UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC FACTORS RELATED TO STUDENTS'

SUBJECT FAILING AT THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR, SEMESTER I – 2000.

GRADUATION WORK

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of failing subjects as an issue of concern for all educational institutions regardless of the rate it may reach, for the fact that if it exists, it demands the quality of the processes and programs that educational institution offers; the quality of its teachers and the particular characteristics of every student. For this reason the following research comprises a wide view of the possible causes that are related with the issue of failing subjects.

These pages contain the research final report whose main objective was to find out the academic and non-academic factors related to subject failing at the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador in Semester I-2000.

This document includes the antecedents and the statement of the problem investigated; a list of research questions and objectives that guided the investigation; a theoretical framework which contains the theoretical aspects related to the topic, based on the consulted literature; the hypotheses and methodology used; the sampling section that describes not only the population and sample of the study, but also the statistical procedure to calculate it as well as the instrument used to collect the data. Finally the questionnaire and a list of all the references consulted are included, as well as the annexes.

I. ANTECEDENTS

During the ancient times human beings learned through advice and the experience of others. Moreover, in previous times younger people used to go to the elders to look for counseling. These people transmitted their knowledge to other generations . At first, the Education Institution was not necessary to transmit knowledge: since, people did not need a degree to look for a job or to have a better lifestyle, nevertheless, nowadays education is required in all the cultures and all the historic periods.

The culminations of formal education processes constitute the access to different fields in which people can develop not only the acquired knowledge, but also their abilities. The fulfillment of this goal increases the quality of people life. However, tertiary education in Latin America is facing a lot of difficulties such as: Low economic support, lack of appropriate facilities, etc. But one of the worst problems at the University level is subject failing; a lot of researches have been done in some countries in Latin America related with this matter, and many different causes around this phenomenon have been discovered.

A research done in Argentina showed that in the Economy School of the National University of Fourth River[1] the following causes were found; first, the difficulties that the students had related with the subject contents, they were not able to manage the material of study that was required in the

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[1] Comisión de Desarrollo Propedéutico (CODEP). Deserción Estudiantil a Nivel Universitario.

subject; second, the way of study which showed that the student who only studied in groups had a lower level of efficiency than those who studied in groups as well as individually; third, the students got low grades affecting their whole evaluation because they were not able to manage the materials; and finally a meaningful factor that made students abandon their university studies is that some universities registered a great number of students without having an entrance exam. This allows some students to enter to the University without having a good level of proficiency in their studies in a tertiary education institution.

In Mexico, it is the fact that most of the time teachers do not have a good methodology to help the students to have a successful learning process. Tomas Niclos (1989) stated in his research that some myths suggest that private universities are much better than the public ones, and that the education quality depends on the number of full time teachers should disappear, because all the universities work under similar academic programs since they are guided by the law of tertiary education; and the education quality does not depend on the number of teachers working full time, but on the quality of teaching methodologies.   One of these researches is "Reprobación y Deserción Estudiantil en el Itparral" the sampling of this research was formed by 100 students from The Major Electric Engineering of ITP (Instituto Tecnológico de Itparral in Mexico) from August to December 1992. The result showed that effectively, there exists a close relationship between attrition and subjects failing.

Most of the students of the sample of the latter research had to work and study at the same time. In other cases they decided to work instead of studying because they did not have other way to support themselves. In general, he concluded that the students who did both activities were not able to develop the curricular plan as it was designed, and this was one of the most common causes of failures.

In our country, the University of El Salvador, as an Institution of tertiary education is not the exception; it has also been affected by the subjects-failing phenomenon. In accordance with a research done in this University "Rendimiento de la Educación Universitaria" (1992)[2], the academic failure at the University of El Salvador included not only student's subject failure but also attrition.

As it can be seen, there is a variety of causes that are related with the student's subject failing in different countries of Latin America as well as in El Salvador and the intention of this research is to find the causes that were behind the student's subject failing in the School of Arts and Sciences in the University of El Salvador, Semester I-2000.

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[2] Sección de Estadística y Archivo de la Administración Académica Central en El Salvador. "Rendimiento y Deserción de la Educación Universitaria en El Salvador".

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador is being affected by the subject failing phenomenon. According to its statistics this School reported 42 subjects out of the 206 that were offered during the first semester of the year 2000 with the highest percentages of failures. The failure percentages ranged from 10 to 57.

According to the Academic Administration Office, the Departments of Journalism and Foreign Languages and the School of Arts are reported to have the highest number of subjects students failed during the first semester of the year 2000. The same record contains subjects such as "Lógica General" in the Philosophy Department , "Metodología de la Investigación" and "Fundamentos Psicofisiológicos de la Conducta Normal y Anormal" in the Psychology Department, and "Historia del Arte I" in the School of Arts, which present failure percentages above the 50%. Finally it is reported that one fourth of the total subject enrollment failed any of these 42 subjects.

In order to place this research in the specific context the definition of the terms and the model to be used in this study are presented below.

