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Advancement Via Individual Determination Graduates' Applying Instructional Strategies In Post-Secondary Education

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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MA, Grand Canyon University, 2007

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The problem in a suburban school district in a northwestern state is that fewer socioeconomic disadvantaged and minority students are graduating high school and attending post-secondary education than their White and economic middle-class counterparts. The disparity continues to expand the achievement gap between minorities and Whites within the education system and continues a cycle of poverty for the poorest and minority students. Bandura's self-efficacy theory guided the study. The purpose of this bounded qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the advancement via individual determination (AVID) instructional strategies high school graduates used in their transition to post-secondary education. The research questions addressed which instructional strategies the AVID graduates learned and how they used the strategies in post-secondary education. The participants were 13 AVID high school graduates from a suburban northwestern school district who entered post-secondary education in 2014–2018. Data collected through one-on-one interviews were analyzed thematically using descriptive and axial coding to allow themes to emerge using the constructs of the framework. AVID students suggested that focused notetaking, collaboration, and self-regulatory behaviors assisted them in their academic success. Based on the findings, a 3-day professional development was created for high school teachers to design content area lessons featuring student collaborative groups, self-reflection, and notetaking strategies. This endeavor may contribute to positive social change when administrators provide teachers with grouping, social emotional, and instructional strategies for AVID enrollees, which may result in increased AVID graduates and post-secondary students.

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Introduction

Education reforms of the 21st century strive to increase student graduation rates and achievement for all. Since the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), students of color still represent a lower percentage of those students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and honors programs that prepare students for college throughout the United States. Research indicates a lower number of socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students are attending post-secondary education and earning a degree, a disparity exists for Whites (41%) as compared to Blacks (22%), Hispanics (15%), and Native Americans (<10%; Davis, Smither, Zhu, & Stephan, 2017; Kerr, 2014; Klugman, 2013; McKenzie, 2014; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016, Perna et al., 2015; Saenz & Combs, 2015; Swanson & Nagy, 2014).

There are programs, such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), in place where instructors teach the skills and give support necessary for low-income and minority students considered to be at-risk to continue their education and challenge them with rigorous courses during their high school and post-secondary education. AVID is designed to build academic skills with students who are less likely to graduate from high school and attend post-secondary education. Seventy-five percent of students in AVID receive free-or reduced lunches, 86% are from demographics historically underrepresented in high education, 75% take at least one Advanced Placement course, 93% complete the requirements for attending a 4-year college, and 96% take either the

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT) (AVID, 2018). Students in AVID also have higher attendance rates and grade point averages (GPAs) along with higher composite and mathematics scores on the ACT than non-AVID students (Gaskins, 2014).

The instructional strategies utilized by the AVID teachers build students' skills and increase self-efficacy to assist them in the completion of high school and transition to post-secondary education and training (Pugh & Tschannen-Moran, 2016; Swanson, 1986, 1996). The components of AVID include reading, writing, inquiry, organization and collaboration (AVID, 2018). Instruction in Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading (WICOR) is designed to benefit students in the AVID elective in high school and across the curriculum. Students in the daily AVID elective class receive instruction in notetaking for use in all classes and have tutorial sessions twice each week where they bring class work that is posing a struggle for them to complete. The tutors are district employees, who are often college students and trained in AVID note-taking and instructional strategies. During the tutorial sessions, small groups work on mathematics, English, history or other subject matter dependent upon the student needs each week. During the other daily sessions, their instructor guides students through college essay writing, SAT and ACT preparation, college and scholarship applications, or applying note taking to their coursework. Students graduate from AVID by completing all general high school credit requirements and at least one advanced course each year coupled with their AVID binder where they show their use of the note-taking strategies for their course work and organize their assignments from all classes.

The purpose of this study was to explore the AVID instructional strategies high school graduates used to transition to post-secondary education. These students were successful with high school completion and moved on to post-secondary education. Interviewing these graduates gave insight to their academic self-efficacy in using the instructional strategies learned in high school and carried on to post-secondary education.

Definition of the Problem

The problem is fewer socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students are graduating high school and attending post-secondary education than their White and economic middle-class counterparts throughout the United States and in this local school district. Ellerbrock and Keifer (2013) identified the importance of the ninth-grade year as an indicator of high school completion. Students who are not successful in their ninth-grade year are more likely to drop out of high school; thus, putting students at risk of failing their coursework. Students who drop out of high school decrease their long-term earning potential, putting themselves at risk for continuing a cycle of poverty. Dropping out of high school also increases their likelihood to have children who do not complete high school. High school dropouts are less employable, are less healthy long-term, and are at an increased risk for crime and going to prison (Huang, 2014; NCES, 2015; Reardon, 2015).

When students transition to high school, they are in classes that are required for graduation. Failing courses in middle school does not affect their long-term academic career; however, it does leave students lacking content knowledge, study skills, and positive academic habits as they transition into high school (Ellerbrock & Keifer, 2013).

Students often struggle academically and socially when they lack the skills and preparedness for high school especially when transitioning from middle school where they are promoted to the next grade even if they fail courses (Roybal et al., 2013). The lack of secondary school readiness puts students' academic success at-risk and increases the likelihood that they will dropout.

There are various internal and external factors that affect students' transitions from middle school to high school. Uvaas and McKevitt (2013) found multiple stressors during the transition to high school including increased expectations in courses and an overall decrease in grade point average. One factor that contributes to students failing their courses is a lack of academic self-efficacy (Putwain, Sanders, & Larkin, 2014). Without study skills being taught, the students often fail their freshman courses and start on a path to not complete high school (Uvaas & McKevitt, 2013). It is currently unknown what factors influence graduates of the at-risk populations to complete high school while facing multiple challenges that deter others away from graduation.

With increases in benchmark assessments and standardized testing throughout the United States, students are still struggling to meet their course needs in the ninth grade and throughout high school due to their lack of study skills (Bernhardt, 2013) and academic self-efficacy. There is currently only one program, in this district, that explicitly instructs students to be successful in high school and in post-secondary endeavors through concentrating on pro-academic behaviors, including study skills, in a suburban northwestern state high school. The AVID curriculum teaches pro-academic behaviors throughout middle school and high school. Nationally, 86% of AVID students

are of ethnicities historically underrepresented in higher education, and 75% of enrollees are low-socioeconomic status (SES) (AVID, 2018).

The AVID program explicitly instructs students in multiple skills that are necessary for all students, builds self-efficacy in their academic behaviors through supporting students in rigorous classes through tutoring, and connects them to post-high school education (Swanson, 1986, 1996). The students enrolled in the program self-select the AVID elective class, are recommended by a teacher, counselor or administrator, and then complete an interview with two members of the AVID site team. Once a member of program, each student is mentored by the same instructor, administrator, and counseling staff through their years in middle and/or high school. The consistency with the staff connection has been shown to build a bond with the students (Putwain et al., 2014) that is supportive. Without a support within the school, at-risk students are more likely to drop out.

The AVID program was initially adopted in the school district in 2009 as a response to economically disadvantaged and minority students being underrepresented in advanced placement courses and having lower graduation rates, concerns associated with the achievement gap. Teachers and administrators brought the program to the district as an initiative to improve overall graduation rates and increase the skill level of potentially at-risk students through a transition program that includes academic support throughout high school (AVID, 2018). The first group of students for this school district began the program as sophomores in high school during the 2009–2010 school year.

Despite much research on the achievement gap, the AVID program, and the transition to high school and to post-secondary institutions, it is unknown what AVID instructional strategies graduates apply to help them graduate on time and transition to post-secondary institutions. Knowing which strategies and how students applied these strategies in their coursework, both in high school and in post-secondary settings, may help administrators and teachers ensure AVID strategies are presented clearly and to encourage continued use by the graduates after completing high school. The AVID site lead expressed that it will be beneficial to know which strategies the graduates are using in the post-secondary setting, to benefit the instructors for future AVID participants.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In a suburban school district located in a northwestern state, AVID has been implemented across the district for the last 9 years, as a tool for helping at-risk students achieve passing grades and attempt challenging courses for college preparation, while mentoring them towards graduation. In 2009, the year the first group of AVID students began the program, there was an overall graduation rate 70.6% in the district. In 2012, when the first group of AVID students graduated, the rate increased across all demographics. Table 1 lists the graduation rates from 2009-2017 (see Table 1). The overall graduation rate in 2012 was 80.1%.

Table 1

Graduation Rates for the School District 2009—2017

Demographic	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
American Indian/Alaskan Native	49.1	39.5	65.8	64.3	52.4	45.0	69.2	73.7	84.6
Black/African-American	71.4	66.1	80.2	70.8	69.2	81.9	88.7	87.9	87.3
Caucasian	71.4	75.3	85.6	80.3	85.4	86.7	86.0	90.4	88.5
Hispanic/ Latino	59.7	61.9	74.3	81.5	85.7	78.4	86.0	84.9	87.3
Low-income	46.5	55.3	75.2	84.1	69.7	77.6	79.1	83.4	81.5
Two or more races			84.7	84.1	84.5	84.2	89.7	89.8	85.3
All students	70.6	73.5	84.3	80.1	83.7	84.6	86.6	89.6	87.2

Note. Two or more races not reported until 2011.

Another factor that may have influenced graduation rates was an enlistment change with the U.S. Army. Prior to 2008–2009, the enlistment requirements did not include a high school diploma. For the years of 2008–2017, a diploma was required for all branches of the armed forces. As of 2018, the army will help students towards a General Education Diploma (GED) (United State Army)

Prior to the implementation of AVID, in this school district, a faculty position was created to help students who are credit deficient complete failed courses. The teacher meets with all students who have failed classes and guides them towards on-time graduation using online credit retrieval software program, Odysseyware. The On-Time Graduation Specialist (OTGS) was hired for the fall of 2007, at each of the comprehensive high schools, and has continued to work with credit deficient students during the day and after school towards graduation. Additionally, the OTGS links

students with classes that help them build their skills to pass the state standardized assessments, during the school day, with a faculty member in science, mathematics or English. The Collection of Evidence (COE) classes began in 2008 to assist students who failed the state assessments to meet the requirements for graduation.

As of 2017, the overall graduation rate for this local district increased to 87.2% with low-income and minority students achieving graduation at a lower rate than their White counterparts (Washington State Report Card, 2018). The graduation rates in this local district have increased for the at-risk students since the full implementation of the AVID program, across the three comprehensive high schools. The AVID high school graduation rate in the local district is 100% for years 2015–2018.

Beginning in the 2009–2010 school year, the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) began in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Tenth-grade students were expected to pass the reading and writing portion of the exam to graduate. A clear increase in reading and writing is seen across all demographics the year the first AVID students took the test (2009–2010) as compared to the 2008–2009 school year scores of 10th grade students. Table 2 represent the percentage of 10th grade students who passed the HSPE reading assessment between 2009 and 2014, Table 3 presents the percentage of 10th grade students who passed the HSPE writing assessments between 2009 and 2014. However, the standardized testing data for the same years has not shown an overall increase in scores and the state assessment changed in the 2014–2015 school year.

Table 2

Percentage of 10th Grade Students who Passed HSPE Reading Assessment 2009--2014

Demographic	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<10	87.5	84.0	73.9	86.6	86.3
Black/African American	70.4	69.5	72.3	69.1	83.5	81.9
Hispanic/Latino	54.2	64.8	83.6	81.6	83.5	82.4
Low-income	57.6	72.2	81.3	79.2	85.4	83.2
Two or more races			92.3	89.3	91.7	88.0
White	66.6	86.5	90.2	89.1	91.5	90.7
All Students	65.5	83.4	88.7	87.1	90.3	88.6

Note: Two or more races not reported until 2011.

Table 3

Percentage of 10th Grade Students who Passed HSPE Writing Assessment 2009—2014

Demographic	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<4	>95	86.9	73.9	86.6	78.2
Black/African American	78.5	92.5	89.0	89.8	89.5	89.8
Hispanic/Latino	65.2	86.6	88.8	87.0	88.3	86.8
Low-income	73.8	86.2	87.7	85.1	88.2	86.9
Two or more races			92.9	90.5	92.3	89.7
White	86.0	93.3	94.8	89.8	89.5	89.8
All Students	82.5	92.5	93.5	90.7	91.6	91.7

Note: N suppression of data due to identifying factors of students (Washington State Report Card, 2018)

The newest state standardized test is the Smart Balanced Assessment (SBA). Table 4 displays the percentage of 11th grade students who passed the SBA from 2015–2017, the most recent year reported (see Table 4). The test is administered in the 11th-grade as opposed to the previous HSPE, given in the 10th grade students. With the SBA, which was first administered in the 2014–2015 school year, students are assessed in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Passing this assessment was required for graduation beginning in 2016. Minority and low-income students are not passing the SBA in mathematics (Math) and English Language Arts (ELA) at a higher rate than White students each year since the test has been administered (Washington State Report

Table 4

Percentage of 11th Grade Students Who Passed SBA 2015—2017

	2015		2016		2017	
Demographic	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
American Indian/Alaskan Native	28.5	14.2	*N*<10	16.6	*N*<10	10.0
Black/ African American	13.2	N<5	61.6	12.5	65.8	21.7
Caucasian	16.5	11.8	85.6	26.7	80.3	33.5
Hispanic/Latino	16.2	9.0	71.0	15.8	67.8	19.2
Low-income	17.2	7.3	72.2	18.5	62.7	13.5
Two or more races	19.7	7.4	84.0	22.9	77.9	22.2
All Students	16.9	10.9	82.1	24.4	77.0	29.7

Note: **N* suppression of data due to identifying factors of students (Washington State Report Card, 2018)

The local school district allowed access to the HSPE scores of AVID graduates for the year 2015 and the SBA scores for years 2015–2018, the most recent available for

use. The scores given were total score, not separated by ELA and mathematics test type, meaning the student percentages given passed both assessment on the first attempt. The AVID population tends to include students of low SES and minorities, populations who tend to perform lower on standardized tests than their White peers. However, the AVID students passed the HSPE at a higher rate that any demographic listed for 2014, including the total school population 91.7%, at a rate of 93.83% on their first attempt, in 2015 (see Table 5). For the SBA, starting in 2016, the AVID population passed at a rate of 94.6% in comparison to 82.1% of the total district population for the highest ELA score percentage recorded. In the year 2017, the AVID student population passed the SBA at a rate of 90.9% as compared to 77% of the total school district population in the highest category of passing score (see Table 5).

The data for 2018 identifying the first attempt passing percentage for SBA tests is not available on the state report card site. The site now reports the passing percentage, no matter the attempts for students; therefore, skewing the data when comparing the AVID students and the general population of the school district. The AVID population of students is continually passing the SBA at a higher rate than the general population of the district's three high schools.

Table 5

Percentage of AVID Students Who Passed The HSPE and SBA 2015—2018

2015	2016	2017	2018
HSPE	SBA	SBA	SBA
93.83	94.6	90.9	91.2

The strategies taught within and support provided by the AVID elective class are especially important for students who are at-risk; however, the program is limited in the local high schools, only allowing approximately 125 students each year (25-30 per grade level) into the program. This number is from a population of approximately 1,890 to 2,000 students per high school for Grades 9–12, a small portion of the total school population. The limit is due to staffing allocation, directly related to funding at the district level and the balance of offering a variety of elective courses. The number of students at-risk of academic failure is larger than those students who are served by the AVID program. Exploring students' ability to apply AVID instructional strategies in postsecondary education may help school leaders and instructors to see the benefits of this program.

The approximately 125 students who are admitted into the program each year is small in comparison to the 35.3% of the student body receiving free or reduced lunches and minority students representing 37.3% of the total population, both indicators of being at-risk of academic failure (Washington State Report Card, 2016). AVID students received free or reduced lunches ranging from 38%–52% between years 2015–2018, a higher percentage than the general population, meaning more students in the AVID program are reporting they are low-income. However, the number of students accessing free or reduced lunches tends to be under reported at the high school level, according to the AVID site lead.

