



## Two-Year Evaluation of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID ) Program

Catherine A. Little & Anne C. Black  
University of Connecticut

### The AVID Program

- School-wide reform initiative
- Goal to increase the enrollment of historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students in 4-year colleges
- Provides increased access to and support in advanced courses at the middle and high school levels

## The AVID Program

---

- Started by Mary Catherine Swanson in 1980
- Clairemont High School, San Diego County
- Prompted by the school's desegregation mandate
- The first cohort of AVID students graduated from high school with a 3.2 GPA
- All of the original 30 AVID students attended college; 28 of them 4-year college
- Currently available in approx. 2300 schools in 36 states and 15 countries

## Target Student Population

---

- The AVID program selects for participation students
  - of ethnic, linguistic, or economic backgrounds that are historically underrepresented in 4-year colleges
  - who face obstacles to college enrollment
  - who are the first in their families to attend college
  - who express willingness and determination to put forth the effort to succeed in advanced classes
  - whose parents/guardians agree to support the student throughout his/her program participation

## Rationale for Program

---

- Involvement in rigorous coursework during HS cited as most important predictor of college success (Adelman, 1999)
- Individuals enrolled in AP courses in HS more likely to obtain an advanced educational degree than those of equal ability who were not (Bleske-Rechek, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2004).
- Among African-American and Latino students, the intensity and quality of the secondary school curriculum was a stronger indicator of bachelor's degree completion than any other "pre-college" variable (Adelman, 1999).
- Students of ethnic minority and those from lower SES groups have historically not had the same access to AP courses as other students (Leonard et al., 2003)

## 11 Program "Essentials"

(Smith, AVID Center)

---

1. Selection of Students
2. Participation of students and staff
3. Scheduling (school commitment)
4. Rigor (advanced courses)
5. Writing (strong, relevant, writing curriculum)
6. Inquiry
7. Collaboration and Reading
8. Tutorials
9. Data
10. Resources (school commitment to staff development)
11. Interdisciplinary Site Team

## Criteria for Student Selection

(Smith, AVID Center)

- 2.0 – 3.5 GPA in regular classes (“academic middle”)
- College Potential
- Standardized test scores are passing or borderline
- Desire and Determination
- Low SES
- Historically underrepresented in Pre-AP, AP, and College Enrollment
- First in Family to Attend College

## Typical Week in AVID Program

(Smith, AVID Center)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>AVID Curriculum</b> Cornell-style note-taking Test-taking and study skills Assignment-tracking Writing to learn College and careers	<b>Tutorials</b>	<b>AVID Curriculum</b> Cornell-style note-taking Test-taking and study skills Assignment-tracking Writing to learn College and careers	<b>Tutorials</b>	Binder checks Field trips Media Center Speakers Motivational Activities

## Results to Date

---

- At the high school level
  - Studies have suggested positive AVID program effects on such variables as
    - Performance on standardized achievement tests
    - School attendance rates
    - GPA
    - Enrollment in advanced courses
    - College enrollment and acceptance rates

## Results to Date

---

- At the middle school level
  - Study suggested positive AVID program effects on
    - GPA
    - Credit accumulation in High School
    - AP course enrollment
- Most studies were descriptive and did not include indication of statistical significance or effect size of program effects
- Many results were tentative and inconclusive

## Results to Date

---

- Some studies have suggested differential AVID program effectiveness across groups based on
  - ethnicity
  - gender
  - SES
  - years in the AVID program

## AVID Program Evaluation

---

- 2-Year Evaluation Period: 2004 – 2006
- Funded by *Advanced Placement Incentive Program* federal grant
- Goal of APIP is to increase AP access to students
  - Development or expansion of AP programs in schools with high proportions of low-income students

## AVID Program Evaluation Design

---

- Quasi-Experimental Research Design
- 3 Middle Schools within one urban school district
- 2 “AVID” schools, 1 comparison school
- All students selected based on AVID selection criteria
- Two cohorts of students
  - 51 AVID students and 22 comparison students in each cohort

## Qualitative Data Collection

---

- Interviews for stakeholder perceptions of successes and challenges of program implementation
- Semi-structured individual interviews:
  - AVID teachers
  - AVID coordinators
  - Principals
- Semi-structured focus groups:
  - Cluster (content-area) teachers
  - Students
  - Parents



## Results of Qualitative Data Analysis

---

- Major themes:
  - Academic focus, motivation, and behavior
  - High expectations for academics and behavior
  - Program coordination, organization, and professional development
  - Challenges and growing pains yet value over time



