teaching exclusively test taking skills.

García and Calhoun (2002) also examined the relationship of English language proficiency to achievement levels on the CAHSEE. English learner pass rates (25%) were lower than non-English learner pass rates (61%) on the English Language Arts section of the exam. On the Math section the pass rate for English learners was 11% and 37% for the non-English learners. "While disparate passing rates were found between white and ethnic/racial minority students, the achievement gap persisted even among students passing the CAHSEE" (García & Calhoun, 2002, p. 6). The researchers concluded the CAHSEE contributed to increased test preparation especially among EL students; however, EL students were less likely to pass compared to non EL students even with considerable test preparation.

Non-English learner students were more likely to indicate the CAHSEE was covered in school (García & Calhoun, 2002). This type of instruction, teaching to the test, limits students' learning experience when the focus is on passing the test. García and Calhoun (2002) did not find that poor performance on the CAHSEE had adverse affects on students' academic grades. They did report an

adverse effect on school attendance. Given their preliminary results, Garcia and Calhoun (2002) suggested a longitudinal study of students failing the CAHSEE to investigate links in changes in school attendance to decreased academic achievement or increased school dropouts. At the time of their study, the decision to make the CAHSEE a graduation requirement had not been finalized. Now testing data are available for the class of 2006-2012.

Zau and Betts (2008) identified students who did not pass the spring 2006 CAHSEE exam and attempted to uncover the fate of those students. In one southern California school district 636 students failed to graduate in 2006 because of the CAHSEE requirement. Questions remained as to whether or not these students passed CAHSEE in a subsequent year, if they opted to obtain a General Education Development (GED) diploma or if they did not return. They found that 38.5% of the students who did not pass re-enrolled in school. Half of the students were severely disabled and in non-diploma programs designed to help students acquire basic life skills. 61% of the students, not including the special education subgroup, did not remain engaged in the public school system nor did they re-enroll in the school district to take the CAHSEE during

2006-2007. Of those who did re-enroll, only 3.1% passed the exam making the overall pass rate for the school district rise from 90.4% to just 90.7%. The researchers took into consideration that students may have moved or taken the exam elsewhere.

In many regions, California community colleges have obtained grant funding to assist students beginning with the class of 2006 to complete coursework credit toward their diploma and receive assistance preparing for the CAHSEE after grade 12. Mattson (2007) noted much of the research related to college student success, centers on the traditional 18 to 22 year old full-time student. Mattson argued for more research for at-risk populations. The current study focuses on traditionally underrepresented populations.

Academic Self-efficacy

The achievement gap persists, but there are students who are determined to continue until they accomplish the necessary tasks to earn a high school diploma. The 2008 CEP report referred to senior high school students from the class of 2007 who had not passed the CAHSEE by fall of their senior year yet remained in school by the end of the school year as "persistent strugglers" and "hard-working

educational persisters," a term coined by the California Dropout Research Project (CDRP). "Persistent strugglers" were disproportionately low socioeconomic Latino students and largely (79%) English language learners (CEP, 2008). While persistence as referenced above may have a negative connotation, the quality may contribute to students who fall into the achievement gap as persistence is a key characteristic of academic self-efficacy. "It requires a strong sense of efficacy to remain task oriented in the face of judgmental failures" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1176). According to Bandura, (1989) a person's self-efficacy beliefs determine their level of motivation including how much effort they will exert to accomplish a goal.

Self-efficacy comprises a key component in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory which addressed the processes governing the interrelationship between knowledge and action. Bandura (1986) theorized, "knowledge, transformation operations, and constituent skills are necessary but insufficient for accomplished performances" (p. 390). He included perceived self-efficacy as another determinant of performance. Bandura (1997) defined perceived self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to

produce given attainments" (p. 3). Attainments may include academic performance such as passing the CAHSEE or obtaining a high-school diploma. Bandura (1986) purported a person's sense of self-efficacy acted in a generative capacity by allowing them to "exercise some control over events that affect their lives" (p. 391).

Self-efficacy is different from self-concept (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2003). Self-efficacy is the judgment one has regarding skill or capability to accomplish a task, rather than the skills themselves (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy beliefs determine a person's agency; how one would proceed in difficult or challenging times (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2003). Agency also involves when one acts intentionally (Bandura, 1997). A student who decides to continue to take the CAHSEE may act with the intention to pass it. Bandura (1986) noted the important role intention plays in the self-regulation of behavior. "An intention is defined as the determination to perform certain activities or to bring about a certain future state of affairs" (Bandura, 1986, p. 467). Intention precedes agency; a student would first set an intention, to pass an exam for example, and then act to bring about a satisfactory result.

Bandura (1977) described three characteristics of efficacy expectations: magnitude; generality; and, strength. The magnitude of an efficacy expectation refers to the difficulty of the challenge. A task may be considered easy, moderate, or difficult. Generality refers to a specific or general level of mastery of a task. The strength of an efficacy expectation can be strong or weak. Weak expectancies can be easily discarded. "If people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Strong expectations are approached with more determination and effort to persevere regardless of obstacles. "Agent causation involves the ability to behave differently from what environmental forces dictate rather than inevitably yield to them" (Bandura, 1997, p. 7). While successes raise mastery expectations, repeated failures lower them (Bandura, 1977). This study examined whether students attempting to pass the CAHSEE view the magnitude of the task as easy, moderate or difficult. The self-efficacy surveys shed light on the strength of their beliefs about their capabilities.

Bandura (1986, 1989) characterized persistence and resilience as components of self-efficacy. Bandura (1986)

reported that judgments of efficacy "determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles or aversive experience" (p. 394). A person with a high sense of self-efficacy is more likely to achieve personal goals whereas a person with a low sense of self-efficacy is less likely to achieve personal goals (Schunk, 1991). A student attempting to pass the CAHSEE exam may be more likely to have high self-efficacy because he is taking action to reach a goal. Furthermore, the student, after previous failed attempts to pass the CAHSEE perseveres by continued efforts after high-school. An individual with strong perceived self-efficacy persists more vigorously in their efforts (Bandura, 1986). This describes the property of resilience. "Because the acquisition of knowledge and competencies usually requires sustained effort in the face of difficulties and setbacks, it is resilience of self belief that counts" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1176). Bandura (1989) referred to the "robust sense of personal efficacy" that provides staying power. Those who recover from adversity quickly recover their sense of efficacy because they possess the quality of resiliency of perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Students who have made it their goal to earn their high-

school diploma even after they have been denied it because they did not pass CAHSEE may exhibit these characteristics because they are persistent in their efforts and resilient after multiple attempts. Those who can weather the difficult times and continue to persevere after the setbacks are those with a high sense of personal efficacy.

Literature on self-efficacy is abundant and has lead to more specific contexts of studies related to academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Gore; Pajares & Kranzler (1995); Pajares & Miller, 1994). This study addressed academic self-efficacy and persistence of students who have not passed the CAHSEE.

Students who did not pass CAHSEE may enroll in community college programs to earn their diploma and in some cases continue in higher education. Community colleges are modifying their curriculum to offer non-credit courses in basic skills for underprepared students. One of the questions of interest is what internal and external influences motivate students to continue after grade twelve to obtain their high school diploma which requires passing the CAHSEE. An examination of the concept of self-efficacy may assist in understanding student motivation to persist in their academic pursuits.

Previous researchers have confirmed through self-efficacy measurements predictive and mediator effects on student achievement in Math (Pajares & Kranzler, 1995; Pajares & Miller, 1994) and in writing (Pajares & Johnson, 1996) using multiple regression models as well as path analyses. Studies have assessed college students who have taken the SAT and ACT (Pajares, 1996); however, there have not been any efficacy studies in relation to the CAHSEE.

Much of the literature indicates self-efficacy acts as a mediating determinant in predicting goal attainment (Bandura 1986; Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Kranzler, 1995; Shcunk, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000). Pajares (2003) confirmed self-efficacy acts as a predictor and mediator in student writing performance and emphasized the importance of teachers reinforcing development of student confidence in writing.

Students enrolled in a community college CAHSEE program have already finished high school and did not obtain their diploma; however, they decided to persevere and continue to study to pass the CAHSEE and get their diploma. To these students the diploma is meaningful and represents a goal obtained through intrinsic motivation. These students persist in an effort to receive their high

school diploma despite numerous obstacles. Schunk (1991) commented on rewards as motivators, "Anticipation of desirable outcomes motivates students to persist. Rewards enhance efficacy when they are linked with a student's accomplishments and convey that the student has made progress in learning. Receipt of the reward also symbolized progress" (p. 291).

Pajares (1996) elaborated stating, "Efficacy beliefs help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will prove in the face of adverse situations--the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience" (p. 544). Pajares (1996) characterized self-efficacy beliefs as strong determinants and predictors of the level of accomplishment individuals finally attain. He further noted the importance of a domain specific measurement when assessing self-efficacy.

In the following study the relationships between the constructs Academic Self-efficacy, Persistence, and Academic Achievement were examined. Through the survey areas of academic self-efficacy and achievement are addressed. The interviews conducted provided participants'

perspectives on the taking the CAHSEE, their experiences,
and how they demonstrated persistence.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter includes a description of the participants, the procedures, and methods followed to conduct the research. A description of the quantitative method employed is followed by the qualitative method.

Participants

Participants included males and females 18 years of age and older who attended four years of high school but did not earn a high school diploma or the equivalent at the end of grade 12. Participants included those who may have completed all high school course work but did not pass one or both sections of the CAHSEE or were course work deficient. Participants were enrolled in southern California Community College CAHSEE preparation programs. The participants were not currently attending high school but were planning to re-take or had re-taken the CAHSEE. Anyone under the age of 18 years was excluded.

Recruitment

In 2007 after the first year of the CAHSEE graduation requirement, 17 community colleges throughout California

received grant funding to offer CAHSEE preparation programs; however, as time passed the California budget worsened and grant funding for CAHSEE programs was not renewed. Three years later, at the time of data collection, few Community College CAHSEE preparation programs remained and most were in the process of closing. Five Community College Districts in southern California with CAHSEE programs/courses were identified. Of the five Community College Districts six campuses with active programs were identified: College A, College B, College C, College D, College E1 and College E2.

CAHSEE program coordinators at the six college campuses were contacted by e-mail and were informed of the purpose of the study. Coordinators were asked if they would be willing to allow the researcher to survey students attending their CAHSEE program (See Appendix A: Letter of Invitation to Coordinators). A follow-up telephone call to the coordinators (See Appendix B) was made to confirm receipt of the Letter of Invitation and willingness to participate. All requested materials, including an abstract describing the purpose of the study and the researcher's university Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval documentation were sent to each college IRB committee.

College D required an additional application for IRB approval to access their campus. Permission to conduct the research at six colleges was granted. A copy of the research results was requested upon completion of the study by all campuses.

Letters of Invitation (See Appendix C: Letter of Invitation to Survey Participants) to complete the survey were then sent to a total of 234 potential participants at the six college campuses. Prior to completing the survey participants were required to sign an Informed Consent document (See Appendix D) indicating their willingness to participate and their right to stop their participation at any time without penalty. Participants were informed that all information provided would remain confidential. Participants completing the survey on-line provided an electronic signature by clicking the "next" button to move forward to the survey. Those who completed a paper-and-pencil survey were provided two Informed Consent forms, one to initial and return and one to keep for their personal files.

Participants who completed the survey were notified in advance they had an opportunity to win one of two \$25 Target gift certificates via random drawing for completing

the survey. After data were collected, two individuals were selected at random by a third party. Those whose names were drawn were contacted and sent the \$25 Target gift certificate.

Response Rates

College A. At College A approval to send e-mails to 164 potential participants was obtained. The letter of invitation was sent via e-mail to their campus e-mail accounts from the researcher's campus e-mail account on three separate occasions. E-mails were sent during the semester the program was closing so the response rate was poor. Furthermore, e-mail addresses included previously and currently enrolled students. While campus e-mail addresses were obtainable, former participants may no longer have accessed them.

In an attempt to improve the response rate at college A, the program director was contacted and asked to assist in contacting participants. Even with the director's assistance, only 13 responses were elicited for a response rate of 7.9 percent from College A.

College B. As a result of the experience with College A, program directors were asked to assist in participant recruitment because they were more directly connected to

the participants. The program director at College B preferred to announce the survey website link to participants enrolled in CAHSEE classes. The program director expected a total of 25 students would complete the survey. Participants were informed of the survey and provided the website link as an optional assignment. At College B 14 participants responded for a response rate of 56 percent.

College C. The program director at College C preferred to provide paper-and-pencil copies of the survey to participants. The program director printed the electronic copy, had students complete it and mailed the hard copies to the researcher. College C served a slightly different population (those enrolled in prisons and those under age 18), thus the number of participants meeting inclusion criteria was minimal. The survey and informed consent documents were sent electronically to the program director at College C. Surveys and Informed Consent documents were mailed back to the researcher by U.S. mail. At the discretion of the program director, four participants met the inclusion criteria and all four completed the survey at College C for a 100 percent response rate.

College D. The director of the CAHSEE program at College D announced the survey website link to participants enrolled in their program. This college was among one of the colleges in the process of closing its program. The program director reported a low enrollment of seven students. Five participants from College D responded for a 71.4 percent response rate from college D.

College E1. The program director of sister colleges, College E1 and E2 requested the researcher conduct the survey in person and provide paper-and-pencil versions of the survey. Trips in person by the researcher were made to the colleges on three separate occasions to improve response rates. The program for this district was in its last semester at the time of data collection. According to the program director far fewer students enrolled than had been anticipated.

At college E1 20 participants were expected to attend, however, nine participants from College E1 were in attendance on the day of data collection. All nine responded for a response rate of 100 percent.

College E2. The professor of the class at College E2 asked all of her students to fill out the survey. In one class section eleven individuals were in attendance. All

eleven completed the survey for 100 percent response rate. The second class section had fourteen in attendance. All fourteen participants completed the survey for a response rate of 100 percent.

All participants who completed the survey were asked of their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview at a later date. If willing to participate in an interview, participants were asked to provide the best way to contact them for an interview.

Measures

The survey for this study was titled *Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits*. On the survey (See Appendix E, *Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits*) participants were asked to self-report the following demographic information: age, gender, ethnicity. Participants self-reported whether they passed the CAHSEE, their CAHSEE scores and current GPA. Instructions for demographic data inquiries were written at an average grade 6.7 readability level.

Participants were asked to self-report all CAHSEE scores for both Mathematics and English Language Arts while in high school and afterward. Scores below 350 are

considered non-passing scores by the California Department of Education.

Participants who have completed community college courses were asked to self-report their GPA and number of units (courses) completed and number of courses attempted.

Academic Achievement. Achievement indicators were self-reported by participants. Student CAHSEE scores before and after high school graduation were one academic achievement indicator of interest. Other academic achievement indicators were a) maintenance of a minimum GPA of 2.0 in college courses and, b) completion of the requirements for a post-secondary associate's degree or certificate. The latter indicator was included because during the course of this study and during their time enrolled in community college concurrently with the CAHSEE program, it was conceivable a participant could meet CAHSEE requirements while completing requirements for an AA degree or certificate. What was unanticipated, however, were the participants older in age (30 and above), who enrolled to meet current high school graduation standards.

Persistence. Persistence was operationalized in the context of an academic setting and included the following indicators: a) the number of times a participant attempted

the CAHSEE; b) the number of college courses the participant completed; c) the number of college courses the participant attempted; and, d) continued enrollment in a post-secondary institution. Persistence indicators were self-reported by participants.

Academic Self-Efficacy. As indicated by Bandura (1997), "self-efficacy scales should measure people's beliefs in their abilities to fulfill different levels of task demands within the psychological domain selected for study" (p. 44). Academic self-efficacy was operationalized as participants' judgments of their academic skills and in their ability to pass the CAHSEE. Survey items addressed participants' belief in their ability to accomplish tasks related to academic subjects and passing the CAHSEE. Participants also responded to items which addressed their beliefs in self-regulated learning and beliefs related to career and educational goals.

Participants were asked to rate their level of confidence on a four point Likert type scale (4 = complete confidence, 3 = some confidence, 2 = very little confidence and 1 = no confidence at all) for all items related to Academic Self-Efficacy. Instructions were written at an 8.2 grade level readability. The overall readability grade

level for the entire survey was 6.7, appropriate for participant comprehension.

The survey included 40 prompts addressing academic self-efficacy. Items on the survey were adopted from four subscales. The survey was written in English at an average 6.7 grade level. Readability of survey items ranged from 3.3 to 14.2 grade level. Item 8, "I remember information presented in textbooks" scored a grade 14.2 readability level. The average readability for all items was a 6.4 grade level.

Survey items related to self-efficacy for self-regulated learning and survey items related to self-efficacy for academic achievement were adopted from Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martínez-Pons (1992). Survey items related to academic self-efficacy were adopted from Chemers, Hu, and García (2001). Items related to career and educational goals were adopted from Tucker, Rudmann, and González (2008). Primary authors were contacted and all granted approval to use their items.

The study included all 11 items from the *Self-efficacy for Self-regulated Learning Scale* (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martínez-Pons, 1992). Items 1 through 11 measured perceived capability to use self-regulated learning strategies.

Sample items included: "I finish my homework assignments by deadlines;" "I study when there are other interesting things to do;" and, "I concentrate on school subjects." Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martínez-Pons (1992) reported a Cronbach's reliability coefficient of .87. The Cronbach's reliability coefficient for this study was .80.

All 9 items were adopted from the *Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement* subscale used in the same study by Zimmerman et al (1992). Prompt numbers 12 through 21 measured students' perceived confidence to achieve in nine areas of study. Confidence in ability to learn reading and writing language skills was divided into two separate items (numbers 16 and 17 respectively). Other item examples included: "I am confident in my ability to learn general mathematics;" "I am confident in my ability to learn algebra;" "I am confident in my ability to learn science;" and, "I am confident in my ability to learn English grammar." Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martínez-Pons (1992) reported a Cronbach's reliability coefficient of .70 for the 9-item *Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement* scale. The Cronbach's reliability coefficient for this study was .86.

Two prompts, numbers 22 and 23 were created and included by the researcher to assess academic self-efficacy in relation to taking the CAHSEE. Prompts 22 and 23 were modeled after the Zimmerman et al (1999) *Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement* survey. These prompts addressed confidence in the ability to pass the CAHSEE: "I am confident in my ability to pass the CAHSEE Mathematics section;" and, "I am confident in my ability to pass the CAHSEE English Languages Arts section." These two items were included because they directly addressed academic self-efficacy in the context of high-stakes testing, in this instance the CAHSEE. The Cronbach's reliability coefficient for these two prompts in this study was .61.

All eight items (prompts 24 - 32) from Chemers, Hu, and Garcia's (2001) *Academic Self-Efficacy* scale were included in the study survey. Chemers et al (2001) developed a survey based on Bandura's (1997) "designed to reflect a variety of specific skills pertinent to academic achievement, including scheduling of tasks, note taking, test taking, and researching and writing papers, and included general statements regarding scholarly ability" (Chemers et al, p. 59). The intent of the Chemers et al (2001) measure was to predict overall college performance.

One of the eight items, "I am good at research and writing papers" was edited into two items for clarity: "I am good at research;" and, "I am good at writing papers;" (items 27 and 28 respectively). Items from this scale included: "I know how to schedule my time to accomplish my tasks;" "I know how to take notes;" and, "I know how to study to perform well on tests." Chemers et al (2001) reported a Cronbach's reliability coefficient alpha of .81. The path diagram showed "significant and substantial direct effects of self-efficacy" (Chemers et al, 2001, p. 60) on academic performance (standardized coefficient = .34, $p < .001$). Students with high self-efficacy had better academic performance. The Cronbach's reliability coefficient pertaining to *Academic Self-efficacy* for this study was .80.

In addition, eight items (prompts 33 - 40) from Tucker, Rudmann and Gonzalez's (2008) 23-item *Academic and Career Goal Clarity Scale* were included. These items related to educational paths and career options. Items included: "I have identified at least one area of interest that I would like to pursue in my education;" "I am aware of the steps it will take me for me to complete my highest educational goal;" and, "All in all, I am set with a clear

academic plan toward completing my educational goals.” Tucker reported via e-mail an initial Chronbach’s reliability of .90 for the Career Goal Clarity Scale. In a subsequent study Tucker et al (2008) reported a .95 Cronbach’s alpha. The Cronbach’s reliability coefficient pertaining to academic and career goal clarity for the eight items used in this study was .88.

The Cronbach’s reliability for the *Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits* survey, (items 1 - 40 was) .92.

Prior to distribution the survey was piloted on a group of doctoral students and one professor. Participants in the pilot study provided feedback on readability, understanding of the questions, and a check on redundancy.

Interviews

Interviews were scheduled and conducted after the survey was collected. Twelve of 25 participants who met the interview selection criteria and who indicated they were willing to be interviewed were contacted by telephone and/or e-mail and informed of the interview and random drawing incentive. Interview selection criteria included: (a) Participant enrolled in a CAHSEE preparation

program at a community college; (b) Participant completed a survey; and, (c) Participant agreed to an interview.

Participants were required to sign an Audio Informed Consent document (See Appendix F). Participants who met in person, signed one Audio Informed Consent document and kept one for their personal files. Participants who completed telephone interviews were sent the Audio Informed Consent document in advance via e-mail. Participants acknowledged receipt of the document and provided verbal consent over the phone to complete the interview. Participants were informed that all survey and interview information would remain confidential and stored in a secure, password protected location at the researcher's university.