Table 6

Percentage of AVID Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch 2015—2018

2015	2016	2017	2018
42.05	33.33	52.70	38.16

Students who have low socioeconomic status and minority are less likely to graduate from high school and need a college readiness program featuring a support system with strategies like AVID to assist them. The instructional strategies in AVID help students to develop skills to be successful in 2- and 4-year post-secondary institutions (Llamas et al., 2014). The AVID graduates' ability to apply the instructional strategies in their schooling may help them bridge the achievement gap. Low-socioeconomic status and minority students are considered at-risk and are targeted through communication with teachers and counselors to enter the AVID program prior to high school. The students who are in the academic middle are encouraged to apply to the program and parents are contacted. Data gathered from one-on-one interviews with students who graduated provided an explanation of their self-efficacy in post-secondary education using the AVID strategies. The data provided by participants better informed the district about which AVID instructional strategies they used. The continued use of the instructional strategies may sustain and increase graduation rates. The AVID site lead at one high school expressed an interest in knowing which instructional strategies are most beneficial for the graduates into college. She stated that knowing the instructional strategies that were more beneficial to students could influence the professional development offered to the AVID instructors, school counselors and administrators and

help future AVID students. The site lead also stated that speaking to AVID graduates about the program could be informative for the district in the choices made to include more students and how the students are chosen for AVID.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Low-income and minority students are more likely to leave high school prior to graduation. Seventy-five percent of Black, 72% of American Indian, and 75% of Hispanic students graduate on time from high school (NCES, 2015). Students who do not earn a high school diploma are more at risk for living in poverty, having long-term health issues, and rearing children who also do not finish high school (Huang, 2014; NCES, 2015; Reardon, 2016). Students who do not graduate high school, especially Black males, are more likely to go to prison (US Department of Labor, 2013; Boykin & Noguera, 2011), leaving them less likely to find an occupation or continue in their education, and decreasing their future earning potential. Students who do not graduate high school tend to make about $25,000 annually (NCES, 2015), which is at the poverty line for a family of four (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2019). As of 2014, 87% of White students graduated high school on time as compared to 73% Native American, 76% of Hispanic students, 73% of Black, and 89% of Asian/Pacific Islanders in the United States. However, only 0.6% Native American, 9% Black, 10.7% of Asian/Pacific Islander, and 18.8% of Hispanic students participated in AP courses as compared to 55.9% of White students (College Board, 2015). This lack of enrollment in courses that prepares students for college is one of the factors for low-income and minority students not entering post-secondary education (Bernhardt, 2013).

Students who are at-risk also need guidance to navigate the school system to have it work for them. AVID teaches them why taking AP classes is beneficial and how to apply to college while supporting them in the process (Bernhardt, 2013; Plano Clark, Stringfield, Dariotis, & Clark, 2017; Swanson 1986, 1996). AP classes are one indicator of high school achievement and increases the likelihood of continuing to post-secondary education. Enrollment in post-secondary education, which is a goal of AVID, is lower for all demographics nationally with only Asian students (65.2%) enrolling at a higher rate than Whites. In 2014, only 42.2% of Whites, 35.4% of Native Americans, 32.6% of Black, 34.7% of Hispanic, and 41% of Pacific Islander graduates enrolled in post-secondary education at 2- or 4-year institutions (NCES, 2015).

Definitions

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID): a program designed to help underachieving students with high academic potential prepare for entrance to college and universities (AVID, 2018).

Achievement Gap: refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students, such as White students and minorities, for example, or students from higher-income and lower-income households (Coleman, 1966).

Advanced Placement (AP): a rigorous academic program designed to prepare students for college through courses taught in high school (College Board, 2015).

At-risk Student: defined as a student who is likely to fail at school, typically seen as dropping out before high school completion, including low socioeconomic and minority status students. (NCES, 2015).

Low Socioeconomic Status (SES): a term referring to students who are either enrolled or eligible to participate in the federal free or reduced lunch price program (NCES, 2015).

Historically Underrepresented Students: a term referring predominantly to Black or Hispanic student groups/populations (Arendale, 2007).

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): the process to through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Elias et al., 2014)

Significance

This study is important because it may benefit the local stakeholders by offering how potentially at-risk students applied AVID instructional strategies in high school and college. The graduates of the AVID program can benefit this school community by providing information regarding their uses of the instructional strategies in post-secondary education. The AVID teachers and administration will benefit from the data and can continue use of the instructional strategies identified as beneficial. AVID students will also be instructed in the strategies by their trained teachers, that have been reported as beneficial by the graduates and will possibly have more success due to this data.

Knowing which strategies benefitted the AVID graduates in their success will allow the teachers in this district to continue their instruction in the AVID strategies, the administration to continue the AVID program which makes it possible for more students to enter and complete the AVID program increasing their likelihood to go to college as well. Only a small portion of the economically disadvantaged and minority students of this district receive an invitation or self-select to be in this program. The results of this study may provide insight into the instructional strategies that AVID students applied to their coursework and helped them graduate.

Guiding/Research Question

The research questions listed below guided this study and helped gain insight into the instructional strategies that AVID graduates learned from high school courses and their ability to apply those skill sets to post-secondary education. Data reported directly from AVID graduates who were enrolled in or have completed college provided a better understanding of how each participant used their instructional strategies in multiple schools within the same district. From the reported data, the suburban northwest school district administration and teachers can support students enrolled in AVID with the instructional strategies and support of their self-efficacy for later application of those strategies in post-secondary education. The following research questions guided this qualitative research study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What instructional strategies did AVID graduates learn in high school to support their post-secondary success?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do AVID high school graduates perceive their ability to use AVID instructional strategies in post-secondary education?

Review of the Literature

I conducted a literature review on relevant topics related to this study. The topics include the transition to high school, self-efficacy theory, the achievement gap, social emotional learning and instructional strategies, and the AVID. While researching the problem, it became evident that AVID, a school wide implemented transition program, has assisted underrepresented populations to be successful in high school and graduate on to post-secondary education. The implementation of the AVID program has helped a select population of potentially at-risk students to graduate on time. However, there are many students who do not participate in the program. These students are at-risk of failing their classes and need the supportive instructional strategies, guidance, and support throughout high school to graduate and move on to post-secondary education. The data from this study identified AVID graduate's self-efficacy to apply instructional strategies in high school and post-secondary settings.

I conducted several searches for scholarly literature using the following library databases: ERIC, EBSCO, ProQuest, Thoreau, Google Scholar and Academic Search Complete. The keyword terms used to narrow down the search were *achievement gap, minorities, Latino, Black, transition programs, support programs,* and *instructional strategies.* My literature search resulted in the retrieval of over 800 articles, but only about 55 were relevant to the research topic.

Another necessary search was for the terms *transition to high school* and *high school transition to college*, in which I found 257 articles, with approximately 35 being relevant to this problem and study. Both sets of searches were in collaboration with the instructor and a university librarian for guidance. Fifty-five articles were chosen for further review and found to be relevant for this study.

The purpose of this study was to explore AVID high school graduates' ability to apply instructional strategies to their post-secondary setting. It is now understood by the researcher which strategies were effective to assist these at-risk students on their journey to graduation and pursuing post-secondary education. The graduates represented an at-risk population who were successful in completing high school and enrolling in post-secondary education. They were statistically more likely to continue a cycle of poverty, a risk for those who do not graduate high school and attend college. Their self-efficacy in applying the AVID instructional strategies was a tool they utilized to continue to use in post-secondary education.

Conceptual Framework

Through his theory of self-efficacy, Bandura (1986, 1997) stated that students who feel competent in their abilities to perform tasks will carry out those activities and avoid undertakings where they doubt their capability and will be used as the conceptual framework for this study. The self-efficacy theory directly relates to the AVID program, where students are explicitly instructed in note-taking strategies, collaboration, reading and writing techniques to build their confidence and motivate them to persevere in rigorous courses and at difficult tasks. The curriculum helps build belief in themselves

and motivates them to attempt difficult courses, navigate them through the school environment, and builds ambition to do well in school (Llamas et al., 2014).

Perceived self-efficacy has an influence on students in their academic performance capability (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Bernhardt, 2013). Students who doubt their personal self-efficacy in completing difficult tasks have multiple subskills to be successful and struggle in the face of difficult circumstances. Combining the subskills together to complete more complex tasks is the area of struggle for students who lack personal efficacy. Academic self-efficacy can be built by explicit instructional strategies and supported through class interactions. Confidence building through academics can increase self-esteem and increase social interactions.

Teachers who are culturally aware and encourage the students were more likely to see success in the children. Building self-efficacy is often characterized by motivation within students, increases engagement and academic success (Guvenc, 2015; Putwain et al., 2014). The AVID program design includes connections with a teacher throughout the high school experience, linking the students to a person who guides while building skill through interaction and the curriculum (Llamas et al., 2014; Swanson, 1996). By design, the AVID program builds skills in the student while keeping their social-emotional learning in mind, challenging the students academically with support personnel and continual involvement with a caring adult. Review of AVID graduates' ability to apply the instructional strategies in post-secondary education gave clear evidence to their self-efficacy. Interviews with AVID graduates provided data on the specific instructional strategies they have continued to use in post-secondary education. Details about if and

how they continue to use the strategies beyond high school illustrated the connection from the AVID tutorial and classroom experience that contribute to their abilities. Analyzed data provided by multiple graduates informed me of their feelings about their academic behaviors and if they employ their teachings from AVID when faced with a challenging task.

The Achievement Gap

The American public schools represent equal access to education for all; however, an achievement gap exists among minority and students of low socioeconomic status as compared to their White middle-class counterparts (NCES, 2016). Much work has been done to close this gap through the 1980s and 1990s and continues to date. The achievement gap is measured not only by drop-out rates, but enrollment in college preparatory programs, completion of advanced placements exams, and admittance to colleges (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; NCES, 2015; Noguera & Wing, 2008). The gap is characterized by the continued under-performance of poorer and minority students on standardized tests in comparison to their White counterparts.

Sixty years after the desegregation of schools due to a ruling by The Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, schools are still not providing equal access to quality instruction and materials (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Johnson, 2014; McKenzie, 2014; Noguera & Wing, 2008; Reardon, 2015). Students are still disadvantaged, especially in urban schools, which are often overcrowded, have fewer highly-qualified teachers, and less funding, (Johnson, 2014; Moon & Singh, 2015; Rothstein, 2014; Welsh, 2016) where it is difficult to be successful. Less access to trained teachers,

materials, and funds continue in low-income and urban areas where an increase in economic and racial segregation has occurred as well (Moon & Singh, 2015; Reardon, 2015; Welsh, 2016). School funding is based predominantly on property taxes, leaving students in poorer areas at a disadvantage as compared to their counterparts who live in middle-class or wealthier neighborhoods. It is difficult to retain teachers in lower-income districts, and students are educated with lower or unqualified teachers due to the low salaries, continuing the achievement gap (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Ferguson & Mehta, 2004; Moon & Singh, 2015; Reardon, 2015; Welsh, 2016).

Despite political agendas and pressure for reform, interventions in the classroom, including small group remediation and Response to Intervention (RTI), like explicit instruction aligned to benchmark standards have not wholly been effective, continuing a pattern of low performance by underserved populations of students (McKenzie, 2014). The most at-risk are students coming from poorer backgrounds and minority students, who are graduating at a rate of 65% nationally, as compared to middle-class White students graduating at more than 80% (NCES, 2015). The most underserved population are Black and Latinos, the largest percentage of the achievement gap (NCES, 2015). Such students are inhibited to ask questions, due to their fear of feeling stupid or risking being wrong in front of their peers or accused of "acting White" (Grantham & Biddle, 2014; Kerr, 2014; Neal-Barnett et al., 2010; Ogbu, 1978). This phenomenon is a cultural divide where many minority students will feel they should not earn good grades or be cooperative in the classroom for fear of acting like Whites in the eyes of their friends (Grantham & Biddle, 2014; Ogbu, 1978). Specifically, Black boys and men seek to be

assertive in the classroom, classified as acting out, to fit in with others, in ways that are culturally acceptable, including earning grades lower than a 3.5 grade point average (Grantham & Biddle, 2014; Neal-Barnett et al., 2010).

Transition to High School

Failure rates of students transitioning to high school are highest during the ninth grade and is an indicator of high school success (Roybal, Thornton, & Usinger, 2013). Students who struggled the most, when transitioning to high school are more likely underserved populations and minority students who may have a harder time connecting to their school (Benner, & Graham, 2015; Uvaas & McKevitt, 2013). At-risk students need to be connected to the school to be successful in their classes and not drop out. When students are drawn into a program that is supportive and helps them move from the eighth grade into high school, they are more likely to pass their classes and graduate (Usinger, 2013).

To help all students connect to the school, the culture must be inviting and caring for students, relationship building is part of the AVID program, which serves as a support and transition program into high school. A culture of care is created when students are with staff who they know cares about them and guides them through high school (Huerta et al., 2014; Llamas et al., 2014). With the lack of cognitive noncognitive skills, coupled with entering high school versus middle school, students often struggle academically and socially, putting their success in peril and increasing their dropout risk (Benner & Graham, 2015; Roybal et al., 2013). It is currently the practice at the district site to move

on students to high school despite failing classes at the middle school level. All students move on from the eighth grade, no matter their grade data.

Students who struggle the most in high school have many absences, fail their classes, and are less connected with staff and peers. Students who are credit deficient continue onto high school despite failing classes; however, they will not complete high school without passing their classes and earning enough credits to graduate.

Transition Programs

With the implementation of a transition program that includes teachers guiding students with the new expectations of high school, the students will be more successful in their core classes and are more likely to graduate on time (Saenz & Combs, 2015). Schools that have a comprehensive transition program, have more students, regardless of their socioeconomic or minority status, on track for graduation meaning more ninth graders attending school and passing their classes (Roybal et al., 2013). Embedded within the programs are mentoring with one consistent teacher, tutoring programs, visits to the high school prior to beginning, invitations to school clubs, and teaming of teachers. The students were found to feel more connected to the school had overall higher GPAs and better attendance, both further indicators of success (Saenz & Combs, 2015; Roybal et al., 2013) on the path to graduation. Mac Iver et al. (2015) found that engaging families as a necessary support for students to be successful in the transition to high school. Navigating through the process of entering high school with a program that includes parental engagement and communication is an area that is still lacking throughout the school system. Mac Iver et al. (2015) analyzed data from 433 school surveys regarding

engagement with families during the transitional period from middle to high school. Fewer students struggled in the first year among the schools where there were multiple outreach activities to parents of incoming students including several forms of communication. The authors reported a need for more creative and effective ways to connect with and influence student's families to help improve student outcomes. Connecting students to their school through their family is a necessity for success in high school (Bohnert et al, 2013; Mac Iver et al., 2015).

Uvaas and McKevitt (2013) found multiple stressors during the transition to high school including increased expectations in courses and found an overall decrease in grade point average overall. The stressors included increased expectations in the classroom, different social expectations and making new friends, managing multiple classes, and connectedness to the school. These studies were completed in an urban environment and included students from various ethnic backgrounds and a large percentage of low socioeconomic students.

A need for explicit instruction to guide students through the change of school model, as they enter high school was also found. Helping their academic development including explicit instruction in study skills was found to be a necessity to help students transition and stay connected to the school (Davis, Chang, Andrzejewski, & Poirier, 2014; Uvaas & McKevitt, 2013). Without study skills including organization systems (like use of a planner and binders) being explicitly taught, the students often fail their freshman courses and start on a path to not complete high school. (Uvaas & McKevitt, 2013). Instruction in Cornell Style note-taking, high-level questioning, and use of a

mentor tutor are specific ways to increase academic study skills. Continued guided use with the skills furthers the student's use in the context of all classes. (Bernhardt, 2013; Plano Clark et al., 2017).

Uvaas and McKevitt (2013), in a study of urban ethnically diverse eighth graders, found that students were concerned with earning passing grades and making new friends prior to entering high school. The students were surveyed again, once they had begun ninth grade. After the transition, the students reported a decrease in anxiety over making new friends, however their academic grades were the lowest in the first semester of ninth grade. Students were also less involved in extra-curricular activities while they were enrolled in high school compared to their time in middle school (Uvaas & McKevitt, 2013).

Benner and Graham (2010) also found the need for a connection to peers and a faculty member as indicators of high school success and decreased anxiety among the ninth graders who had recently transitioned to high school. In their study of multiethnic urban youth, Benner and Graham (2010) found students were more engaged with school activities fair better in their academics if specifically connected socially and with a faculty member than those who were not. Those students who were not connected to the school through clubs or specific programs had more absences and failed more classes, (Benner & Graham, 2015; Davis et al., 2014) putting them at a higher risk of dropping out and not completing high school. Teacher student relationships or relational engagement are a key indicator for success in classes and increased attendance (Davis et

al., 2014). Students who do not build a relationship in their school environment have less support.

Several factors contribute to students failing their courses, including a lack self-efficacy and pro-academic behaviors, perseverance and social skills. Huerta, Watt, and Butcher (2013) found that students enrolled in the AVID program were more successful in academics, and more likely to take challenging courses, than students who were not enrolled. Further, Huerta et al. (2013) included the necessity of students beginning the program as early as possible to benefit their overall academic skills for successful high school completion and move to post-secondary endeavors.

Students who take AVID are better prepared for college, take more AP classes and more likely to achieve 4-year university requirement as compared to their non-AVID counterparts (Huerta et al., 2013). Long-term involvement in the AVID program as an indicator of higher academic achievement, including meeting the 4-year university entrance requirements, while in high school.