Subject failure is defined as **the student's lack of success in achieving the average of six, which is the lowest passing grade in any specific subject at the end of the semester.**

The model used to study the phenomenon of subject failure includes two major categories: **Academic factors and Non– Academic factors.**

The academic factors were sub-divided into *Students, Professor's,* and *Institutional areas.*

The student's variable includes students' academic background as well as students' in-class performance and students' general evaluation, which are some of the factors related to subject failure according to the theory read. The aim of this area is to find out to what extent these variables influenced students' subject failure.

The professor's variables include the teaching-learning methodology used in the subjects that present the highest number of failures, teacher's academic performance and how they influence the students' academic performance.

The last one, the institutional area is specifically aimed at determining the relationship between subject failure and the administrative processes students carried out.

The non-academic factor included variables such as students' lack of motivation, interest and dedication, and satisfaction toward the career they are studying. The purpose of this area is to determine to what extent all these factors influenced the students' results in semester I-2000.

This study tries to answer the general question: What are the academic and non academic factors that influenced students' subject failure in the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador (Central Campus) in the first semester of the year 2000?

- **SUBJECT FAILURE**

It refers to the situation in which a student does not obtain the minimum scores required in order to pass a subject .

- **TEACHER´S METHODOLOGY**

The set of techniques , procedures and methods that a teacher applies during teaching a given subject .

- **STUDENT´S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

The way the student handles his learning including the degree of responsibility and the dedication that students have in a given subject. The students performance also includes the scores a student gets.

- **STUDENT´S ACADEMIC BACKGROUND**

The education and experiences that a student posses before entering or develop during the first two semesters at the university.

- **STUDENT´S PERFORMANCE IN CLASS SELF-EVALUATION**

It involves students own opinion through a set of questions of their performance as a college student .

- **ACADEMIC FACTORS**

  Related with the teaching learning process and the three agents that actively participate on it : the students , the professors and the institution.

- **NON-ACADEMIC FACTORS**

  Refer to all those factors outside the curriculum that are part of the student's environment .

- **LACK OF MOTIVATION , INTEREST AND DEDICATION**

  Refers to the absence of positive attitudes and the lack of responsibility and effort of the student's part toward the subject .

- **TESTING**

  Set of activities directed to measure the student's knowledge and abilities established in the curriculum of a given subject.

III. RELATED LITERATURE

Graham and Weiner (1978), formerly a social studies and English teacher at a junior high school, and an associate professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), respectively, have shown that teachers tend to sympathize with students whose failure they attribute to lack of ability, while they get angry with students who fail for lack of effort. Students read the implicit message in these emotional cues the same way: pitty is an ascription of low ability, anger one of low effort.

Other common teacher's behaviors send similar signals. "A student who receives a lot of praise from the teacher for an easy success is perceived as high in effort (and therefore low in ability), when compared to another student who achieves the same outcome and is not praised," Graham and Weiner write. Likewise, students who receive unsolicited help from the teacher are also perceived to be low in ability.

To understand the consequences of these subtle and indirect cues about ability and effort, it first has to be understood how we tend to think about ability and effort. Most people believe ability to be a personal characteristic that is relatively fixed and beyond the individual's personal control. "This means that failure due to low aptitude is perceived as a characteristic of the failing individual, enduring over time, and beyond one's personal control," the

authors say. Effort, on the other hand, is seen as something that can vary from one situation to the next and that the individual can control.

Various emotions are associated with these perceptions. For example, a pupil who believes he or she has failed because of low ability is likely to feel humiliation and hopelessness; emotions associated with beliefs that personal failures are due to uncontrollable causes. On the other hand, a student who believes he or she has failed because of low effort, may feel guilty about not having tried harder but optimistic about doing better in the future.

How does all this affect student motivation? Graham and Weiner(1998) describe how two students who both fail the same math test might respond in very different ways. Jane, who has always done well in the past, attributes her failure to inadequate preparation and feels guilty. The anger and criticism expressed by her teacher and parents reinforce her perception that lack of effort, not inability, was the cause of her failure. Optimistic that she will do better on the next exam if she tries harder, Jane is motivated to find a math tutor and spend more time studying.

Susan, on the other hand, has done poorly on previous math tests and attributes this latest failure to low ability, a perception that is reinforced by the teacher's sympathy and lack of criticism. Believing that she is unable to do anything to improve her performance, Susan decides to drop out school.

What is being suggested here is that motivation not be seen as something existing solely in the student that he or she brings to the classroom and academic tasks; but rather as an outcome of meaningful

participation in the classroom and the social practices that accomplish its everyday practical activities.

Disincentives to effort and learning are also found within the classroom. Teachers may not insist that students work to their full potential for a variety of reasons, including protecting them from failure. They may offer challenging work but undercut their own expectations by offering students an easy way out. For example, teachers who provide students with summaries of the main ideas of a course take away the lesson in self-directed study and personal responsibility that comes from puzzling out the ideas for themselves. Giving multiple-choice tests instead of essay questions places a premium on recall and frees students from the need to make connections between principles or to apply them in new situations. Giving students the questions—sometimes even the answers—that will appear on the next test means that they have no excuse for failing the test, but it also means that they have no incentive for mastering the material.