The interview was semi-structured and comprised of 16 open-ended questions (See Appendix G for all interview questions). Participants were asked where they were from what their interests and hobbies were and, their current school schedule if applicable. The interview gradually lead into questions about participants' experience taking the CAHSEE, for example, "The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE," and

"What do you think about the fact that students have to pass an exit exam as a graduation requirement?"

Participants were asked what persistence meant to them and to describe a time in their life when they were persistent. In the last two interview questions (numbers 15 and 16) participants were asked to share their career and educational goals.

Three interviews were conducted in-person and nine were conducted via telephone. In-person interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Telephone interviews were recorded via note-taking, simultaneous transcription on the computer while the participant spoke.

Interviews lasted from 20 to 30 minutes. One interview lasted 75 minutes. All three in-person interviews were held in the researcher's work office. Telephone interviews were conducted from the researcher's work office location or from the researcher's home office.

Interview participants were informed of a second random drawing wherein they had another opportunity to win one of two \$25 Target gift certificates. Upon completion of the interviews, two individuals were selected via random drawing. Those whose names were selected were contacted and sent the \$25 Target gift certificate.

Assumptions

Based on the literature and on the researcher's own personal experience, the following assumptions were made prior to interviews:

- Participants would attribute their level of confidence to a family member or teacher
- Participants would have low academic self-efficacy
- Participants would indicate receiving their diploma as their primary motivation
- Participants would know what persistence meant
- Participants would indicate pressure from their parents as a motivation to continue taking the CAHSEE
- Participants would blame someone other than themselves for not passing
- Participants would feel embarrassed or ashamed they did not pass
- Participants would be angry or sad about their CAHSEE experience
- Participants would not remember their exact CAHSEE scores
- Participants attending a CAHSEE program at a community college would express interest in continuing in college

Interview questions were adjusted as needed. For instance, if a participant had already addressed a topic in a previous response, they were not required to elaborate in a subsequent question related to a similar topic unless they wanted to add to their response.

A phenomenological approach was employed. The goal was to gain an understanding of what participants perceived may have influenced their self-efficacy related to their performance on the CAHSEE. According to Madison (2005) "The basic premise of phenomenology is that the perceiver determines meaning, and therefore it is human perception, not external influences or objects of the material world, that is at the core of our analysis" (p. 57). Participants expressed their viewpoints of their experiences taking and re-taking the CAHSEE and provided insight into their perceptions of the exam. Participants also provided examples of a time when they were persistent in their lives.

Interview transcripts (Appendix H) were evaluated for emerging themes. Key noun-phrases used by participants were identified. Noun phrases were coded and grouped into categories. Categories were coded and compared with subsequent interview transcripts.

Upon initial review, 133 key noun phrases were extracted. Twenty were presented as demographic and/or descriptive data. The remaining 113 key noun phrases can be viewed in Appendix I. Noun phrases were condensed into 28 sub-categories.

Transcripts were assessed by another reader to verify inter-rater reliability. The second reader was a community college Philosophy professor. The second reader agreed with 27 of 28 (96.4 percent) initially identified topics.

Readers were able to come to an agreement on the 28th item by consolidating it into one category based on a similarly labeled category. "Guessing others" and "Guessing - self" were combined into the category of "Guessing." Both readers agreed to name the category based on the concept of guessing, hence, there were a total of 28 sub-categories.

The key phrases were then grouped as clusters into 11 principle categories. Analysis of the key categories allowed for consolidation of data to form general groups of data revolving around a theme. Eleven categories were funneled into the final three themes: Persistence, Attitudes about CAHSEE, and Self-concept/identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Introduction

In this chapter the results and data analysis are presented. The first section is devoted to the quantitative analysis of participant surveys and the second section provides an analysis of the qualitative data collected through the interviews with participants.

The relationships between academic self-efficacy, persistence, and academic achievement were considered. Previous studies on academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997; Gore, 2006; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Kranzler, 1995; Schunk, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000) have supported that academic self-efficacy is positively correlated with participant academic achievement: A participant with high academic self-efficacy was expected to perform well (i.e., on achievement tests), whereas, a participant with low academic self-efficacy was expected to perform poorly.

The *Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits* survey was used to measure, self-efficacy for self-regulated learning, self-efficacy for academic achievement,

self-efficacy taking the CAHSEE, academic self-efficacy and self-efficacy related to academic and career goals.

Hypotheses

To begin analysis, the following hypotheses were made:

Hypothesis One. The construct Academic Self-efficacy is made of five manifest variables whose intracorrelations will be moderately correlated: Self-efficacy for Self Regulated Learning (SESRL); Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement (SEAA); Self-efficacy for Passing the CAHSEE (SECAHSEE); Academic Self-efficacy (ASE) and, Academic and Career Goal Clarity (ACGC).

Hypothesis Two. The construct Persistence is made of four manifest variables whose intracorrelations will be moderately correlated: number of times taking CAHSEE English Language Arts; number of times taking CAHSEE Mathematics, number of college courses attempted; and, number of college courses completed.

Hypothesis Three. The construct Academic Achievement is made of four manifest variables whose intracorrelations will be moderately correlated: minimum 2.0 GPA; AA or certificate completion; CAHSEE Math scores; and, CAHSEE ELA scores. The most recent CAHSEE scores reported by participants were used.

Hypothesis Four. Academic Self-efficacy is positively correlated with Academic Achievement.

Hypothesis Five. Persistence is positively correlated with Academic Achievement.

Hypothesis Six. Persistence is positively correlated with Academic Self-efficacy.

Research Questions

Participants who decided to continue to re-take the CAHSEE would exhibit persistence by re-taking the exam multiple times. The following questions were considered during the interview phase of the research:

- What would participants identify as their incentive to continue taking the CAHSEE?
- What were participant experiences taking the exam?
- How did participants identify with the concept of persistence?
- To what did students attribute their passing or not passing the exam?
- Would students who needed to re-take the exam consider higher education?

Data Screening

Data were screened for missing data and for outliers. All respondents completed an Informed Consent document indicating they were 18 years or older; however, those who indicated they were 17 on the survey were removed from all analyses. Five participants reported an age of 17 leaving 65 respondents. Six out of 65 respondents (9.2 %) did not report their age. The pattern of missing data for age appeared to be Missing at Random (MAR). Those cases were not removed.

Missing Values

In some instances, survey items were blank leaving missing data. See Table 4.1.

Data related to the Academic and Career Goal Clarity (ACGC) scale were presumed missing because those items were on the last page of the paper and pencil version of the survey and participants may have overlooked them. The missing data were considered Missing at Random (MAR) and the cases were left in the analysis.

Table 4.1 Missing Data for Subscales

Subscale	Missing Values
Self-efficacy for Self-regulated Learning (SESRL)	2
Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement (SEAA)	1
Self-efficacy for the CAHSEE (SECAHSEE)	3
Academic Self-efficacy (ASE)	2
Academic and Career Goal Clarity (ACGC)	7
Total/Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits (ABAP)	1

Response rates related to some of the indicators of Academic Achievement and Persistence were low, therefore there were numerous missing data. CAHSEE score recording was low and the majority of participants had not received an AA or Certificate. GPA reporting was also low. Table 4.2 contains the missing data frequencies for Academic Achievement.

Table 4.2 Academic Achievement Frequencies

Indicator	N	Mean	SD	Range	Skewness
Math Score ^a	19	270.68	136.43	0-381	-1.44
ELA Score ^b	17	263.35	142.04	0-365	-1.30
GPA	15	2.53	0.64	1-4	0.51
AA	7				
Certificate	8				

^a and ^b possible range = 275 - 450

Given the poor response rate for Academic Achievement indicators an overall Academic Achievement indicator was created. The new Academic Achievement variable indicated the adequacy of CAHSEE performance and was based on the sections of the CAHSEE a participant still needed to pass. The indicators for the new variables were: Passed CAHSEE, Need ELA, Need Math, and Need Both.

Sixty-five participants (100.0%) indicated the section(s) of the CAHSEE they needed to pass. Twenty-six (40%) needed to pass the Math portion. Ten (15.4%) needed to pass the ELA section. Sixteen participants (24.6%) needed to pass both sections of the CAHSEE and thirteen (20%) passed both sections.

The initial Persistence indicators are shown in Table 4.3. The table includes the number of respondents who answered the inquiries for Times Taking CAHSEE Math, Times Taking CAHSEE ELA, College Courses Attempted, and College Courses Completed.

Table 4.3 Persistence Indicators

Indicator	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness
Times taking CAHSEE Math	54	0	10	3.19	2.61	0.94
Times taking CAHSEE ELA	52	0	10	2.75	2.51	1.30
Coll. Courses Att.	27	0	23	3.93	5.40	2.24
Coll. Courses Comp.	25	0	62	9.00	16.69	2.69

Key:

Coll. Courses Comp. = College Courses Completed

Coll. Courses Att. = College Courses attempted

Given the numerous missing values, Persistence indicators were re-coded into new variables which were then collapsed to create a composite variable. Times taking CAHSEE ELA was re-coded to Persistence ELA; Times taking

CAHSEE Math was re-coded to Persistence Math; College Courses Attempted was re-coded to Persistence College Attempted (Coll. Att.); College Courses Completed was re-coded to Persistence College Completed (Coll. Comp.). If the data were missing for any of the four indicators the participant was assigned a one (1=unknown). If the value was zero the participant was assigned a two (2=No). A participant who recorded a score for any of the indicators was assigned a three (3=Yes). The four new indicators: Persistence Math, Persistence ELA, Persistence College Courses Attempted, and Persistence College Courses Completed were collapsed to form the variable named Persistence Level.

The Persistence Level variable Mean, Standard Deviation, and Skewness were as follows: $M = 8.37$, $SD = 2.13$, Skewness = $-.10$. The range was between four and twelve.

The indicators were added to compute an overall persistence group variable (range 4-12). The highest level of persistence measured could be 12 and the lowest level could be four if a participant did not record any response to the persistence indicator queries. Persistence Level was

grouped into the following categories: low (4-6); moderate (7-9); and, high (10-12).

Fifteen participants (23.1%) placed in the low (4-6) Persistence Level Group. Twenty-five participants (38.5%) placed in the Moderate (7-9) Persistence Level Group. Twenty five (38.5%) placed in the High (10-12) Persistence Level Group.

Parametric Assumptions

Parametric assumptions of normality and linearity of the items were assessed using scatter plots. Academic achievement data appeared linear. There were no outliers. Persistence indicators appeared linear. One or two outliers were expected in the areas of college courses completed, attempted and earned AA or certificate since the sample was small and a traditionally underrepresented population whose main concern was passing CAHSEE versus enrolling in college courses. Subscale scatter plots appeared linear and there were no outliers.

Descriptives

The age of participants ranged between 18 and 48 years old. The mean age was 22.83 years old ($SD = 7.15$). The majority of the participants (64.6%) were between the ages of 18 and 21.

Sixty-five participants meeting the inclusion criteria completed the *Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits* survey. Twenty-one participants were male (32.3%) and 43 participants were female (66.2 %). One participant did not report gender (1.5 %).

Sixteen participants (24.6%) indicated they had an Individual Ed Plan (IEP) in high school. Forty one (63.1%) indicated they did not have an IEP in high school. Eight participants (12.3%) did not respond to the IEP inquiry.

Two participants (3.1 %) reported they earned an Associate of Arts degree (AA) and four (6.2 %) completed a college certificate.

Ethnicities were self-reported and reflected those used by the California Department of Education analyses for reporting test scores. The majority (50) of the participants were Latino (76.9%). The second largest group was Black/African American (7, 10.8%). Three participants (4.6%) were White. Two participants (3.1%) were Native American and one participant (1.5%) was Asian/Pacific Islander. Two (3.1%) did not record their ethnicity.

Table 4.4 presents the mean, standard deviation, range and skewness for each of the five self-efficacy subscales and total.

Table 4.4 Subscales Mean, Standard Deviation, Range, and Skewness

Subscale	N	Mean	SD	Range	Skewness
SESRL	63	3.11	0.50	1.91-4.00	-0.38
SEAA	64	3.34	0.52	1.70-4.00	-0.57
SECAHSEE	62	3.48	0.73	1.50-4.00	-1.32
ASE	63	3.10	0.66	0.67-4.00	-1.19
ACGC	58	3.40	0.58	1.50-4.00	-1.04
ABAP/Total	64	3.15	0.56	1.28-4.00	-1.07

Key:

SESRL: Self-efficacy for Self Regulated Learning (11 items)

SEAA: Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement (11 items)

SECAHSEE: Self-efficacy for the CAHSEE (2 items)

ASE: Academic Self-efficacy (8 items)

ACGC: Academic and Career Goal Clarity (8 items)

ABAP: Attitudes/Beliefs about Academic Pursuits (40 items)

Table 4.5 contains the five self-efficacy subscales and total correlation table.

Table 4.5 Self-efficacy Subscales Correlation Table

	SESRL	SEAA	SECAHSEE	ASE	ACGC
SEAA	0.42**				
SECAHSEE	0.28*	0.47**			
ASE	0.47**	0.35**	0.19		
ACGC	0.42**	0.41**	0.26	0.48**	
ABAP/total	0.61**	0.67**	0.41**	0.88**	0.65**

** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

SESRL: Self-efficacy for Self Regulated Learning (11 items)

SEAA: Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement (11 items)

SECAHSEE: Self-efficacy for the CAHSEE (2 items)

ASE: Academic Self-efficacy (8 items)

ACGC: Academic and Career Goal Clarity (8 items)

Total ABAP: Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits(40 items)

Table 4.6 presents correlations for Self-efficacy subscales and total, Persistence and Academic Achievement indicators.

Table 4.6 Academic Achievement, Persistence Level, and Self-efficacy Subscales

	Acad. Achieve	Persistence Level	SESRL	SEAA	SECAHSEE	ASE	ACGC	ABAP/ Total
Persistence Level	0.10							
SESRL	0.07	0.16						
SEAA	-0.22	0.17	0.42**					
SECAHSEE	-0.02	0.18	0.28*	0.47**				
ASE	0.07	0.10	0.47**	0.35**	0.19			
ACGC	-0.00	0.23	0.42**	0.41**	0.26	0.48**		
ABAP/Total	0.07	0.19	0.61**	0.67**	0.41**	0.88**	0.65**	

** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

The data in the Tables 4.5 and 4.6 reveal Hypothesis one (the intracorrelations among the Self-efficacy subscales will be moderately correlated) was supported. No significant correlations were found between Academic Achievement and the Self-efficacy subscales or between Persistence and the Self-efficacy subscales. Therefore, Hypotheses two and three were not supported. A post hoc Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Persistence Level Groups but was tested and was not significant. The Persistence Level Groups did not differ on any of the self-efficacy subscales.

Interviews

The semi-structured interview questions. (See Appendix F) were designed to elicit participant attitudes toward passing/not passing the CAHSEE and to obtain personal perspectives on the experiences they had. Persistence was also addressed.

The interview process allowed participants to share their experiences taking the CAHSEE and provided further relevant data beyond what was covered in the survey

Interview Descriptives

Twenty-five participants (38%) indicated they were willing to be interviewed. When contacted three declined to

be interviewed, and nine were either not reachable by the contact information provided or did not return multiple telephone calls. One participant did not meet the age requirement. Twelve participants (18%) who completed the survey were interviewed. Four were male (33.3%) and eight were female (66.7%). Participants' ages ranged between 18 and 30. The average age was 20.67 ($SD = 3.11$). Ten interview participants (83.3%) were Latino. Of those ten, two indicated an accompanying ethnicity: one reported being Native American and Latino and the other reported being Mexican/Italian and Latino. Two participants (16.7%) interviewed were Black.

At the time of the interviews, seven participants (58%) indicated they were awaiting their CAHSEE results. Three individuals (25%) had passed the CAHSEE as a participant in the college preparation program. One passed the CAHSEE on her first try but entered a college CAHSEE program because she was coursework deficient.

Nine interview participants (75%) passed the ELA section of the CAHSEE and needed to pass the Math section. Two (17%) passed Math and needed to pass the ELA section. One participant (8%) still needed to pass both sections of the CAHSEE. Four participants (33%) indicated they enrolled

in the program because they needed to make up high school credits. The 30 year-old female had never taken the CAHSEE because she was from the class of 1998 when the CAHSEE was not a mandatory graduation requirement.

Ten interview participants (83%) specifically stated they joined a CAHSEE preparation program because they wanted their high school diploma. One participant, referenced passing CAHSEE because it was a "big requirement." Another participant when asked why she planned to re-take the CAHSEE stated, "I don't plan to - if it's not necessary, but if it does come to where it's necessary..." (Participant 60, personal communication, August 20, 2010). This participant, from the class of 2006, had since completed an AA degree in Administration of Justice in 2009 and was beginning her courses at a California State University in 2010. While she does not have a high school diploma, she is satisfied with her certificate of completion. This participant indicated complete confidence in her ability to pursue her academic goals.

Table 4.7 contains the 12 interview participants' summary scores of the three constructs.

Table 4.7 Interview Participant Subscales, Academic Achievement, and Persistence

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	SESRL ^a	SEAA ^a	SE CAHSEE ^a	ASE ^a	ACGC ^a	ABAP ^a	Academic Achievement	Persistence Level ^b
F	20	Latina	2.73	2.90	4.00	3.22	3.25	3.05	Passed Both	10
M	19	Black	3.45	3.00	3.50	3.67	3.12	3.32	Need Math	6
F	19	Latina	3.91	3.40	4.00	3.89	3.88	3.78	Need Math	8
M	20	Latino	2.91	3.00	3.50	2.89	3.25	3.02	Need Math	10
F	19	Latina	2.45	3.80	3.50	3.22	2.50	3.02	Need Math	8
F	18	Black	3.45	3.90	4.00	3.44	3.88	3.68	Need Math	8
F	30	Latina	3.73	4.00	4.00	3.78	3.25	3.72	Needs Both	7
F	22	Latina	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	Need Math	10
M	20	Latino	3.64	3.40	2.50	3.56	4.00	3.58	Need Math	8
F	21	Latina	3.09	3.50	4.00	3.56	3.88	3.50	Passed Both	8
F	20	Latina	3.82	3.00	4.00	3.67	3.88	3.60	Passed Both	12
M	20	Latino	2.73	2.60	2.00	2.56	3.00	2.68	Passed Both	12
Mean			3.33	3.38	3.58	3.45	3.49	3.41	.33	8.92
SD			0.53	0.48	0.67	0.42	0.49	0.39	0.49	1.88

^a range 1 to 4; ^b range 4 - 12

Continuing in Higher Education

Two participants (17%) indicated they had completed an AA or certificate. One earned an AA in Administration of Justice and one had completed a certificate in Welding. Eight participants (67%) expressed interest in continuing in higher education. Five (42%) intended on continuing at the community college to complete the AA degree; 2 (17%) were going to enroll in the California State University system and one (8%) indicated an interest in transferring to a University of California campus. One participant referenced the term "4-year college," when expressing future academic pursuits. Three (25%) were interested in pursuing a Bachelor's degree and two participants (17%) stated they wanted to earn a Master's Degree. Three (25%) reported they were not enrolled in college at the time of the interviews.

Career Interests

Eleven participants articulated a clear career interest that would require education beyond high school. However, one participant stated, "I am really a confused person," and "It's hard for me to know what I want right now" (Participant 48, personal communication, August 20, 2010). She also indicated she did not like her current job.

This participant scored lowest of the interview participants in Self-efficacy for Self Regulated Learning (2.45) and in Academic and Career Goal Clarity (2.50).

Interview Data Categories and Frequencies

Key noun phrases were funneled into categories, subcategories and themes. The initial 113 Key Noun Phrases are listed in Appendix I. The first number after each word represents the number of respondents who used the phrase and the second number indicates the frequency with which the phrase was used overall.

Twenty-eight general topics were extracted based on the initial 113 key noun phrases used by participants. Topics described general ideas that reoccurred in participant interviews. Among widely referred to topics were Motivation to Persist, Passing, Opinion of the CAHSEE Requirement, and Who Helped. Several topics were referred to fewer times but were left in because 1) their relevance to the study and 2) the level of importance the participant assigned to the topic. For example only one participant mentioned cheating - a topic relevant to high stakes exams. Special education was mentioned by one person, but he addressed the issue very thoroughly and it was also relevant to the study.

Table 4.8 contains the 28 subcategories extracted from the 113 noun phrases. The first number after each word represents the number of respondents who expressed the idea and the second number indicates the frequency with which the idea was expressed overall.

Table 4.8 Twenty-eight Subcategories Used by Participants

Motivation to persist 12, 101	Special education 1, 15
Passing 12, 79	Resisted experiences 5, 14
Opinion of CAHSEE Requirement 12, 48	Not passing by a few points 6, 13
Limitations 6, 35	Positive attitude 6, 12
Who helped 11, 34	Financial concerns 2, 10
Goal 7, 33	Moved during school 4, 6
College perceptions 10, 28	Guessing, 2, 5
High school perceptions 9, 27	Failed 2, 5
Inhibitors 10, 25	Experience taking CAHSEE 2, 4
What helped 9, 25	Repercussions/consequences 2, 2
Efforts to pass 11, 18	Place in family 2, 2
Affective 6, 17	Basic skills 2, 2
Beliefs for not passing 6, 17	Certificate 1, 2
Recalls past schooling 7, 16	Cheating 1, 1

The 28 subcategories were further funneled into eight emergent categories (Table 4.9) and finally into three resultant themes.