Social Emotional Learning

Interventions for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) along with efforts to increase achievement can benefit students who historically struggle in academics (Elias et al., 2014; Farrington et al., 2012). Instruction that keeps a student's emotional well-being in mind, can benefit the classroom, towards increased academic scores (Elias et al., 2014). Systematic instruction in non-cognitive or soft skills including problem solving and relationship building within a school climate that is welcoming and supportive can move students further towards believing they will be successful (Elias et al., 2014). Building

relationships between the teacher, student, and their family is an integral part of the AVID program. AVID is built on the positive teacher-student relationship and how it can benefit the students' success (Swanson, 1996). AVID includes families in monthly events to continue the process of family inclusion and provides additional opportunities for the students, parents, and teacher to interact. During the monthly events, parents check on the academic progress with their child through the AVID instructor. All students communicate with their teachers prior to the grade report and the work is cross-checked by the AVID instructor to help students improve if necessary. The grade reporting and communication with all the students' teachers can lead to tutorial topics or areas of need to use for tutorial questions. Each AVID instructor has built a relationship with these students and their families, making this monthly connection and grade reporting a safer environment than if the AVID instructor had not already built a relationship with the students.

Teaching for emotional well-being, a positive sense of well-being allowing someone to function in society in the classroom is also necessary while challenging students at their ability level (Elias et al., 2014). Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is needed in the classroom for more in-depth engagement. Teaching for emotional well-being in a supportive environment can increase all student's capacity to learn and is increasingly necessary at an age where mental health issues and substance abuse are more common (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2013). For all students to connect to teachers, student-student relationships and connection to the classroom and school. SEL includes instruction in self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making,

social awareness, and relationship skills (Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers, Duncan, & Weissberg, 2016; Yang, Bear, & May, 2018).

Patel et al. (2016) found that instruction for emotional well-being may be beneficial for students who have higher stressors outside of the school day as found. Poorer students from dangerous neighborhoods are more in need of emotional well-being than their wealthier peers with safer circumstances. According to Patel et al. (2016), outside stressors may have an influence on their ability to achieve in school. An aspect of SEL is culturally responsive teaching, appreciating the differences among the students and respecting their shared values.

Culturally responsive teaching in the classroom is needed to benefit students and help them strive for excellence (Griner & Stewart, 2013) while supporting them individually. Students who are low socio economic status are more likely to live in an environment that is dangerous, and they are less likely to achieve due to these outside circumstances. SEL has been shown to have a positive influence on student's motivation, engagement and capacity to learn, no matter their socioeconomic or demographic background (Oberle et al., 2016; Tan, Sinha, Shin, & Wang 2018; Yang, et al., 2018).

American public schools have failed to make all the changes necessary for underserved populations to help them be successful in skill building and high school completion (Darling-Hammond, 2014), as illustrated in their college readiness or lack thereof. More interventions are necessary for poor and minority students to meet the same skill level as their higher income and White counterparts, including graduation of high school and continuing to college. Reardon (2015) found that the income disparity in the

United States has greatly increased since the 1960s further widening the gap among students of low socioeconomic status and their peers. Parents who do not go to college have children who do not go to college (Bernhardt, 2013) and are less likely to earn a living wage. Closing the achievement gap cannot just focus on in school variables but must include multiple early interventions and possibly a longer school day or year to assist our poorer students towards success. Students who have a longer school day and are included in early intervention programs like Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs (ECEAP) are more likely to complete high school as compared to other low-income and minority students (Huang, 2015; Reardon, 2015). Providing additional classes as an intervention for lower socioeconomic status students can increase their abilities through instructional practice and more time spent developing skills the students may be lacking in contrast to their higher socioeconomic status counterparts. The additional classes are not available throughout the United States, for all potentially at-risk students (Huang, 2015).

Moon and Singh (2015) found that Black male students voiced the need for more tutoring or interventions that their White counterparts can afford and they were lacking Mendoza-Denton (2014) found that structural changes to assessments may also decrease the achievement gap while enforcing the belief that all are capable and intelligent is like a muscle that must be built up. Tutoring within the classroom and school wide can be beneficial for all students and specifically for those who struggle in any academic area. Cross-age or peer mentoring tutors were found to have a positive influence on students in academic success on standardized tests and in classroom-based assessments (Ayvazo &

Aljadeff-Abergel, 2014; Grills, 2017). Including a tutor to assist students with their attitude about the learning process, support the academics, and model study skill strategies has an influence on academic achievement for diverse learners (Ayvazo & Aljadeff-Abergel, 2014; Grills, 2017).

The ramifications for students who do not gain non-cognitive skills and success in school, puts them in the cycle of poverty and low employment (NCES, 2015). The students in the achievement gap are less likely to finish high school or go to college leaving them with low-paying unskilled jobs. The NCES (2015) found those who do not graduate high school earn only $25,000 per year compared to the who have a high school diploma who average earnings of $35,000 annually.

Students of color report they are not a part of schools where there are advanced class and support program opportunities that are the same for White students and identify few have close relationships with a staff member mentor (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Moon & Singh, 2015), not giving them a support person at school to push them towards goals and advancement at school. Closing the achievement gap begins with instructor encouragement inside the classroom, with social emotional learning including teaching techniques to build trust allowing the risk to learn (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Oberle et al., 2016).

All schools must have effective teachers, who can communicate with students and relate to them (Darling-Hammond, 2014), giving them the much-needed support, they deserve to bridge the achievement gap. Institutions that have a common vision of success for all, with access to rigorous coursework are aligned to standards, and accountability

tied to assessment have been shown to reduce the achievement gap (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). The move for teacher-student bonding can build motivation and self-efficacy in students while the students are moving toward reaching education benchmarks. As students meet the benchmarks, they are exhibiting their skills in the subject matter and will see their own success. When they have success in school, they are more likely to persevere through difficult tasks, building self-efficacy and continue achieving in school. Guvenc (2015) found teacher's motivational support has an influence on student performance. When teachers support students in their classroom instruction and have built a relationship with them, the students are more successful (Guvenc, 2015; Putwain et al., 2014). Students who have self-efficacy, or a faith in their competence to complete challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997), persevere through difficult work in the classroom and beyond. Students who have instructors who believe in them, are more likely to develop self-efficacy and continue to achieve in the classroom; thus, potentially reducing the achievement gap (Putwain et al., 2014).

According to Tomlinson and Jarvis (2014), economically disadvantaged students were more successful when they had a well-developed relationship with teachers and the school whether through classroom engagement or organized activities (Webb & Thomas, 2015). They specifically focused on the benefits of the relationship when teachers helped supporting at-risk students to enroll in academically rigorous courses and the support of the relationship. Social psychological writing interventions classroom exercises with a teacher to help students counteract stereotyping threat (the risk of conforming to stereotypes about their group) have proved to be helpful in bridging the achievement gap

as well (Dee, 2015; Hanselmann et al., 2014; Protzko & Aronson, 2016). Similarly, Macias (2013) found that the teacher's attitude about success for first generation students influences their success or failure in high school. Smith et al. (2016) found teacher's perception of their student's abilities may also affect the outcome of their achievement in areas like science. Those who are lower-achieving and often lower income are more likely grouped together and continue a gap in their skill set due partly to their access to resources and their prior achievement history (Smith et al., 2016). Sheppard et al. (2016) also concluded that intervention from staff will build confidence and help students seek to graduate and build positive bonds to the school and teachers.

Casillas et al. (2012) examined multiple factors contributing to success in high school. The authors found that assessing at-risk student's behavior and prior academic achievement, to provide intervention and build self-efficacy, increased their likelihood of pro-academic behaviors and graduation. Building self-efficacy and teaching note taking strategies to learn had a benefit to students for success in their courses (Smith, Elder, & Stephens, 2014; Watt et al., 2008). Similarly, Andrzjewski et al. (2014) found that explicit instruction for self-regulation had an influence for all students' achievement, more significantly for minority students. When students are explicitly instructed how to study and take notes, they are more likely to be successful in their classes and graduate high school; thus, potentially, closing the achievement gap.

Students who were reared by parents who had not received formal education beyond high school were less likely to teach the academic behaviors and build academic self-efficacy by encouraging their children (Smith et al., 2014; Webb & Thomas, 2015).

The children who do not have a support system at home, must learn self-efficacy at school to be successful. The school system must be a place to build self-efficacy and motivation within students who do not have support at home if the achievement gap is to be reduced. School may be the only means for numerous students to build their self-efficacy. Jeynes (2015) concluded that the most successful efforts to assist students are non-standardized and personally based (Elias et al., 2014; Jeynes, 2015; Yeh, 2015). Focusing in on each student and their needs was more successful than efforts created by the government through a multitude of initiatives and program (Yeh, 2015). Overall, Jeynes (2015) found a persistence in the gap for our minority and poor students, which was narrowed more as students grew older than when they were in elementary school. He concluded that students who have an internal locus of control was a contributing factor for the narrowed gap as students progressed in school (Jeynes, 2015). Students who were motivated had more belief in themselves and persisted in the face of stereotyping of low-income or minority students (Moon & Singh, 2015). More belief in themselves may be a basis for building self-efficacy and perseverance in the face of difficult tasks (Bandura, 1986, 1997).

The History of AVID

The AVID program began in San Diego in 1980. Mary Catherine Swanson created the curriculum and program to assist middle ability level students, who were to be the first generation to go to college in their family (AVID, 2018). The first 30 students chosen were predominantly Latino and African American, enrolled in a desegregation

mandated school where many teachers wanted to track the students toward lower level courses (Avid.org, 2015).

Swanson (1989, 2002) believed the economically disadvantaged and minority students were capable of taking rigorous advanced courses and sought to create a program that supported them academically through an elective class and increase their skills to meet the entrance requirements for colleges and universities. Swanson and other instructors used explicit instruction through language arts, including note taking strategies to assist the students across the curriculum and throughout high school, preparing them for the rigor of advanced placement courses and college. Swanson used the local college programs to make a connection beyond high school, with the ethnically, linguistically and socioeconomically challenged students (Swanson, 1989, 2002). The original development of the program included eight areas of focus including a non-traditional classroom setting, and a supportive teacher or counselor as a student advocate. The original AVID program included eight areas of focus, including a non-traditional classroom setting, a supportive teacher or counselor, objective data about the students, support from trained tutors, a student-centered environment, career and learning goal setting, academic reading, and writing with a reliance on the Socratic process (AVID, 2018; Bernhardt, 2013; Plano Clark et al., 2017). The program has changed evolved over time (e.g., using WICOR and tutorials as newer terms for the 8 original essentials).

Components of AVID

Over the years, the development of the AVID program has evolved to include 11 essentials of an AVID program/school. They include using WICOR, tutoring, and

requiring students to take AP courses with support from a staff team for full implementation. (AVID, 2018; Plano Clark et al., 2017). Each of the 11 essentials are an important part of the program for proper ongoing support for running the program. The program was developed in the San Diego school system to assist students in high school completion and entering college, with just three teachers in the beginning. The program grew and changed to include the 11 essentials of AVID including AVID includes in school academic support for students from grades 5 through 12 that prepares them for college eligibility and success. Working as a team of teachers, counselors and administration, average achieving students are scheduled in advanced classes, where they are supported through the elective class and tutoring to help them achieve success. AVID provides more equity in education for minority, rural, low-income and other students without a college-going tradition in their families. AVID is available for all students but targets those students who are in the academic middle in this school and district wide (Bernhardt, 2013; Plano Clark et al., 2017). Any student can request to be a part of AVID; however, they are most often recommended by a teacher or counselor.

Implications

The aforementioned literature supports a school-wide program to transition into high school with support personally and academically through systematic instruction, parental involvement, and a family group mentality. Supporting the at-risk students may build their self-efficacy if they are given the opportunity to challenge themselves and the tools to continually learn through advanced courses while being connected with an instructor who can help them navigate the education system. Teacher and peer influence

can play a role in positively influencing the mentality to achieve and move onto post-secondary education when students are enrolled in AVID. The purpose of this study was to explore the AVID instructional strategies high school graduates used in post-secondary education. The participants of this study graduated from a school district that is predominantly White, middle class and suburban where fewer minority and poor students are in AP courses. By utilizing the data gathered from the graduates, this study may tentatively provide data about beneficial AVID strategies to continue, with possible professional development offered by the AVID instructors as facilitators. I designed a professional development course as the project from the results of this study. The professional development course will be for all instructors in the district over a 3-day period focused on application of AVID strategies across the curriculum.

The findings of the study will be most beneficial by gaining a better understanding of the benefits of the AVID program by its graduates and how the program possibly played a role in their development of self-efficacy in high school and into post-secondary education. The findings will be offered to school district officials for review in hard copy, including the training and implications for future study. The school district will be equipped with data to benefit the most at-risk populations, including low socioeconomic status and minority groups and possibly to increase the number of students included in the AVID classes using data provided in an evaluation report.

Summary

Students struggle the most academically during the transition from middle to high school and the most at-risk populations are likely to leave school during this time of high

stress and change (Roybal et al., 2013). With an implemented school wide transition program, it has been found to be beneficial to students and help ensure their graduation and move on to post-secondary education (Llamas et al., 2014). The connections made through the relationships formed with instructors and mentors in the program have been beneficial in developing confidence for students (Shepard et al., 2013) who are most likely to leave high school, putting them at a higher risk for continuing in a cycle of poverty. With the support of the AVID program in place, at risk students are more likely to take advance placement courses and challenge themselves academically, increasing the possibility of continuing their education in college (AVID, 2015). This study was used to explore AVID graduates' self-efficacy in applying instructional strategies in high school and post-secondary classes. Section 2 of this study will highlight the methodology used to explore the self-efficacy of graduates to apply the AVID instructional strategies in high school and college of AVID graduates through one-on-one interviews. Section 3 of this study will identify the project. Section 4 of the study will include my reflection regarding the problem, research process, and possible future research directions.

Section 2: Methodology

Introduction

The achievement gap persists throughout the educational system despite many attempts to eliminate it and help the most at-risk populations be successful in school (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2014; Ferguson & Mehta, 2004; Smith et al., 2016). However, success has been found through school-wide implemented transition programs where relationships are built among staff members and students. The AVID program provides explicit instruction in WICOR. Instructing students how to use WICOR is a large part of the AVID course. Exploring what instructional strategies AVID high school graduates learned to support their post-secondary success and how AVID highs school graduates perceive their ability to use AVID instructional strategies in post-secondary education guided this project study.

Research Design

This study was qualitative in nature to describe the graduates' self-efficacy in applying AVID instructional strategies through an exploratory case study. A case study is an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context with multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). For the purposes of this study, the real-life context was the AVID graduates' use of the instructional strategies in a post-secondary setting. The case for this study was the AVID graduates.

A case study was deemed the ideal research method for this study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Creswell (2012) stated that the case study approach allows for a smaller number of participants and a limited time period for gathering a rich description

of their viewpoints. According to Merriam (2009), the unit of analysis makes this study a single case that is bounded by a phenomenon (their participation and completion of AVID). The participants were in the AVID program, in one school district, limiting the number of participants who were part of the phenomenon. Yin (2018) stated that an exploratory case study provides a researcher the opportunity to examine a bounded system. The participants were part of a bounded system, in this case the AVID program, and an exploratory case study approach was most suitable to explore how they applied the instructional strategies learned in high school to post-secondary learning. Interviewing graduates to explore their ability in applying the AVID strategies in high school and post-secondary education increased the scholarly awareness of the benefits for students, staff, and the stakeholders in this suburban northwestern school district and may lead to future research.

I considered an ethnographic approach, where an intact group that share a culture are studied (per Merriam, 2009), for this study. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), ethnography was not the correct approach for this study because the focus is studying culture. A phenomenological approach was also considered but I decided against it, because the focus of this study was instructional strategies not just participants lived experience. Creswell (2012) recommended using a phenomenology to make connections amongst participants with a shared experience. However, the participants' in this study were from various cohorts of AVID, so they had different classmates and instructors which would have made connecting their shared experience or individual perceptions as typical AVID experiences difficult to analyze using a phenomenological approach. I

carefully considered each of these qualitative methods for this project study but did not deem any suitable due to the nature of approach. Creswell (2012) stated that quantitative studies focus on numerical data and measuring factors that are a part of the data collection instrument. Therefore, I did not choose a quantitative research design for this study. My intent was to gather thick, rich descriptions about participants' experience in which qualitative research was more suitable to assess their individual feedback, opinion, and perception.