These situations are not rare. Educational researchers note an increase in teacher-student "bargains," those usually tacit but sometimes explicit agreements in which teachers lower their standards in exchange for classroom cooperation. Some teachers engage in these agreements not only to maintain order but also because society holds them responsible for fulfilling its education goals. High graduation rates are seen as an indication of success, and bargains embodying lower standards let teachers and students off the hook without wholly abandoning the appearance of serious work.

"Preventive classroom management" offers teachers an alternative to traditional—but ever less effective—authority as the principal method to win the attention and cooperation of students. Indeed, modern management strategies are being developed that engage students as a cooperative social group in which they learn to regulate their own behavior without the imposition of external authority. The eventual goal is students who are responsible for much of their own learning and the selection of many of their academic tasks.

John W. Thomas (1978), an independent educational researcher and visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, claims that setting higher academic expectations to encourage greater effort and more learning has been one of the key strategies of a reform movement. For example, higher-order thinking is an earnestly sought intellectual capability. Signs that one possesses this skill include the ability to note relationships among ideas and extend concepts and principles to other contexts. An essay test rather than a test of memory and recall is required to assess the status of this skill. But the kind of integrative learning required to write a good essay is undermined if, on the day before the test, the teacher passes out a review sheet giving students the essay questions and model answers to go with them.

In other words, Thomas explains, when students are asked to do integrative thinking, they are compensated "by being given the answers to integrated questions in advance of the test." As a result, they are challenged to do little more than memorize the handout sheet.

On the other hand, Thomas has found that certain kinds of supports can induce the kinds of study practices that lead to mastery of course content and the kinds of integrative learning and problem-solving skills necessary to succeed in college or the workplace. Setting clear goals and teaching students the techniques of studying are two important supports. Testing students on the material covered by homework and class work is also important. Rather than supplying review sheets, teachers can test students' understanding of the subject by asking them direct questions or by giving them time to ask questions.

Thomas, like other researchers, finds feedback to be a critical support. The more individual students receive written comments from their teachers, the more inclined they are to develop study aids, such as note taking, Thomas said. The more thorough the feedback on quizzes and homework, the more likely they are to manage their study time effectively and to take the initiative for their own learning.

Thomas cautions, however, that it will not be easy to rid the nation's classrooms of compensatory practices. "These practices may ensure that students succeed in a course to some degree," he said. "Removing these compensations carries with it a great risk of student failure and, by extension, teacher failure. . . We cannot expect teachers to act in ways that will increase the risk of student failure (increasing homework, raising standards, dropping compensations) unless and until we are able to demonstrate to them that other

provisions (feedback, articulated practice material, study-skills training) will offset the risk they anticipate."

At the School of Economics and Commerce of the University of Melbourne, full-time students are expected to take four subjects each semester and the normal duration of the Bachelor in Commerce (Bcom) pass degree is three years. With four subjects the total class hours for lectures and tutorials will amount to some twelve or thirteen hours per week. This may seem small in comparison with what is customary in secondary schools or in university courses involving laboratory work, but new students in particular should realize that they are also expected to do much private reading and prepare essays and other written work. They should therefore avoid accepting too many outside commitments, or seeking employment during the academic year. The atmosphere of a university is not one of a teacher instructing pupils, but one of self-education on the part of the students, aided by lecturers and tutors, from advice can readily be sought on any points of difficulty arising from their studies.

Students in full-time employment are limited in their own interests to two subjects per semester. To attempt more is to run the risk of failure. It follows that for part-time students the duration of the Bcom (Bachellor in Commerce) pass degree is six years, but the maximum length of the course is limited to eight years. In arranging their courses and selecting their subjects, part-time students should pay close attention to the rules governing the order in which particular subjects can be taken. It is no longer possible to arrange

timetables so that part-time students can always attend lectures at convenient times, and there will inevitably be occasions when they have to obtain leave of absence from their employer. If at all possible, students are urged to take at least one year of their course full-time.

The main topic of this research was to find out the subject failure causes, and in order to study it, the following model was used.

The subject failure phenomenon is believed to be caused by different factors, which have been classified into two groups: Academic factors and Non-Academic factors.

A.   Academic Factors

These factors included students' own variables, professor's variables, and institutional variables which may have affected the student's academic results in semester I-2000.

The student's variables included students' academic background as well as student's in-class performance, and student's self-evaluation . These are some of the variables that belong to the student himself or herself. The aim of this area was to find out to what extent these variables influenced their subject failure.

The professor's variables included the teaching-learning methodology used in the subjects that presented the highest number of failures, the teacher's academic performance and how they influenced the student's academic performance

The institutional area comprised the Administrative processes such as subjects registration, dropping out a subject, subjects grades and student's general evaluation on their career.

B.   Non-Academic Factors

The variables included in these factors are: the non-academic variable which are: motivation, interest and dedication by the students toward the career they were studying. The purpose of this area was to determine to what extend all these non-academic factors influenced the student's subject failure at the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador semester I-2000.

IV. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL: Define the variables that affected the student's final academic results, semester I-2000.