Related ideas were grouped into more general categories. Table 4.13 contains the eight emergent categories followed by a discussion of the grouping rationale.

The first number indicates the number of participants who expressed the idea and the second number indicates the number of times the idea was expressed overall.

Table 4.9 Emergent Categories

Incentive 12, 148	Perceived obstacles 12, 17
Assistive Behavior 12, 27	Support network 12, 62
Future Aspirations 12, 112	Educational experience 12, 135
Beliefs in abilities 12, 52	Family influence 12, 48

Incentive. All participants indicated incentive to complete the CAHSEE primarily to obtain their high school diploma. All also expanded on their personal motivation to

pass the exam. Incentive included two subcategories: Motivation to Persist and Resisted Experiences. In regard to motivation, one participant stated, "I wanted an education; I wanted to have a degree to better myself" (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010). The same participant also indicated what he avoided (a resisted experience), "I didn't see myself working at a grocery store. I didn't want to be like my managers wanting my diploma" (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010). Similarly, another participant indicated, "I knew I didn't want to be working at a fast food restaurant and I wanted to have a career where people would know me" (Participant 49, personal communication, September 23, 2010).

In response to his decision to enroll in the CAHSEE program, one participant clarified, "Yeah, and I, and I would like to be somebody, you know, bigger, that's why I like it" (Participant 69, personal communication, August 18, 2010). He went on to provide input regarding his determination to continue taking the CAHSEE:

It's like, yeah, I guess uh, why, you, you know, to like they say why I still needed to pass it, like you know, get out of the bubble, you know like sort of

group, you know, I was stuck, you know, I was behind, I was only like you know get out of the, out of the area so I can be one of you know, the high school k, graduate. (Participant 69, personal communication, August 18, 2010)

Participants indicated strong desires to continue not only graduating high school and receiving their diploma, but also interest in continuing in education beyond high school. For these individuals, the CAHSEE was not a tremendous barrier in relation to their persistence as demonstrated in their perseverance.

Assistive Behavior. The category Assistive Behavior included subcategories: Positive Attitude, Moved in High School, and Basic Skills. Not all participants had a positive attitude, however, all participants acknowledged at least one change in their study and/or preparation habits for the exam from high school to college. In regard to positive attitude, one participant acknowledged, "I feel very comfortable and open to new experiences in life. It's very amazing. I can achieve my goals and dreams" (Participant 9, personal communication, October 5, 2010).

This participant, who aspired to attend Julliard School of Performing Arts maintained a positive, upbeat attitude

throughout the interview. Not passing the CAHSEE did not deter her in pursuing her goals. Another participant expressed, "I think it was a good thing that I did move because that's what motivated me to pursue my degree, so I think it did help" (Participant 60, personal communication, August 20, 2010). Although she experienced a transition during her schooling, she was able to perceive how it may have benefitted her rather than hurt her.

Only two participants commented on basic skills abilities. The 30 year-old participant stated the following, "I just recently went back with the new CAHSEE requirement which I think is a good thing, it makes you get a good grasp, get at least the basics" (Participant 48, personal communication, August 20, 2010). The participant who self-identified himself as learning disabled with cerebral palsy indicated, "Well my educational goals, I plan on doing much better up in community college and right now I'm just taking basic skills classes but I'm trying to work my way up to college level" (Participant 4, personal communication, October 4, 2010). In each instance, the participant identified what assisted him/her in working toward their goal. They viewed obtaining the basic skills in language and mathematics as essential to their

anticipated success in their academic pursuits. Again, not passing the CAHSEE or having it as a requirement was not a life-altering obstacle for these individuals. On the contrary, it allowed them to concentrate their efforts on what they believed they needed to improve.

Future Aspirations. Future Aspirations were comprised of the subcategories Goals and Passing. All participants possessed an awareness of future aspirations whether it was passing the CAHSEE to obtain the diploma or to work in their field of interest. Career goals and areas of study in which participants expressed interest included juvenile counselor, child development, psychology, sociology, counselor, administrative assistant, physical therapist, and forensic psychologist. Participants were primarily interested in service careers. One participant stated, "my educational goal is to pursue my BA and finish that and get hands on experience in the field I want to work with which is social work. So I want to work with at-risk youth providing services to minorities and low income families" (Participant 60, personal communication, August 20, 2010). In regard to passing the CAHSEE one participant who was awaiting her results indicated, "Now I'm very confident with it. Practice makes perfect. That's what I'm doing, I

keep practicing until I pass the CAHSEE" (Participant 9, personal communication, October 5, 2010). These participants possess a quality of strong self-determinism. Their attitudes were assistive. They were able to perceive goals and passing the exam as rewards rather than grand obstacles obstructing their progress.

Beliefs in Abilities. Beliefs in Abilities included the subcategories Beliefs for Not Passing and Limitations. All participants who did not pass a section of the exam indicated they were confident prior to taking the exam. Only one participant who passed on the first attempt did not think she was going to pass because she did not think she was smart enough.

Two participants identified themselves as learning disabled. Both enrolled in a CAHSEE preparation college program in an attempt to pass the math portion of the exam. While one considered himself slow and needing more time to complete assignments, the other indicated he had a more severe disability, cerebral palsy which involved surgeries and recoveries while he was in high school. This participant was aware of the waiver process for special education participants, yet, given his confidence, he opted not to request a waiver and wanted to take the CAHSEE

because he felt he was able to pass. Although these participants self-identified a learning disability, they were not deterred from continuing to take the exam until they passed. One eventually passed while in the program and the other continues to prepare himself for the math exam.

Perceived Obstacles. The category Perceived Obstacles was comprised of 4 subcategories: Inhibitors, Affective, Repercussions/consequences, and Recalls Past Schooling. Inhibitors and Affective were similar. Inhibitors included fear, not confident in math, labels placed on students. Affective reactions included sadness, nervousness, trembling, feeling stuck, held back, ashamed. One participant reported the following experience:

So I had hope and then as I got in my senior, my senior year came around it was more like oh if don't pass, I don't pass. I'm not gonna graduate, I'm not gonna graduate. So it was like a fear. So as soon as I would go in, I would remember my hands would start sweating I was just like, I had like trembles, I was like damn I gotta pass this test but... (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010)

When interviewed, this participant was awaiting his math CAHSEE results. He had not told his parents about not passing CAHSEE. He experienced the following:

The math, I too- no, the math, I didn't pass it and then I took it again that same year which I believe it was in two thousand and five? And then when I took it in 2005 I didn't take it again 'cause I was so scared to take it so I procrastinated until like the end of my junior year which I wish I would have never done and then um, I didn't. I took it - failed, t- took it again, failed, took it and failed. (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010)

The participant indicated he was labeled as "the smart one" in his family but felt as if he were a burden on his teachers. To the dismay of this participant, local CAHSEE preparation programs were closing or had already closed and he was desperate to find assistance. He was not interested in adult school or obtaining a GED. He was determined to meet the requirements necessary to obtain his diploma.

Participants noticed certain repercussions for not passing. One participant was discouraged by the feedback from his high school teachers:

Everything was a distraction. Sometimes even the teachers were distractions. Some of the teachers like when I was in high-school um taking the exam or something was coming up, the first time I took my English t- exam, I passed. Math results came back, I failed. So then when every time I would re-take it, it was, became like almost the teachers knew me, so it was like a burden to them. So every time I would, went, it was always negative feedback. So I really didn't want to go back to it. (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010)

The same participant commented:

I felt like it was, I was labeled, yeah. All the teachers said, you're not going to pass, I don't know why you keep coming back. So then, hearing them, like say that just like, it kind of gave me a complex too, every time I took that. (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010)

This participant relayed the most severe affects for not passing the CAHSEE. While he expressed these negative consequences, his self-determinism did not falter. He was working, attending college, and persisting in his attempt to meet his CAHSEE requirement.

Support Network. The category Support Network was made up of those people who participants indicated supported them during their high school attempts taking the CAHSEE. Most participants attributed their level of confidence in passing the exam to family members, mother, father, brother, sisters. Three participants indicated teachers were a large motivating factor and one had indicated program staff were the most helpful. One participant stated the reason he persists is because of his son. Another participant attributed her level of success to God. Referring to his high school Spanish teacher, one individual commented, "She was very motivational, would always preach resiliency, and overcoming things" (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010). He also stated how her comments helped him, "Hearing those things from her, which was what made me want to actually go out and do it, and still continue to pr- and just keep going with it" (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010).

Participants were able to recognize who strongly supported them and trusted those individuals. Several students recognized specific instructors from the CAHSEE programs as well as CAHSEE program staff and coordinators.

Referring to who supported her in her efforts one participant commented:

I think it was because I had a great coordinator of the CAHSEE program. I spent a lot of time with her. I was just telling her how I felt. And she told me how important that was. And I didn't want to go to no adult school. She was a motivator. (Participant 49, personal communication, September 23, 2010)

Another participant acknowledged the secretary of one of the programs, "And then the secretary from the CAHSEE, Patrice. She goes, 'Yeah, just keep on trying, keep on trying.' And I did it!" (Participant 64, personal communication, August 24, 2010). All participants were able to acknowledge at least one supportive person in their life and recognized the important contribution that person made to their progress and eventual success.

Educational Experiences. Numerous subcategories were included under the category Educational Experiences including high school perceptions, college perceptions, efforts to pass, guessing, cheating, certificate, failed, experience taking the CAHSEE, financial concerns, and special education. Many of the responses related to these subcategories were defining moments of the participants'

self-concept and identity. Participants considered high school more difficult than college. Most indicated a sense of independence in college. One indicated the independence gained in college was a big responsibility and he felt more alone than in high school.

Family Influences. The category Family Influences was made up of the subcategory Place in Family. Two participants indicated family members who had achieved academic success whose behavior they modeled or in other instances resisted. For example, one participant stated, "I think it has a lot to do with family and my sister. She graduated from CSUN, with a BA so I don't want to make the family look bad" (Participant 60, personal communication, August 20, 2010). Another participant indicated, "They just like what I do. As long as I'm at school they're happy. Especially my dad" (Participant 64, personal communication, August 24, 2010). She also added her brother had received a high school diploma but did not want to attend college, and instead went to a trade school.

Resultant Themes

Three main themes: Persistence, Attitudes about CAHSEE, and Self Concept/Identity were derived from the final eight categories. Items related to Persistence were

extracted from Future Aspirations, Incentive, Family Influence, and Support Network. Participant Attitudes were evident in commentary taken from the categories Assistive Behavior, and Perceived Obstacles. Commentary related to Beliefs in Ability, and Educational Experiences led to the theme Self-Concept/Identity.

Persistence. Participants exhibited the characteristic of persistence in several ways. Their willingness to be interviewed and share their experiences as they continued to take the CAHSEE illustrated persistence. Two participants exhibited persistence in that despite not having passed CAHSEE during high school they went on to earn an AA and a Certificate. When asked the specific interview question about how persistence showed up in participants' lives, four participants did not know what persistence meant so the question was either rephrased or a definition with an example was provided. Eventually, eleven participants were able to describe how they were persistent in their lives.

The following are instances of persistence described by the participants when asked, "What does persistence mean to you?" or "How does persistence show up in your life?"

One participant stated, "I don't give up" (Participant 46, personal communication, October 6, 2010). This participant was referring to taking the CAHSEE, however, earlier in the interview he had expressed he was going to go to a trade college to study physical therapy, but did not go because of financial concerns. He had retaken the CAHSEE and was awaiting his math results.

Another participant responded, "It means everything. They don't want you to be a slack off" (Participant 60, personal communication, August 20, 2010). She made slight reference to being persistent to satisfy "they" authority figures at work.

A participant who was trying to pass the Math portion of the CAHSEE stated,

Pretty much all I think somebody should have is persistence; 'cause if you don't dedicate yourself to something you'll never have it. So, I said, if I don't get my act together, if I don't dedicate, or if I'm not persistent with schooling, then I'll just continue to become the grocery store clerk guy and not somebody

with a degree. (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010)

His persistence, while helpful, was wearing thin as he continued to attempt to pass the Math portion of the CAHSEE and continued to hide his status from his parents.

A second participant commented:

I was about to quit, but then I was like I'm going to stick to it and I'm going get my diploma no matter what year and when I got it, it was pretty emotional.

(Participant 49, personal communication, September 23, 2010)

Persistence paid off in this instance.

Finally, participant with a severe disability commented the following related to persistence:

Yeah, I have somewhat of a knowledge about that word. It's to constantly keep doing something. To keep going. Well for me, my main motto or the word that I always use is to never give up and to keep pushing and to keep trying. Don't stop until you get to your destination. Until you reach your goal. I'm still in the CAHSEE program and I'm not going to quit.

(Participant 4, personal communication, October 4, 2010)

Whether or not the participants could provide a definition of the word, their stories and motivation were indicative of persistent individuals. Even in the face of obstacles, they kept going.

Attitudes about CAHSEE. Attitudes toward having the CAHSEE as a graduation requirement varied. Five of the 12 participants expressed the CAHSEE was a useful or good tool to assess student achievement. One participant commented,

It was a very good experience, it was because it motivates me, actually. I took classes to pass CAHSEE when they passed the law that it was a requirement to take the California High School Exit Exam. Because a lot of people go on and think it wasn't important. Later on in life, it's up to us. It's really up to us as a person to strive for excellence. I mean nobody's perfect, but education and knowledge is power.

Regarding the CAHSEE I really feel that it helps me a lot with math. (Participant 9, personal communication, October 5, 2010)

Even though she had not passed the Math portion, she was motivated to continue trying. She even sees the exam as a motivating tool.

Another participant stated,

I think that the exit exam is a really good tool to use for high schoolers because I know that that the statistics or the average group of high school students may or may not graduate high school. Some people end up dropping out or some people end up graduating and they don't seem to get the diploma. (Participant 4, personal communication, October 4, 2010)

This participant passed the English portion of the CAHSEE and continued to take the Math portion. He also had a sense of the larger picture related to why the exam was made a requirement:

But I think the high school exit exam is a good tool to use. Because I know that the governor wants to make sure that all of the California citizens are educated and they get educated, doing well and get job. And also to make sure the future of California is secure. (Participant 4, personal communication, October 4, 2010)

This participant was able to set aside his non-pass status and assess the importance of the exam regardless of his results.

Another participant emphasized the importance of the exam as a requirement to go on to college:

I think it's a very good thing, a very good requirement they put it there. I think it's adequate to see where students are at that age. I think it's only right they not continue without that. If I need more study I am ready for that. Because it's a requirement that you need to get your high school diploma and I don't believe I should go on to college if I can't even pass that. (Participant 48, personal communication, August 20, 2010)

Still, participants who did not pass one or both sections of the CAHSEE had negative attitudes toward the graduation requirement. Four participants strongly disagreed with the requirement. One individual referred to the CAHSEE as "An extra level you have to accomplish; an extra thing; It was a big requirement" (Participant 69, personal communication, August 18, 2010). Another participant stated his dissatisfaction with the exam more vehemently:

They need to find another process of it or something because I don't like it at all. I don't really agree with it. I think there should be other terms. I don't

think they should hold the diploma for the test. They should be able to do another exam or a portfolio, or a secondary thing. I think if you worked just as hard as everybody else did and took the classes and you passed those classes, you should receive a high-school diploma. (Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010)

The participant is employed and had experienced success in college courses. He expressed an interest in psychology and sociology. While he expressed a more extreme negative attitude toward the requirement, he exhibited persistent characteristics and a drive toward accomplishing his goals.

Another participant felt the process was unjust: Well at first I was like, oh, I have 20 extra credits and I still have to pass that. I got sad for a while. It was, just, w-, it wasn't fair. (Participant 64, personal communication, August 24, 2010)

She had eventually passed the math portion, finished at community college, and is ready to begin her courses at CSU.

Finally, the following participant passionately voiced her perspective on the exam stating the following:

I think it's irrelevant. I really do because it's a lot of people who haven't passed the CAHSEE and because of that, they just gave up. Now they don't have a high-school diploma or anything and they just gave up on going to college. Most people feel down. And then the process of getting results is a long process and then when the scores come and you don't pass, you can't do nothing about it. I think it's irrelevant. (Participant 49, personal communication, September 23, 2010)

For this participant, it was irrelevant because she had since received her AA degree and was attending Cal State University. Regardless of the exam requirement, she managed to persist and move forward with her educational pursuits yet she spoke on behalf of others who may not have been as persistent, nor steadfast as she was. She is the participant interested in assisting at-risk youth.

Self Concept/Identity. The subject of the exit exam and student perspectives lead to the theme labeled Self-concept/Identity. Student experiences in high school, taking the exam and in college defined them in many instances. Two participants went as far as to indicate they felt as if they were labeled or tagged students because of

their experience not passing the exam in high school. Two years later, they remembered the experience and the labels. Four individuals (three female and one male) identified with the idea of having a weakness in math.

One participant acknowledged she would like to have been like the other students:

I just wish I could have been like the other kids back then and passed all their classes and got their diploma back then. This time I am, I'll get a better a score and pass. (Participant 48, personal communication, August 20, 2010)

Even with the experience of not passing, she remains optimistic that she will this next time.

Finally, another participant who was very self aware and determined realized passing the exam required his dedication and motivation as well as the support of his teachers:

I do have a little bit of a confession. During my senior year I did go through a little bit of depression because I found myself telling myself what if I don't pass the test. If I don't push myself hard enough I may not graduate and things like that. But I also had a lot of motivation. And I guess that's what

kept me going. And I really feel that the teachers should just motivate the students to keep pushing themselves to do greater things and to not settle for less and not give up and to set their goals high.

(Participant 4, personal communication, October 4, 2010)

The participants of the interviews were open and willing to share their experiences taking the CAHSEE. While some felt embarrassed or ashamed for not passing, all of them exhibited persistence by continuing to attend CAHSEE programs or enroll in college. Not all agreed with the exam as a requirement, but most possessed a strong self-determinism to take the necessary steps to complete their high school requirements and earn their diploma.

Each of the research questions were addressed throughout this chapter. The observations made and conclusions drawn will be addressed in the next section.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The quantitative and qualitative data for this study are discussed in this chapter. First the hypotheses and post hoc analysis are addressed followed by a discussion of the research questions. Limitations, recommendations for future research and implications for educational leadership are also addressed.

In this study the relationships between Academic Self-efficacy, Persistence, and Academic Achievement in the context of high-stakes testing were assessed. While previous studies have focused on college-bound students, this study focused on traditionally underrepresented participants who have overcome academic obstacles and exhibited high levels of academic self-efficacy as well as persistence. Although the participants in this study were not the traditional college-bound population, the participants were extraordinary in their own right. They did not let obstacles inhibit their progress. They did not give up, instead they took action to improve their CAHSEE results.

The target population of this study was participants enrolled in California Community College CAHSEE remediation programs. Upon identifying programs, the participants are considered to be "CAHSEE persisters." From the survey data and the interviews, the group for this study was very select. In fact, the individuals in this study scored high on the *Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits* total self-efficacy scale ($M = 3.15$) even after multiple failed attempts at the CAHSEE. The group was also a unique population as they were motivated to continue to take the CAHSEE as shown in the actions they took such as enrolling in a remediation program.

Hypotheses

Of the six original hypotheses proposed for this study, one was supported. Two hypotheses were revised and three were not supported for the reasons to be discussed below. An additional post hoc analysis was included.

Hypothesis One. The first hypothesis stated: The construct Academic Self-efficacy is made of five manifest variables whose intracorrelations will be moderately correlated. The correlation matrix presented in Table 4.5 indicates this hypothesis is supported. The five Self-

efficacy subscales are useful in assessing participant *Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits*. The contents of each subscale combined provide a comprehensive view of participants' beliefs related to their ability to self-regulate, their beliefs about academic achievement including passing the CAHSEE, Academic Self-efficacy, and their Academic and Career Goal Clarity.

Of the relationships that were correlated, all but one was moderately correlated ($p \leq 0.01$). The correlation for Self-efficacy for Passing the CAHSEE and Self-efficacy for Self-regulated Learning was ($r = 0.28, p \leq 0.05$). The Self-efficacy for Passing the CAHSEE was made up of two additional items modeled after the Self-efficacy for Academic Achievement inquiries, for example, "I am confident in my ability to pass the CAHSEE Mathematics section." The CAHSEE programs may have contributed to the this association as the programs provided participants with the resources to develop skills to improve their scores on the exam.

Previously students may have approached the exam ill-equipped, lacking the necessary training. Even after the setback of not passing, the interviewed subsample took action (personal agency) to improve their scores in an

attempt to pass, depicting traits of efficacious individuals discussed by Bandura; "They recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. They approach potential stressors or threats with the confidence that they can exercise some control over them" (1997, p. 39). Prior to enrolling in a CAHSEE preparation program, participants had the experience of not passing the exam and may have lacked the resources and information needed to succeed earlier in their academic history. The CAHSEE preparation programs specifically addressed the skills and objectives required to pass the exam.

Self-efficacy for passing the CAHSEE was not correlated with the subscales Academic Self-efficacy and Academic Career Goal Clarity. In respect to Self-efficacy for passing the CAHSEE and Academic Self-efficacy, one possible explanation may be the items for the Academic Self-efficacy scale addressed capabilities in academics, for example, "I am a very good student," and "I usually do very well in school." Having experienced not passing the exit exam, a lack of correlation between these two subscales may be expected.