## Academic Motivation and Focus

---

- “My grades are better because I study more, because I understand more, because I ask the questions during tutorial.” (grade 7 student)
- “The teachers have noticed.... [The students] are conducting business in a different way in the classroom now, so they’re using the skills they’re learning in here outside in the other areas as well.” (AVID teacher)
- “He’s looking into colleges and what college has what... That’s something I couldn’t get him to do last year. I would ... talk to him about college and the future, and he really didn’t see it, and now he’s the one talking to me about it.” (Parent)

## High Expectations

---

- “The students themselves notice a difference in attitude.... the kids are really focused on education – the social stuff, the playing around, it’s not there [in the AVID cluster].” (Principal)
- “They’re telling the other kids, ‘Close your mouth, I want to learn’ and ‘stop interrupting the teacher,’ and they’re really trying to take the school back and make it an academic setting.” (AVID teacher)
- “If you want to be in [AVID]... you have to show the teachers that you’re willing to go your half of the way, and that you have to behave in front of them to show them that you’re not just doing it to do it.” (grade 7 student)

## Program Organization and Professional Development

---

- “...I find myself doing Cornell notes.... I think a lot of the strategies that we’re trying to teach these kids, I’m trying to take on myself and use which has made me a better teacher.” (AVID cluster teacher)
- “I use a lot of them [AVID strategies] in my LA class just because, now I’m only a second year teacher so it’s really the only way I know how to teach now. I don’t know anything other than AVID, so it’s in everything that I do.” (AVID cluster teacher)
- “Just like the kids feel more confident, I think the teachers do also, and I think that they enjoy coming to work every day....” (AVID teacher)

## Key Challenges

- Funding
- Scheduling
- Extending the reach of AVID without diluting its effect
- Conflicting priorities and high expectations for students
  - “Most of time they say ‘You’re an AVID student, you shouldn’t be doing that’ and I would want to be treated (the same way) by everyone else, even though I’m in AVID.”
  - “It gets us scared if they say we’re going to get kicked out of AVID, or we’re going to miss this or that. And they put us on probation just because we failed class. It scares kids, kids feel like, ‘oh, I’m stupid.’ They feel like ‘oh, I’m not important in that class.’ It gets them upset, it gives them stress. And when they go home, they stress even more.”

## Program Value Over Time

- “We show kids who are able to do the work that they *can* do the work and there’s a place to go with that work...” (principal)
- “They should start it in 3rd grade. Then, the little kids in elementary school will learn how to take notes in elementary school, which will help their grades ‘cause their grades usually start when they’re little... then they’ll get straight A’s like us.” (grade 6 student)
- “I see the whole program as a cultural change.... there’s a discernable difference in terms of attitudes.” (principal)
- “It will keep me on the college track. If I’m in high school some people will try to make you to do other things. If I wasn’t in AVID I would probably do other things than study or do homework and stuff, but now I’m in AVID I would do more homework and it would help me get better grades and keep my mind on just school.” (grade 7 student)

## Quantitative Data Collection

---

- We collected data *over time* by Student Survey on such indicator variables as
  - Attitudes toward school
  - Academic self-efficacy
  - Self-reported grades
  - Time spent on homework
  - Educational goals
  - Academic motivation

## Quantitative Data Collection

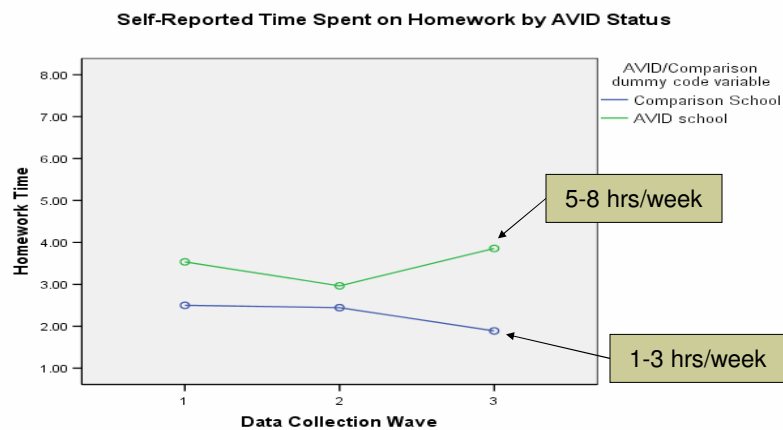
---

- Data were collected from student records *over time* on
  - Earned Grades
    - *Language Arts*
    - *Math*
  - Number of absences by school year
  - CMT scores for *Reading, Writing, and Math*
  - Rate of enrollment in 8th-grade Algebra