SPECIFIC:

- Find out how students' subject failure was influenced by their own in class performance.

- Analyze if the teaching- learning methodology used in the different subjects influenced students' subject failure.

- Relate the students satisfaction towards the career they were studying and their academic performance with subjects-failing.

- Find out how student's own motivation and interest affected their academic performance.

- Determine the relationship between student's self-evaluation and subject failure.

V. HYPHOTESIS

- The methodology used in the teaching-learning process influenced the subject failure at The School of Arts and sciences in the University of El Salvador during semester I-2000.

- The lack of motivation, interest and dedication influenced students' subject failure at the School of Arts and Sciences in the University of El Salvador during Semester   I-2000.

- The students' subject failure was influenced by the student's in class performance during Semester I-2000 at the School of Arts and Sciences in the University of El Salvador.

- The students satisfaction with the career they were studying is not directly linked with subject failing.

- The student's self-evaluation is not related with subject failing.

- The teacher's academic performance influenced student's subject failure at the School of Arts and Sciences in the University of El Salvador during semester I-2000.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to find out the Academic and Non Academic factors that influenced students' subject failure at the School of Arts and Sciences during the first semester of the year 2000.

There was the need to measure and explain the subject failure phenomenon; for that reason the survey research method was used. This was a sample survey since the nature and the purpose of the study was related to Education and Social Sciences and it studied only a portion of the population.

The most challenging type of survey is one that seeks to measure intangibles such as attitudes, opinions and values, or the sociological and psychological constructs, like the reasons the population of students had for failing subjects as well as the implications related to University entities such as Faculty and Administrators, teaching- learning methodology, students' economic factors, job related reasons, students' preparation for entering college.

The opinions, attitudes, and values were not directly observable but they were inferred from responses given by the subjects to the questionnaires specially designed for this purpose. Since it was a survey of intangibles, this was limited by the fact that the data that was collected was only indirectly measuring the variables the study concerned about. This limitation depended on how well the observations measured the intangible variables.
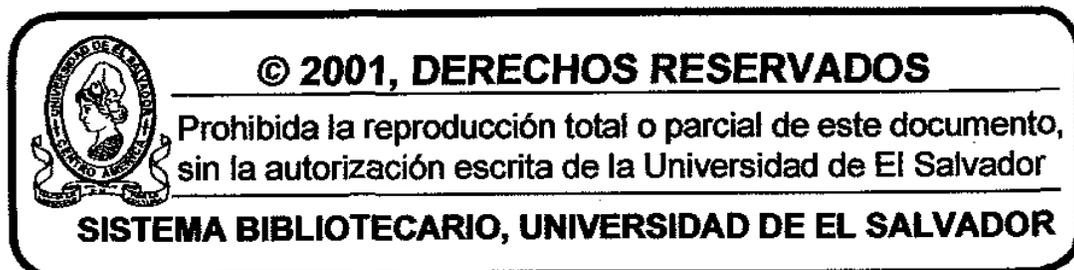
A. Process

The steps involved in this survey research were:

1. Planning:

- The survey research began by making contacts with the people in charge of the Academic Administration of the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador in order to get the information needed.

- After doing the contacts, the lists of the student's grades on the subjects they had passed and failed on semester I 2000, were given to us. From these lists the subjects with higher failure percentages were chosen to select the research sample.

- Once the subjects were selected, the student's information (residence, telephone number, etc) were obtained from the Academic Administration Office of the School of Arts and Sciences, with the purpose of getting in contact with the sample subjects.

2. Sampling:

a) The population of this study was formed by the students who had failed one or more subjects in the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador during semester I-2000.

b) The sample subjects had the following characteristics : had studied at the School of Arts and Sciences, students who had failed subjects during semester I-2000, and they also had to be studying at the University of El

Salvador when the survey was carried. The subjects were selected according to a simple random sampling with one substitution that was designed for each Department within the School of Arts and Sciences (refer to the Sampling Section for more information).

c) The population of this research was formed by 850 students who had failed one or more subjects in semester I-2000 at the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador. The sample was proportional to the number of students that had failed one or more subjects which constituted a total of 236 students. In order to design the sample the following formula was used:

$$n = \frac{Z^2PQN}{E^2(N-1) + Z^2PQ}$$

Where n= Sample; N= population; Z= scores; PQ= Percentage to be included or excluded; E= Standard Error

3. Conducting the survey:

a) Pilot study: once the data gathering questionnaire was ready, the pilot study was run to determine if the designed questionnaire would provide the expected data.

b) Field work

The steps that were followed for gathering the information were:

i)Phone calls

 they were made in order to set a date with the subjects of the sample for an interview. In case one of the subjects could not be contacted or he/she refused to be interviewed, the substitute was taken.

  ii)Visiting their workplace or house:

 After contacting the subject of the sample, they were visited, either at their job or at their house to administer the questionnaires.