In relation to Self-efficacy for passing the CAHSEE and Academic Career Goal Clarity, some of the interview

participants were able to define clear academic and career goals. Overall there was not a relationship between Academic and Career Goals and Self-efficacy for passing the CAHSEE. This could have been partially because the items about Academic and Career Goals had the most missing data (7 cases). Another possible explanation may be participants lacking confidence in their CAHSEE abilities may not be prepared to address more advanced life topics such as Academic and Career Goals. Instead, participants were focusing on one goal at a time - to graduate high school with a diploma - in this case a prerequisite to further schooling and career goals.

Hypothesis Two. The second hypothesis addressed the correlations of the four manifest variables that would comprise the construct Persistence. In order to adequately test this hypothesis, the measure for Persistence had to be revised. There were too many missing data, i.e., few participants reported times taking CAHSEE Mathematics and ELA, and few participants recorded college courses attempted and/or completed (Table 4.3). The Persistence measure was re-coded by collapsing the Persistence indicators into a composite Persistence Level. Participant persistence levels were grouped into low, moderate, and

high. The Persistence level was moderate (8.37).

Persistence was probably not adequately measured given the numerous missing data.

Hypothesis Three. The third hypothesis was not supported. This hypothesis, addressing the correlations of the four manifest variables for Academic Achievement, was also revised to accommodate the minimal data retrieved. Table 4.2 reveals the minimal amount of data retrieved for each of the four indicators. Poor response rates for minimum GPA, AA or Certificate Completion, CAHSEE Math and CAHSEE ELA scores did not allow for adequate intracorrelation analyses. Academic Achievement was recoded to reflect adequacy of CAHSEE performance indicating which sections of the CAHSEE a participant needed to pass. Newly devised indicators included Needs Both, Needs Math, Needs ELA, and Passed Both. All participants provided this information.

Hypothesis Four. The fourth hypothesis, Academic Self-efficacy is positively correlated with Academic Achievement was not supported. The revised Academic Achievement indicator, a participant's adequacy of CAHSEE performance was not correlated with any of the Self-efficacy subscales. This could have been a result of the variable that was

created. However, lack of relationship between CAHSEE performance and Self-efficacy could be expected given 52 participants (80%) performed poorly on the CAHSEE (did not pass one or both sections). Consistent with Schunk, "High self-efficacy will not produce competent performances when requisite skills are lacking" (1991, p. 209). Most of the participants are still working on passing the exam. Their efficacy scores are high, but the reality of their lack of success does not align with their high self-efficacy.

Hypothesis Five. The fifth hypothesis, Persistence is positively correlated with Academic Achievement was not supported. The indicators for both Persistence and Academic Achievement were each collapsed. There were too many missing data to adequately assess the relationship. The absence of correlation could be explained by the inadequacy of the replacement index and/or the lack of sufficient data. Participants' average level of Persistence was moderate (8.37), however, high persistence did not lead to high academic achievement as far as passing the CAHSEE. Forty percent needed to pass the Math portion; fifteen percent needed to pass the ELA section; and, and Twenty-five percent needed to pass both. Further research assessing this relationship is suggested.

Hypothesis Six. The sixth hypothesis, Persistence is positively correlated with Academic Self-efficacy was not supported. Although a composite variable was constructed and rated moderate (8.37) for Persistence there was no association between Persistence Level and the Self-efficacy subscales or total. Correlations of persistence with the Self-efficacy subscales were not significant. While the average persistence level was moderate (8.37), Persistence did not correlate with the Self-efficacy subscales.

The lack of relationship between Persistence and Academic Self-efficacy was unexpected. The literature supports positive correlations between the two. Furthermore, the population scored moderately high in Academic Self-efficacy and Persistence. Participants exhibited unique traits. They were primarily from underrepresented populations, in this case Latino and willing to persist. They had high levels of self-efficacy. Such a unique combination of traits warrant further examination to better understand this population and what qualities they possess allowing them to persevere in their academic pursuits.

Post Hoc Analysis. A One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run using the Persistence Level Group to see if

the groups differed on any of the five Self-efficacy subscales or total score. No differences were noted.

While the survey did not adequately address Academic Achievement and Persistence these constructs are addressed below and in the interviews. Interviews allowed participants to share their personal stories often revealing a population with high levels of persistence. Participants also exhibited high levels of self-efficacy and in most cases had identified an academic and/or career goal they wanted to pursue.

Research Questions

Interview data provided a clear view of how participants experienced the phenomenon of the newly implemented high school graduation requirement, the CAHSEE. The first research question addressed what participants would identify as their incentive to continue taking CAHSEE. As expected, the majority of participants indicated they wanted to obtain their high school diploma. To these participants the high school diploma signified something of value (Schunk, 1991). It was less expected whether or not participants would express an interest in continuing in higher education. Not surprisingly, their high levels of persistence aligned with the academic aspirations they

indicated during their interview. Two were already enrolled at the university level, four had obtained an AA or certificate, and others expressed interest in continuing in higher education.

What were participant experiences taking the exam? The experiences varied from feelings of nervousness and test anxiety to a sense of confidence. One participant experienced shame in having to repeat taking the exam during high school. Consistent with Brown and Lee (2005) and Reardon (2009) participants experienced performance pressure. Two participants indicated they felt "labeled" or "tagged" by teachers that may have had consequences related to stereotype threat (Brown & Lee, 2005; Reardon, 2009). One participant skipped a year of taking the exam in high school because he was so nervous about it. Consistent with Zimmerman (2000), "performance in academically threatening situations depends more on efficacy beliefs than on anxiety arousal" (p. 87). In this case, despite his anxiety in high school, the participant did not give up and decided to join a CAHSEE remediation program so he could earn his diploma.

When participants entered the CAHSEE programs, on recommendations of counselors and program coordinators, they received assistance and were equipped to approach the

exam again and in some cases eventually pass. One participant tried, but did not pass. She went on to study at the university anyway.

Interview data provided participant perspectives on the concept of persistence addressing the research question, how did participants identify with the concept of persistence? All of the participants provided instances (other than continuing to take the CAHSEE) of how they exhibit persistence in their lives. Many indicated clear educational and career goals. They had future aspirations to attend a university for continued study. The participants could identify a career of interest and were paving a path to obtain it.

The question regarding to what students attributed their passing or not passing the exam elicited responses indicative of individuals not only of high self-efficacy but of high integrity as well. None of the participants attempted to cast blame on someone else for their inability to pass the exam. They exhibited the attribute of personal responsibility characteristic of one who possess high self-efficacy. "They attribute failure to insufficient effort, which supports a success orientation" (Bandura 1997, p. 39). One participant felt the exam was irrelevant and for

her it was. She succeeded in light of not passing by receiving her AA and going on to the University. Another participant admitted he believed there should be an alternate process for the exam, a senior portfolio for example. None of the interview participants indicated it was the fault of the teacher, the school system, or their family. On the contrary, participants were able to identify what behaviors were helpful toward their academic progress and which individuals were supportive to them. Their willingness to enroll in a CAHSEE preparation program, often having to meet on evenings and weekends illustrated their ability to perform with regard to self-regulated learning. Participants commented on the computer assisted labs, attending class on Friday, and "just open the book" (Participant 64, personal communication, August 24, 2010) as indicated by one participant in an effort to pass the exam. Another admitted to on-line searches so he could get familiar with the exam and what was required to pass it.

Resultant Themes

The interview data provided insight into the perspectives of participants who exhibited persistence by taking the CAHSEE multiple times. Surprisingly, their attitudes about the CAHSEE were not all negative. Their

experiences reaching the academic milestone of obtaining their high school diploma developed their self concept/Identity.

Persistence. Participants exhibited a strong determination to succeed. They had high levels of persistence and self-efficacy even in the face of obstacles. The 12 interview participants possessed what Bandura (1997) referred to as a "resilient sense of efficacy" in the domain of the CAHSEE. "People who have strong beliefs in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided" (Bandura, 1997, p. 39). Furthermore, consistent with Pajares (1996) participants did not give up and continued to work toward obtaining their diploma and in some cases went on to higher education. Their motivation was both intrinsic and extrinsic. They wanted to improve their lives and their futures. They wanted the diploma they worked so hard to obtain throughout their elementary and secondary education.

Attitudes about the California High School Exit Exam. While participants may be categorized as "persistent strugglers" (CEP, 2008), their persistence paid off. An exit exam did not appear to be a grand obstacle to those

interviewed for this study. It caused participants a delay, but it also gave them reason to work hard, change study habits, and persist.

They held the exit exam requirement in high regard. They made it important enough to enroll in remediation courses to improve their scores. Participants attended class on Saturday or in the summer, fall, or spring after their proposed graduation date so they could fulfill their requirement. The exam requirement did not stop them. On the contrary, consistent with Weisberg et al (2006) accountability through use of an exit exam motivated one of the participants to do well. She specifically stated the experience of taking the exam motivated her.

Self-concept/Identity. As students go through their educational journey, there will be certain experiences and milestones that define them. The participants in this study will have their experience taking the CAHSEE etched in their consciousness. What some will learn from the experience will differ from others. Ideally, students experience success and begin helpful study habits earlier on in their academic careers. Doing so, may attribute to future successes. Participants from this study could have learned hard work and perseverance lead to rewards. On the

other hand, there may be some who do not feel the hard work and persistence is worth the reward. Some of the participants are still trying to pass CAHSEE. It is not known if they will continue to persist. With programs closing, even they do not know where to turn for assistance. Others have moved forward and carry with them the lessons of their journey in attaining their goal.

Limitations

The primary limitations of this study were the sample size of the survey participants and the numerous missing data related to the constructs Academic Achievement and Persistence. The small sample size and the various missing data made it difficult to adequately test the hypotheses. A main issue leading to the limitation was the closure of CAHSEE preparation programs. Some programs had closed just as data collection began and others had closed prior to data collection. The ability to obtain larger quantities of survey responses was stunted upon commencement of data collection. Having participants self-record their CAHSEE scores and GPAs may have contributed to the lack of sufficient data. A future recommendation would be to request data such as test scores and GPAs from participants' schools with their permission. If data are

collected by computer surveys, a prompt telling participants they cannot move forward in the survey until they have completed the current page may be helpful. Such a prompt however, may provoke them to decide to exit the survey. In the instance of paper-and-pencil surveys, it is recommended researcher quickly review the pages checking for completed fields and returning unfinished surveys to be completed by the participants.

Another potential limitation was the timing of data collection in relation to when participants took the CAHSEE. Future researchers may address the issue of efficacy earlier in high school. Following Pajares (2003), "Efficacy instruments should always be administered before the outcomes with which they will be compared and in as close temporal proximity as possible"(p. 142). To do this would require the earlier suggestion made to integrate an academic self-efficacy component into the curriculum and assess it appropriately. In the instance of this study, the instrument was administered after multiple failed attempts at the CAHSEE and somewhat blindly to its participants. Fortunately they were interested enough in academics and their own growth they were willing to participate in the study.

Finally, this study does not address those who did not pass the CAHSEE and did not graduate. Participants in this study were persistent and possessed high levels of academic self-efficacy. However there are other subgroups which remain unaddressed by this study, e.g. individuals of low socioeconomic status, migrant populations and special education populations. This study was limited in its ability to address those populations.

Future Recommendations

There are going to be students who are left behind whether by choice, skill level, or poor systematic administration. What we must recognize and what this study helps to illustrate is students are not only willing, but have the ability to rise above their hardships and persist if given the opportunity. They are often not afforded the opportunity (Callet, 2005; Carnoy, 2005; Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Dorn 2003; Warren, Jenkins, & Kulick, 2006). If we recognize this capacity we can continue to reach students and preferably earlier in their academic career.

The unique characteristics of the participants in this study lead one to inquire more about what other characteristics they may possess attributing to their high levels of persistence, motivation, and resilience. While

the participants scored over 3.00 in levels of self-efficacy (range 1 - 4) they did not exhibit high levels of achievement. Furthermore, they exhibited high levels of persistence. Future research may approach the constructs differently. For instance, the current study may have benefitted from defining the construct Academic Achievement more broadly as Achievement. For example, the definition could be expanded upon to include other areas of achievement as opposed to the four indicators used. A broadened definition might include areas of achievement such as extra-curricular activities (music, sports, dance, theater), employment, club memberships, or scholastic programs.

Also, recognizing Schunk (1991), Zimmerman (2000), and Bandura's (1997) findings that beliefs of personal efficacy actively contribute to the pursuit of human attainments, educators can begin to appropriately address the phenomenon earlier in school. Zau and Betts (2008) emphasized the importance of improving math and English Language Arts skills for testing assessments as early as the 4th grade. Educators would be wise to introduce in the curriculum a module directed toward self-efficacy.

Pajares (2003) contends teachers can gain important insights by assessing their students' self-efficacy. Schools should address Academic Self-efficacy prior to assessment testing to get an indication of this aspect of a person's character and if necessary earlier intervention can be applied. Zimmerman (2000) urged the fostering of a positive sense of personal efficacy over focus on diminishing scholastic anxiety. In the context of high-stakes testing, teachers and administrators would be wise to include an additional component addressing self-efficacy as well as the core subject matters. Doing so appropriately benefits everyone involved. Students are successful, programs continue, and teachers and administrators remain in good standing at their institutions.

A study of self-efficacy on other levels would be of benefit. For example, the current study focused on the participant at the student level. The concept of efficacy applies to everyone. Another important area to observe is the self-efficacy of the faculty and administrators in an academic institution. If students can rise above the challenges of an exit exam and demonstrate persistence in an area, we can expect faculty and administrators to reflect on their level of efficacy in areas of concern such

as teaching efficacy, leadership efficacy, and program efficacy. Doing so may assist in eliminating extreme (in some cases fatal) reactions to poor performance reviews.

It is also recommended to continue to fund programs designed to support traditionally underrepresented populations. The participants commented on how the CAHSEE program helped them improve their skills. Participants were engaged in a program because a counselor or faculty member advised them to do so. Otherwise, they may not have known about the program and not taken action. Not only do we need to continue programs to prepare students to pass the exit exam as long as it is a requirement, we need to make sure we adequately inform students and families about existing programs. As one astute participant noted, we want "to make sure the future of California is secure" (Participant 4, personal communication, October 4, 2010). Information should be made readily available and programs in place to support all students.

Not included in this research but a potential area for further investigation is the implementation of a mentor program. Now that the CAHSEE is in its sixth year as a graduation requirement, schools and college campuses can

create mentor programs consisting of peer advisors who can share their strategies.

Implications for Educational Leadership

As indicated in the literature (Dorn 2003; Warren & Edwards, 2005), California contains a demographic make-up similar for states that have adopted a high school exit exam, namely the need for improvement in basic skills. While the implementation of the CAHSEE has caused controversy, the graduation requirement still exists indicating it is an area that requires attention for the benefit of our state.

Even though not all of the hypotheses for this study were supported, the population addressed is very important. One might expect low self-efficacy from a group that had not met their academic requirement for a high-school diploma. Participants in this study demonstrated high self-efficacy and high levels of persistence. Continued efforts to motivate and support this population should be a priority.

Regrettably during the course of the current research CAHSEE remediation programs were ending or had already ended. Participants were left wondering what they would do next. As indicated in their interviews, the program

coordinators, secretaries, and teachers were among their greatest influences leading to their determination to persist. Campuses need to be aware of the relationships between faculty, staff, and constituents especially at the community college level because for many of the participants of this study, those relationships were the most meaningful. Consistent with Rodríguez (2008) by deliberately building relationships between students and faculty, schools can attain "cultures of success". Rodríguez (2008) identified personalization, respect, and structures of support as key influences of academic engagement.

While not the focus of this study, incidentally, many of the interactions with campus CAHSEE program coordinators and teachers as described by participants included elements identified by Rodríguez (2008) that were supportive. Participants felt encouraged not only by their teachers but by CAHSEE program coordinators and secretarial staff. At the same time, also evident were instances when participants felt labeled, tagged, or a burden to teachers.

It is highly recommended that college programs, whether in basic skills, First Year Experience or other bridge programs, continue to mentor participants and foster

interpersonal relationships. As Rodríguez (2008) points out, "healthy relationships with important institutional figures can be productive for students—a source of social capital that can influence one's success" (p. 278). He focuses on the relationship between students and teachers. Many helpful, supportive, encouraging relationships among participants and coordinators, teachers, and staff were revealed in this study. The qualities possessed by those who motivated the "CAHSEE persisters" need to be identified, modeled, and practiced in an effort to ensure positive relationships.

Participants of this study have shown they are willing to meet the demands of an exit exam even after failed attempts. Contrary to potential outcomes of repeated failed attempts as suggested by Zau and Betts (2008) the participants in this study had not become discouraged nor given up. Although not the focus of the current study, participants exhibited resilience by continuing to try again after repeated unsuccessful attempts at passing the CAHSEE. Teachers and administrators are capable of similar feats. That is the main implication of this study as it pertains to educational leadership: a deliberate effort must be made on multiple levels to continue to narrow the

achievement gap and support our educational systems so they improve.

One of the essential elements of Bandura's (1997) seminal contribution to the field of educational psychology is how self-efficacy on a larger scale relates to group achievements and social change. Bandura argued, "personal efficacy can serve varied purposes, many of which subordinate self-interest to the benefits of others" (1997, p. 32). Many of the interview participants were interested in careers involving assisting others. One specifically indicated she wanted to be of service to at-risk youth. Bandura (1997) further noted, "Without a resilient sense of self, people are easily overwhelmed by adversities in their attempts to improve their group life through collective effort" (p. 32). An understanding of Bandura's thoughts about how self-efficacy precedes group accomplishments is instrumental in comprehending how improving one's self-efficacy can effect needed change for example, an effort to reduce the achievement gap within California and increase the graduation rate.

Bandura (1997) conducted studies on how perceived collective efficacy contribute to a group's success. In his 1993 study on perceived collective efficacy in the academic

domain of one district, Bandura concluded, "The stronger the staff members' shared beliefs in their instructional efficacy, the better their schools performed academically" (p. 481). He further explained, "The totality of teachers' beliefs in their own efficacy is just as predictive of school performance as the totality of teachers' beliefs in their schools' efficacy as a whole" (p. 481). Zimmerman (2000) reported similar findings. One of the tenants of NCLB was to do what works based on scientific research. Research related to academic self-efficacy has provided evidence of its usefulness. Our attention needs to be directed on building a community of skilled educators ready and willing to accept a position of leadership in an effort to improve our state's success by considering such concepts as self-efficacy and persistence as they relate to the achievement of their students.

Educational leaders in the role of researchers must work collaboratively. Professional development seminars addressing self-efficacy and its implications can be presented. Improved communication and relationships between students, faculty, and staff is urged. Perhaps an individual who believes strongly in his or her ability to effect change will be able to better engage with students.

Research has shown the importance of positive and respectful relationships among students and faculty. A supportive environment where participants were encouraged by program staff elevated motivation. Even though the CAHSEE programs have closed, there are opportunities for high schools and community colleges to collaborate and strengthen the educational pipeline to higher education particularly for traditionally underrepresented populations. Developing and practicing respectful, encouraging, supportive relationships in school programs among all members involved are essential for positive growth and for creating a successful school culture.

APPENDIX A
LETTER OF INVITATION TO COORDINATORS

Letter of invitation to coordinators

Dear Program Coordinator:

I am contacting you because your campus has been identified as one that serves students who have not yet passed the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at California State University, San Bernardino and I am interested in surveying participants registered in your program.

I would like to obtain permission from you and your college to send program participants a letter of invitation to take the survey and if possible, arrange to meet with students during a period when they are together to administer and collect the surveys.

The survey will take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

There are no risks involved in this study.

Participants will be notified of a chance to win one of two \$25.00 Target gift certificates for taking the survey. At a later date, students who indicate their willingness to participate in a subsequent interview will be contacted individually via the contact method they provide.

Participants have a right to privacy and all information identifying participants will remain confidential.

You may receive a copy of the research results after this project is completed.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the research, please contact Professor Patricia Arlin, Dean of the College of Education, California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 537-5615, parlin@csusb.edu or Dr. Marita Mahoney, Director, Office of Assessment & Research, California State University, San Bernardino (909) 537-5651, mmahoney@csusb.edu. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino (909) 537-5315.

I will also follow up with a telephone call to confirm your willingness to participate.

Sincerely,

Nori Sogomonian

APPENDIX B
TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Telephone script

Hello, my name is Nori Sogomonian. I am a graduate student in the Educational Doctorate program at Cal State, San Bernardino. I sent you a letter last week indicating my interest in surveying some of your students in the CAHSEE program. Do you have any questions about my letter?

Provided that all parties have IRB approval, would your college be willing to allow me to come to your campus and administer a survey to willing participants?

I am willing to work with your program and meet with students at a time when they convene in large groups. I am interested in obtaining the maximum number of surveys possible.

Can we arrange a place and time to administer the survey via pencil and paper or on-line? If an on-line survey is possible, the link can be provided to participants or I am willing to conduct a guided session in a lab if necessary and provided a lab is available.

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Letter to Participants

Hello,

You are invited to participate in a research study about your experience taking the California High School Exit Exam.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. You are also free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your choice to participate or not will not impact your status at school.

Upon completing the survey, your name will be entered in a random drawing. You will be eligible to win one of two \$25 gift certificates to Target.

Participants have a right to privacy and all information identifying participants will remain confidential.

You may receive a copy of the research results after this project is completed.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the research, please contact Professor Patricia Arlin, Dean of the College of Education, California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 537-5615, parlin@csusb.edu or Dr. Marita Mahoney, Director, Office of Assessment & Research, California State University, San Bernardino (909) 537-5651, mmahoney@csusb.edu. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino (909) 537-5315.