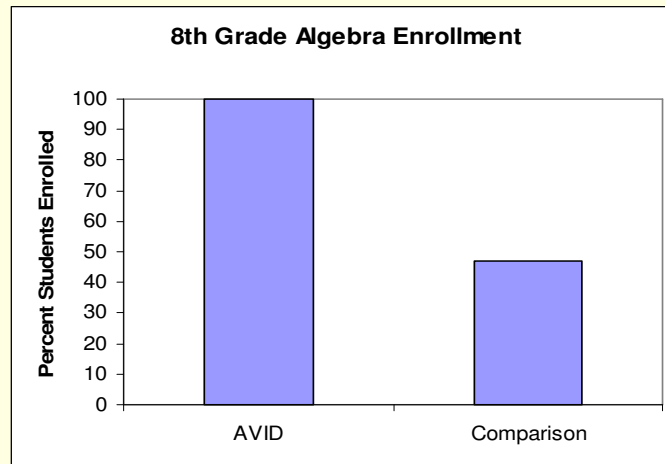
## Results of Quantitative Data Analysis

- Results differed substantially by Cohort
- For *Cohort 1*, there were no statistically significant differences between students in AVID and Comparison schools on any measures in either 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade except
  - Homework
  - Enrollment in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Algebra

## Cohort 1 Results



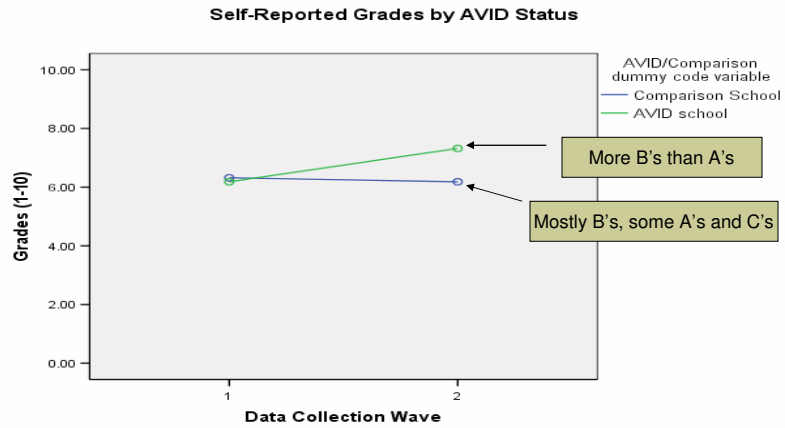
## Cohort 1 Results



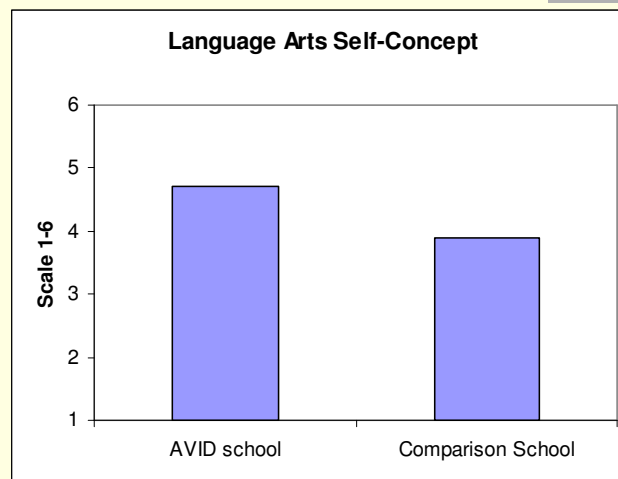
## Results of Quantitative Data Analysis

- For *Cohort 2*, there were several statistically significant group mean differences, favoring AVID students over Comparison students:
  - *Self-Reported Grades*
  - *Language Arts Self-Concept*
  - *School Self-Concept*
  - *General Self-Concept*
  - *Language Arts Grades*
  - *CMT Writing Scale Scores*

