



Evaluation of AVID Effectiveness

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Executive Summary

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is designed to provide the at-risk student who has the personal drive with the organizational and study skills necessary to take advanced level coursework in order to be prepared for and accepted into college. Without the AVID program, these at-risk

Literature Review

This literature review will provide an overview of AVID and describe the 11 essentials and how they can be implemented in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Overview of AVID

The foundation for the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program was conceived in the classroom of Mary Catherine Swanson, a high school English teacher, who sought to support low-income students from diverse backgrounds at Clairemont High School in San Diego with the skills needed to be successful in college level advanced coursework. Her following foundational philosophy, practices, and curriculum for AVID:

1. A non-traditional classroom setting meeting the academic and emotional needs of individual students;
2. The teacher as advisor/counselor/student advocate;
3. An emphasis on objective data;
4. The student at the center of decision-making regarding educational goals;
5. A student contract outlining willingness to work and setting learning goals;
6. Student support from teachers and skilled, trained tutors;
7. A curriculum emphasizing academic reading and writing; and
8. Reliance on the Socratic process. (AVID Center, 2014)

Thirty-five years later, AVID is implemented in 4,837 K-12 schools and 41 higher education campuses in the United States and internationally. The program aims to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness (AVID Center, 2014).

Teachers may not perceive AVID students, particularly students of color and low income, as having the potential to be successful in advanced courses. The way in which students are viewed in the classroom with regards to race and class in relationship to academic ability can impact efforts in school reform (Hubbard & Mehan, 1999; Oakes, Wells, Jones, & Datnow, 1997).

Similarly, at the middle and high school levels, all students receive best teaching practices. Students are also specifically selected to be part of an AVID elective cohort via an application and interview process. In these elective AVID courses, students receive intensive social and academic support.

Components of a Successful AVID Program

The AVID Team, AVID elective teachers, and students involved in the AVID cohort. The lead coordinator in charge of recruiting college tutors, parental involvement, student selection, and professional development. Student selection is important to the success of student cohorts in the AVID elective, which is designed for underserved students. Those students must be intrinsically motivated to take on extra homework and advanced coursework. Student profile characteristics in the selection process include considerations of grade point average, race, ethnicity and family history (Lifvendahl, 2007; Swanson et al., 2000). Other factors that contribute to the success of an AVID program include professional development, teaching strategies, and district and school-wide support (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002; Peak, 2010).

Selection of the AVID elective teacher is a critical component of having a successful AVID program. Watt, Mills, and Huerta (2010) found that principals saw the need for careful selection of the AVID elective teacher but did not connect the importance of the AVID elective teacher as an agent for school-wide change. The same researchers later found that principals recognized that the role of the AVID elective teacher extended beyond the classroom, to tasks such as coordinating and leading field trips to universities and colleges (Mills, Huerta, Watt, & Martinez, 2014). Teachers, however, did not see their role as expanding beyond the classroom.

Teachers and administrators agreed that a supportive environment were important. Administrators placed a larger emphasis on teacher leadership attributes such as open communication with the principal, creative problem solving, collegiality and respect with colleagues, and organizational skills. The implications of these findings are that principals view teacher leadership attributes as important in the selection of the AVID elective teacher (Mills et al., 2014).

The AVID Site team is the final component of an AVID program. Characteristics of an effective site team are communication, planning, and problem solving. The purpose of a site team is to create a stimulating, empowering experience for teachers and students of the school. Site teams require student members to participate (Pagono, 2009).

Principal leadership is crucial: the foundation of implementing a successful AVID program. Watt, Huerta, and Cossio (2004) found that lack of support or involvement by the principal resulted in a high turnover rate for the AVID site team and a lack of AVID training for the staff. The study claims that principals who are successful at implementing AVID programs develop a plan for selection of Site Team members and AVID elective teachers who are excited about AVID and willing to take a leadership role in the process.

consider maintaining fidelity to the eleven essentials outlined by AVID to maximize the full benefits of the program.

Table 1

11 Essential Components

Essential	Evidence
1. Recruitment must focus on students in the academic middle	The AVID student profile describes academic potential, with average to high test scores, and who have the desire and determination to go to college.
2. AVID program participants, both students and staff, must choose to participate in the AVID program.	Documentation is required from teachers and students indicating that they chose voluntarily to participate in the program.
3. The school must be committed to full implementation of the AVID program, with students enrolled in the AVID year-long elective class(es) available within the regular academic school day.	Documentation is required that provides evidence that AVID classes are scheduled within the day, usually a master schedule for the school where AVID is offered.
4. AVID students must be enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will enable them to meet requirements for university enrollment.	In Texas, this usually means students are enrolled in Pre-Advanced Placement or Advanced Placement courses. Student schedules are presented as evidence to verify compliance with this essential.
5. A strong, relevant writing and reading curriculum provide a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom.	Students in the AVID elective class spend time each week receiving instruction in writing-to-learn strategies and using the AVID writing curriculum.
6. Inquiry is used as a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom to promote critical thinking.	

than elective classes as seen in the higher levels. The four fifth grade teachers received a three-day AVID training, and parents received an overview at the beginning of the year

Impact of AVID in Middle School

Implementing AVID at the middle school level brings many challenges, especially in regards to a rigorous

2013; Huerta, Watt, & Butcher, 2013; Monachino, 2012; Peak, 2010). One study found that AVID schools experienced an increase on multiple school-wide indicators of success due to the increase of mid-level student academic performance (Watt et al., 2006). In a four-year study

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organized is a path to academic achievement. For the themes of effort and attitude, students mentioned their willingness to take more rigorous classes so that they would be better prepared for success in college. Additionally,

uwrrqtv"uvwfgpvuø"eqnngig"curktcvkqpu"d{ "rtqxfkpi"uvwfgpvu"ykvj"kphqt o cvkqp"qp"vjg"uvgru"pggfgf" to apply for college and financial aid. Students in the AVID elective receive support in the college enrollment and financial aid process (Watt et al., 2011). It appears that the longer a student was engaged in AVID, the more prepared they were for college (Huerta et al., 2013).