Sincerely,

Nori Sogomonian

APPENDIX D
LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Letter of Informed Consent



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

College of Education
Office of the Dean

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE

APPROVED 03/22/10 VOID AFTER 03/22/11

INFORMED CONSENT

IRB# 09091

CHAIR

Shaun Wood, Ph.D.

Thank you for your valuable time and assistance with this research survey. Your thoughtful participation is greatly appreciated. By participating you will be eligible to win one of two \$25 Target gift certificates.

This study is being conducted by Nori E. Sogomonian under the supervision of Professor Patricia Arlin, Dean of the College of Education and Dr. Marita Mahoney, Director, Office of Assessment & Research, at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, CSUSB.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate participant attitudes and beliefs related to academic pursuits.

DESCRIPTION: Data collection consists of distribution of surveys to approximately 300 participants from three community college campuses.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled, and the participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which the participant is otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Participants have a right to privacy and all information identifying participants will remain confidential. Confidentiality of the participants information will be maintained by storing surveys and interview transcripts and tapes in a locked filing cabinet, or password protected computer.

DURATION: The time to complete the survey will be approximately 30 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants who consent to participate in the study.

BENEFITS: There is no particular benefit to you other than you will have an opportunity to win one of two \$25 Target gift certificates: two names will be drawn for completing the survey.

The aggregated results of this research may be published in a professional journal after it has been completed thereby contributing to the body of empirically-based educational research. Participant confidentiality will continue to be maintained.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about the research and research participants' rights, you may contact Professor Patricia Arlin, Dean of the College of Education at (909) 537-5615, parlin@csusb.edu or Dr. Marita Mahoney, Director, Office of Assessment & Research at (909) 537-3621, mmahoney@csusb.edu at CSUSB. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, CSUSB (909) 537-5315.

RESULTS: Results will be available by December 2010. The results will be presented during a public defense and a bound copy of the dissertation will be available in the CSUSB library.

CONSENT: I understand that I am participating in research and the research has been explained to me so that I understand what I am doing. I understand that I may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences for doing so. I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

909.537.5600 • fax: 909.537.7011

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

The California State University • Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • Dominguez Hills • Fullerton • Fresno • Hayward • Humboldt • Long Beach • Los Angeles
Lodi • Maritime Academy • Modesto • Monterey Bay • Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San Jose • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

APPENDIX E

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT ACADEMIC PURSUITS

Attitudes and Beliefs About Academic Pursuits

Dear Participants:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits Survey! You will be asked some demographic questions (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity) and questions about the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). All information will remain confidential.

At the end of the survey we request your name and contact information so we may contact you if you are a winner of one of two \$25.00 Target Gift Certificates and/or if you are willing to be contacted for an interview at a later date. There will be 40 survey prompts. Please provide an honest response that best characterizes you.

Demographic information

Instructions: Please provide the information below.

Gender: Male Female

Please indicate your age: _____

Ethnicity: Native American White Black Latino Asian/Pacific Islander
 Non-resident Alien Unknown Other (Please Specify): _____

Year finished 12th grade: _____

Number of times taken CAHSEE Mathematics: _____

Number of times taken CAHSEE English Language Arts: _____

CAHSEE section(s) still need to pass: Mathematics English Language Arts

Math CAHSEE scores: First Attempt: _____

Second Attempt: _____

Third Attempt: _____

English Language Arts CAHSEE scores: _____

First Attempt: _____

Second Attempt: _____

Third Attempt: _____

When did you pass the CAHSEE? _____

Month

Year

Not Applicable (N/A)

Did you have an IEP in high school or other special assistance with coursework? _____

Yes

No

Please provide your current G.P.A.: _____

How many college courses have you: _____

Attempted

Completed

Have you earned an Associates' degree (AA)? _____

No

Yes

If Yes, in what area of study: _____

Have you completed a college certificate program? _____

No

Yes

If Yes, in what area of study: _____

Please use the four possible responses below (complete confidence, some confidence, very little confidence, or no confidence) to indicate how confidence you are that you can successfully complete each of the following tasks. Select the box that best describes you in the situation provided. Please answer each question. There are no right or wrong answers. Just indicate the choice which best describes you.		Complete Confidence	Some Confidence	Very Little Confidence	No Confidence
1.	I finish homework assignments by deadlines.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	I study when there are other interesting things to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	I concentrated on school subjects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	I take good notes during class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	I use the library to get information for assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	I plan my schoolwork.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.	I remember information presented in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.	I remember information presented in textbooks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.	I arrange a place to study without distractions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.	I motivate myself to do schoolwork.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.	I participate in class discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12.	I am confident in my ability to learn general mathematics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13.	I am confident in my ability to learn algebra.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.	I am confident in my ability to learn science.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.	I am confident in my ability to learn biology.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.	I am confident in my ability to learn reading skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17.	I am confident in my ability to learn writing language skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18.	I am confident in my ability to learn to use computers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19.	I am confident in my ability to learn foreign languages.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20.	I am confident in my ability to learn social studies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21.	I am confident in my ability to learn English grammar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22.	I am confident in my ability to pass the CAHSEE Mathematics section.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23.	I am confident in my ability to pass the CAHSEE English Language Arts section.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24.	I know how to schedule my time to accomplish my tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25.	I know how to take notes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26.	I know how to study to perform well on tests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27.	I am good at research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28.	I am good at writing papers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use the four possible responses below (complete confidence, some confidence, very little confidence, or no confidence) to indicate how confidence you are that you can successfully complete each of the following tasks. Select the box that best describes you in the situation provided. Please answer each question. There are no right or wrong answers. Just indicate the choice which best describes you.		Complete Confidence	Some Confidence	Very Little Confidence	No Confidence
29.	I am a very good student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30.	I usually do very well in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31.	I find my course work interesting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32.	I am very capable of succeeding at this college.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33.	I have identified at least one area of interest I would like to pursue in my education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34.	I am aware of the steps it will take for me to complete my highest educational goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35.	I am clear about how long it will take for me to meet my final educational goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36.	I am set with a clear plan toward completing my educational goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37.	I have several career options in mind for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38.	I know steps I need to take to enter the career of my choices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39.	I know the most important skills needed for at least one of the careers I have in mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40.	I have a pretty good idea of the college degree requirements for the career I have in mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Enter your name for a chance to win a \$25.00 Target Gift Certificate for completing this survey. This information is optional and allows us to contact you if you are a winner in the drawing.

Name: _____ E-mail Address: _____
 Phone Number: _____

Interview: You will be contacted if you are selected for an interview if you allow us to do so by indicating "Yes" or "No."

Are you willing to be contacted for an interview? Yes No
 May we contact you at the number/e-mail provided above? Yes No
 If no, is there another preferred contact number/address? Please provide preferred contact if different from above: _____

Thank you for completing the Attitudes and Beliefs about Academic Pursuits survey! In doing so you have just contributed to academic research that will allow us to better understand student perceptions about academic pursuits. Your valuable time and participation are very much appreciated.

Survey Developed by: N. Sogomonian, February 2010

APPENDIX F

AUDIO USE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Audio Use Informed Consent Form



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE

College of Education
Office of the Dean

APPROVED 3/22/10 VOID AFTER 3/21/11
IRB# 09091 CHAIR Sharon Wood, Ph.D.

AUDIO USE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thank you for your valuable time and assistance with this research interview. Your thoughtful participation is greatly appreciated. By participating you will be eligible to win one of two \$25 Target gift certificates.

As part of this research project, we will be making an audiotape recording of you during your participation. Please indicate what uses of this audiotape you are willing to consent to by initialing below. We will only use the audiotape in ways that you agree to. In any use of this audiotape, your name would *not* be identified.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to investigate participant attitudes and beliefs related to academic pursuits.

DESCRIPTION: Researcher will conduct audio-taped interviews with approximately 30 participants who complete the survey and agree to follow-up interviews.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled, and the participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which the participant is otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Participants have a right to privacy and all information identifying participants will remain confidential. Confidentiality of the participants information will be maintained by storing surveys and interview transcripts and tapes in a locked filing cabinet, or password protected computer.

DURATION: Interviews will take no longer than 30 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants who consent to participate in the study.

BENEFITS: There is no particular benefit to you other than you will have an opportunity to win one of two \$25 Target gift certificates; two names will be drawn for completing the interview. The aggregated results of this research may be published in a professional journal after it has been completed thereby contributing to the body of empirically-based educational research. Participant confidentiality will continue to be maintained.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about the research and research participants' rights, you may contact Professor Patricia Arlin, Dean of the College of Education at (909) 537-5615, parlin@csusb.edu or Dr. Marita Mahoney, Director, Office of Assessment & Research at (909) 537-3621, mmahoney@csusb.edu at CSUSB. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, CSUSB (909) 537-5315.

RESULTS: Results will be available by December 2010. The results will be presented during a public defense and a bound copy of the dissertation will be available in the CSUSB library.

- ✓ The audiotape can be studied by the research team for use in the research project. Please initial: _____
- ✓ The quotes from audiotape can be used for scientific publications. Please initial: _____

CONSENT: I understand that I am participating in research and the research has been explained to me so that I understand what I am doing. I understand that I may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences for doing so. I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read the above description and give my consent for the use of the audiotape as indicated above. The extra copy of this consent form is for your records.

909.537.5600 • fax: 909.537.7011
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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APPENDIX G
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

- 1) Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.
- 2) Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
- 3) Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school experience.
- 4) What does persistence mean to you?
- 5) Why do you think you continued on after high school?
- 6) The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.
- 7) Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a graduation requirement.
- 8) Tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in high school.
 - a. Did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school? How many times?
 - b. Why did you re-take the exam in high school?
- 9) Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
- 10) What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the exam?
 - a. Please describe.
 - b. Why was this contribution important to you?
- 11) Now that you are no longer a high school student and you are enrolled in college, help me understand why you plan to take the CAHSEE.
- 12) What motivates you to continue to take the CAHSEE until you pass it?
- 13) Tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend a program to assist in passing the CAHSEE.
 - a. Why are these reasons important to you?
- 14) What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus while you were in high school?
- 15) Tell me about your educational goals.
- 16) Tell me about your career goals.

APPENDIX H
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview Transcripts

N = Interviewer

P = Participant

- 1 Participant 46, personal communication, October, 6, 2010
2 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.
3 P: Well, where I was born or where do I stay at? I stay in Gardena.
4 N: Any interests and hobbies?
5 P: Hmm, I don't not really not now.
6 N: Are you enrolled in any classes currently?
7 P: Nah, not right now.
8 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
9 experience.
10 P: Yeah, 'cause they explain more, you know.
11 N: In college?
12 P: Yeah.
13 N: What does persistence mean to you? What kind of things do you not give up on?
14 P: Well I don't know. Well, I don't give up on nothing. Even if I don't pass, I don't give
15 up.
16 N: Why do you think you continued on after high school?
17 P: Well, to get my diploma
18 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
19 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.
20 P: It's a good experience, yeah. Right now I only passed the English one. I'm supposed to
21 pass the math one. They told us the results will be ready at the beginning of October.
22 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
23 graduation requirement.
24 P: Well, I think it's a good thing, right? (seems like he wants to say the right thing)
25 N: Tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in high school.
26 P: 'Cause I wasn't studying, I wasn't paying attention. I'm being honest, though, some
27 people don't.
28 N: Did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school? How many times?
29 P: I think it was like 3.
30 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
31 P: I was confident.
32 N: What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
33 exam?
34 Please describe.
35 P: Yeah, I was, was like studying every night.
36 N: What motivates you to continue to take the CAHSEE until you pass it?
37 P: My diploma and my son. (wants to be a good example)
38 N: What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
39 while you were in high school?

40 P: I studied more. No, it was just a teacher, but over there, there was a program but you
41 had to do it on the computer. They didn't teach us nothing
42 N: Tell me about your educational goals.
43 P: Yeah, I was like, I was about to go to college. But I didn't go. I was going to go to
44 Everrest. I was gonna do like a therapist. But I didn't go no more.
45 N: Tell me about your career goals.
46 P: Therapist.

1 Participant 2, personal communication, October 4, 2010

2 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.
3 P: I'm from XX and I like hanging out with my family and playing with Gabriel (son) and
4 going out with my sisters and that's about it.
5 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
6 P: Yeah, at XX Adult school. I'm just enrolled in one English class. It's for to finish my
7 high-school diploma, I just need 2 English classes to complete.
8 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
9 experience.
10 P: Um, the difference is you can just get up and leave and you don't really have to go.
11 Yeah, and the classes there are actually kind of like harder. The classes in high-school I
12 for me I usually know everything it's just like a lot time I have to put into it.
13 N: What does persistence mean to you? / how does persistence show up in your life?
14 P: Yeah, that's actually why I'm getting my high-school diploma. I'm not trying to give
15 up, I'm going to keep going until I finish.
16 N: Why do you think you continued on after high school?
17 P: Um, like why am I still trying to get it? Um, to better myself, to move forward to get a
18 good job and a career going. I know I need that. I'm just trying to finish to get that.
19 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
20 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.
21 P: Um, I remember. It was easy to me. Yeah, it was easy. I didn't think I was going to
22 pass it, but. Well half of the math was really easy but the other half wasn't, so I didn't
23 think I was going to pass it.
24 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
25 graduation requirement.
26 P: Um, I think it's good that they have to take it like to show what everybody needs to
27 know at least to get a high-school diploma.
28 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
29 P: No, I wasn't confident, I didn't think I was going to pass it.
30 N: What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
31 exam?
32 Please describe.
33 P: Why I wasn't that confident? I just didn't think I was that smart, like smart enough to
34 pass it.
35 N: Tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend a program to assist in passing the
36 CAHSEE.

37 P: to attend the CAHSEE program at Valley? Um, it just seemed easier. They told me I
38 could get units for high school and well credits for high school and units for college.
39 Credits for both it would actually give me more.
40 N: Tell me about your educational goals.
41 P: Um, right now at least getting my AA. But I'm not really sure right now at this
42 moment.
43 P: Tell me about your career goals.
44 N: Um, just like something with the nursing, like take care of elderly people or sick
45 people. Something like that.

1 Participant 49, personal communication, September 23, 2010

2 I don't know if I have passed math, I passed English (class of 2009)

3 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.

4 P: I like softball, go to College D, I'm a freshman there. My minor is in sociology, I want
5 to be a forensic psychologist like my teacher is.

6 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.

7 P: I have English 21 and I have sociology 1 and I have speech 101 and personal
8 development 17 and those are all the classes I'm taking for this semester.

9 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
10 experience.

11 P: Oh, well the differences between high school and college, well in college you don't
12 really have to go to class. They'll just drop you. In high school they call you. In college
13 it's more freedom. You don't be in class so long, teacher gets straight to the point.

14 N: What does persistence mean to you? How does persistence show up in your life?

15 P: Areas of persistence? Well I'm sticking to my goal about being a forensics. Most
16 people told me I shouldn't go in that field. I'm sticking with it like since the 6th grade.

17 N: Why do you think you continued on after high school?!

18 P: Because I want to succeed in life and I want to make something instead of just
19 staying at home not doing anything. With a degree you can do much more.

20 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
21 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.

22 P: Um, at first I thought it was like taking like a task 6 test. Like one of those. I didn't
23 know it was a requirement until I got to like 12th grade. I just kept taking it. I didn't
24 know it was a requirement, until I got to like 12th grade. I passed English I have not
25 passed math. I have not missed by 5 or 6 points.

26 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
27 graduation requirement.

28 P: I think it's irrelevant. I really do because it's a lot of people who haven't passed the
29 CAHSEE and because of that, they just gave up. Now they don't have a high-school
30 diploma or anything and they just gave up on going to college. Most people feel down.
31 And then the process of getting results is a long process and then when the scores
32 come and you don't pass, you can't do nothing about it. I think it's irrelevant.

33 N: Tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in high school.

34 Did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school? How many times?

35 Why did you re-take the exam in high school?

36 P: I really don't know. I tried my best every time I took it. Some questions be tricky but
37 the answers choices is not what I'm thinking. And then they ask you stuff like what
38 happened in the 9th grade. When I was in 10th, I barely remembered 9th grade.
39 Like 6 or 7 times
40 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
41 P: Yes, every time.
42 N: What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
43 exam?
44 Please describe.
45 Why was this contribution important to you?
46 P: Friends, family teachers everybody was supporting me.
47 N: Now that you are no longer a high school student and you are enrolled in college,
48 help me understand why you plan to take the CAHSEE.
49 P: (Awaiting results)
50 N: What motivates you to continue to take the CAHSEE until you pass it?
51 P: Getting a high school diploma because I didn't go to high school for nothing!
52 N: Tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend a program to assist in passing the
53 CAHSEE.
54 Why are these reasons important to you?
55 P: They had sent me a letter. because after I graduated from high school I didn't know
56 if I was able to go back to high school to take the test. They had sent me a letter so we
57 can take classes so we can pass the CAHSEE
58 N: Tell me about your educational goals.
59 P: 15. My educational goal is just to go to school, staying out of trouble. Going to
60 school is something everybody should do. It keeps your mind focused, it keeps you
61 energized. It helps develop vocabulary.
62 N: Tell me about your career goals.
63 P: I want to be a Forensic psychologist.

1 Participant 55, personal communication, August 8, 2010

2 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.
3 P: I started high school right here in XX, CA, I went to XX high school I went all the way to
4 12th grade. I dropped out though, at that time I didn't even know they had the CAHSEE
5 exam. Is it new? My original graduation date was in '98. I went to adult school and
6 ended up not finishing. I just recently went back with the new CAHSEE requirement
7 which I think is a good thing, makes you get a good grasp, get at least the basics.
8 N: Any interests or hobbies?
9 P: I like did I like the English, hobbies? I don't think I have any.
10 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
11 P: I haven't attended college, still trying to get my high school diploma.
12 N: What does persistence mean to you?
13 P: Persist or persistence: Uh, to be strong and pushing forward
14 N: Why do you think you continued on after high school?

15 P: Oh, um why I continued to try to get my high school diploma? Because inside of me,
16 besides the distractions that got the best of me I've always had a strong desire to get
17 educated and have a good foundation

18 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
19 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.

20 P: Um, it was a good experience. It was very good. No pressure, the surroundings, it was
21 very kind of up, how do I explain it. It was relaxing. You have your space. It was good. I
22 was able to get up if I wanted to, stretch my legs. It was on-going, no interruptions.
23 Before they would stop you and some people like to keep going.

24 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
25 graduation requirement.

26 P: I think it's a very good thing, a very good requirement they put it there. I think it's
27 adequate to see where students are at that age. I think it's only right they not continue
28 without that. If I need more study I am ready for that.

29 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?

30 P: I was confident. I was! (laughter)

31 N: What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
32 exam?

33 Please describe.

34 Why was this contribution important to you?

35 P: Honestly? I've given my life to God and he's just given a lot of relief in my life and it's
36 helped me to get a lot of weight off my shoulder.

37 N: Now that you are no longer a high school student and you are enrolled in college,
38 help me understand why you plan to take the CAHSEE.

39 P: Because it's a requirement that you need to get your high school diploma and I don't
40 believe I should go on to college if I can't even pass that. Even though I know you can.

41 N: What motivates you to continue to take the CAHSEE until you pass it?

42 P: That's going to be a little, it seems a little, something that might come back and haunt
43 me. When you go to college it's a lot more independent.

44 N: Tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend a program to assist in passing the
45 CAHSEE.

46 Why are these reasons important to you?

47 P: Because when I heard of the CAHSEE exam I haven't been to school in years so I
48 needed to know where I'm at first of all and then to pick up on, just to refresh my
49 memory, I don't think I'm not smart, just to get a refresher. And it was helpful because I
50 pick up on a lot of things I had forgotten.