Participants

My goal was to explore data from 12 to 15 AVID graduates who are also high school graduates and have since entered or completed post-secondary education. The participants may have just entered post-secondary education or have completed, dependent upon their graduation year from high school. The graduates completed high school between 2014–2018 and participated in the program throughout high school. The information gathered informed the suburban northwestern school district of the benefits of the AVID program for a possible increase in number of students allowed into the program to aide in decreasing the dropout rates of minority and low SES students. The perception of the graduates who represent at risk students provided insight to the impetus of their success and breaking the cycle of poverty for the participants and their future generations.

There were 12 to 15 AVID graduates selected to gather a thick, rich description of their self-efficacy in applying the instructional strategies gained during high school. They represent a purposeful sample because they are most likely to offer information about a

phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2012). Due to the large size of the possible graduates between 2014–2018 (approximately 500 to 1000), a convenience sample of participants volunteered and participated in the study, which was the best approach for the time constraints to complete the project study. Participants were chosen to represent all graduates of the AVID program based on the addresses obtained from the school district and their response to the initial invitation letter. I selected the graduates who responded and attended or completed post-secondary education, part of the shared phenomenon, for exploring their self-efficacy in applying the instructional strategies. Students who did not attend post-secondary school were not chosen to participate in the study.

The possible participants were contacted via a letter of invitation (see Appendix C), which was sent to the address provided to the school district upon graduation. The letter fully explained my reason for contacting them including that I am a teacher in the district, my intentions for a 45 to 60 minutes one-on-one interview and included the research questions for the study. The letter asked for a response to my Walden email address. Once the participants responded to the letter of invitation, I sent an email message including a letter identifying the purpose of the research, optional participation, and my contact information. I attached the open-ended interview questions, and consent form along with my intent for our researcher and participant relationship. I explained my role as a teacher in the school district and how that role did not influence my interactions with the participants.

To protect all participants, I explained in the letter of invitation, and during the interview the confidentiality of the information each person was provided. All data gathered in the interview were kept separate from their name, first on a digital recorder and then transcribed onto an external drive to be stored for 5 years. Each participant was numbered. I did not use their name when identifying their responses in the project study. I only referred to them by their number. I provided an informed consent document prior to being interviewed via the mail and email. A statement for use of their information in a project study for a university program and protection from harm was in the letter sent to possible participants, including that I did not represent the school district for this study (see Appendix C). I protected all participants from harm by following all protocol identified by the university institutional review board, including keeping their information private and secured. Included in the letter was an explanation that they will not have any concerns for harm or response from the school district. I did not include their name in the project study and only identified them by number. I asked the local school district for permission to access their addresses and contacted participants to be in the study, after approval through Walden University IRB# 11-19-18-0419307 and the superintendant of the local school district.

The participants were initially contacted via mail. Each AVID instructor in the district posted the invitation letter to their Facebook AVID Alumni pages, with their permission, to increase the number of potential participants. Each instructor created an AVID Facebook page to continue contact with current AVID students and graduates.

Role of the Researcher

I am currently a family and consumer science teacher in the department of Career and Technical Education, in the school district where I completed the study. I am not an AVID teacher and have not been trained to be one and only work at one of three comprehensive high schools in the local school district.

I may have been the instructor of some of the participants prior to their graduation from high school and they may feel their answers need to align with making the AVID program look completely positive; they may have exaggerated their use of the strategies to benefit the research. I explained my intentions to all participants to explain and interpret the information gathered, striving to address my own bias. I am a proponent of the AVID program. Over the years since implementation of the program, I have instructed multiple participants of the AVID program and have had all positive experiences with those students. The AVID students I have instructed always use their note taking strategies in class. I believe AVID is a beneficial program and believe in it's ideals. I am biased to believe that AVID strategies may have a possible influence on academic behaviors of students. I counteracted this bias by committing to listen to the participants in interviews, to hear their stories and experiences and reporting the findings in their own words. After the interviews were completed, I contacted each participant with intial findings from data analysis for member checking to ensure quality in representing their ideas and experiences.

Data Collection

I conducted one-on-one interviews with participants to gather in-depth information about the AVID instructional strategies they used in high school and possibly in postsecondary education. The participants were high school graduates who participated in the AVID program. I conducted one-on-one interviews with 13 graduates of AVID who respond to a letter of invitation to the study (see Appendix C). Once the participants responded, I sent email letter verifying the expectations of the interview and scheduled the meetings at a local coffee shop and library (see Appendix E). Establishing a trusting relationship with each participant was a challenge that may be less due to our shared connection to the school district. I portrayed patience in the email response letter to help each participant feel comfortable to be interviewed.

Using one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions was appropriate to let participants explain what instructional strategies AVID high school graduates learned to support their post-secondary success, and how AVID high school graduates explain their ability to use AVID instructional strategies in post-secondary education. I used a semistructured interview protocol adapted from Decoster (2017) work on self-efficacy with urban youth to gain insight from the participants (see Appendix B). I created the predetermined interview questions based on literature reviewed from Campbell (2001) work on teaching and learning theories and Bandura (1997) self-efficacy theory.

According to Creswell (2012), Using one-one-one interviews ensured each participant's responses were heard in a more comfortable environment than a focus group interview. The interview consisted seven open-ended questions to gather a better

understanding of the 13 participants' self-efficacy in applying the AVID instructional strategies in high school and post-secondary education (see Appendix B). The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The responses were recorded with a digital recorder and uploaded to a transcription application (Rev, n.d.). I used a data accounting log to chart each participant's interview, including the date and supplemental notes to use during data analysis. I used a checklist matrix to organize the multiple aspects of the instructional strategies used. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2013) recommended journaling and keeping a detailed account of the data analysis process, so I used a reflective journal and a contact summary form while interviewing participants and reviewing the transcribed data. I transcibed any notes created during the interviews electronically and destroyed the hard copies.

I saved all data recorded to an external drive that was stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. The purpose of the interviews was to explore AVID graduates' self-efficacy using the instructional strategies in the suburban northwestern school district and in post-secondary education. Creswell (2012) stated that follow-up and probing questions are useful and helps participants clarify their points, add more details, and elaborate more on their own ideas. I presented the following probing questions and open-ended statements to participants during the interviews: (a) Please explain some examples of how you used the strategies, (b) How do you prepare for challenging assignments and tests, (c) Can you name a specific assignment or test that you succeeded at and describe how you succeeded, and (d) Be specific on what you did and felt before, during and after completing the assignment or test.

Prior to the interviews, I reminded myself to use the same protocol for each interview, including telling the participants the purpose of my study, how many questions were included, and how to contact the after the interview to clarify their responses. I transcribed data after the completion of each interview. All transcriptions were retained and labeled by number to ensure anonymity.

Data Analysis

Using an inductive approach, I explored the data compiled during the semistructured interviews. I completed a preliminary exploration of the data derived from the conceptual framework. In my first cycle coding I used descriptive codes based on the framework constructs as the answers were similar across multiple participants. Miles et al. (2014) stated organizing common phrases together allows a theme to emerge from the data in axial coding and I found the terms “studying”, “attending class”, “notes” and “help from professors” repeated across multiple interviews. I then began to categorize the codes into themes using axial coding from the identified patterns in the descriptive codes to elaborate on the original data (Miles et al., 2014). The themes that emerged included self-regulatory behaviors, notetaking, and seeking help from peers and professors. I disregarded data that did not provide evidence for the patterns across the multiple interviews as identified by Creswell (2012). I utilized NVivo software and word documents to organize the data gathered from the 13 interviews from the participants after transcription of each interview.

Once the data were transcribed and coded, I utilized a review of the themes to verify the participants responses to the interview protocol. I offered to meet or email with

each individual participant to verify my accuracy in depicting their point of view. To ensure validity, I pattern matched across the participants' interviews, addressing any possible rival explanations. To ensure reliability, I maintained a clear chain of evidence with my collected data, used my interview protocol with each participant (see Appendix B), and kept all electronic and hard copy evidence secured (Miles et al., 2014).

Summary

I used an exploratory case study approach was to explore the experiences of AVID graduates from one-on-one semistructured interviews to better understand their experiences in the program and possible benefits they received. The case study approach is best for a shorter amount of time with a small group of participants and is a major qualitative concept of capturing a participant's interpretation (Merriam, 2009). The findings will help illustrate how the AVID program may be a transition program to help eliminate the achievement gap through the relationships and strategies offered to the at-risk students who are part of this support program throughout high school. I hope to provide evidence of the benefit of the AVID program to include more students in the school district, as a part of the program.

The one-on-one interviews captured the perspective of each participant and offered data for instructional strategies the AVID graduates learned and how they perceive their ability to use the strategies in post-secondary education. Their abilities to persevere through difficult academic experiences and to continue their education decreases the likelihood of continuing in a cycle of poverty and may help create a change

for their future generations. In Sections 3 and 4, the project will be explained and evaluated, and implications for social change will be offered.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the AVID instructional strategies high school graduates used in high school and continue to use in post-secondary education. I focused on AVID graduates from a suburban Northwest public school district where the graduation rates have increased since the implementation of this transition program. This study explored the graduates' self-efficacy in applying the AVID strategies in post-secondary education by answering the two research questions:

RQ1: What instructional strategies did AVID graduates learn in high school to support their post-secondary success?

RQ2: How do AVID high school graduates perceive their ability to use AVID instructional strategies in post-secondary education?

Data Collection Process

During this study I gathered data through semistructured interviews with 13 participants who were members of the AVID program, while in high school at one of three comprehensive high schools in this district. All participants were AVID graduates from this suburban Northwest school district over the last three years. I contacted graduates from years 2015–2018. I only received responses from 13 individuals in three months and approximately 400 letters mailed to district AVID graduates. Of the 13 participants nine were female and four were male (see Table 5). All participants were assigned a number to align with their order of being interviewed.

Table 7

Study Participants

	Demographic	High School Graduation year	Gender
Participant 1	Caucasian	2015	Female
Participant 2	Two or more races	2017	Female
Participant 3	Caucasian	2018	Female
Participant 4	Asian/Pacific Islander	2018	Female
Participant 5	Caucasian	2017	Male
Participant 6	Indian	2018	Female
Participant 7	Two or more races	2018	Female
Participant 8	Asian/Pacific Islander	2017	Male
Participant 9	Caucasian	2018	Male
Participant 10	Caucasian	2017	Female
Participant 11	Black/African American	2018	Male
Participant 12	Black/African American	2017	Female
Participant 13	Two or more races	2015	Female

The participants represented several minority groups including Pacific Islander, Vietnamese, African American, and Asian, including several participants who are bi-racial or multi-racial. Only five of the total participants were Caucasian and all are currently enrolled in college. I also gathered data from the state superintendent report card over the past eight years, including graduation rates from years 2011–2018.

The semistructured interview data was transcribed within 48 hours of each meeting using a transcription application. The data were then transferred to a Word document for identifying patterns and themes. I explored using NVivo and Excel to

organize my data and eventually decided to use WORD tables to hand code my data, including notes from each interview and my journaling about each meeting.

Findings

Note-taking in several forms, self-regulatory behaviors and collaboration were the three main themes that emerged from the data. Note-taking is identified by students taking individual notes for initial exposure to class materials and for review and studying. Every participant identified the taking of notes in the Cornell Style or color-coded notes as part of their learned study strategies as a result of taking part in the AVID program. Collaboration with other students was mentioned as being used by study participants in multiple forms and is defined for this study as working with peers or an instructor in person or online. Ten of the 13 participants identified collaboration strategies in their responses during one-on-one interviews. Learned self-regulatory behaviors were reported by every participant through their one-on-one interviews. The behaviors included sitting in the front of college classes, attending classes regularly, completing all assignments, scheduling their completion of essays over time, introducing themselves to other classmates and the instructor, studying and creating an environment conducive to studying and assignment completion.

Students using collaboration in the AVID course for their tutorials is an integral part of the program throughout high school. These tutorials are facilitated by an adult tutor or their AVID instructor. It became clear that AVID graduates seek out these experiences at the collegiate level, without the structure and support from the high school program. Twelve participants described the use of Cornell Style notes as a study strategy

in their college courses. Cornell Style notes are used throughout the high school elective and are a focus across the curriculum, throughout high school. The use of notes was reported by each participant. The Cornell Style includes a two-column format for vocabulary and a self-questioning format using Costa's Leveled Questions for metacognition.

RQ1

RQ1 was "What instructional strategies did AVID graduates learn in high school to support their post-secondary success?" During the interviews two major themes emerged, the use collaboration and note-taking strategies.

Theme 1: collaboration. All 13 participants mentioned the importance of collaboration. For the purpose of this study, collaboration is defined as working with one or more peers or an instructor as explained by the participants during interviews. According to Bandura (1997) reliance on your self-schemata of efficacy influences how you will create your environment for success. Participants reported creating their own study groups to collaborate with peers for difficult assignments or tests due to their experiences in the high school AVID tutorials aligning with Bandura's findings.

Putwain et al. (2014) stated that academic self-efficacy is built partly through mastery experiences and is a predictor for collegiate success. After a strong efficacy was built through repeated success in high school, the participants repeated the parameters of collaborating with peers to continue their accomplishments. Putwain et al. (2014) found that there was a reciprocal relationship between academic performance and learning-related emotions. When students had positive emotions from their academic experiences,

they repeated the parameters for further success. Collaboration throughout high school in the AVID tutorials contributed to the students' academic successes. Due to their positive experiences and academic achievement, the participants sustained these strategies in their college classes, aligning with the findings of Putwain et al. (2014).

The participants mentioned that as a result of participating in the AVID program, they learned to collaborate online and in person with other students, using in person meetings more than any online tool like the Canvas Learning Platform program used for college classes.

During the interviews, each participant spoke about collaborating with others in their twice weekly high school tutorial experiences and working with others for studying in their college classes. Collaboration was a focus of the WICOR instructional strategy in AVID. It was basis for their high school tutorial sessions twice per week and was modeled prior to working with a tutor or their instructor as the lead person for a group. The participants asked their fellow classmates for help in college and reported this strategy began in high school.

Participant four described her tutorial experience and asking for help that "it was intimidating to say I'm really confused about this. It's like you don't want to admit you're confused, but when you do ask it helps." She reported feeling overwhelmed with leading others in the high school tutorials, even with the college tutor as their facilitator. She identified herself as shy when she entered the AVID class, but now asks her college classmates to meet via CANVAS for study sessions. Another participant said:

> For tutorials, I really used it as kind of a tool where I was learning these things from my group members as well as taking something away for myself. And so in college it really helped with my group collaboration with doing group projects, because I was able to use them as a tool and not just as a crutch.

Participant number 13 identified she had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in high school and was nervous about asking for help in her AVID tutorial at first, but eventually realized she could help others too. So, in college, she decided she would continue to try to help herself through CSGs. She said:

> Being able to bring it up to other people who may understand or may have the same issue was also really helpful... So, at Pierce, I asked my teacher about studying as a group and posted on the CANVAS site to find some people to work with. Yeah, it was awesome. Then there was a biology class that I took and we got extra credit for doing study groups with people in that class… so, I kept setting them up for that one too.

Participant six found success in a course and then saw this as a chance to collaborate, even as the lead of a study group.

> I had my first Biology exam for the quarter, and I succeeded. I knew I succeeded… And so, after that, they asked how did I prepare for that class, …so that's when I really reflected, when I started teaching other people how to prepare. They helped me too, cause it was just the first test.

Participants were clear about their creation of study groups in their college courses, without the support of the high school tutorials, a model they were previously

familiar with. They each mentioned collaboration as a tool for their success and using notes for challenging assignments or tests.

Theme 2: notetaking. Using Cornell Style notes as a tool for success aligns with Smith et al. (2014) who identified that focused notetaking had an influence on achievement. The participants used their Cornell Style notetaking at the collegiate level, across the curriculum, due to their previous mastery of tasks using notes for exploration of new class material and reviewing for the purpose of tests or projects aligning with Smith et al. (2014).

The participants explained their note-taking strategies as a tool for exploring new class material and for studying. Application of the Cornell Style notes at the collegiate level is a self-regulatory behavior that aligns with the findings of Zimmerman (1998, 2000). Zimmerman outlined Self-Regulatory Learning Theory (1998, 2000) where students initiate and sustain behaviors that help them attain goals. All participants reported notetaking and reviewing their notes to become more familiar with their coursework.

On difficult assignments, participants mentioned that they used focused notetaking including highlighting (Cornell Style notes). They expressed that this notetaking was a cause for success, and a cause for failure when they did not use the strategy. From the data collected in the interviews, Focused notetaking in the Cornell style is an instructional strategy used in each year of the AVID program. Instruction to use this style of notetaking, across the curriculum, is used each day for high school students, in their course work. Included in the Cornell Style is self-questioning for initial

exposure to a concept and for reviewing. The sections of the Cornell Style notes include a space for self-checking or questioning. The highlighting when reviewing is also focused on in the AVID course for review. It is also an aspect of study strategizing in the AP classes, in which each AVID student must enroll.