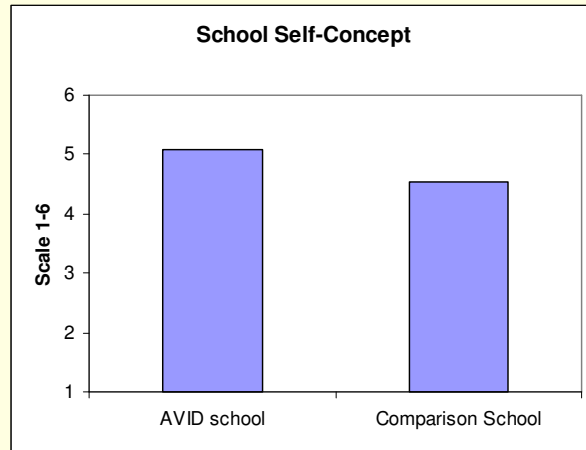
## Cohort 2 Results



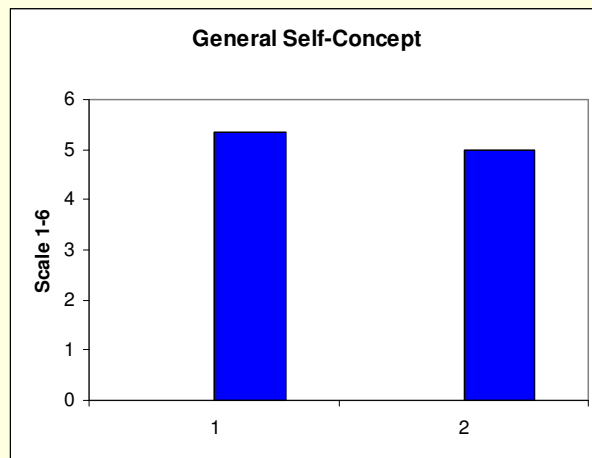
## Cohort 2 Results



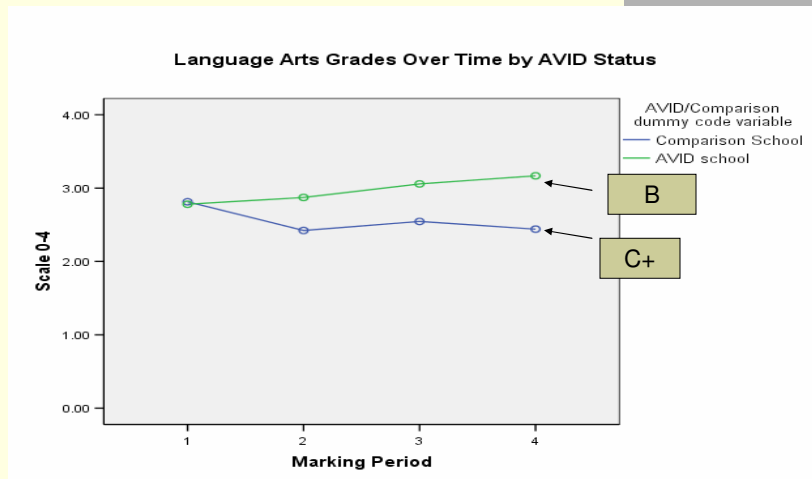
## Cohort 2 Results



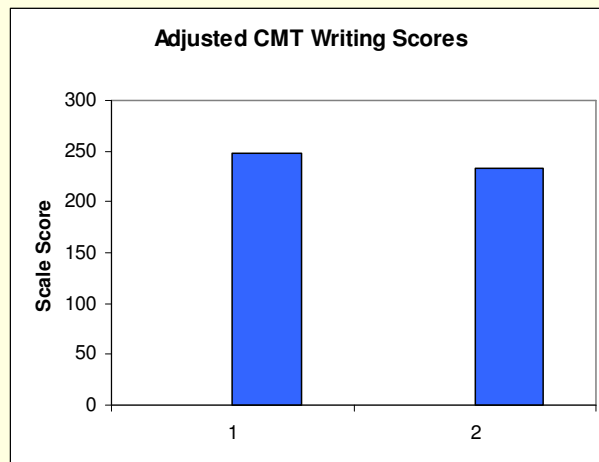
## Cohort 2 Results



## Cohort 2 Results



## Cohort 2 Results



## Summary of Program Evaluation

---

- Stakeholders strongly support program despite differential effects
- It appears that program effects may not become evident at least until teachers' 2<sup>nd</sup> year of AVID implementation
- Within 2 years of AVID implementation, there appears to be an association between Middle School AVID participation and
  - Higher Student Academic Self-Concept
  - Increased Language Arts Grades
  - Higher Standardized Writing Scores

## Recommendations for Additional Indices of Program Effectiveness

---

1. Student Organization
2. Student Behavior
3. Leadership