51 N: Tell me about your educational goals.

52 P: To be office administrative asst in that area, in management but to start off in that
53 direction

54 N: Tell me about your career goals.

55 P: Same (as above)

1 Participant 4, personal communication, October 4, 2010

2 Researcher note: This interview was done differently in that once the participant was
3 informed of the context and purpose of the interview (questions related to his

4 experience taking the CAHSEE) and the participant agreed to be interviewed, he began
5 to speak profusely after the first and second questions providing quite a bit of
6 qualitative data that related directly to the questions I would eventually ask as indicated
7 by the Interview Questions.
8 I decided to adjust the questions I asked by asking fewer questions since the participant
9 had already provided data. Also, this participant self-identified himself as learning
10 disabled (see transcript below) and had very slow, labored speech so the interview went
11 on for considerably longer than the others, about an hour and 15 minutes.
12 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.
13 P: Well, um, I uh, well, I'm not really sure where to start but I guess I'll start with uh,
14 does it matter what it, does it matter from like from birth or should I just start from like
15 when I was in high-school?
16 N: Keep it more present time
17 P: I spent 2 years up there in XX High School, I uh, came there when I was a junior and I
18 had moved from uh, YY to uh XX and I my high-school experience, it was a good
19 experience. I made a lot of friends. I had a lot of good teachers and they were very
20 understanding about my disabilities (participant has a stutter) and all the things I had
21 trouble with like I had trouble getting around school because I have a disability called
22 cerebral palsy, and I had a lot of surgeries, and when I first got to XX High I was wheel
23 chair bound and I had a major surgery and I needed time to heal. And as I was going
24 through that I was getting to know a lot of my teachers a lot of my peers. I was making a
25 lot of new friends and I was doing a lot of new things with my school I was thinking
26 about joining clubs and to do sports but I wasn't able to do sports because of my
27 surgery. Also I was still going through the healing process of my feet, because um the Dr.
28 said it would take a little more time for my feet to heal and as I was going through that I
29 was uh, still, um in the wheel chair and I, I really didn't let my disability affect my
30 schooling. I always stayed on top of my work. I always got good grades. Mostly A's and
31 B's. During my senior year I ended up getting a C up in the CAHSEE program. But I still
32 graduated. But after my junior year I decided to take summer school classes to get
33 ahead. I had took economics and I had took drivers ed. And I passed both of those
34 classes. I passed my economics class with a C. Then I passed my driver's ed, ed class with
35 I believe with a C too. I believe that was like a C+ I think. But then my senior year started
36 and I was still in my wheel chair and a few weeks after my senior year got started I came
37 out of my wheel chair and I started using a walker. I got around school pretty well. I just
38 had to let the teachers know I had to be released from class early so I could get to my
39 next class and things like that. But I make a lot of good friends and things like that. But
40 after I got out on my own and I got out of the walker and I started walking again I joined
41 a club, it was an animation club. And it was a cool club and I made a lot of friends. I was
42 able to, to express myself more and stuff like that. And then toward the end of my
43 senior year I was doing pretty well, I w was staying on top of all my work, but when I fell
44 behind, I would talk to the teachers for extra credit so I could catch up and things like
45 that. I still had trouble with the CAHSEE program. It wasn't really, it was mainly the math
46 parts that I had trouble with with. But when it finally came down to taking the test
47 again, I had found out that I had passed the English part with a 357. And I did pretty
48 good on it. I actually knew I was gonna pass the English portion of it because I like to

49 write, writing poems and things like that. How I knew I was going to pass the English
50 portion is because I had wrote an essay about my uh, what I want to do when I got older
51 and then I had got the paper back and it said I had passed the English portion and I
52 ended up missing the math portion by 5 points. I had gotten a 345 on the math portion.
53 But also after I had passed the English portion it said on my, on, on the CAHSEE paper it
54 said that my test was modified or something like that but I, I didn't really have anyone
55 help me with it. I just asked the teacher was I able to sit in a classroom by myself and do
56 the test. And there were actually teachers watching me do the test so I didn't really
57 cheat or anything like that. But I still wasn't sure that it said that my test was modified
58 but I asked my teacher about it and the teacher told me about it and I guess it was like
59 the school board would have to look at my test and see if my score was good enough for
60 me to get my diploma. And the thing about that is some of the special educations
61 students they ask for waivers and the waivers were for like students who uh, their
62 parents requested for them to like, uh, to only pass one portion of the test and then
63 they'll receive their diploma or something like that. But I didn't request a waiver
64 because I felt that I was able to pass the math portion and then after I got the test back,
65 my counselor told me that I should stay in the CAHSEE program, which I did. And then I
66 took it again. I actually got the same score and then I ended up, it was close to
67 graduation time so I went for a graduation and I didn't go to prom because I was going
68 through some problems and things like that but I did graduate and I did walk across the
69 stage. But I didn't get my diploma but I did get my certificate of completion because I
70 didn't pass the math portion. But I enrolled in College C but before I enrolled in College
71 C my actual plan was to score as high as I could on the test so I could go to a 4 year
72 college. But my counselor told me it would be a little bit better for me to go to College C
73 because I would get enough credits to transfer to a 4 year college. So I just kept going
74 with that and after high-school I enrolled there. I just took a few classes, a self defense
75 class, a math class and an English class. But last semester I didn't pass my English class.
76 Math and English required balance, but I couldn't finish my lab work. I was able to get
77 my hours in but I couldn't finish my work on time so then I just keep t going with the
78 math class. I had took math 6 and I had failed that because I had trouble with my
79 division. So I enrolled in the CAHSEE program and I just asked them for help and they
80 gave me some assignments to do and I started to do them and things like that. And after
81 that I had kept going with the program. But then some things had came up to where I
82 had missed like a few days of class and I had to make up those days and after the
83 semester ended I had found out I didn't pass my math class or my English class but I did
84 pass my self defense class. And I passed with a B and then I just kept going with the
85 CAHSEE program. I had enrolled into the CAHSEE program this semester and I seem to
86 be doing a lot better. I'm starting to understand the stuff of algebra and other math
87 problems I had trouble with. And right now I'm trying to see if I can find a place where I
88 can take the CAHSEE again. I'm not sure if I can take it at my high-school because of my
89 age. I'm 19. And the instructor of CAHSEE she had gave me a form for an adult
90 education center. So I'm going to be taking the test there. I just need to get and the days
91 they're having the exam. And I'll take it before the year's up.
92 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
93 P: I'm currently enrolled in classes.

94 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
95 experience.

96 P: Well the experience for me it's not really all that different, the only thing that's
97 different is the schedule that uh, I get to choose the times that I go into lab and stuff
98 and then I'm making friends and things like that. I would say uh, it's, it's in my opinion, I
99 think for me high-school was just a little bit better because I was a little bit more
100 focused than I am now. I'm because I was working toward a goal and I actually had a lot
101 of motivation and like I guess now I, I uh, now that uh I graduated high-school and I'm
102 an adult now. I guess it's kind of hard because I'm on my own a little bit and I have to
103 start doing things by myself.

104 N: Are you familiar with the word persistence? What does persistence mean to you?
105 How does it show up in your life?

106 P: Yeah, I have somewhat of a knowledge about that word. It's to constantly keep doing
107 something. To keep going. Well for me, my main motto or the word that I always use is
108 to never give up and to keep pushing and to keep trying. Don't stop until you get to your
109 destination. Until you reach your goal. I'm still in the CAHSEE program and I'm not going
110 to quit and if I did decide to stay in the CAHSEE program at the high school I wouldn't
111 have dropped out or anything like that. I just keep going and like I am now, I'm just
112 pushing forward and I'm just learning more and trying to figure out a better way I can
113 learn math and better my education.

114 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
115 graduation requirement.

116 P: Well actually I think that the exit exam is a really good tool to use for high schoolers
117 because I know that that the statistics or the average group of high school students may
118 or may not graduate high-school some people end up dropping out or some people end
119 up graduating and they don't seem to get the diploma. There are actually some people
120 who do get their diploma and they go onto a 4 year college. I actually know some
121 people who graduated high-school but didn't get their diploma and I actually know a
122 couple of people who actually dropped out of high-school. But I think the high-school
123 exit exam is a good tool to use. Because I know that the governor wants to make sure
124 that all of the California citizens are educated and they get educated, doing well and get
125 job. And also to make sure the future of California is secure.

126 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
127 What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
128 exam?

129 P: I'll have to say my mom and the rest of my family, my brothers and sisters and other
130 members of my family and also my friends.
131 Please describe.
132 Why was this contribution important to you?

133 N: What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
134 while you were in high school?

135 Tell me about your educational goals.

136 P: Well my educational goals, I plan on doing much better up in community college and
137 right now I'm just taking basic skills classes but I'm trying to work my way up to college
138 level. Right now I'm just taking basic reading and basic math classes. I'm actually pretty

139 good with English. I can write pretty well, and I can read pretty good but sometimes I
140 stumble on a word and I may need help sounding out a word and things like that.
141 Tell me about your career goals.
142 P: I'm actually trying to keep my options open. I know there's a lot of good fields of
143 study out there like engineering, being a doctor or a doctor's assistant. Even being a
144 scientist. That is one of my main goals is to be an entomologist. But I'm also trying to
145 figure out is it that I really want to do or is it something else.
146 And the things I like to do I like art, I like to draw. I like to draw cartoon art, animation,
147 and things like that and then I like martial arts. So, I'm, I'm also working on that. I'm
148 working my way up to be a black belt. Even though I have a disability I can overcome
149 that and I can reach my goal to be a black belt. And I like nature so I like to study animals
150 and insects and the environment. So I'm still working my way up to being a scientist. I
151 actually like all types of science. I like earth science, I like chemistry I like physical
152 science. Even though I'm not good with math, I still like science and I'm pretty good with
153 figuring out things like the mass of a rock. And I'm pretty good at drawing and I also
154 thought about doing professional art. And maybe if I get really good at it I'll open my own
155 gallery and art show. And if I get really good, maybe I can have someone to sponsor me.
156 Another thing I like to do is I like to work with my hands so I've also thought about
157 engineering and welding, putting metals together and bonding them. That's because I
158 like science and I want to learn more. Maybe if I get really good at engineering may I can
159 build my own engine and create my own car.
160 N: Is there anything else you would like to add or any questions you have?
161 P: I actually do have a few things to add, in my opinion for special education students,
162 well most of the people who were in my class, most of them took the waiver because
163 most of them felt they weren't able to complete certain portions of the test and I guess
164 they might have felt a little bit discouraged because some of the students say the
165 teachers haven't taught them algebra or the teachers haven't shown them how to write
166 an essay and I think for any special education student to keep moving forward and don't
167 give up and just to keep practicing what they know and what they have learned in high-
168 school and if they still are in high-school they should just set their goals and their
169 standards high and keep going for the top.
170 N: Has anyone ever told you you should write a book about your experiences?
171 P: Actually I am thinking about doing something like that.
172 You can feel free to call me anytime to ask me more questions and things like that.
173 P: Do you actually know when the government started to enforce this test in the
174 schools?
175 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006.
176 P: Why is it that students have to wait until 10th grade until they take test?
177 N: By tenth grade students should have covered all skill sets included on the exam.
178 P: I actually know that there are students out there that have like a real potential to pass
179 the exit exam to get their diploma and there are students that I've know that have
180 passed the CAHSEE on their first try and for whatever reason they just decided to drop
181 out of high school or not finish or they may have fallen behind issues.
182 To get the waiver you have to at least pass one portion of the CAHSEE. How the waiver
183 works you have to get consent form your parents or from your social worker and you

184 have to say you have a problem with this. And you'll still be able to receive your diploma
185 but they'll just put you back one year. When I asked the counselor about the waiver
186 they said they would be able to give me my diploma but it wouldn't have my class on
187 there. It wouldn't say 2009 it would say 2010 – with the waiver. But if you go back and
188 you take the CAHSEE again and you pass both portions then you'll get your diploma with
189 the class that you graduated. To me I kind of felt that if I had got the waiver I would be
190 just kind of settling for less a little bit and I actually set my goals pretty high because I
191 want to be the best that I can be and get the best education that I can.
192 When I was back in high-school there have been a few students who were kind of laid
193 back and they don't really do much work. Like there was this one student who didn't
194 really do much work, and he actually ended up passing the CAHSEE with a really high
195 score.
196 I do have a little bit of a confession. During my senior year I did go through a little bit of
197 depression because I found myself telling myself what if I don't pass the test. If I don't
198 push myself hard enough I may not graduate and things like that. But I also had a lot of
199 motivation. And I guess that's what kept me going. And I really feel that the teachers
200 should just motivate the students to keep pushing themselves to do greater things and
201 to not settle for less and not give up and to set their goals high. And sometimes I do kind
202 of feel that special education students may not know the things they need to know to
203 pass the test. Because for special education students I guess they teach at a 6th grade
204 level or something like that. I'm not sure about the level but as I was going through
205 education, I started special education when I was in the 3rd grade and ever since then
206 I've been in special education. And then when I got out of elementary and entered
207 middle school I got really good grades. A few of the teachers suggested they should take
208 me out of a few of the special education courses. Like the English course, I believe they
209 had me with regular education and I did pretty good and I think I passed the class with a
210 C. and I did pretty good but I guess after that when I attended 7th grade they just
211 decided to put me back into special education English because they felt there was a few
212 more things I needed to know. Any other areas like science, reading, I was pretty good
213 at it but like math and I think it was social studies I wasn't so good at it but I did okay. So
214 from the 7th grade half of the year I was in a regular class and then like the next
215 semester they had pulled me out of there and put me back into special education class.
216 And then I just stayed in special education all the way through high school. But I did get
217 the opportunity to take a few non-special education classes. I took computers, art, and I
218 did take an economics class a drivers' ed class and all those were non special education
219 classes and I was able to keep up with class. And when I did fall behind.
220 I think sometimes for special education students because of our disabilities because
221 some students aren't able to do certain things or jump over obstacles, it's mainly
222 motivation. I believe that the parents, students teachers should work together and they
223 should set high goals for the students so they can work their way up the best way that
224 they can in their education and mostly in my opinion I think special education students
225 should learn to relax a little bit more in class and to not be pressured by tests given out
226 or the assignments that the teachers give them and that they should study more and
227 research and just believe that they can do it. Because it can be accomplished and you
228 just have say yes I can and go for it.

229 N: Excellent. Thank you for your time.

1 Participant 64, personal communication, August 24, 2010

2 N: The first question is tell me about yourself, where you're from, any interests or
3 hobbies.

4 P: Is it on?

5 N: Yeah, it's on

6 P: Oh!

7 N: So where are you from?

8 P: I'm from, I was born in, I was born in XX, California.

9 N: Oh, interesting. Interests and hobbies, what do you like to do?

10 P: What do I like to do? Well lately I've been liking to run because I need it.

11 N: That's really great

12 P: I like to run and just be around my little nephew.

13 N: Oh, cool. Okay.

14 P: And shopping.

15 N: And shopping. Um, tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.

16 P: Well right now I'm enrolled at CSU. I really don't remember my classes but they're all
17 psychology and I just added an aerobics class.

18 N: Ah, good for you. Great. And Cal State begins next month?

19 P: September 23rd.

20 N: Excellent, okay. And then describe for me how your college experience compares to
21 your high school experience. At least what you've done so far.

22 P: Well, it's kind of the same thing for me but high school, like, they were, well, right
23 here they're more like on you, like do your work and they just motivate you more. High
24 school's like, ahh, you have another semester, ahh, just wait, or you have summer
25 school like to complete. Well you have the same choices here but - I think it's better
26 here.

27 N: Okay. Thank you. And then, what does persistence mean to you?

28 P: Can we skip that?

29 N: And just to give you an idea, persistence, maybe the question would better be stated,
30 how does persistence show up in your life and what that means is not giving up. When
31 you're persistent in something you keep going. How does that show up in your life, in
32 any area?

33 P: Well, like with my parents. Like don't give up, there's opportunities for you out there.
34 Just keep going.

35 N: Okay, so they model that for you?

36 P: Yeah.

37 N: Okay, interesting. That's good.

38 P: They just like what I do. As long as I'm at school they're happy. Especially my dad.

39 N: Okay, nice. And then, um, why do you think you continued on in college after high
40 school.

41 P: Cause, in my family it's just my brother and me. And my brother' like 26, 25 right
42 now. And, well he received his high school diploma. He started coming to Valley but he
43 didn't like it. He didn't like the going to one class to another. He didn't like that. So he

44 went to a trade school. So I was just thinking, I didn't, I had all my credits for high school
45 but I didn't have my, my diploma. So I just have to, I just, I came here and they just told
46 me about the program and I just went to sign up and it helped me.
47 Excellent. And that's part of your persistence by the way. You kept going.
48 P: Yeah.
49 N: Good. Um, the CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of '06. In regard
50 to the CAHSEE tell me about your experiences taking it.
51 P: Ooh, well, English at first, that was easy. I mean the only part I didn't like was the
52 essay. But the rest was pretty good. And math I have always had a problem with math.
53 It's just, not me! And, I took it and like the first try I was off, the first try I was off like 20,
54 what are they points?
55 N: Yeah
56 P: I was like off 20 points and then the second it was more points off and I just kept on
57 going, kept on going, until, until I passed it.
58 N: Excellent. Thank you. Um, seven, tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a
59 high school exit exam as a graduation requirement. What do you think about that?
60 P: Well at first I was like, ooh, I have 20 extra credits and I still have to pass that. I got
61 sad for a while. It was, just, w-, it wasn't fair.
62 N: Yeah.
63 P: But oh well. Requirement.
64 N: Because you were class of '07? You were one of the first classes
65 P: Yeah.
66 N:, And so, "oh well, it was a requirement." Um tell my why you think you did not pass
67 the CAHSEE when you took it in high school? And in your case the Math part.
68 P: Ooh, because I didn't try, because. In math, at, well, in high school, I wanted to, I took
69 math, but I just wanted to pass with a D out, cause I wanted to pass and just get over it
70 'cause I just needed 2 years and then I just, I couldn't, it was. Math has always been my
71 weakness.
72 N: Okay, did you retake the CAHSEE during high school? And how many times if you
73 remember?
74 P: Before I graduated I took the CAHSEE like three times.
75 N: All right, and, why did you retake the exam in high school?
76 P: Why? Because, well the school, just recommended me to retake it.
77 N: Great. Nine. Prior to taking the CAHSEE exam were you confident that you could pass
78 it?
79 P: So, once I started here I said, yeah, I could pass it, I could pass it. Because I started
80 with the lowest math here at Valley. So I said, I could pass it, I could pass it. So, on my,
81 on my own I would just open the book, redo the problems and the answers were on the
82 back and if I had a question I would just ask my teacher or tutoring or something.
83 N: Very nice
84 P: I never used the internet. The Plato thing.
85 N: But the classes at Valley helped too?
86 P: Yeah, a lot.
87 N: Okay, so, um ten. What or who do you believe contributed to your level of
88 confidence in being able to pass the exam? Please describe.

89 P: Well, my first Math here I believe it's 942.
90 N: I think so,
91 P: I told my teacher about my situation, about the CAHSEE and she told me and she just,
92 whenever, anything you need just let me know, I'll help you, Ms. Briggs. And I took her
93 like for 4 or 5 semesters. Pretty much just math.
94 N: Wow, she must have had a good impact on you.
95 P: Yeah,
96 N: Excellent
97 P: And then the secretary from the CAHSEE, Patrice. She goes, yeah, just keep on trying,
98 keep on trying. And I did it! Well my parents!
99 N: Your parents. Excellent. Eleven, so now that you're no longer a high school student
100 and you're enrolled in college, help me understand, (well and I we've kind already
101 covered this) why do you plan, why did you plan, or why did you re-take the CAHSEE
102 P: When I came here
103 N: Um, what motivated you to continue to take CAHSEE until you passed it?
104 P: Well I took it like 4 times before I graduated from high school and then I came here
105 and the first try I passed it. I remember they sent me to Washington high school and
106 they, I went for the Math part. And it was like two, two and a half hours long. And they
107 divided by section, Everybody just guessed. Seriously. Everybody just walked out like
108 anything. I was like the only one in there and then I was about to, I finished like in an
109 hour something, so I just came outside and then like five minutes later they called us in.
110 And then, everybody just guessed. You could just tell, like the person next to me was
111 just writing and writing, whatever. (moves hands around)
112 N: And did they call you in with scores or?
113 P: No, they just, to go do the second part of the test.
114 N: And, so what was motivating you? Like were you in there saying?
115 P: What were these people thinking? And I want to get over this and they're just
116 guessing!
117 N: Yeah, you, you really had a true goal.
118 P: Yeah, I was the last one out, from, from there, the building.
119 N: Okay, yeah.
120 P: I guess it was a cafeteria or something. I was the only one in the room. Teacher,
121 whatever, everyone else was gone
122 N: That's great because you really wanted to do well, so you were taking your time in
123 there really taking the test.
124 P: Yeah
125 N: And by then you were totally prepared, right?
126 P: Um hum.
127 N: Great, that's great. Um, tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend this
128 program at Valley to assist in passing and why are these reasons important to you?
129 P: Well I came to the program I believe a counselor from Colton High School told me
130 about the program, so I came in and then just, they told me about it and okay, I'll just
131 enroll, 'cause they were gonna, o 'cause they helped with my tuition.
132 N: Oh, that's right.

133 P: Yeah, and with books and everything so that was really good 'cause I don't get
134 anything.
135 N: That's right.
136 P: And, at first I thought that we were going to have like a meeting or two a week where
137 the professors were going to be telling us how to work. But it wasn't like that. It was
138 everything was on-line. And, with books,
139 N: So you, when you said earlier you didn't go on-line you were really just taking classes,
140 P: Yeah,
141 N: And that's what got you through.
142 P: That's what helped me.
143 N: Excellent. Okay, uh last few. What are you doing differently, uh, this one doesn't
144 apply, the question is, what are you doing differently to pass the exam at this point
145 versus while you were in high-school. Um, so let's consider it this way, while you were
146 here what did you do differently than when you were in high-school when you were
147 preparing for it?
148 P: 'Cause, when you're in high-school I think you start taking the CAHSEE in your junior
149 year? Or like sophomore year?
150 N: Sophomore year
151 P: Sophomore year. I took it, what was the question? Sorry
152 N: Oh, so what did you do differently when you were in the Valley program versus when
153 you were in high-school to pass that math part? What do you feel you did differently?
154 Did you do anything differently?
155 P: Yeah, I was, I studied more here in high school 'cause I finished math over there, I just
156 wanted to get over my two years and then I started here and then I just got on it.
157 N: Good, okay, and the last two. Tell me about your educational goals.
158 P: Oh,
159 N: School-wise
160 P: Well, I want to complete my, I wanna get my bachelor's in psychology and then I
161 wanna go, get my counseling, my Master's in counseling and from there, no plans yet,
162 but hopefully.
163 N: Excellent. Those are good goals. And then last one, and you kind of answered it, tell
164 me about your career goals. So you're going to have a bachelor's in psychology and a
165 Master's in counseling, what are you going to do?
166 P: Ooh, I want to work with little kids. Maybe start off in elementary or something,
167 elementary school or
168 N: like with school counselors?
169 P: Yeah, I can build myself up
170 N: Did you work with counselors when you were in school?
171 P: I was a TA in high-school. First she was a teacher but she's, now she's a counselor and
172 I still talk to her and everything. So it's cool.
173 N: Oh, so the teacher you were a TA for now is a counselor.
174 P: Yeah
175 N: Okay, and that interests you?
176 P: Um hum.
177 N: Beautiful.