Notetaking was reported by each participant and was a focus for their academic success in their classes. Every participant stated the lack of using their notes or not taking them as a reason for failing an assignment or test. One participant said:

> But, since I already had learned the concepts from another teacher, I felt that I already had a grasp on it and I was overly confident. I only thought about what I already knew and I would basically skip over the things, not take notes on the stuff I knew because I would consider them irrelevant to me because I was better than those concepts. Because I had already learned them in another class. I only studied the new stuff not in my last chem class.

The participant did report they after this experience, he relied again on his note-taking strategies. He went back to his previous Cornell Style notes for the rest of the chemistry course he mentioned and succeeded.

Participant one mentioned using her notes throughout an online course as the only way she could be successful “because I couldn’t rely on the instructor to be there.” She used a study group and referred to her notes for studying. She said:

> I usually will do note cards and I'll ask the questions on the front and answers on the Back and highlighting …So, every weekend I would go over my notes. The AVID program taught me how to do that. And so I'd have different tiers of

questions. Like, this is the main topic, sub-topic, and then I would go from there in learning it.

Each participant reporting notetaking as a tool for their academic success was clear. The respondents saw a benefit of creating their notes and reviewing during studying. Only one participant did not report use of the Cornell Style notes.

Discrepant Case

Participant number six adamantly said he did not like the approach of the Cornell Style notes. He felt that it was scripted and did not help him across his classes in high school. He said the formulaic aspect of the Cornell Style was not what he uses in college. Instead, he records lectures, using the online study guides and makes his own notes, using highlighting. He learned the highlighting strategy in an AP class where his instructor encouraged the students to use the Cornell Style and add in highlighting. He prefers his own styles. He does use notes, like all of the interview participants, to prepare for assignments and tests.

RQ2

RQ2 was "How do AVID high school graduates perceive their ability to use AVID instructional strategies in post-secondary education?" and two major themes emerged: Taking responsibility for their own learning through self-regulation and seeking help for academic success from professors or peers.

Theme 1: self-regulatory behaviors. For this study self-regulatory behaviors include actions inside and outside the classroom that positively influence academic achievement as reported by the participants. Participants formed a positive academic

environment through their self-regulatory behaviors such as creating a study environment without distractions, attending class each day and sitting close to front of the room aligning with Zimmerman (1998, 2000). The participants continued to immerse themselves in study conducive environments whether they lived on campus or off, as they achieved academic successes in their college classes.

Using self-regulatory behaviors continually aligns with the findings of Zimmerman (1998, 2000) who found that students will continue or repeat behaviors that lead them to academic achievement. Students regulated their personal environment for academic achievement as well as sought out the support system they experienced in high school by seeking out faculty and peers for studying. Watt et al. (2008) and Llamas et al., (2015) found AVID had a positive influence on motivation and academic achievement partly due to the family-like supportive environment. Students seek out this support system at the collegiate level due to their successes in high school. Participants reported attending college classes regularly, sitting close to the professor and introducing themselves to the instructor as a way to recreate their supportive constructs from high school AVID, aligning with Llamas et al. (2015). A social connection, motivation from peers and teachers and a push for personal growth are all factors related to the academic achievement of AVID students (Llamas et al., 2015). The participants reported looking for the parameters of the AVID program and consistency from their instructor as a means for their academic success.

All respondents reported self-regulatory behaviors as a tool for their collegiate success including organization, creating an environment conducive to studying or reading

class assignments. Four participants described sitting at the front of the classroom for lectures and always attending class as another tool for their success in their classes. Seeking help from their instructors was reported by six participants through email and in person as another strategy for success. Looking for support from the instructor and introducing themselves was reported by six participants as a way to help themselves have success in their courses. Every participant reported attending classes, completing assignments, and studying for tests as part of their self-regulatory behaviors.

During the interviews nine participants identified their academic strengths and areas where they struggled in different subject matter. Interestingly, every participant focused on their role in their grades and mastery experiences or struggles when asked about assignments or test that they struggled with. Mastery experiences are an aspect of developing academic self-efficacy and the clear ownership in their academic success was apparent. Self-regulatory behaviors were mentioned throughout each interview. When participants were successful in their course work, they had taken time to study, review, attend class, ask questions, sit at the front of the class, and ask the instructor questions or for help. When the respondents struggled academically, each identified how they could improve for the next assignment or test.

Participant four lives in a dormitory at her university and stated she had to learn the best environment to study and eliminate her distractions because of living with her friends. She said:

> It can be like a sleep over every night, but then I don't do my homework. I don't study. I can't sit in the lounge either, because I just get off, I get distracted…I go

to the library, to the cubbies. I can stay in my room too… Figuring out where to study was the most important… Then I do much better.

Another participant focused on being in class each day and sitting at the front of the room as a way she helped herself each day. She said: "I try to get there early…I sit at the front of the class so I can hear well… I feel closer to my professor, so I don't feel so intimidated to ask them a question". Focusing on her own habits to perform better in her coursework show her clear self-regulation.

When explaining how they perform better when struggling in a class, each identified taking notes or reviewing, taking more time to use online study guides. Two participants mentioned the instructor being a "hard grader," but never blamed the instructor for their failing of a test or assignment. Each saw a path for continuing to improve in the coursework and they had control to be successful. Asking for help was a strategy that eight participants mentioned.

Theme 2: assistance from professors or peers. Participants reported seeking help from their instructors and peers as a tool for their success. This aligns with Pugh and Tschannon-Moran (2016) who found a positive relationship between self-regulatory behaviors like asking for help in class and academic achievement. Further, Pugh and Tschannon-Moran found students continually asked for assistance because they received the help needed. Participants also contacted their instructors looking for a positive student-teacher relationship to achieve aligning with Pugh and Tschannon-Moran (2016). The participants repeated an experience from their high school AVID program specifically through seeking a positive teacher-student relationship. The participants

reported making themselves visible to the professor by sitting at the front of the room and discussing their academic needs via the CANVAS to seek help from peers and the instructor. These actions show their requirement for teacher-student academic relationship (Pugh & Tschannon-Moran 2016) as a tool for their academic success.

All participants reported telling their peers about their struggles in classes on CANVAS and in person, to seek out support and persist in their academics. Persevering when struggling aligns with an aspect of self-efficacy as identified by Bandura (1997). The participants endured academic struggles and sought out help to achieve due to their faith in self, aligning with Bandura (1986, 1997). The academic self-efficacy built by their mastery experiences in high school assisted the participants with asking for assistance at the collegiate level. Further, their success through vicarious experiences of their peers, who sought help from the instructor via CANVAS discussions boards and in class, encouraged the participants to also seek help.

The participants seeking a relationship and contact with their instructor supports the findings of Guvenc (2015) who found that motivational support provided by teachers had an influence on students' class involvement and motivation. The AVID graduates reported active participation in class after regular contact with their instructor, aligning with Guvenc (2015) who reported students are encouraged to repeat their involvement when the instructor builds relationships with students. Further, the participants reported asking for continued help when they perceived the teachers' motivational support in their courses by their comments on the students' assignments or papers.

Eight of the participants clearly explained the link between their study strategies and asking the instructor for help as part of their mastery of challenging assignments or tests. Respondents reported seeking help from their peers and instructors for their challenging tests and assignments. They also reported the absence of asking for help when they had academic struggles. Seven of the participants mentioned their AVID instructors in high school and verbal persuasion (from that instructor) as part of their reasoning for entering AVID and their continued success in college. Each of these participants reported asking for help via email and/or in person prior to assignments or tests that they performed well on.

Participant 12 mentioned not performing to her own expectations in an English course and then asking the instructor for help to do better on the next essay. She reported the positive comments that she appreciated from the same instructor when she improved on the final paper for the class. She noted wanting to do better in the class as a way to show the instructor she was listening. She stated:

> So she just gave me some tips and tools on how to, you know, kind of find my way within going through the class and college... She was always super helpful with finding things if we needed anything... So it was really helpful for her to kind of build on that confidence to find helpful tools to help out during college.

Several participants did not seek out help from their professors until they were struggling. Participant five was “called out in class” for failing a test and then he decided to get help at the instructor’s office hours. He stated:

> I was really, really upset that I failed it ... I just disappointed him, and that was my biggest thing. So I kind of just met with him and I'm still really attached to him. Like yes, I was upset I failed, but I knew that there was a lot more I could do. That connection you make with professors is ... it can be interesting. It can kind of change the way you do things.

Participant number two stated that the "Profs are there to help you, if you ask." She reported introducing herself to each instructor, so she was "not just another face." She attends "a pretty big school" and felt the need to ask for help regularly "so my prof knows I'm going to class and I'm trying." She also reported positive experiences with her instructors as a reason that she continues to seek their help.

It is clear the participants feel comfortable to ask for help in their coursework and reflect on AVID high school as a mastery experience where they also asked for help. Their continued success is partly due to their willingness to ask for that assistance. They would not do so if they had not received these supports in the high school elective.

Summary of Outcomes, Literature, and Conceptual Framework

The findings for the study are outlined by the conceptual framework and analyzed based on the research questions. The findings revealed that participants identified collaboration, focused notetaking in the Cornell Style, practiced self-regulatory behaviors, and sought out help from their instructors and peers as tools for their academic success. The participants all experienced similar circumstances to their AVID high school courses, during college experiences due to their previous mastery experiences according to Self-efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997).

These findings suggest a need for professional development (PD) and educator training in Cornell Style notes across the curriculum, instruction in facilitating collaboration in the classroom with supports from the instructor, and relationship building that will help students persevere with difficult academic tasks. I have designed a 3-day PD workshop to assist teachers in gaining an understanding of the Cornell Style notes including Costa's leveled questions, collaboration strategies across the curriculum, ways to use collaborative groupings, and strategies for relationship building in the classroom.

In this section I have described the findings of my study according to the research design, the framework, data collection and analysis. The findings were presented from the semistructured interviews and according to the emerging themes. Section 3 introduces the project including goals, rationale for the project selection and a literature review supporting the selection of the project.

Section 3: The Project

Section 3 includes a description of a 3-day professional development created to address the concern of the on-time graduation rates of minority and low socioeconomic status students in a suburban northwest school district. I found insights to the application of AVID instructional strategies at the post-secondary level that lead to success for the participants of the study in high school completion and transition to post-secondary education. The insights provided lead me to create 3 days of PD for teachers that includes collaboration strategies, Cornell Style notetaking strategies and elements of social-emotional learning (SEL).

Rationale

Creating a 3-day PD workshop for this study included a focus on teachers using their existing and new knowledge in an ongoing manner, which according to Hoyle and Johnson (1995) will improve their instruction and skills to positively impact students. The focus of the PD designed for this 3-day workshop was on teachers' current teaching assignment, for continual growth in their own classroom (Harris, 2016; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). I emphasized collaboration with colleagues for lesson creation and adaptation within the context of their content area amongst the professional learning community (PLC) groups to ensure teachers can use the strategies presented. A formative evaluation will be used to gain feedback and make adaptions if necessary, to ensure teachers understand the concepts each day, and continue learning for the following days of PD.

Review of Literature

For this review I researched adult learning theories, professional development, professional learning (PL), effective professional learning communities (PLC), and self-determination theory (SDT). During my search I narrowed my focus to include only research from 2014–2019 and included searches of peer-reviewed journals within Education Source, ERIC and Education Research Complete. I also relied on texts related to adult learning theories, PD and PLCs to create my 3- day professional development workshop.

Adult Learning Theory

I focused first on the adult learning theory by Knowles (1984), also known as andragogy, and six principles for how adults learn were identified. The six principles include the learner's need to know, the self-concept of the learner, prior experience of the learner, readiness to learn, and motivation to learn. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012) also identified adult learning is best when the individuality of the learners is a focus and adapted for their current working environment. The assumptions presented by Knowles (1984) identified how adults learn however, there is not a clear connection to how behaviors can be changed in learning. Creation of PD that includes the input of teachers who are at the site in necessary for them to change to fit their needs at their school specifically. Creating PD to fit the teacher's needs with their content group aligns with Knowles (1984) and allows the teachers to identify how the focus will happen in their own classroom as they adapt lesson plans collaboratively and create their PLC goals.

When working with students in the education field, adapting to change is necessary, continued learning by the instructors is vital. Teachers are self-directed in most of their daily work, guided by frameworks, timelines and standards. Educators are required to continue their learning and this process is self-directed. Knowles' framework for adult learning coupled with a focus on SDT will benefit both the educators and their students.

Self Determination Theory (SDT)

Self Determination Theorists identify that if the three main psychological factors of autonomy, relatedness, and competency are present then a higher level of motivation and engagement for improving their instruction and being persistent (Self Determination Theory, 2019) are more likely to occur. When teachers are supported in the three main psychological aspects, they are more likely to participate in continued growth for their professional life (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017). Increasing the possibility of independent motivation for improving their teaching was found to be important for teachers to actively participate in more trainings and implement changes in their classroom (Gorozidis & Papioannou, 2014; Korthagen & Evelein, 2016). Korthagen and Evelein (2016) discovered that extrinsic factors have an effect on each teacher, but encouraging their autonomy has a positive outcome for their willingness to build relationships with students and try new concepts in the classroom.

Ensuring the three main psychological factors are met is not enough to influence teachers' instruction and participation in PL but is an aspect of teacher's continuing to improve in their classrooms. It is also necessary to include relevant professional

development, colleagues who are supportive for helping each other's well-being, opportunities for decision-making and support to create relationships among their colleagues and students (Hobson & Maxwell 2017). Each of the mentioned aspects of increasing a teacher's well-being for classroom improvement are also a part of effective professional development. The focus of the PD project created was supportive collaborative and allowed for autonomy. Hobson and Maxwell (2017) and Korthagen and Evelein (2016) proposed that both supportive, collaboration, and autonomy amongst teachers is necessary to implement change in the classroom that improves student achievement.

Professional Development

There is a large amount of research related to PD and PL. PD as defined by Hoyle and Johnson (1995) is how educators learn new information and skills to impact their students through their improved instruction. PD that is more effective when related to the teacher's current assignment, embedded in their job and ongoing for growth (Harris, 2016; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Crowley (2017) outlined several different types of PD programs to implement including one-day workshops, multiple day conferences, and even university level courses. Any type of PD program could be directed at improving the instructional skills of teachers and may take place at the study site or select location.

However, the gap in literature is with the interchangeable terms PD and PL. PL is ongoing and a part of a group process with several defined and necessary parameters for continued success. PL happens within the context of a supportive environment for

ongoing improvement of practice. Moving from professional development to professional learning in a shift in the mindset for teachers and must happen over time and with the correct supports including the participation of the teachers in development of the activities, including collaborative efforts (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Wennergren, 2017).

A PLC can be a basis for transforming a school culture if it is in collaboration within the context of the administration and the teachers, honoring the collective knowledge, creating a sense of community, experiential learning and reflection (Gutierez & Kim, 2017). A PLC is characterized by several principles including shared vision, values, and goals, willingness to collaborate and share experiences, focus on outcomes or results, and a supportive leadership structure. The PLC movement was influenced by a need for continued learning rather than just teaching with an emphasis on each individual educator as a contributing member that can be a part of the school's overall success (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Eaker, Dufour & Burnette, 2002; Hord, 1997; Provini, 2016; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1997; Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008). PLCs can be used as a collective at one school and within the school, there can be PLCs for each content area, which is the current practice of the district accessed for this study. An effective PLC can only happen with support from within the building and trust for the risk teachers must make in learning and changing their practice.

Project Description

Project Goals

The goals of this 3-day PD project is to educate teachers on how to utilize Cornell Style notes across the curriculum and equip them with the skills to create a collaborative

environment with relationship building activities. The overarching goal is to enable teachers to enrich their instructional practices, introduce effective learning styles, and foster connections with students to enhance academic performance. The goals of the PD plan will be reached through a 3-day workshop as a larger group and smaller content specific groupings. The final goals of the PD is to have a cycle of continually improving instruction based on the work in PLC groups and analysis of the classroom data for each individual teacher.

Existing Supports

Currently there are existing supports in this local district to enable the PD. The district has just transitioned this academic year to an AVID district meaning that all teachers are expected to learn AVID strategies through PD experiences to incorporate into their classrooms. This is a great benefit to the likelihood of the PD plan being used. The district has been supportive of this study allowing me to access testing data and the addresses of AVID graduates and further encouraging me to share my results once the study is complete.

Potential Barriers

There are potential barriers to implement the PD plan I have designed. The PD is 3 days in length, a long time to focus on the three elements presented within the already established PD calendar. Additionally, it is a cost of approximately $100 for printing materials and for a registration fee to cover these costs and facility rental if district buildings are not used. Another barrier is the need for more staff to facilitate the content area sessions. I will need at least one assistant to facilitate the curriculum sessions and

this additional staff would need time for advanced training prior to the 3-day PD with the staff. Finally, the PD is content-specific and the single elective class teachers will need to collaborate with their counterparts in other district buildings.