4. Data processing

The steps that were followed for processing the data were:

a) Designing the data base using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

b) Coding the information.

c) Entering the data into the data base.

d) Analyzing and interpreting the data.

e) Writing a Report

5. Instrument used

The instrument used was a questionnaire, which was composed by 82 questions; 68 of these questions were closed, and the rest were opened. This questionnaire contained questions related to the areas included in the model designed to study the subject's failing in the School of Arts and Sciences in Semester I-2000. It was divided into seven sections:

a) student's socio-demographic profile and academic background at the University. b) The Teaching-Learning Methodology used in the subjects they had failed. c) Student's academic performance during semester I 2000. d) Student's involvement in Campus activities. e) Environment and physical conditions of the classrooms. f) Students opinions toward the student's department and the School of Arts and Sciences. g) the teaching-learning Methodology used in the subjects they had passed. (see annexes)

VII. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

6.1 SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

The final sample of the study was composed by a total of 236 students that belonged to the different academic units of the School of Arts and Sciences, as it is shown on the following table.

Table 1: "Sample of the study by Departments of The School of Arts and Sciences "

Departments of The School of Arts and Sciences	Frequencies	Percentages
Philosophy Department	8	3.4
Department of Social Sciences	19	8.1
Psychology Department	43	18.2
Literature Department	11	4.7
Department of Journalism	51	21.6
Foreign Language Department	36	15.3
Education Department	41	17.4
School of Arts	27	11.4
TOTAL	**236**	**100**

6.1.1 GENDER

The sample of the School of Arts and Sciences was formed by 56.8% women and 43.2% men. (see annexes 1)

6.1.2 AGE

Most of the subjects of the sample were in the age–range of 17 to 21, representing a 58.90%; and a 30.5% in the 22 to 26 range. The rest was composed by individuals aging 27 and more, making a total of 10.6%. As it is shown on table 3 the population of the School of Arts and Sciences was composed mainly by young students during semester I-2000.

Table 3   "Sample of the School of Arts and Sciences by Age Ranges"

Age Ranges	Frequencies	Percentages
17-21	139	58.90
22-26	72	30.5
27.31	18	7.6
32-36	4	1.7
37-41	3	1.3
TOTAL	236	100

6.1.3 MARITAL STATUS

According to the information gathered, it was found that a great deal of the interviewed students was single, comprising 89.4% of the sample. And the rest of the subjects, a total of 10.6%, was married or husband and wife by common law. (See annexes table 2)

6.1.4 YEAR OF ENROLLMENT

The majority of the students of the sample (89.8%) started to study at the university between the period 1995 and 2000; in other words, they had been studying between 3 to 8 years. And the rest 10.2% had enrolled in years previous to that period.

Table 5 "YEAR OF ENROLLMENT OF THE SAMPLE SUBJECTS"

Year of Enrollment	Frequencies	Percentages
1983-1985	1	0.4
1986-1988	1	0.4
1989-1991	7	3.0
1992-1994	15	6.4
1995-1997	48	20.3
1998-2000	164	69.5
TOTAL	236	100

A. CONSTRUCTS DESIGNED IN THE STUDY MODEL

Since the hypotheses and objectives that were established are related to finding the causes of subject failure, the results are analyzed by taking into consideration the different constructs designed in the study model. One of them was "the methodology construct" that comprised techniques, strategies and resources used in both classes, where they had failed subjects and where they had passed the subject they had liked the most. Another construct used was "student's in class performance" which comprised the student's participation in class, attendance, developing of tasks assigned by the teacher and studies habits used by the students in their classes. The third construct, "Administrative processes at the School of Arts and Sciences" that included an evaluation given by the students to the administration personnel.

B. SCALES USED FOR ANALYZING THE CONSTRUCTS

In order to measure the constructs a Liker scale was used, which can be analyzed taking as starting point the average mean understanding that the closer the mean was to 1.0 the better evaluated the issue was; the farther the average mean was from 1.00 the worst evaluated the construct was.

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        1             2             3             4             5
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B. FINDINGS

–Teaching Learning Methodology

One interesting finding is presented in the following table that shows that there are significant differences between how students evaluated the teaching –learning methodology used in the course they had failed and the one where they had passed a subject. The students evaluated the methodology used in the first one as "Strongly negative and negative" with an average mean of 2.5, and the methodology used in the second group of subjects was evaluated by the students as " fairly positive and positive" with an average mean of 1.8.

Table 2.1 "Comparison of the evaluation given to the Teaching Learning Methodology in the different groups of subjects"

Type of Methodology	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Evaluation of the Teaching Learning Methodology where they failed subjects	2.51	2.45	2.36	0.70
Evaluation of the Teaching Learning Methodology where they passed the subjects	1.85	1.70	1.40	0.46

Another interesting finding, is presented in the following table that shows that there is no significant on how student's evaluated in class performance since the mean of 2.23 is not farther from 1.00. It can be said that in class performance was evaluated as fairly good and good, for this reason this can not be considered as a factor closely related with subjects failure, because, students were involved in their teaching-learning processes.

Table 2.2 "Student's in class performance construct "

Students in class performance	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
	2.23	2.25	2.25	.49

The last finding is shown in the following table, which comprises the aspects related with the Administrative processes at the School of Arts and Sciences. The students interviewed considered the Administration personnel's performance, as worse by getting a mean of 3.49. It can be interpreted that students did not feel satisfied with the activities and tasks performed by the Administration personnel at the School of Arts and Sciences, for this reason these factors influenced student's subjects failing.