178 P: And she would always tell me what do you want to do? I want to be like you.
179 N: Oh, so you had a, like a mentor.
180 P: Yeah.
181 N: Oh, very cool. At Colton?
182 P: At Colton. Miss. García.
183 N: Miss García? Okay, very nice. That was the last question, so
184 P: Okey dokey.
185 N: I'm going to end this interview now.

1 Participant 48, personal communication, August 20, 2010

2 N: The first question is tell me about yourself, where you're from, any interests or
3 hobbies.
4 P: I'm from Torrance, my interest is trying to go to school and finish. My hobbies are
5 free time hanging out with family, no drama.
6 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
7 P: At College D I'm taking one class because that's all I can afford, English 101.
8 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
9 experience.
10 P: Well, I haven't started yet.
11 N: What does persistence mean to you?
12 P: I have no idea what that means. It's a big word, I would like to learn bigger words.
13 N: Why do you think you continued on after high school?
14 P: I'll continue to go if I pass.
15 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
16 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.
17 P: Before I never knew this stuff when I used to take the CAHSEE I took previous classes
18 in high school but I didn't understand, but taking a class with teacher helped a lot.
19 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
20 graduation requirement.
21 P: I really don't I just wish I could have been like the other kids back then & passed all
22 their classes and got their diploma back then.
23 N: Tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in high school.
24 Did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school? How many times?
25 Why did you re-take the exam in high school?
26 P: The 1st time I didn't actually try because I didn't think it was a big deal until people
27 told me I needed it to pass. The first time I wasn't even caring about it.
28 a) like about like 5 times already just math
29 b) Because if I wasn't to take it in high school I would never know. I had to pass it to
30 walk the stage. I didn't even walk it at all. It's a requirement.
31 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
32 P: This time I am, I'll get a better a score and pass.
33 N: What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
34 exam?
35 Please describe.
36 Why was this contribution important to you?

37 P: Mostly, it'd be my mom, cause she told me do not give up, don't let one little thing
38 hold your education up. Keep taking it until you pass it.
39 N: Now that you are no longer a high school student and you are enrolled in college,
40 help me understand why you plan to take the CAHSEE.
41 P: I have to get my diploma.
42 N: What motivates you to continue to take the CAHSEE until you pass it?
43 P: That. Until I get my diploma
44 N: What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
45 while you were in high school?
46 P: Look at my old notes, instead of just having it on the computer. The lessons would be
47 on the computer, it basically told us everything. I Performed better with a live person.
48 N: Tell me about your educational goals.
49 P: I am really a confused person, I like to learn though, learning more
50 N: Tell me about your career goals.
51 P: Right now, like I really don't like the job I'm in right now, and it's like, people are
52 telling me I can do better, it's hard for me to know what I want right now. I mean other
53 people already know what they want and I haven't.

1 Participant 9, personal communication, October 5, 2010

2 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.
3 P: Ok, well when I was a little girl, since I was a little girl, I've been dancing and acting,
4 and in plays, choreography, ballet, hip-hop and modern music. Those are my two
5 biggest passions. I've been in school dancing programs and acting programs just at my
6 school and what not.
7 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
8 I am currently enrolled in the college readiness academy with College E2. I'm just taking
9 the math class with CAHSEE. But also it's helping getting me ready for math classes at
10 College E2. Next week I start English classes to prepare me with English. With Marvin he
11 was supposed to give me a call yesterday to get more classes.
12 N: Is Marvin a Counselor?
13 P: Yes, he's a counselor
14 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
15 experience.
16 P: Um, it's very different. The environment is very different. Very, I feel very
17 comfortable and open to new experiences in life. It's very amazing. I can achieve my
18 goals and dreams. It's very helpful.
19 N: You have a very great teacher.
20 P: I really look forward to class. She motivates us. She's an excellent teacher. I really
21 respect that and I admire that about a teacher. It's different from high school. They
22 didn't help us as much in high school. Don't get me wrong, but the classes are filled with
23 31 and you don't get much individual help.
24 N: How does persistence show up in your life?
25 P: It shows up in my dancing life. Choreography and dancing have been my biggest
26 passion since a little girl. But also I look at the big picture too. Majoring in child

27 development and just going from there. Have a career in that. I'd like to have a settled
28 career in that and I could balance my career and keep my dancing.

29 N: Why (what are some of the reasons) do you think you continued on after high
30 school?

31 P: I want to be successful, I want to be able to achieve my goals and dreams. My
32 mother's a single mother and until now, thank God she's still supporting me. I don't
33 know if it's fine for me to tell you this or if it's useful information. I'm still trying to
34 accomplish that goal to succeed with my high school diploma. I recently took it again in
35 July but I haven't received my results yet.

36 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
37 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.

38 P: I passed English the first time. Well actually, it's fine. Yeah I would like to answer it. It
39 was a very good experience, it was because it motivates me, actually. I took classes to
40 pass CAHSEE when they passed the law that it was a requirement to take the California
41 High School Exit Exam, because a lot of people go on and think it wasn't important. Later
42 on in life, it's up to us. It's really up to us as a person to strive for excellence I mean
43 nobody's perfect, but education and knowledge is power. Regarding the CAHSEE I really
44 feel that it helps me a lot with math. When I was younger, honestly, I did struggle with
45 math. I am getting more confident. I'm not a mathematician or anything. I know basic
46 stuff. I've been doing math since I was a little girl addition, subtraction, multiplication.
47 Now I'm very confident with it. Practice makes perfect. That's what I'm doing, I keep
48 practicing until I pass the CAHSEE.

49 N: Tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in high school.
50 (Math)

51 P: I think I didn't pass it honestly because I didn't focus a lot. And the environment I was
52 in, it was very distracting. There were students around me, just getting others and me
53 distracted. It was not a comfortable environment to focus.

54 N: How many times did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school?

55 P: I retook it as a matter of fact, I took it this year twice already and last year I took it
56 twice. And in July this is my 4th time taking it.

57 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?

58 P: Actually, yeah I was pretty confident but I should have just focused on practicing
59 more on algebra and all of the areas covered in the CAHSEE. I should have focused more
60 the first time I took it. I was looking forward to passing it.

61 N: What(or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
62 exam? Please describe.

63 P: My mother. It was my mother. She graduated from high school but it was in El
64 Salvador. She's my biggest motivation. She motivates me. She pushes me to my limits.
65 She's very proud of me. And I'm still not giving up. Things are harder but I still have to
66 overcome those obstacles. I have to work very hard to achieve my goals and dreams.
67 Yeah, my mother has been my biggest motivation and inspiration.

68 N: What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
69 while you were in high school?

70 P: Um I'm doing many things differently, because I'm looking at because before honestly
71 I was younger and I didn't do my best. I just took it and just to get it over with. Now I'm
72 more focused. I'm much more confident.
73 N: Tell me about your educational goals.
74 P: I want to go for an AA or a BA. Yes, I am, very much very interested in Julliard, which
75 is in New York. It's a professional school for dance and theater.
76 N: Tell me about your career goals.
77 P: I want to do child development

1 Participant 66, personal communication, September 9, 2010

2 Note: Class of 2009 – got diploma – but walked w/class in 2007

3 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.

4 P: My interests and hobbies are actually playing sports, volley ball, soccer, trying to stay
5 in shape, I do come from a Hispanic family. It's been pretty hard but I don't mind. I
6 actually like challenges.

7 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.

8 P: I'm attending College A now. I'm a full-time student. Right now I'm taking psychology,
9 administrative justice, Spanish and aerobics. I usually have morning classes but
10 psychology is in the evening.

11 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
12 experience.

13 P: Oh wow! Um, I thought high school was kind of easy but at the like when it was time
14 for me to take the CAHSEE, it got a little hard on me. And I was like oh my god it got like
15 so hard. I was about to quit, but then I was like I'm going to stick to it and I'm going get
16 my diploma no matter what year and when I got it, it was pretty emotional.

17 N: What does persistence mean to you?

18 Well, I always have my goals so high, but I know it gets a little challenging, but I know I
19 will do it, complete it and I'm just sticking in there.

20 N: Why do you think you continued on after high school?

21 P: The reason why was because I knew I didn't want to be working at a fast food
22 restaurant and I wanted to have a career where people would know me. I'm actually
23 one out of 6 kids who is actually attending college. I'm like the first one who got diploma
24 and is attending college in my family.

25 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
26 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.

27 P: About taking it – oh my god, wow! Well I remember the essay part and reading
28 comprehension & the algebra, geometry, and the math, which I'm not a very happy fan
29 about math. But I'm more into English. That was the first one I completed for the
30 CAHSEE. I passed English, then math. I was actually surprised because in my math I
31 scored a little higher.

32 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
33 graduation requirement.

34 P: Well at the beginning it, I thought, I was like what is this thing for? But then like
35 people were telling me it's very important because they want to know you're really

36 capable of knowing math or doing English. Like the first time I was like I could do this
37 okay, whatever. But then what I did was study and it helped me pass.

38 N: Tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in high school.
39 Did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school? How many times?
40 Why did you re-take the exam in high school?

41 P: Well when I was in high-school I still had it. Oh yes, I even lost track of it. I was already
42 tired of it but when I heard about the CAHSEE program in valley college. I was like I
43 might as well try it here. That's when I started getting into college and I was dealing with
44 my high-school also. It was a challenge for me because I didn't know what to expect. I
45 had never been to a college but I actually passed my classes. After the first semester I
46 did more classes. That's when I started becoming a full-time student.

47 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
48 P: Well during high school I was like a little like I tend to get nervous when taking tests
49 especially when they're very boring. And sometimes I would like know the answer in my
50 head but I didn't know how to like put it down and I would just freeze. I had to
51 overcome those fears a little.

52 N: What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
53 exam?
54 Please describe.
55 Why was this contribution important to you?

56 P: I think it was instructors from the CAHSEE program. Because I would always be there
57 like every Friday, even though I was not a happy fan of going to school on Friday. But
58 doing it on computer and, and having the teacher on computer, I was like I cannot do
59 this. But I did get a lot of help from it. I didn't want to but I needed to get more practice.

60 N: What motivated you to continue to take the CAHSEE until you passed it?
61 P: I think it was because I had a great coordinator of the CAHSEE program. I spent a lot
62 of time with her. I was just telling her how I felt. And she told me how important that
63 was. And didn't want to go to no adult school. She was a motivator.

64 N: Tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend a program to assist in passing the
65 CAHSEE.
66 Why are these reasons important to you?

67 P: Well, I already had like in mind like when I got my diploma that I already like, teachers
68 had already told me in high-school like I would take a test. I found out about the CAHSEE
69 program after I had gone to valley college and after I found out about the valley college
70 that's when I met Denise.

71 N: What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
72 while you were in high school?
73 P: I remember doing a lot more work and a lot more studying. That's all I remember
74 from it.

75 N: Tell me about your educational goals.
76 P: Well my educational goals for right now is to try to finish everything approximately by
77 one year and probably transferring to a university. I'm thinking Cal State San
78 Bernardino.

79 N: Tell me about your career goals.
80 P: My career goal is to be a juvenile counselor.

1 Participant 62, personal communication, August 25, 2010
2 N: Now the first question is tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and
3 hobbies.
4 P: Well, um, I'm originally from uh Whittier, California. I moved here my freshman year
5 of high school and I started at XX High. Um, interests, I like to play music, um hang out
6 with friends, fellowship, things like that and play the conga drums. And, that's a little
7 about myself.
8 N: Very good. Um, tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
9 P: I was uh, taking uh, well right now I'm not enrolled in any classes but last semester or
10 last, yeah, last year, I was taking uh, poli, what is it? Human, with uh, professor Pier,
11 Sociology, and then I took, uh, Criminal Justice 103 with uh, prof, with, uh Porvo. And
12 those are two of the classes that I was enrolled in.
13 N: Thank you, and describe for me how your college experience here or in another
14 college compares to your high school experience.
15 P: Oh, the college experience here was phenomenal. I mean everybody was friendly,
16 nobody was just like, everybody just came here and did work. Nobody was really a
17 distraction as compared from high school. Everything was a distraction. Sometimes even
18 the teachers were distractions. Some of the teachers like when I was in high-school um
19 taking the exam or something was coming up, the first time I took my English t- exam, I
20 passed. Math results came back, I failed. So then when every time I would re-take it, it
21 was, became like almost the teachers knew me, so it was like a burden to them. So
22 every time I would, went, it was always negative feedback. So I really didn't want to go
23 back to it.
24 N: Oh, wow!
25 P: Yeah,
26 N: Very interesting, okay
27 P: Almost like if you were um, how do you say, a tagged student.
28 N: Okay, yeah, you felt labeled?
29 P: Labeled, I felt like it was, I was labeled, yeah. All the teachers said, "you're not going
30 to pass, I don't know why you keep coming back." So then, hearing them, like say that
31 just like, it kind of gave me a complex too, every time I took that.
32 N: That couldn't help!
33 P: Yeah, it couldn't help.
34 N: Gee! Thank you. The next question is what does persistence mean to you? And if you
35 want I can define it.
36 P: Persistence is like continuing and keep going for something?
37 N: Exactly.
38 P: Um, that's pretty much all I think somebody should really have, is persistence, 'cause
39 if you don't dedicate yourself to something if you want it you'll never achieve it, you'll
40 never have it. So, without persistence, without, I mean if I didn't have persistence of
41 wanting an education, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be doing this interview, I would
42 probably be at home still, or at Stater Bros. just waiting to get promoted or something
43 N: Okay, is that where you work?
44 P: Yeah, that's where I work.

45 N: Nice, and how does persistence, well you just, you answered that, never mind. Um,
46 the fifth question, why do you think you continued on after high school?
47 P: I wanted an education. I wanted um, I wanted uh, to have a degree. I wanted to
48 better myself. I didn't want, um, my examples that I had, 'cause I started real early
49 working at some jo-, working jobs, um, and the examples I had in managers were not, is
50 not something I wanted to fall into, because in the examples I had as, as proceeding
51 professors and people who were educated was here I saw myself. I didn't see myself,
52 working like you know, working at a grocery store, or something. So, I said if I don't get
53 my act together, if I don't dedicate, or if I'm not persistent with schooling, then I'll just
54 continue to become the grocery clerk guy and not somebody with a degree.
55 N: Good. Thanks, So, the CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of '06. In
56 regard to the CAHSEE, tell me about your (you sort of already did, if you have any more
57 to add) about your experience(s) um, taking the CAHSEE.
58 P: CAHSEE, um, the experience taking it, I um, for some reason, my parents and
59 everyone around me always see me as the smart one, as the smart kid, I guess you can
60 say. So, they were like don't worry you're not, you're going to pass it with flying colors.
61 So I was like okay, so I took the test, passed the English, excelled in it and everything,
62 and I, you know I did good in my, in my classes at school. And the t- when the teachers
63 kept coming back with my results they would say, what's the matter? How come you
64 can't pass it? What's wrong? And to this day my parents don't know I haven't passed it.
65 So it's just like something that, it's like, I think it's. They need to find another process of
66 it or something 'cause it's. I don't like it at all
67 N: Sure, sure, good. Um, well it, like, well, I'll comment on it afterward. We'll keep to the
68 interview right now. Um, let's see, so what do you think about the fact that students
69 have to pass and exit exam as a graduation requirement.
70 P: Um, the fact that that is, is, I don't really agree with it. I think that there should be
71 other terms like they shouldn't, if the student can't pass it and then the student passes
72 their classes and receives their cre- their credits and is done with all that then I don't
73 think they should just hold the diploma for the test. They should be able to do another
74 exam, or a portfolio, or a secondary thing, where not where they have to go get a GED,
75 or something, anything less because I think if you worked just as hard as everybody else
76 did and took the classes and you passed those classes, you should receive a high-school
77 diploma.
78 N: Good job. Thank you. Okay, number eight, tell me why you think you didn't pass, uh it
79 sounds like jut the math part for you.
80 P: Just the math was hard, um
81 N: Yeah, when you took it in high school?
82 P: Uhh, I don't know, I just, I thought it was so easy so I flew by it and then I didn't pass
83 but I k- every time I took the test I swore I would pass that time and I swore, I was like
84 oh, wow, this is it, I'm gonna pass it. And then I'd get the results and I was off by a
85 couple points, two to three points, and I'm like damn them! So I had hope and then as I
86 got in my senior, my senior year came around it was more like oh if don't pass, I don't
87 pass. I'm not gonna graduate, I'm not gonna graduate. So it was like a fear. So as soon as
88 I would go in, I would remember my hands would start sweating I was just like, I had like
89 trembles, I was like damn I gotta pass this test but

90 N: Wow!

91 P: Yeah, so it was like that so,

92 N: When did you, in terms of English did you pass that one the first time?

93 P: Yeah, I passed that my sophomore year.

94 N: Wow, and then the math

95 P: The math, I too- no, the math, I didn't pass it and then I took it again that same year

96 which I believe it was in two thousand and five? And then when I took it in 2005 I didn't

97 take it again 'cause I was so scared to take it so I procrastinated until like the end of my

98 junior year which I wish I would have never done and then um, I didn't. I took it - failed,

99 t- took it again, failed, took it and failed.

100 N: Okay.

101 P: Yeah (somber)

102 N: Thank you. Um, prior to taking the CAHSEE (and again, you kind of answered this

103 already) were you confident that you, in your ability to pass?

104 P: Yeah, I was, I was real confident to pass. I was like I'm gonna pass this in like nothing

105 'cause I already had, all these, all these other people around me, were, had passed. Even

106 my sister had passed. And they were- always said like oh you're the smart one. Don't

107 worry about it. And then when I, when I didn't pass, it was just like wow, wait a minute,

108 you know. So I, it's almost like yeah, I'm ashamed of it. I don't even mention it or talk

109 about it.

110 N: Oh, okay.

111 P: Yeah, so it's like something that I should express more and talk about it 'cause I think

112 that's the only way of getting over things, but that's something that I still don't really

113 talk about to anybody.

114 N: Okay, well I want to thank you for talking to me today, because I, I see what you're

115 saying. Um, who you believe or what do you contributed to your level of being confident

116 to pass the exam? Please describe.

117 P: Um, I had a teacher in high school by the name of uh Miss. Ramirez. She was very um,

118 she was a Spanish teacher. She was very motivational, would always preach resiliency,

119 and overcoming things. And, she would tell me that don't worry about it you're going to

120 pass, don't worry, s- forget everybody else and what they say because you know you

121 can do it and I know you. And her, hearing those things from her, which was what made

122 me want to actually go out and do it, and still continue to pr- and just keep going with it.

123 So she's probably like the only one. I think she's the only one that's ever gave me a (pi?)

124 sign. Well, positive. Everybody else would just like, you're not gonna t-, you're not

125 gonna pass it, Just go get your GED.

126 N: Seriously?

127 P: Yeah

128 N: Wow. All right, well, the following question is now that you are no longer in high

129 school student and you are enrolled in college, or you have been, um help me

130 understand why you planned to, to re-take, to take CAHSEE or why did you take it?

131 P: It, why I chose to re-take it or come here was just 'cause I felt like I, if I didn't I would

132 let myself down and it, and I would quit. And I wasn't gonna let this math test, you

133 know, stop me from getting what I really want. And I don't want a GED, and I didn't

134 want anything, I wanted my diploma from what I worked for, from what I woke every

135 morning to go to school for. So I wanted that diploma. It wasn't so much take the easy
136 way out. It was like I worked just as hard as everybody else did, but yet I'm not getting
137 the diploma because of the test now, so I'm gonna take any other terms and
138 opportunities to make sure that I get it 'cause I think that's what our life is based off, is
139 opportunities and I'd be a fool if didn't take the one they gave me with Denise Benton.
140 N: Okay.
141 P: So I took it
142 N: Excellent, thank you. Uh, what motivates (and again, you may have mentioned some
143 things) what motivates you or motivated you to continue to take it until you pass it?
144 P: Just, knowing that I could. Knowing that I really could do it and then just wanting to,
145 wanting my diploma is what it, and making sure that I received the AA, receive the
146 bachelor's, and the, and a master's. That's what I, that's my goal is to receive a master's
147 degree.
148 N: Okay. Thank you, and then the last two, oh just a little comparison, what are you
149 doing or what did you do differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
150 while you were in high school?
151 P: I studied. I studied and I made myself take um, tutorial courses at the, at the math
152 labs. Um, I looked up things on-line. I educated myself on the exam rather than just
153 having something put in front of me which I knew nothing about. So I said I'm gonna be
154 prepared this time, so I'm gonna look up the statistics on it, who passes it, what is the
155 material, and things like that.
156 N: You did all that?
157 P: Yeah
158 N: Good for you. And the last two, first tell me about your educational goals.
159 P: Yeah, my educational goal is to receive an AA in Criminal Justice here at College A and
160 pursue that and go to, get accepted into UC and to, to continue with um, my goal to get
161 a master's degree in Criminal Justice. And I want a dual in Sociology 'cause I love that
162 subject.
163 N: very nice, and the last one, again, was, again same, same idea: tell me about your
164 career goals, and that would be sociology,
165 P: Sociology and Criminal Justice, to hold degrees in those subjects.
166 N: Okay, perfect. Thank you. Um, just say, "I'm gonna end this interview now" and click
167 off.
168 P: And I'm gonna end this interview now and I'm clickin' off.