Solutions to Barriers

There are possible solutions to the barriers including using district buildings for the 3 days of PD, asking teachers to volunteer their time without payment, and asking the district to print all needed materials. The district could pay the assistant teachers for their time prior to the PD and during the 3 days of the designed plan. Further, the district can allow this PD plan to be a part of the current calendar outlined for the academic year. The PLCs begin their work in August of each school year and the district could allow the focus of these PD days to be included in their work.

To implement the PD plan described, the district could incorporate this work at the start of the school year in August 2020. During this time the PLCs meet with new and returning staff for planning their year within their content area. The PLCs are separated by subject and grade level, including all teachers from each building in PLCs for collaboration. In classes that are single electives at the building level, the district allows for collaboration across the district. If the PD plan is utilized during the beginning of the year, continued collaboration would need to happen for all staff during the PLC time all year.

Roles and Responsibilities

I will be responsible for setting up the PD by contacting the district administration for approval with my completed plan and each high school building principal for setting

up the 3 days of PD. I will work with each building principal to identify the assisting teachers and to create a time to work with them prior to the PD. It is also my responsibility to print all materials necessary and give each assistant teacher the power points associated with their session of PD. I will also be responsible for analyzing the feedback at the end of each workshop. Implementation of the PLC work for the academic year will be the responsibility of the building administrators.

The administrators' role in this PD will be to allow me to use their school facilities, ask their teachers to be a part of the PD and to align the teachers' PLC goals for the year with the specific topics in the workshops. The teachers involved with the PD will be responsible to be open-minded to learning more about SEL, the new notetaking style, be willing to share their experiences in the classroom, collaborate with other staff in their department and create PLC goals related to the focus of the PD.

Project Evaluation Plan

The project evaluation for the PD will be formative. Each day the participants will complete an evaluation providing feedback for the usefulness of the content and questions they still have for implementation. The information will be gathered anonymously on a paper feedback form at each content level session and put in an envelope for my review. A formative evaluation for feedback each day of the PD was chosen to ensure teachers can participate in the PLC environment even during the PD, as they are developing their goals for the year. A formative evaluation gives the possibility o adapt the PD after each day as needed to honor the collective knowledge of the teachers,

their learning, and reflection to allow for continued improvement according an effective PLC model (Gutierez & Kim, 2017).

Teachers will also be asked for feedback for improvement of the PD (See Appendix A). The evaluation goals include securing immediate feedback each day to identify the teachers' goals, understanding of the topics and give the facilitators and myself the opportunity to adapt the PD for the next day to assist the teachers' understanding of the concepts and strategies for application in their own classroom. The overall goals for the PD are for teachers to create or adapt their lessons to include SEL components, Cornell Style notes and relationship building to better student achievement in each classroom.

Project Implications for Social Change

The possible social change implications from this project are related to the use of the PD as it is implemented at the classroom level. The PD is provided to give teachers the tools to use the strategies in their classroom for building relationships to increase collaboration among the teacher PLC groups while utilizing the focused notetaking strategies. The project goes beyond the 3-day workshop, because it gives teachers the tools to teach their specialized content, but with more relational engagement for the instructor with their students. While most PDs for secondary teachers can be vague and difficult to implement across many content areas, the notetaking, collaboration strategies, and relationship building can be adapted for every classroom for possible impact on students and their achievement. This project is important because it gives teachers tools to assist students in building their skills while supporting them in a newly defined

relationship as mentor and mentee and not just teacher and student. Further, the focused notetaking gives teachers visible data for remediation when students struggle and proof of how the strategies have worked when students are successful.

Local stakeholders (district personnel, building administrators, teachers, parents and students) will benefit as more students are likely to pass standardized assessments and graduate. The students using the strategies reported to be tools for success by the participant AVID graduates will be better prepared for their high school and postsecondary course work. Beyond the local level, the students who use the AVID strategies are more likely to continue using them at the collegiate level for success and retention. Millea, Wills, Elder, and Molina (2018) found that students who were academically prepared were more likely continue and finish their degree program.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

This project study provides teachers with the information and strategies to use Cornell Style notes, social-emotional learning, and collaborative strategies for relationship building and student achievement in the classroom. In this section, I will evaluate the research project, identify my learning about the process, discussion of the limitations and alternative approaches. I will also discuss the strengths, weaknesses, scholarship, project development, the evaluation, leadership and change. In this section, I included an analysis of myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer along with the potential for social change, implications, applications, and directions for future research.

The purpose for this case study was to explore the AVID instructional strategies high school graduates used in their transition to post-secondary education. The data collected in this qualitative case study revealed that AVID graduates do use Cornell Style notes, collaborative strategies, self-regulatory behaviors and seek assistance from instructors, and peers reflected learned behaviors and use of AVID instructional strategies. They continue to use the instructional strategies beyond high school and into post-secondary education.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

The strengths of the PD include focusing on training teachers based on the results of the data provided by the AVID graduates during this study. The study participants

reported using their collaborative and notetaking strategies learned in AVID and applied the strategies to their college setting. The respondents also identified the importance of the relationships they built with their AVID teacher and continued to seek this out at the postsecondary level, with their professors. The participants reported their self-regulatory behaviors learned in high school AVID and they continued to manage their behaviors for academic success in college. The data reported by the participants led me to develop PD that utilizes relationship building in the classroom, focuses on notetaking and collaboration while supporting the students in the classroom. A second strength of the study is facilitating teachers to collaborate for sharing current lessons, providing their input for units of study and revising for use with SEL strategies and Cornell Style notes in collaborative student groups.

A final strength of the study is the transferable aspects for an entire population of AVID students in another environment. The location of the study was a suburban northwest school district, however the findings from the 13 participants were similar across three high schools and four graduating classes from years 2015–2018. It is possible for the study to be replicated in an urban setting with such a large possible population from this setting.

Limitations

A limitation of the project is the study included a small sample size compared to the number of students served by the AVID elective over the years since the course began in the local district. The district serves approximately 125 AVID students in each grade level across the three comprehensive high schools each year. The population size was

approximately 400 graduates and the sample size consisted of 13 graduates who were interviewed for this study.

Another limitation for the study is the lack of balanced diversity among the participants. If I were to conduct the study again, I would like to include more participants to add more data from AVID graduates across additional years, using a purposeful sample of the full possible 400 respondents who have graduated from the local district since the inception of the AVID elective. Inclusion of a purposeful sample can also increase the diversity of the graduate respondents, allowing for an even number of male and female participants and those who have differing backgrounds.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

One way of addressing the problem differently could be the use of continual PD where veteran teachers lead monthly sessions including their strategies for reaching at-risk populations in their classrooms. The PD would include their SEL expertise along with collaborative groupings and Cornell Style notes. During the PD sessions, teachers could teach each other their lessons and focus on student data for monitoring progress, based on the content area standards and formative assessments given throughout the year.

Project Development, Scholarship, Leadership and Change

In the beginning of my doctoral experience, I was not a mother and I am now. I have been greatly challenged throughout this process partly due to the blessing of becoming a parent and working to be a good wife, teacher, and activity adviser while also trying to be good student. I had no idea how much time and dedication this process would require, and I now realize I am supported by a network of family, friends, and colleagues

who have been understanding in this long journey. I have learned a great deal about myself and abilities during this process.

Reflection as a Scholar

As a scholar, I felt it was a struggle to narrow my focus for my prospectus and once I finally did, I realized I wanted to benefit future students, if possible, from the experiences of graduates who had come before them. Once I realized my topic and how it could possibly influence my district, I was able to move through the prospectus process.

Another struggle I faced was analyzing my data once my interviews were complete. I planned to use NVIVO but did not fully grasp the complex program. I should have asked for help and learned the program in advance of the analysis process. I then struggled to use Excel as an option but settled on hand coding in the end. Printing out my transcripts and analyzing using color-coding felt right for me and the themes to emerge.

A surprising part of completing my study was the willingness of the participants to be interviewed by a stranger and their helpful nature. I was also surprised by their confidence and ability to explain their responses fully. Their reflecting back on experiences in AVID while explaining their own perceived strengths and weaknesses in regulating themselves for studying and completing of their course work was intriguing. I expected many AVID graduates would not respond for the fear of having to speak about him or herself and their possible mistakes in their educational experiences. However, the respondents were willing to tell about their life to possibly benefit the school district and future students.

Reflection as a Practitioner

As a practitioner, I learned a great deal about time management for my job and my work as a student. As a full-time teacher, activity advisor, parent, and student, I have had a huge challenge to find time for everything. I teach three different courses and work with my student activity group two to three times per week. I struggled to find the time for my family and spent a large amount of every weekend at a coffee shop or library to complete my work on my study. Once I realized how much time I needed to spend, I began arriving at work at 6:30 in the morning to leave in the afternoon as soon as possible. I also had to take all of my personal days off from work to focus on my study, have phone conferences with my chair, and to complete interviews.

The insight I gained from the research and participants gave me a different perspective on reading literature and listening to the ideas of current and former students for understanding their experiences. In my daily life I now find myself questioning any study referenced in periodicals and find the need to look deeper for the constructs of the work the writer is relying on for their story.

Reflection as a Project Developer

As a project developer, I planned PD that can be beneficial to all content area teachers, including myself. I am a Career and Technical Education teacher and often feel left out of PD experiences where the facilitators focus on the core subjects only. I knew I needed to include teachers' own experiences. Honoring the expertise of the educators I am working with is necessary for them to adapt this learning into their classroom. Assuming they knew nothing of SEL, Cornell Style notes or collaboration would do a

disservice to all in attendance of the PD and risked alienating the audience. Further, teachers work very well to mentor others, a regular aspect of their job. Allowing teachers to collaborate and share their lessons for others was an important facet of adapting this work to their personal PLC goals for the year.

Reflections of the Importance of the Work

This project's possible effect on social change begins with the teachers being supported so they can help the students succeed, most importantly of all. As this project focuses on utilizing current teacher practices that are beneficial while adding additional tools for success through collaborative strategies and focused notetaking, the dialogue is open for the PLC groups to work to impact all students in each content area. Support from the administration and continued sharing while analyzing data from formative assessments throughout the year will encourage teachers to continue to use SEL in the classroom. An increase in achievement can happen with informed and supportive teachers, increasing the ability for all students to be successful.

Implications, Applications and Directions for Future Research

Because teachers have many challenges each day, I found it necessary to give them the ideas to foster SEL in their classrooms while also teaching students to use Cornell Style notes and collaborative groupings for the benefit of student achievement. As found during the semistructured interviews, the AVID graduates identified the focused notetaking strategies as a tool they use in postsecondary education along with self-regulatory behaviors, many of which were learned or encouraged in their high school AVID experiences. In this local district, the need to support all students to on-time

graduation persists, and the use of the outlined strategies can be tools to meet this goal. Students who graduate high school are less likely to live in poverty and less likely to have children living in poverty. Graduates are able to pursue more career options and earn a wage that can help them to benefit their local community. Supporting students in this district to graduation will positively impact the community by having alumni who can give back to this school district in the future.

Future research is needed to identify the effects of SEL on students outside the AVID elective, in the whole school population and in an urban setting. It would be beneficial to see how the SEL strategies, Cornell Style notes and collaborative strategies can have an effect on an urban school with a large population. I hope to stimulate teachers to continue their use of SEL strategies to foster positive decision-making with their guidance so that all students can benefit from a supportive environment, graduate from high school, and pursue future training and/or education.

Conclusion

This qualitative case study gave me the opportunity to explore the instructional practices of AVID through the eyes of graduates who are attending post-secondary education. Through my research and semistructured interviews, I gathered a better understanding of the AVID graduates' experiences in high school and post-secondary education. This study has given me the opportunity to learn a great deal about the AVID elective course and given me the opportunity to create a PD plan that will connect teachers each month for continual PLC work while integrating SEL, Cornell Style notes

and collaboration within groups for their students. I feel confident that teachers will be better able to collaborate to benefit their students due to the PD plan set in place.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project outlined in this appendix is based on the results of this project study regarding low income and minority students completing high school and transitioning to post-secondary education while utilizing their AVID strategies. The results of this research study indicated the need for professional development focused on an in depth understanding of focused notetaking strategies, social emotional learning and collaboration strategies within the classroom setting. Professional learning that is focused on the needs of each teacher, embedded in their current job and ongoing is likely to benefit the instruction and increase student achievement.

Each day of the 3-day professional development sessions engages participants in a variety of learning activities within their building groups as well as their subject area PLCs. PLCs are designed for collaboration with support from other instructors for use in their own classrooms. Effective PLCs are characterized by a shared vision, values, and goals, willingness to collaborate and share experiences, focus on outcomes or results, and a supportive leadership structure (Eaker, Dufour & Burnette, 2002; Provini, 2016). Each full-day session includes large group and small group discussions, multi-media resources, and time for independent work and reflection.

The following professional development plan includes large grouping, content area learning, time for collaborative lesson design, and participant reflection. The project plan includes an agenda for each day, the power point slides for the full group and small group sessions, and the evaluation for each day.

Professional Development Program Objective for Session 1: By the end of first day session, participants will be able to:

- Summarize the philosophy of Social Emotional Learning
- Describe the effective use of SEL strategies in their own classroom.
- Create one lesson using SEL components in content area groups

Session 1: Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Time	Activity
8:00am - 8:30am (30 minutes)	**<u>Welcome, Introduction, & Energizer</u>** • **Introduction of presenters** • **State today's learning goals** • **Review professional learning expectations** o Be engaged in today's work. Stay off personal technology unless it is part of the learning activity. o Share your ideas and listen to others. Everyone learns better together. o Keep your classroom in mind for our sessions. • **Large Group Energizer:** Raccoon Circles Activity o In their introduction, participants will state their name, school, courses currently teaching, and one interesting fact about themselves that others may not know. o Using the straps provided, the participants will separate into groups of 10-12. o Once in their group, the participants will state their first names. o When the timer begins, participants will move the knot of the strap alphabetically to each participant as fast as they can. o The group that finishes first drops the strap and is the winner. o The participants then move with their group back to their tables.

8:30am - 9:30am (60 minutes)	**Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** • **What is SEL?** o Philosophy o Introduce the 5 elements: • **How does SEL benefit students?** o Student testimonials (short video) o Teacher testimonials (show thank you notes from students) • **Why should we incorporate SEL?** o Support from current research o Discussion: Your experiences with relationship building in the classroom. • **What does it look like in a classroom?** o Show short video of teacher-student interactions in classrooms. All 5 elements must be present in the video. Classroom examples include a mathematics class and a Culinary Arts classroom kitchen. o **Table group discussion:** What did you observe in the video? What activities could you implement in your classroom? Tables must be prepared to share at least one discussion point with the larger group.
9:30am – 10:15am (45 minutes)	• **SEL in the classroom- Mathematics teacher sample lesson** o Mathematics teacher explains how to use SEL strategies with getting to know students in the classroom o Focus is on building a relationship with the students first. o Teacher outlines how she explains responsible decision-making for mathematics assignments and homework as part of classroom norms. o Examples include classroom pictures of students writing goals for completion of their assignments.
10:15am – 10:25am (10 minutes)	**Break** • Drinks and snacks provided for participants
10:25am – 10:35am (10 minutes)	**Content Area Groupings** • Teachers are split into content areas and by grade level (where applicable) and transition to another classroom location for their content area work.
10:35am - 11:55pm	**Content Area Groupings**

(45 minutes)	• In each content area and grade level, a facilitator will guide the group through a sample lesson using SEL components. • The facilitator's focus will include the scope and sequence of using SEL throughout the semester and then focus on the beginning of the course to introduce SEL components. • Then, each group will choose a beginning unit of their course for applying SEL components (the focus can be on instruction with any one component or a blend of several of the 5 components). • Teachers must create a rough plan for one lesson with their content area group before lunch.
11:55pm - 12:45pm (50 minutes)	**Lunch** • **Options:** Participants may choose to bring sack lunch or leave campus and eat at a nearby establishment.
12:45pm – 2:15pm (90 minutes)	**Content Area Groupings** -lesson creation, examples • **Content Area Discussion** o Teacher will share their experiences with relationship building in the classroom (one of the 5 elements of SEL). o Then, each group will finish their first lesson plan for SEL component inclusion o Each group will also identify how to include SEL components throughout their first full unit of their course, for the month of September.
2:15pm-3:00pm (45 minutes)	**Reflection & PLC goal setting** o Teachers will identify how they can continue to use one or more elements in their classroom units for the semester. o Teachers will make a plan to meet together in the next month to reflect on their experiences with the use of the SEL components for the month of September (for the Monday PLC planning time provided on one day per month from 7:30am-8:30am).
3:00pm-3:30pm (30 minutes)	**Wrap-Up & Evaluations** • **Next Steps:** **Evaluations:** distribute evaluations for participants to complete. Participants may leave once evaluations have been turned in.