Since the students stated that when they dropped out a subject in a semester due schedules changes, they had problems at the end of the semester, because even they notified to the administration that they would not take the course, the subject was registered as failed.

3 "Aspects related with the Administration Processes of the School of Arts and Sciences"

Aspects related with the School of Arts and Sciences	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation
	3.49	3.33	3.33	.72

Table 9 "Relationship between ages and subjects the sample students failed"

Ages Ranges	Numbers of Subject Failed					
	1-2 subjects	3-5 subjects	6-8 subjects	9-11 subjects	12-14 subjects	TOTAL
17-21	88	44	5			
	37.3%	18.6%	2.1%		.8%	58.9%
22-26	40	29	2	1		72
	16.9%	12.3%	.8%	.4%		30.5%
27-31	10	6	2			18
	4.2%	2.5%	.8%			7.6%
32-36	3	1				4
	13%	.4%				1.7
37-41	3					
	1.3%					
TOTAL	144	80	9	1	2	236
	61.0%	33.9	3.8%	.4%	.8%	100%

In Table 9 it can be observed that the students who failed from 1 to five subjects were the youngest students since as it can be seen 85.17% from the total of 236 students are between the ages of 17 and 26 years. It might be

said that this happened due to students' lack of motivation, interest and dedication toward the subjects they were taking during semester I-2000. The researchers believe that the students at these ages

tend to be less responsible in regard with academic matters in this case their responsibility toward the subjects.

Table 10 "Relationship between the way students finance their studies and the number of subjects they failed"

The way they finance their study	Number of subjects failed					TOTAL
	1-2 subjects	3-5 subjects	6-8 subjects	9-11 subjects	12-14 subjects	
Family support	90	49	7		1	147
	38.1%	20.8%	3.0%		.4%	62.3%
Work	42	21	2		1	66
	17.8%	8.9%	.8%		.4%	28.8%
Scholarship	7	5		1		13
	3.0%	2.1%		.4%		5.5%
Others	5	5				10
	2.1%	2.1%				4.2%
TOTAL	144	80	9	1	2	236
	61.0%	33.9%	3.8%	.4%	.8%	100%

As it can be observed in table 10, out of the total of students who failed subjects, 58.90% of the students that failed 1 to 5 subjects had family support . Even though they had economic support , they failed more subjects than the students who paid for their studies, comprising the 26.7% of the students.

Even though students who work face more difficulties, especially these dealing with class schedule , having to work does not always justify subject failure by itself. However, as it was stated in the study of the University of Melboure, this type of students had particular restrictions due to their special social conditions. One of them had to do with the number of subjects they can register due to their time constraints. As it well known at the University of El Salvador full time students can register all the subjects that are programmed in their curriculum in each semester, but those who work can only register one or two subjects due to their time availability. So, it can be concluded that part- time students take more time to finish their studies at the university, but also may have poor academic performance and full time students do not fully appreciate the cost of studying because they are not paying for it.

Table 11 "Relationship between students satisfaction with their career and the number of subjects they failed"

Number of subjects failed	How students feel with their current career											
	Highly satisfied		Satisfied		Indifferent		Fairly Satisfied		Unsatisfied		TOTAL	
1-2 subjects	53	22.5%	77	32.6%	3	1.3%	9	3.8%	2	.8%	144	61.0%
3-5 subjects	20	8.5%	40	16.9%	5	2.1%	13	5.5%	2	.8%	80	33.9%
6-8 subjects	2	.8%	4	1.7%			2	.8%	1	.4%	9	3.8%
9-11 subjects			1	.4							1	.4%
12-14 subjects			2	.8%							2	.8%
TOTAL	75	31.8%	124	52.5%	8	3.4%	24	10.2%	5	2.1%	236	100%

The table presented above indicates the student's degrees of satisfaction towards the career they were studying when the survey was run. As it is shown 52.5 % of the interviewed students felt satisfied with the career they were studying, even though they had failed subjects. It can be interpreted that they were comfortable with the classes they had. Therefore, the students degree of satisfaction regarding the career is not directly linked with failing subjects.

It also seems relevant to mention that a third part of the population (31.8) felt highly satisfied with the career, it means that in one way or another the career fulfilled their expectation.

Table 12 "Subject Failing Causes mentioned by the Sample Students"

Causes of failing	Frequencies	Percentages
Lack of motivation	99	41.95
Inappropriate methodology	38	16.1
Problems with professors	22	9.3
Problems with the schedules of classes	15	6.4
Missing 1 or 2 evaluations	8	3.4
Difficulty of the subject	23	9.7
Classes´ schedule interference	3	1.3
Drop out subjects	4	1.7
Others	35	14.8
TOTAL	236	100

In the table above, the information was taken from an open question that gave the students a chance to express why they had failed the subject and had mentioned in a previous question. They also listed causes that were later classified into the most relevant ones, such as: lack of interest by themselves, inappropriate methodology by the teachers, professor's problems, etc.