1 Participant 60, personal communication, August 20, 2010

2 N: Tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.

3 P: I grew up and I was raised in LA we are a 1st generation family. I'm Attending Cal State
4 next month.

5 I finished my AA in Administration of Justice back in '09 in the fall. I was in the CAHSEE
6 program but I didn't pass by 3 points. But Denise was like "you already have your AA,

7 so" I got my high school diploma and actually have certificate, but it shows in the
8 records I didn't pass the CAHSEE. It was hard but with financial aid, It wasn't a big

9 problem for me. I did graduate high school so I was able to attend college. What helped
10 me out was the BOG waiver. Started getting financial aid second year. I was in EOPS too.

11 I started getting more informed. That's when I found about CAHSEE through my
12 counselor in EOPS.
13 I went back to College E2 south campus to take statistics class because I needed it for
14 social work for CSLA. So I should be uh, I'm going to start getting my classes next month.
15 I think it has a lot to do with family and my sister she graduated from CSUN, with a BA so
16 I don't want to make the family look bad.
17 N: Tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
18 P: I just finished a child development class and then I took the statistics class. child
19 development was 5 weeks and the Stat was 7 weeks. I passed.
20 N: Please describe for me how your college experience compares to your high school
21 experience.
22 P: Oh my God it was a big change because it was a big transition from living in the city,
23 from living in the you know, it was just so different living in XX. The weather, the
24 environment, the people, I didn't know anyone. I think it was a good thing that I did
25 move because that's what motivated me to pursue my degree. So, I think it did help.
26 N: What does persistence mean to you?
27 P: It means everything! Anywhere, any job place you know they want you to do, to be
28 persistent. They don't want you to slack off.
29 N: Why do you think you continued on after high school?
30 P: My family
31 N: The CAHSEE is a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
32 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking the CAHSEE.
33 P: Um, I think I made it a big deal because I didn't pass but if I would've passed I don't
34 think I would have really cared for it. That's when people start caring when it happens to
35 them. But if I would have passed it would have been like whatever. It does make it
36 harder for a lot of people because when you go to college you can't receive financial aid.
37 It just slows you down especially, if you don't have enough resources.
38 N: Tell me what your thoughts are regarding having a high school exit exam as a
39 graduation requirement.
40 P: But I think it is important. I think so,
41 N: Tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in high school.
42 Did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school? How many times?
43 P: I think cause I didn't really take it serious at that time. I didn't really think it was going
44 to make a big difference. And I think at that time I did know it was going to affect, I
45 don't know, I was young. A)In high school I think I just took it once.
46 N: Prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass the exam?
47 P: Yeah, I was. I really thought I was, thought I was going to pass.
48 N: What (or who) do you believe contributed to your level of confidence in passing the
49 exam?
50 Please describe.
51 Why was this contribution important to you?
52 P: I think it was myself, having enough help, practices, mocks during the school year.
53 Teachers giving us ideas of what was going to be on it.
54 N: Now that you are no longer a high school student and you are enrolled in college,
55 help me understand why you plan to take the CAHSEE.

56 P: I don't plan to – if it's not necessary, but if does come to where it's necessary I
57 probably won't take it.
58 N: What motivates you to continue to take the CAHSEE until you pass it?
59 P: I guess because I moved again. I moved to XX, I think I didn't have enough resources
60 because I have my certificate, that's why I didn't bother no more.
61 N: Tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend a program to assist in passing the
62 CAHSEE.
63 Why are these reasons important to you?
64 P: because I thought it was going to help me taking it.
65 N: What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
66 while you were in high school?
67 P: well I was taking CAHSEE classes which was after school I think it was Friday and
68 Saturday where I would go to the lab and they would just give us examples. On-line it
69 was helpful live chat
70 N: Tell me about your educational goals.
71 P: My educational goals is to pursue my BA and finish that and get hands on experience
72 in the field I want to work with. Which is social – work.
73 N: Tell me about your career goals.
74 P: So I want to work with at-risk youth providing services to minorities and low income
75 family.

1 Participant 69, personal communication, August 18, 2010

2 N: So, tell me about yourself: where you are from, interests and hobbies.
3 P: I, I was born on June 25th, of the year 1999, I mean 89.
4 N: 89?
5 P: Yeah, I was born in San Fernando, California, um, I've just, I've been living in XX for
6 about 7 years. I used to live in, um, LA in uh Wilmington, close to um,uh Long Beach.
7 And then uh, after I graduated from middle school I moved to XX and started as a
8 freshman in XX High School.
9 N: OK
10 P: And, um, I'm here for uh to get my AA in Auto. And, uh, I'm already certified for
11 Welding. But I would like to, you know, get my LA cert so I can work out of XX County.
12 N: Okay, cool, nice. Um, tell me about the classes you are enrolled in currently.
13 P: I am enrolled in three um,
14 N: Oh, yeah, you told me. What are they?
15 P: Three classes. The first one is uh Auto, uh, class #2 is Speech 100, and class #3 is
16 Reading 920.
17 N: OK, and then please describe for me how your college experience compares to your
18 high school experience.
19 P: Um, my GPA is a big difference from high school. Uh, In high school I barely made, I, I
20 got close to 1, 1.9 maybe even a 2.0. But in, in college I have a, a GPA of a 3.3.
21 N: Wow! Interesting.
22 P: I'm surprised too. And uh, it's, yeah it's college is a little more, it's a little bit more
23 easier.
24 N: Wow, okay.

25 P: Uh, it's a big comparison. Uh, high school is like, everything's on your case, you know.
26 There's a big difference, yeah.
27 N: OK, thank you. Any others?
28 P: Um, well it's just like, yeah, like, you know, college is almost like on your own, you
29 know, on your own pace and easy to um, to be stable, um, you know to be, see why
30 you're in classes, your studies and stuff like that.
31 N: Okay, thanks. Cool. And then, um what does persistence mean to you?
32 P: Persistence.
33 N: Persistencia.
34 P: Persistence. Can you define it?
35 N: Yeah, um it means when you keep doing something. For example, you're persistent in
36 that you continue in school. Um, I might be persistent in dance classes, meaning I don't
37 give up, I keep going. Or, what does it mean to you or how does it apply to you?
38 P: Um, persistence for my schooling that I would like to...to live better in life, to, you
39 know, to live in a better place than, you know, stay in San Bernardino County. I'd like to
40 move, you know, somewhere nicer, with fresh, you know, fresh air. You know, be like,
41 you know b- uh-. Try to make it better a place than you live now. You know what I'm
42 saying?
43 N: Yeah, that might, that's a reason why you keep in school? Why you stay in school?
44 P: Yeah, and I, and I would like to be somebody, you know, bigger, that's why I like it.
45 N: Hmm. Very nice, thank you. And then, why do you think you continued on after high
46 school? And that might be similar...but-
47 P: Yeah, uh, to be on track, I try not to, you know, not to, like take a break from my
48 school and then just like be too late later on in life, so I just like, kind of like consistency,
49 you know it's a, even though I took a break summer, but, uh, you know, I had a reason, I
50 had 2 jobs.
51 N: You do?
52 P: Yeah, I still, I still have 2 jobs now.
53 N: 2 or three?
54 P: 2
55 N: Wow,
56 P: And – and I'm doing, uh, you know, I have three classes, so I'm staying busy. I can't, I
57 have to be active, I can't be in one spot, you know, just, not doing anything, I can't do
58 that.
59 N: Sure, yeah
60 P: I have to, like the days that I'm not off, well, I mean the days that I'm off, you know I'll
61 work one job, but I'm off with the other one. I'll go home or, or just go to Starbuck's or
62 something, and just like, you know use my wi-fi. I can't just like, you know what I'm
63 saying? be in my room-
64 N: Yeah
65 P: I do that but it's just like I have to get up, you know, out of the cage, you know, so I
66 can-
67 N: That's a good, good analogy, "out of the cage", I like that. Yeah, so you have to be
68 active. That makes sense, you're a young guy, you should be active. Okay, um, so related

69 to the CAHSEE, it's a relatively new graduation requirement as of 2006. In regard to the
70 CAHSEE, tell me about your experience(s) taking it.

71 P: Um, I guess my, I don't know, it's you know my learning experience or something
72 because I'm bilingual and you know my parents from Central America and stuff like
73 that.

74 N: You're from Central?

75 P: Yeah

76 N: What part? El Sa.?

77 P: Uh, Honduras

78 N: Oh, Honduras, OK

79 P: Yeah, so, I don't know it's, you know from my background affects my, you know, my
80 grammar and you know, all that stuff. Would affect my, you know, my CAHSEE and stuff
81 because it's like all that stuff, takes place like, you know, middle school, college, you
82 know stuff like that. But, like, I don't know if, if that affects me or because, you know, I
83 kind like, I'm kind of a disabled student, kind of too. So that would, that's another thing
84 that I might be affected. Other than that, it's just like, it'd probably easy if you wanted it
85 to be but like you know. Like cause I'm disabled you know and learning disabilities and
86 stuff like that. That's why, you know it takes me a while to, to process my learning and
87 stuff like that.

88 N: Interesting, okay. That's good. Um, tell me what were your thoughts regarding having
89 a high school graduation, excuse me, having a high school exit exam as a graduation
90 requirement. What did you think about that, that you had to have that?

91 P: Uh, it's like, it's like a extra level that you have to accomplish. Even though you've
92 been going through 4 years of like, I don't know, it's like, you know of nonsense and you
93 have to take a extra thing. So it's like

94 N: Yeah, interesting, yeah. So it's like they just put one more thing you had to
95 accomplish.

96 P: Yeah,

97 N: Interesting, Ok, anymore on that one?

98 P: No

99 N: Then, um, tell me why you think you did not pass the CAHSEE when you took it in
100 high school. Is that true, when you took it in high school you didn't?

101 P: I had many ti- many uh tries in high school. I, I passed the math part. So I had three
102 years of it. And then, the English part, that was, I was getting stuck. I was getting close,
103 like 3, 340, 311, 3s, you know 3 something. I was a few, few more questions I would
104 have made it.

105 N: Yeah, oh my gosh! You would have totally made it. My goodness, OK, um, I, I have
106 here part a and you sort of answered it. Did you re-take the CAHSEE during high school?
107 How many times? Do you remember?

108 P: I would say part I like 5 to 7 times.

109 N: OK, and then, why did you re-take the exam in high school? We sort of talked about
110 that too.

111 P: I needed to qualify the, the requirement

112 N: Yeah, for just English though, right?

113 P: Yeah, English

114 N: Interesting, but Math, do you remember if you passed it early on?
115 P: It took me like, at least, probably like 4 tries maybe.
116 N: Ok
117 P: 4 or 5 tries. I passed it and then I was just getting stuck with the English part.
118 N: Okay, and then, prior to taking the CAHSEE were you confident in your ability to pass
119 the test, the exam?
120 P: Um, I tried my best, you know I tried
121 N: OK
122 P: I tried to answer them. I guess most problems you know, most I got close to the
123 answers right
124 N: You did
125 P: I didn't get the right ones
126 N: So like on the days when you knew you were going to have it, did you, were you
127 nervous, or were you?
128 P: Yeah, I was nervous
129 N: Do you have test anxiety? A little bit? Or no
130 P: Sometimes, it's like I was worried about it. I just like worry about little things and stuff
131 like that.
132 N: Okay,
133 P: It's a big requirement, so yeah.
134 N: Yeah, so it made a big deal to you.
135 P: Yeah, because I didn't want to get stuck behind.
136 N: Yeah, OK, thank you, that's very actually interesting. So, what (or who) do you believe
137 contributed to your level of confidence in passing the exam? Please describe. So for
138 example, were there any teachers? Any family members? Was it just you on your own?
139 P: What do you mean, you mean, uh, you mean out of my family like trying you know,
140 make me to pass it? Or stuff like that?
141 N: Yeah, could be like that
142 P: Uh, well my, you know my parents knew about it. You know, and it's like,
143 N: They did.
144 P : Yeah they knew about it. It was like, yeah, but when, but when they told me, I was
145 like, yeah, I know about it but it's like, you know, I was just like in the part where you
146 know it's like I mean you know I really, you know, have something to try, but you know,
147 hopefully I pass this time.
148 N: OK, so they were sort of quietly supportive?
149 P: Yeah
150 N: OK, um, do you have brothers or sisters that dealt with that too?
151 P: Not yet. My brother, well, he's probably taken it, but he just started as a sophomore.
152 So he, I don't know if he's taken it or not. But I'm pretty sure he'll pass. Cause most of
153 the s-, you know, STAR testing and stuff like that, they're pretty, you know, just like
154 mine, when I did it, it's like, I didn't like learn enough, but - I did okay.
155 N: Yeah
156 P: I mean, I tried, you know, so I can get like higher level
157 N: Okay, um, so now that you are no longer a high school student and you are enrolled
158 in college, (this might not apply to you) help me understand why you plan to take the

159 CAHSEE. So, y, you are not taking it anymore, right? Because you already, you've already
160 passed that.

161 P: Yeah, that's right

162 N: Yeah, so, ento, entonces, I started speaking Spanish! So, why was it important for you
163 when you were in that program to take CAHSEE? Or to take the exam again? Cause you
164 were in the exit exam?

165 P: Yeah, yeah, I was in CAHSEE. They, yeah, they, they um, kind of helped me. Uh, I had a
166 few classes that I had to take, you know to go over with. It kind of helped me just a little
167 bit but not as much. But, uh, you know this-

168 N: Was it important for you um, actually that's the next question. Twelve: Um, what
169 motivates you to continue (in, in your case, what motivated you) to take it until you
170 passed it?

171 P: I just keep going because you know, it was a big requirement so I keep going, so I just
172 like, you know, I had to try my best.

173 N: Okay, yeah, excellent. Big requirement.. And then, um, again, a similar sort of
174 question:

175 Tell me some of the reasons you decided to attend a program to assist in CAHSEE, in
176 passing CAHSEE.

177 P: It's like, yeah, I guess uh, why, you, you know, to like they say why I still needed to
178 pass it, like you know, get out of the bubble, you know like sort of group, you know, I
179 was stuck, you know, I was behind, I was only like you know get out of the, out of the
180 area so I can be one of you know, the high school k, graduate

181 N: Yeah, cool, and you, you did, right? I mean eventually you passed your English didn't
182 you?

183 P: Yeah, yeah

184 N: Yeah, I remember you, you left class to go take it. And then the last one, um, what
185 are you doing differently (actually that one won't apply – I'm going to read it anyway.)
186 What are you doing differently to pass the exit exam at this point in your life versus
187 while you were in high school? (Skip it.) Um 15, is tell me about your educational goals.

188 P: My um, well my main one, is, it was Auto. And uh, work in, you know, work in
189 automotive skills. There, there's some, the most that I like is just brakes. It's pretty easy.
190 But you know there's like -

191 N: Oh, like adjusting brakes? Is that what you meant when you said brakes?

192 P: Um, yeah, like there's, there's like 8 different fields. Yeah, so, there's one of them, my
193 favorite is brakes 'cause It's just pretty easy, you know, replacing pads, and you know
194 and then there's you know there's, others like you know um, engine performance and
195 suspension, and uh electrical, all that stuff but the one's that I like and it's pretty easy
196 for me is brakes. Yeah, and um, that's you know that's my main one. To be, you know,
197 to get my AA degree in Auto. You know I like to you know work um for, for a shop in,
198 you know, for the county, like uh, you know, work for, you know, for, work for the San
199 Bernardino County, like, you know, their Police cars and stuff like that. Uh, and then, my
200 back up goal is the Welding. My backup, yeah, I already, I already did that though.

201 N: And, that's what, earlier you said you already have a certificate in that? Is that
202 correct?

203 P: Yeah, I'm certified.

204 N: Wow, back up goal in Welding.
205 P: Yeah, but, the, the main I just gotta finish with my, with my AA and then I, I rather
206 just, I rather just be (the power went out) and um but my main goal it's uh Welding.
207 N: OK, no Auto? Welding or Auto?
208 P: Welding, welding I think would be my, my perfect job for me.
209 N: That's hard work.
210 P: Yeah, and uh, I want to do um you know do it in the, in the evening, and then
211 hopefully try underwater welding, someday and stuff like that, or
212 N: I've heard of that!
213 P: Yeah, and, well I haven't, well, I've seen pictures, you know and stuff, but I really
214 want to like, you know really try it – you know in person.
215 N: Wow, that's impressive.
216 P: But uh, other than that, it's just like those two.
217 N: OK, yeah, excellent
218 P: I got my main goal and I got my back up goal.
219 N: OK, yeah, very good. And then that was educational but they're very related in your,
220 in your case. The last one is about your career goals and you pretty much answered
221 that. Okay, very good. I'm going to end this interview no

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEWS: 113 KEY NOUN PHRASES

Interviews: 113 Key Noun Phrases

190

Moved during school 4, 6	CAHSEE Good experience 2,	Feeling labeled by teachers 1, 1	Tutorial course at math labs 1, 1
Recall past schooling, 5, 7	College easier 1, 2	Did not pass by a few points 5, 5	First in family to college 1, 1
High school easy 2, 2	Exam is easy 1, 1	Dropped out of high school 1, 1	CAHSEE Coordinator 2, 2
Independence/freedom in college 5, 7	Don't agree with CAHSEE as a requirement 1, 1	One more thing you had to accomplish 1, 1	Don't want to be a grocery clerk all my life 1, 1
College phenomenal 1, 1	Get out of the area 1, 1	Main goal 1, 1	Exam is extra level 1, 2
On your own/own pace 2, 3	CAHSEE a good tool 3, 7	Get out of the bubble 1, 1	Teachers 7, 33
succeed in life 1, 1	Work 5, 45	Family 4, 11	Behind 3, 6
To improve self 1, 1	Nervousness/anxiety 1, 1	BOG 1, 1	STAR testing 1, 1
Bilingual 1,1	Sad, it wasn't fair 2, 2	It slows you down 1, 1	Be a high school graduate
Distractions 3, 6	Math weakness 3, 16	Important 1, 1	Back up goal 1, 1
Guessing, 2, 14	Adult school 3, 3	Didn't take it serious 2, 2,	Sister has BA 1, 2
GPA 1,2	Tried, studied 3, 9	HS certificate 1, 2	Care, caring 2, 2
Disability 2, 6	On-line/computer learning 5,9	Sociology 2, 6	Financial aid 1, 3
Disabled 1, 2	Requirement 3, 6	Goal 6, 21	I was young 2, 2,
Obstacle 1, 1	Didn't cheat 1, 1	Likes challenges 1, 1	Labeled 1, 2
Not paying attention/didn't focus/didn't try 8, 5	Didn't want to make the family look bad 1, 1	I didn't think it would make a big difference 1, 1	Don't want to be bad manager 1, 1
Parents don't know 1, 1	Program helped 1, 1	Scared 1, 1	Didn't want work fast food 1, 1
There should be options 1, 1	Feeling ashamed 1, 1	Fear of tests 1, 1	Sweating, trembles 1,1
CAHSEE is irrelevant 1, 2	CAHSEE was hard 2, 3	Passion 1, 2	Did well in classes 1, 1
Not study 1, 1	Not smart enough 1, 1	Walk the stage 1, 1	Tuition & books paid 1, 1
Motivation, my son 1, 1	Passing, 10, 113	Dad 1, 1	Focus, 1, 5
I was a burden to them 1, 1	Study, 3, 6	Program secretary 1, 1	First to get diploma 1, 1
Job 2, 5	Was confident 8, 13	Psychology 1, 3	Parents 1, 2
Exam is nonsense 1, 1	Wants to move 1, 1	Failed 1, 4	High school counselor 2, 5
Stuck 1, 4	Be on track 1, 1	Didn't want to go back to it 1, 1	Books 1, 3
Getting close 2, 2	Tagged student 1, 1	Failed 1, 4	ELA easy, Math hard 3, 3
Surgery 1, 3	Waiver, 1, 9	Special education 1, 15	Cerebral palsy 1, 1
Wheel chair 1, 4	Basic skills 1, 1	Knows what persistence is 6, 6	Modified 1, 2
God 1, 1			

APPENDIX J

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER OF APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval



Academic Affairs
Office of Academic Research • Institutional Review Board

March 22, 2010

Ms. Nori E. Sogomonian
c/o: Prof. Pat Arlin
Department of Education
Dr. Marita Mahoney
Office of Assessment and Research
California State University
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

CSUSB
INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD
Expedited Review
IRB# 09091
Status
APPROVED

Dear Ms. Sogomonian:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Academic Self-Efficacy in the Context of High Stakes Testing" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The attached informed consent document has been stamped and signed by the IRB chairperson. All subsequent copies used must be this officially approved version. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended. Your application is approved for one year from March 22, 2010 through March 21, 2011. One month prior to the approval end date you need to file for a renewal if you have not completed your research. The protocol renewal form is on the IRB website. See additional requirements of your approval below.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following requirements. You are required to notify the IRB of the following: 1) submit a protocol change form if any substantive changes (no matter how minor) are made in your research prospectus/protocol, 2) if any unanticipated/adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research, and 3) when your project has ended by emailing the IRB Coordinator. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, IRB Compliance Coordinator. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillespi@csusb.edu. Please include your application identification number (above) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,


Sharon Ward, Ph.D., Chair
Institutional Review Board

SW/ing

cc: Prof. Pat Arlin, Dean, Department of Education and Dr. Marita Mahoney, Office of Assessment and Research

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