Session 1: Social Emotional Learning Slides
Slides 1-6

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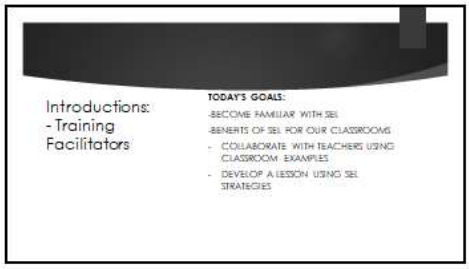

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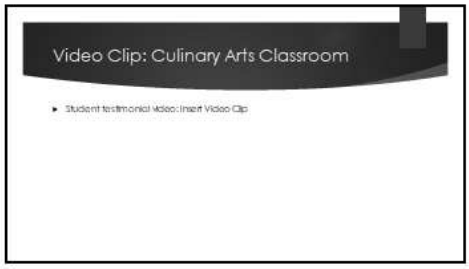

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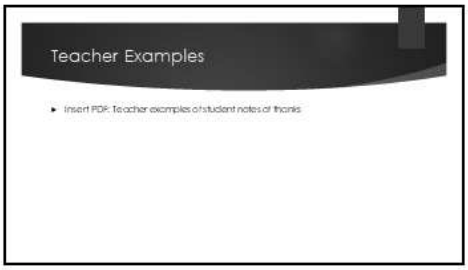

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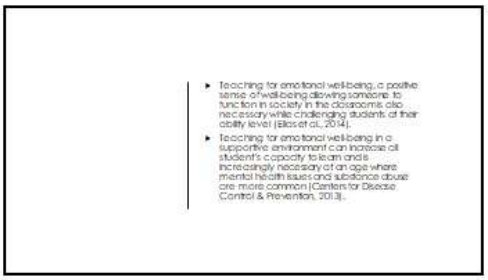
Slides 7-12



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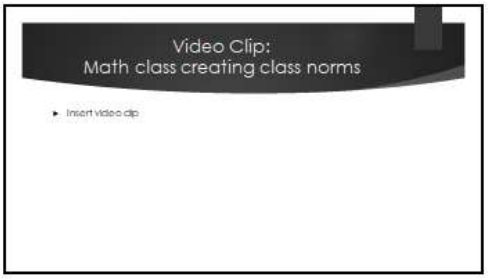

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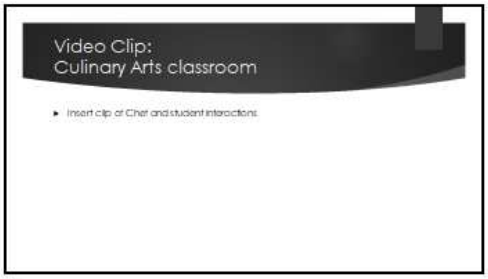

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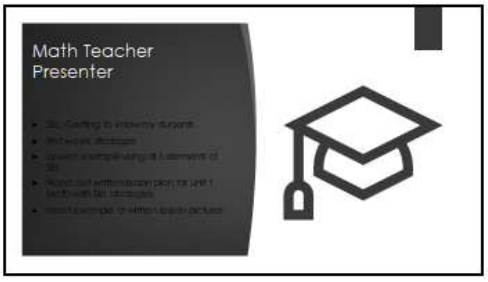

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Slides 13-18

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Slides 19-20

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Session 1: Evaluation Questions for Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

1. In your own words, what is Social Emotional learning? In your explanation, state one benefit of SEL.
2. Briefly identify how you can utilize SEL in your classroom.
3. On a scale of 1 to 5 was today's learning objective was met?

   Objective Not Met 1 2 3 4 5 Objective Met
4. Provide any suggestions you may have for improving today's training experience.
5. Please share your goal for how you would like to implement SEL in your classroom.
6. How can the training facilitator and your PLC help you reach your goal?

Professional Development Program Objective for Session 2: By the end of session two, teachers will be able to:

- Use the Components of SEL with Cornell Style notes.
- List examples of how to use Focused Notetaking in the classroom for their own content area.
- Summarize the benefits of Cornell Style notes for their content area classroom use.

Time	Activity

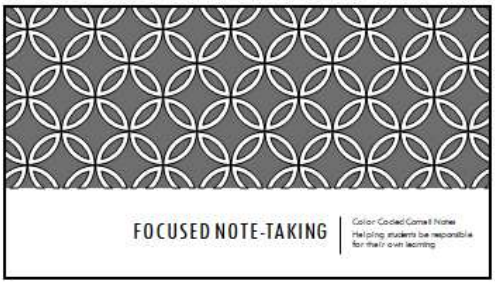
8:00am - 8:30am (30 minutes)	**<u>Welcome, Introduction, & Energizer</u>**
	• **Introduction of presenters**
	• **State today's learning goal**
	• **Review professional learning expectations**
	  o Be engaged in today's work. Stay off personal technology unless it is part of the learning activity.
	  o Share your ideas and listen to others. Everyone learns better together.
	  o Be forward thinking. Apply today's work to your classroom environment.
	• **Review 5 Components of SEL**
	  o Self-Awareness
	  o Self-Management
	  o Responsible Decision-Making
	  o Social Awareness
	  o Relationship Skills
	• **Transition to content area groupings**
	• **Discussion: How can you use SEL components for note-taking in your content area?**
	  o Teachers discuss how they use notes in their classroom and how to blend SEL strategies

	○ One teacher from each content area will record ideas for PLC use
8:30am - 9:30am (60 minutes)	• **Teacher Presenter-AVID Site Lead** ○ Brief explanation of AVID goals ○ AVID note-taking for all content areas is utilized daily and weekly. ○ Brief explanation of Collaborative Study Groups (Tutorials) twice per week. ○ 5 Phase of Note-taking ○ Examples of student work using color-coding of notes
9:30am – 9:45am (15 minutes)	**Break** Drinks and snacks provided for participants
9:45am – 11:30am (45 minutes)	• **Teacher Presenter-AVID Site Lead: Cornell Style notes** ○ Format ○ Section expectations ○ Revisiting notes (uses in the classroom for studying and review, use at home) ○ Watch video of Students explaining their use of Bloom's Taxonomy and Costa's Leveled Questions in their self-questioning.
11:00am – 12:00pm (1 hour)	**Lunch** • **Options:** Participants may choose to bring sack lunch or leave campus and eat at a nearby establishment.
12:00pm –12:30pm (30 minutes)	**Content Area Use of Note-taking Strategies** ○ Levels of Questioning (Bloom's Taxonomy and Costas leveled questions) **Content Area Discussion** ○ Participants will discuss their previous experience with Bloom's Taxonomy and Costa's leveled questions in small table groups ○ Each table will share their experiences to the whole group. ○ The Facilitator will distribute the template handouts for 2 and 3 column note formats to use for creating lessons.

1:30pm-2:20pm (50 minutes)	**Sample Lesson Creation** • Content area teacher groups will use the templates for integrating the Cornell Styles Notes into their current lessons.
2:30pm-3:20pm (50 minutes)	**Cornell Style notes For Review** • Content area teacher groups will use the provided templates to create a plan for reviewing with Cornell Style notes. • Teachers will identify how to use two or more student groups for reviewing using their notes
3:20pm-3:30pm (10 minutes)	**Evaluations** Distribute evaluations for participants to complete. Participants may leave once evaluations have been turned in.

Session 2: Focused Notetaking- Cornell Style notes

Slides 1-6



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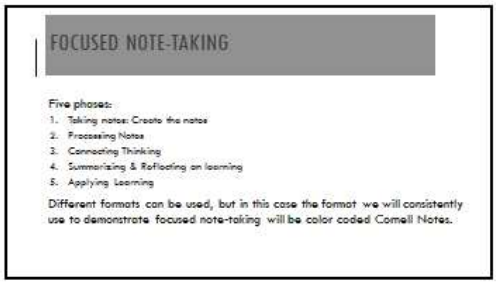

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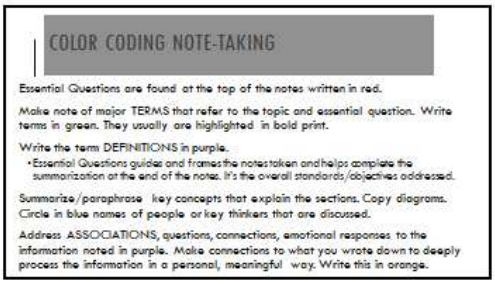

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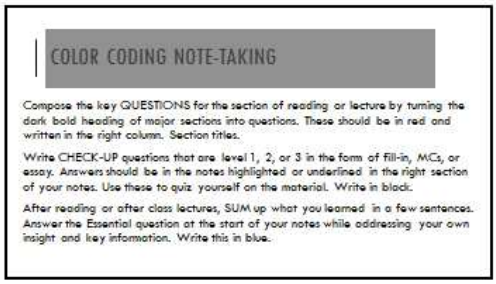

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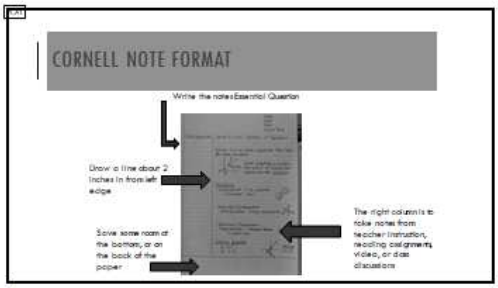

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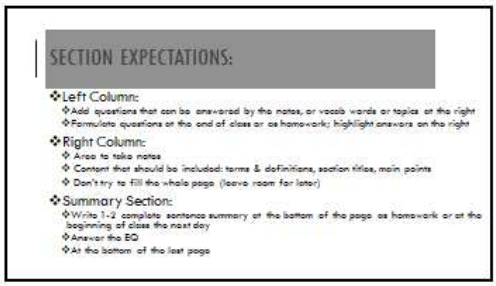

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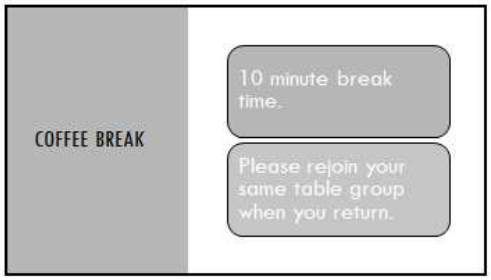

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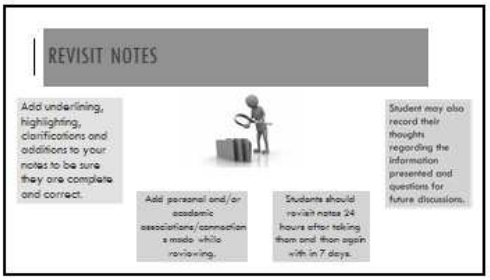

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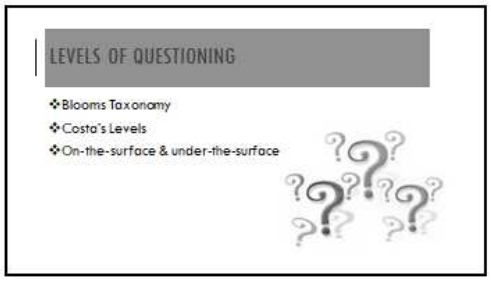

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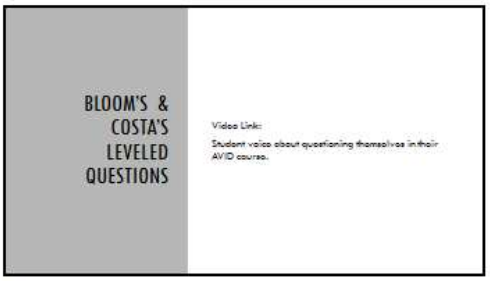

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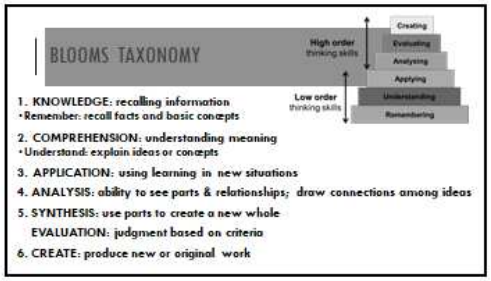

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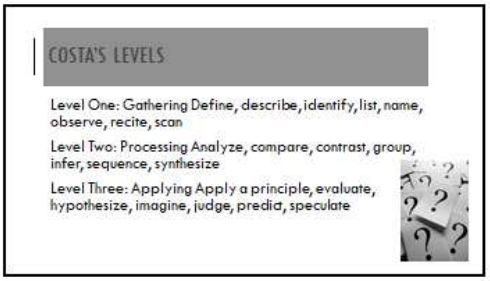

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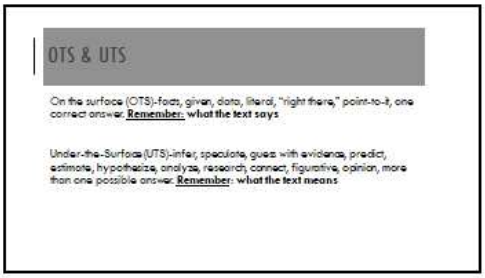

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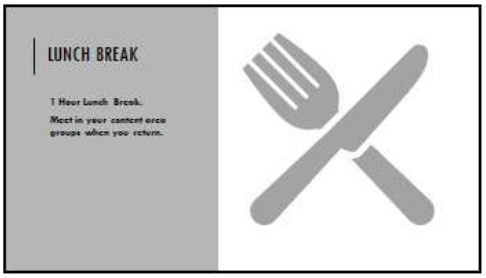

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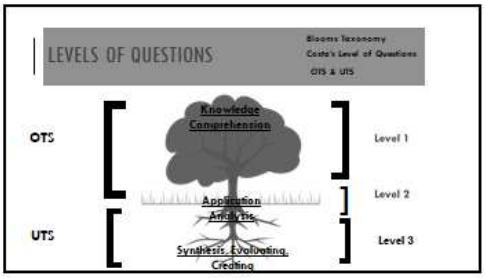

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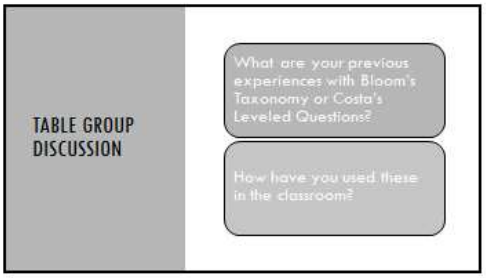

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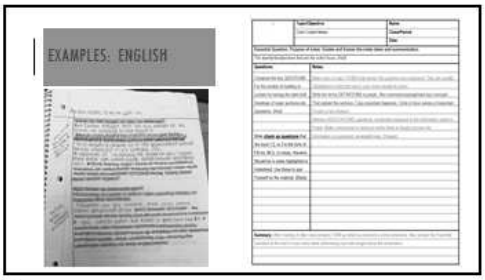

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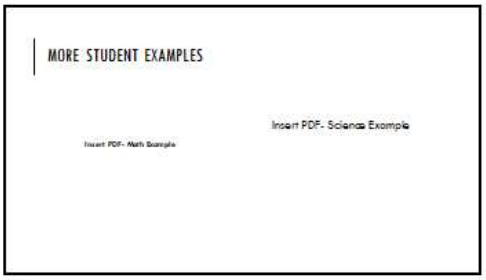

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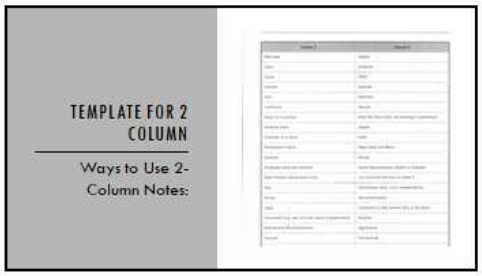
Slides 19-23



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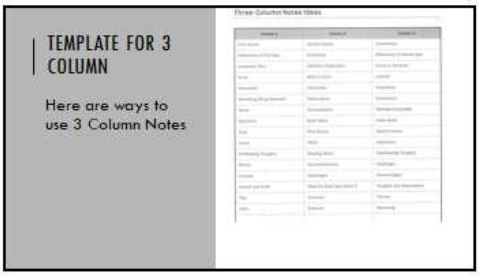

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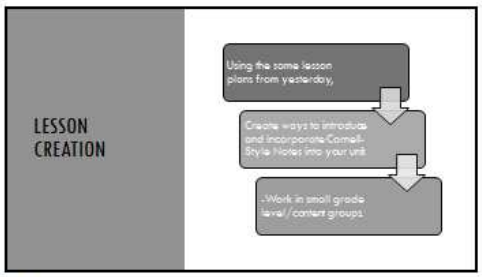

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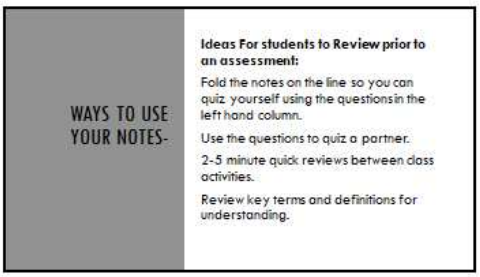

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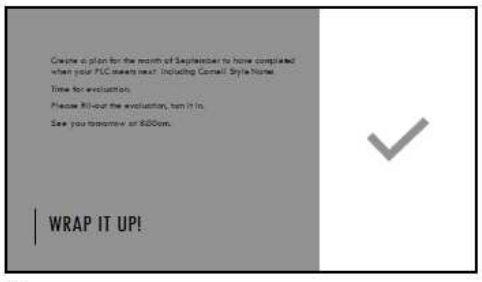

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Session 2: Evaluation Questions for Content Area Training

1. Explain how you see the connection between SEL and the Cornell Style notes.
2. Briefly describe your lesson plan for using Cornell Style notes.
3. On a scale of 1 to 5 was today's learning objective was met?