Impact of AVID on College Success

Once in college, AVID students may fare better than their non-AVID peers. It appears that AVID students persist into their second year of college at similar rates to those of their peers (Watt et al., 2011). This finding is significant, as AVID students are primarily underrepresented students of color and low socio-economic status, thus indicating that AVID is achieving its aim vq"enqug"cejkgxg o gpv" icru"*CXKF"Ugeqpfct {"Uvwfgpvuø"Eqnngig"Gptqnn o gpv"cpf"Rgtukuvgpeg+0 In a study of 36 AVID students attendingJETBT1 0 0 1 288.29 571.18 Tm{fa)486.6 433.15 Tm[)]TJETBT1 0 0 1 20

students studied reported using Cornell Notes, 69% attended tutoring sessions regularly, 58% used collaborative group work in their studies, 69% used time management strategies learned, and 85% used components of an AVID binder to keep organized.

Summary

Although it is clear that much research supports the use of AVID, most of the research has been non-experimental in nature, did not utilize comparison groups, and had small sample sizes. It is strongly recommended that a program evaluation plan be in place for measuring the local impacts of AVID.

Program Evaluation Plan

There are a few options for AVID program evaluation in PPS schools, particularly with schools that are not considered AVID-sponsored schools and are not participating in the larger evaluation. The plan and timeline for non-sponsored schools can follow closely to that of the official AVID evaluation plan. Options for an evaluation plan can vary depending on budget, time, and other constraints.

Teacher, Student, and Administrator Surveys

One low budget option would be to implement a series of surveys that would be completed by teachers, students, and administrators. The surveys would closely mirror those developed by the outside evaluators. Data would be collected immediately, or at baseline (i.e., prior to implementation of AVID), and then annually in the following spring . Sample questions for each group are as follows, all potentially using a five to seven point scale (i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Potential survey items for teachers.

1. This school has clearly defined specific standards for what constitutes college and career readiness for students.
2. There is a cultural belief among teachers and staff that the role of school is to prepare students for life beyond high school.
3. Part of my job is to teach the skills necessary to be successful at college and careers.

Potential survey items for students. Students can be asked questions from a variety of topics. For example, open-ended questions may focus on specific AVID strategies they may use in the classroom, attitudes about higher education, self-efficacy or growth mindset, and attitudes about school in general.

1. I use a three-ring binder for my class work.
2. I keep my three-ring binder for my class work orderly.
3. I use and/or take notes chunked into three categories/columns of questions, facts, and steps.
4. How important to your future is getting an education beyond high school?
5. If I try hard, I believe I can do my schoolwork well.
6. Learning at school is important.

Potential survey items for administrators.

1. My students are taking an active responsibility for their own learning. Responsibility may be expressed by a willingness to advocate for their academic needs, taking rigorous/advanced classes, and/or aspiring for a higher degree.
2. I talk with students about college.

3. Based on your observations and opinion, about what percentage of the students in your school do you think will attend college?

Teacher, Student, and Administrator Interviews

For schools with more time and larger budgets, an evaluation plan could include teacher, student and administrator surveys as well as focus group or individual interviews. The benefits of conducting interviews in addition to surveys would be a more in-depth, accurate picture of the impact of AVID. Some sample interview questions for administrators and teachers are listed below.

1. What are some particular strengths reflected in your evidence of any of the 11 AVID Essentials at your school?
2. What aspects of the 11 AVID Essentials have room for growth? How might you address these in your site plan?
3. What evidence demonstrates that the school is committed to full implementation of AVID?
4. Is there evidence that the use of AVID is promoting student higher-level inquiry? Why or Why not?
5. Is there evidence that the use of AVID is promoting student collaboration? Why or Why not?
6. Is there evidence that the use of AVID is promoting student critical thinking? Why or Why not?
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Fidelity of Implementation of AVID

It is imperative that the degree of the fidelity of implementation of AVID be measured as part of any evaluation plan. One potential method of measurement is the Certification Self-Study (CSS), which are data already collected by certified AVID sites.

In a wide-scale study to determine the level of reliability and validity of the Certification Self Study (CSS), researchers found the tool to be a good measure of fidelity of implementation. The exception to this is in AVID Essential 4, academic rigor, in which juniors and seniors may have already completed at least one AP, IB, or dual credit college course. Also, 100% of students may already be involved in rigorous courses (AVID Center, 2014) at the time of application to the middle school level (Johnston et al., 2010). Both of these items had low-level correlations and did not meet criteria for internal consistency. The primary reason for this is that both indicators could measure student outcomes as a result of AVID implementation as opposed to assessing fidelity of implementation. At the high school level, barriers to students taking college entrance exams, such as fees, could affect an accurate measure of the academic rigor essential (Johnston et al., 2010).

Because the CSS is completed as part of the AVID certification process, there is some concern that completely accurate fidelity of implementation data cannot be collected from this tool alone. Although some researchers have discovered that, through proper implementation of AVID, students who are underachieving, economically disadvantaged, and/or ethnic minority can succeed in a rigorous curriculum; they have also discovered that the implementation of AVID varies substantially among the programs, despite demographic commonalities and a consistent vision (Watt et al., 2002).

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