It was found that 58.05% of the students had failed the mentioned courses due to lack of motivation and interest in the process of learning by the students in their studies and due to inappropriate methodology used by their teacher; so they can be considered as the two main causes of failing. A 9.32% failed because they faced problems with their teachers .And 6.35% failed due to problems between their studies and job schedules .The rest of the students failed because of other causes such as missing 1 or 2 evaluations , difficulty of the subject , class schedules, interference and drop out of subjects .

Table 13 "Relationship between teacher's academic performance and the sample's subject Failing"

Number of subjects failed	Teacher's Academic Performance					
	Deficient	Regular	Good	Very Good	Excellent	TOTAL
1-2 subjects	19	15	44	50	16	144
	8.05%	6.35%	18.64%	21.18%	8.89%	61.01%
3-5 subjects	7	15	26	26	6	80
	2.9%	6.35%	11.01%	11.01%	2.54%	33.89%
6-8 subjects		1	4	4		9
		.4%	1.7%	1.7%		3.8%
9-11 subjects			1			1
			.4%			.4%
				2		2
				.8%		.8%
TOTAL	26	31	75	82	22	236
	11.01%	13.13%	31.77%	34.74%	9.32%	100%

As it can be observed in table 3.7 the students who failed one or more subjects comprised a total of 66.53%, considered the teacher's academic performance as good and very good. It can be interpreted that even though they had failed subjects, they did not evaluate it negatively . For this reason, it can be mentioned that the teacher's academic performance is not a cause closely related with subject failure at the School of Arts and Sciences.

Table 14 "Relationship between Student's general self-evaluation with their satisfaction towards the career they were studying"

How students felt with the career they are studying	General Average grade				
	Lower than 6.0	6.0-6.9	7.0-7.9	8.0-8.9	TOTAL
Highly satisfied	4	36	31	4	75
	1.7%	15.3%	13.1%	1.7%	31.8%
Satisfied	6	60	48	10	124
	2.5%	25.4%	20.3%	4.2%	52.5%
Indifferent	1	5	1	1	8
	.4%	2.4%	.4%	.4%	3.4%
Less satisfied	5	7	10	2	24
	2.1%	3.0%	4.2%	.8%	10.2%
Unsatisfied	2	1	2		5
	.8%	.4%	.8%		2.1%
TOTAL	18	109	92	17	236
	7.6%	46.2%	39.0	7.2%	100%
		74.1%			

It is shown in table 3.8 that 74.1% of the sample students felt highly satisfied and satisfied with their career and they had an average grade between 6.0 to 7.9 in the subject they have taken until semester I –2000. It means that, although students at The School of Arts and Sciences were highly

satisfied and satisfied with their career, they had not achieved a high general average grade.

It might be said, there is not relationship between student's satisfaction with their career and the general average grade that they had gotten until semester I-2000, on the subjects they had taken through their time at the University.

Table 15   "Lack of Motivation, Interest and Dedication: Subject failing cause most mentioned by the sample students by department"

DEPARTMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Philosophy	4	50%
Social Science	8	42.1%
Psychology	22	51.1%
Literature	7	63.3%
Journalism	21	41.1%
Language	20	60.6%
Education	12	29%
Arts	4	4.8%
Total	98	100%

The table above shows the frequency of the cause of "Lack of motivation, interest, and dedication" of students by department . As it has been

withdrawn this is the cause most repeated regarding student's subject failure. The department with the highest percentage of lack of motivation is Literature with 63.3%, followed by the Department of Language with 60.6%. There are two departments that show a half or a little bit more percentage of lack of motivation, Psychology having a 51.1%, and Philosophy with a 50% . The rest of departments represent less than the 43%, one of those cases is Social Science with a 42.2% and the other one Journalism within 41.1%, Education Department and Arts School are the ones that present the lowest percentage of lack of motivation. (see annexes graph 1)

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

1. The professor's methodology used in the teaching learning process influenced the subject failure of students in the School of Arts and Sciences. The majority of them evaluated the methodology used by the teacher as inappropriate and as it is known the methodology plays an important role in the learning- process, the student-centered methodology promotes the interest of students, as it improves the student's learning, and consequently their academic performance.

2. The student's satisfaction toward the career they are studying is not closely related with failing subjects, because the students in the School of Arts and Sciences felt satisfied with the career they were studying even though they had failed subjects.

3. There was not relationship between student's satisfaction with their career and the general average grade that they had gotten until semester I-2000 in the subjects they had taken, although students stated, they were satisfied with their career , they had not achieved a high general average grade.

4. The students in class performance is not a non academic factor closely related with the subject failure, since the students at the School of Arts and Sciences evaluated it as fairly good and good.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the results gathered, it can be suggested that the professors of the School of Arts and Sciences should assist constantly through seminars, workshops, etc in order to improve that methodology used in the teaching learning processes. In this way, the students will increase their interest and motivation in their studies, and the professors will implement a new and current methodology that will help students get motivated.

- Students should consult libraries, info-centers or other resources outside the classrooms that would help them to get the maximum knowledge for having success in a given subject.

- Students should be enrolled in programs that would prepare them for fitting into the University studies; these programs should contain student's advisory to help them clarify their priorities for the career choosing. Also, the students should be enrolled in pre-entering courses that would prepare them in the general knowledge they should manage before getting into the career courses.

- From the beginning of the courses, the professors should help students become aware of the objectives of the subject and what they expect from them in order to succeed at the end of the course.
- The University authorities, specifically of the School of Arts and Sciences should try to provide technology devices to the Academic Administration in order to give an effective and good service to the students.
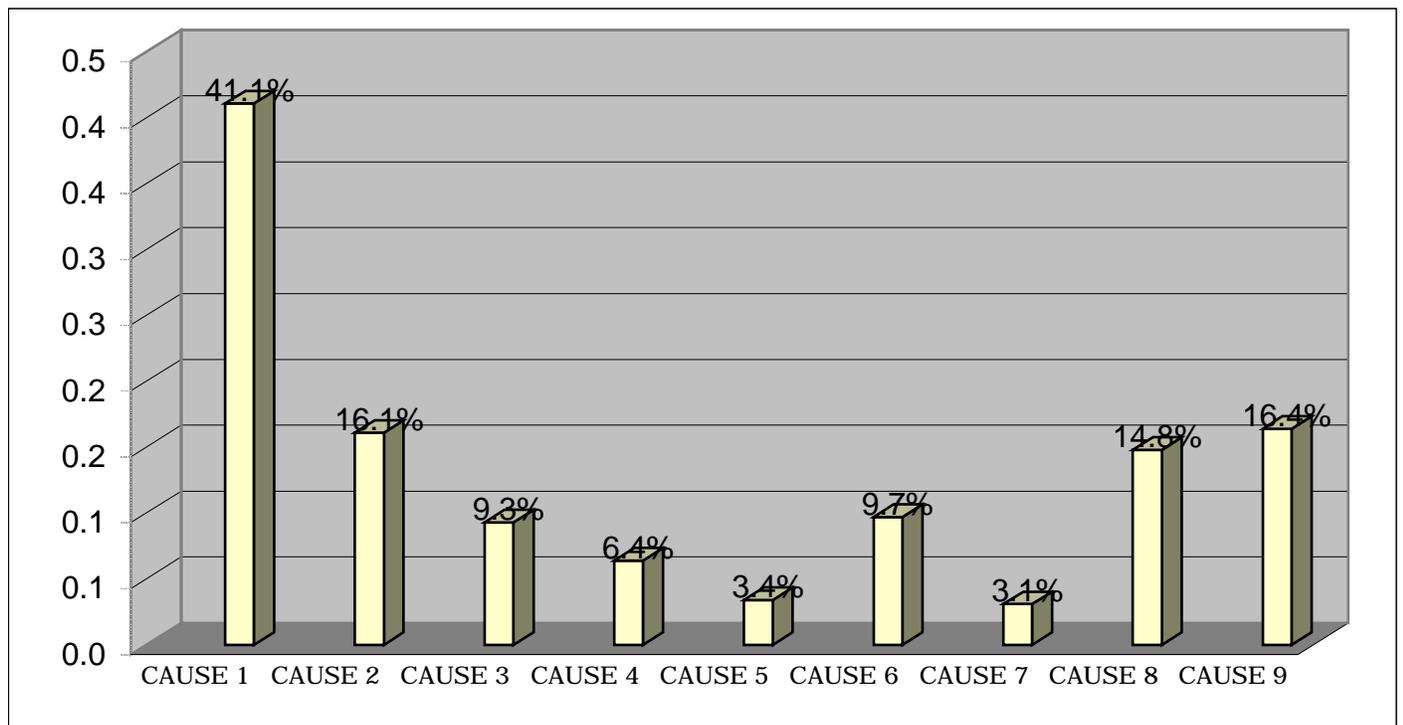
ANNEXES

Table 1 "Gender of the Sample Subjects of the School of Arts and Sciences"

Gender	Frequencies	Percent
Male	102	43.2
Female	134	56.8
TOTAL	**236**	**100**

Table 2 "Marital Status of the Sample"

Marital Status	Frequencies	Percentages
Married	18	7.6
Single	211	89.4
Common Law Husband and Wife	7	3.0
TOTAL	**236**	**100**

Graph 1 "CAUSES OF FAILING IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS FACULTY"

CAUSE 1 :	LACK OF MOTIVATION	
CAUSE 2 :	INNAPROPIATE METHODOLOGY	
CAUSE 3 :	|PROBLEMS WITH PROFESSORS	
CAUSE 4 :	PROBLEMS WITH SCHEDULE OF CLASSES	
CAUSE 5 :	MISSING ONE OR TWO EVALUATIONS	
CAUSE 6 :	DIFFICULTY OF THE SUBJECT .	
CAUSE 7:	CLASSES SCHEDULE INTERFERANCE	
CAUSE 8:	DROP OUTS	
CAUSE 9 :	DROUP OUTS STUDENTS	

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