   Objective Not Met 1 2 3 4 5 Objective Met

4. Provide any suggestions you may have for improving today's training experience.
5. What is one takeaway from today's session that will help you as you plan instruction?
6. What is one personal goal that you have as a result of today's session and you shared with your PLC?
7. How can the training facilitators and your PLC assist you meeting your goal?

Session 3 Goal: By the end of the third session participants will:

- Use the Components of SEL with Cornell Style notes in groups.
- Identify how to use groupings for collaboration in their content area groups.
- Explain groupings used in content area classrooms.
- Revise lessons to include collaboration in groups and for reviewing.

Program Session 3:

Time	Activity

8:00am - 8:45am (45 minutes)	**<u>Welcome, Introduction, & Ice Breaker</u>**
	• **Introductions**
	  ○ Facilitators
	  ○ Presenters
	• **Professional learning expectations**
	  ○ Be engaged in today's work. Stay off personal technology unless it is part of the learning activity.
	  ○ Share your ideas and listen to others. Everyone learns better together.
	  ○ Be forward thinking. Think of how what you learn today can improve learning for students in your classroom.
	• **Bell Work**
	  ○ On chart paper, spend 15 minutes constructing a Common Beliefs Word Cloud, using the words and phrases generated by your team. Determine font sizes based on the number of times that a word or phrase is mentioned.
	  ○ Be prepared to share your Word Cloud with the group.
	• **State today's learning goals**
	• **Ice breaker:** Without speaking, organize yourself into a circle, in order, by your birthdate. You can use gestures and drawn pictures only. You have one minute.
	• Next, choose all members of the circle with your birth month. Sit at a table.

8:45am – 9:45am (60 minutes)	• **Quick-Write:**
	  ○ Complete a 2-minute quick-write using the following questions to guide your thinking:
	  ○ What instructional strategies do you use to promote groups to collaborate and reach goals?

	○ Share out to your small group. • **Discussion: How did you decide to create a lesson using Cornell-Style notes? (3-5minutes).** ○ Share out a lesson that stands out at your table. • **Collaboration Activity – Sole Mate** ○ Take about 20-30 seconds to find a partner who shares the same shoes as you (if they're not identical, look for a close 2nd…) ○ Share your quick-write response with your partner. ○ If time allows, find one more partner to share your response with. ○ Be prepared to share out insights with the whole group.
9:45am - 10:00am (15 minutes)	**<u>Break</u>** • Drinks and snacks provided for participants
10:00am - 11:00am (60 minutes)	**Collaboration ideas:** • Share ideas to use groups to meet goals. **Focused Note-Taking and Academic Rigor** ○ How does Focused Note-Taking support a rigorous classroom? ○ How can you group students together and use notes? • Elbow Partner Discussion: ○ With your elbow partner, identify how you currently decide to group students. ○ Explain a lesson where you partner or group students. • Grouping Strategies: We used two for the last activities • Discussion: What types of groups do you use in the classroom? ○ Ability level ○ Student chosen ○ Mixed skill level ○ By student interest ○ By Alphabet ○ Grouping Apps or Website ○ Random (counting, sticks, names from a hat) • *Share out any not listed as a table group.
11:00am - 11:30pm (30 minutes)	• **Table Discussion:** ○ What did you see in the video that was beneficial for groups?

	○ Who was facilitating the questions? ○ Why were there small groups vs. large groups? • Discussion: What types of groups do you use in the classroom? ○ Ability level ○ Student chosen ○ Mixed skill level ○ By student interest ○ By Alphabet ○ Grouping Apps or Website ○ Random (counting, sticks, names from a hat) • *Share out any not listed as a table group.
11:30pm - 12:30pm (60 minutes)	**<u>Lunch</u>** • **Options:** Participants may choose to bring sack lunch or leave campus and eat at a nearby establishment. • **1 hour** • **Meet in content area groups after lunch**
12:30pm - 1:15pm (45 minutes)	• **Reminder: Cornell Style notes** • **Examples of Groups for Review:** ○ Discussion: How do you use partners or groups for reviewing currently? ○ Partner ○ Collaborative Groups ○ Tutorial Example ○ Video: Biology students reviewing in groups ○ Tutorial Request form (TRF) ○ Mathematics Example • **Collaborative Groups** ○ Can use Tutorial format or not ○ How to introduce self-questioning with Costa's leveled questions ○ Bloom's leveled questions (handouts) ○ Costa's leveled questions (handouts)
1:15pm-3:15pm (2 hours)	• **Content/grade level groups** ○ Revise a current lesson to incorporate SEL and Cornell Style notes with the intent to review in a group ○ Revise the unit plan to teach leveled questions and reviewing with a group
3:15pm-3:30pm (15 minutes)	**<u>Evaluations</u>** • Distribute evaluations for participants to complete. Participants may leave once evaluations have been turned in.

Slides 1-6

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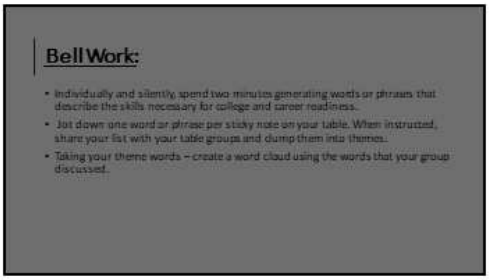

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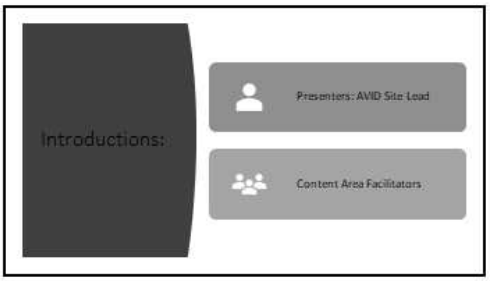

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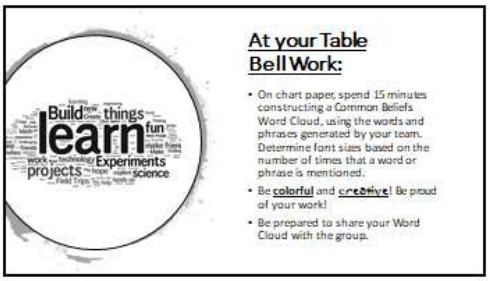

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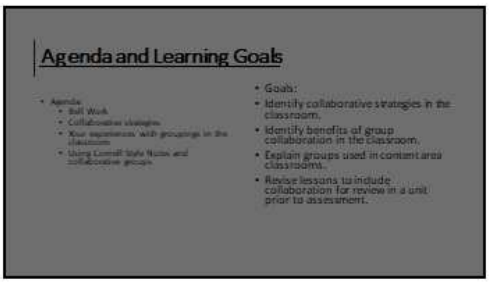

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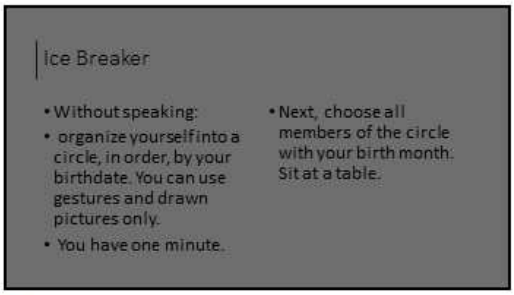
Slides 7-12



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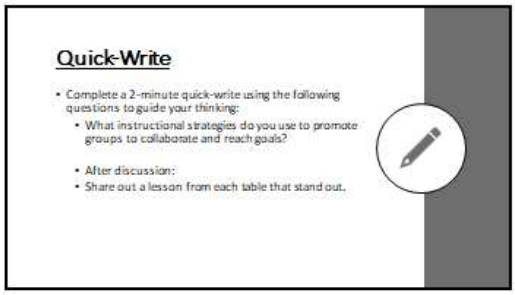

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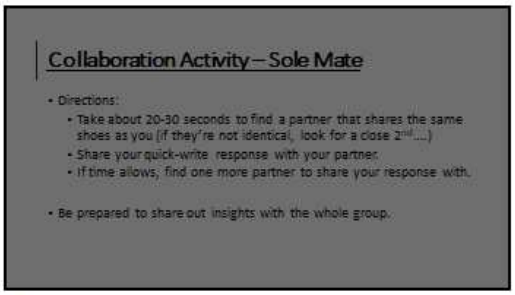

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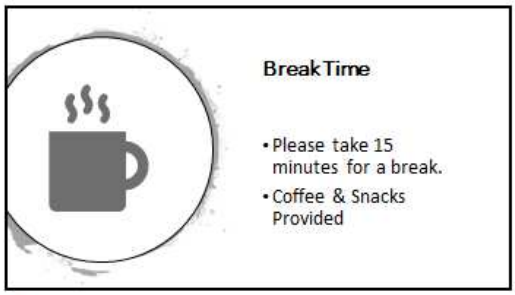

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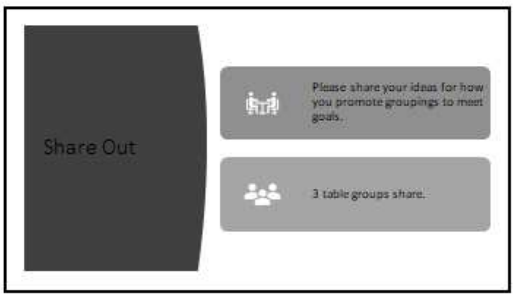

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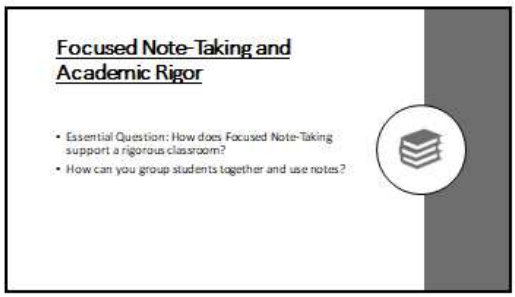

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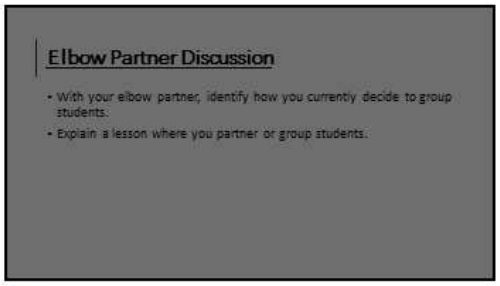
Slides 13-18



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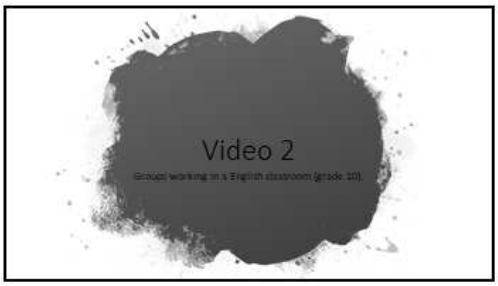

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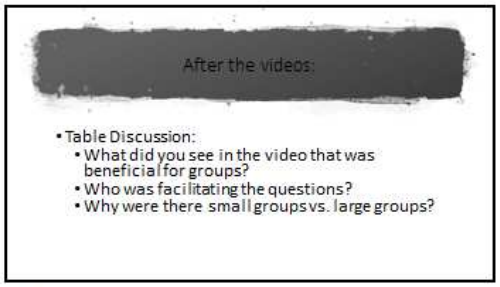

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Slides 19-24

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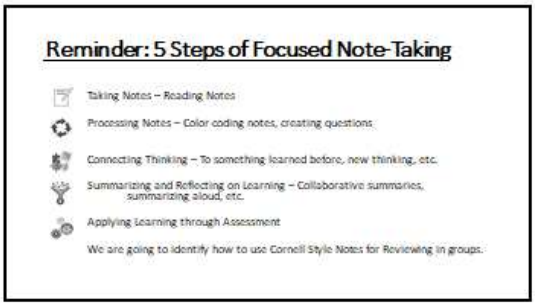

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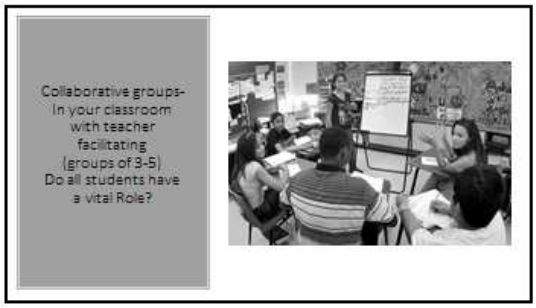

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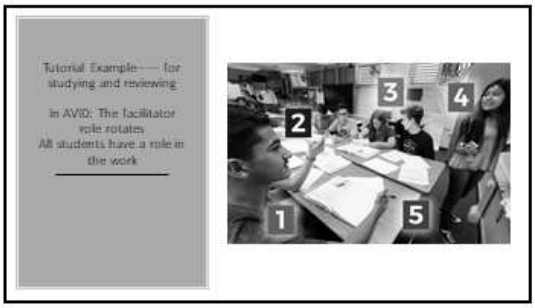

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Slides 25- 30

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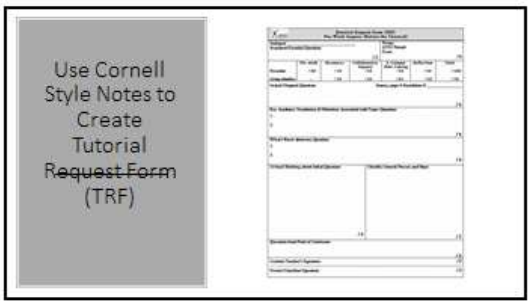

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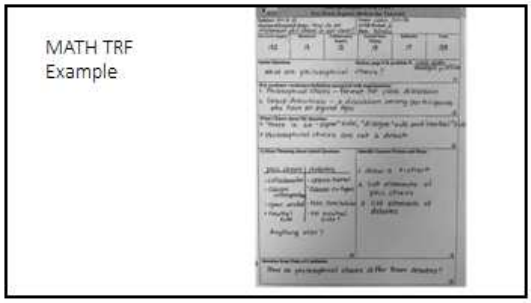

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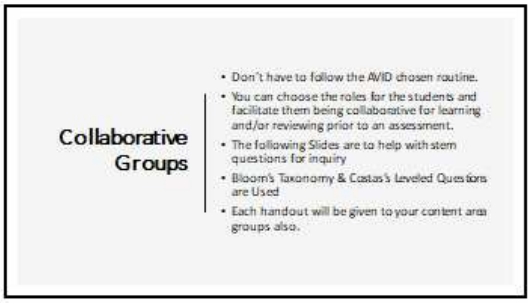

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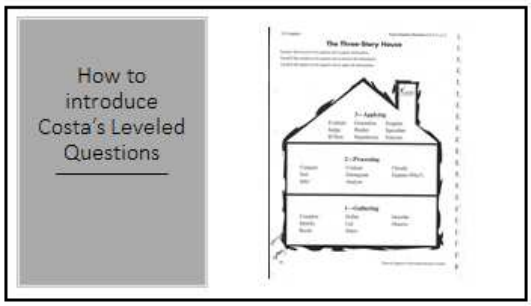

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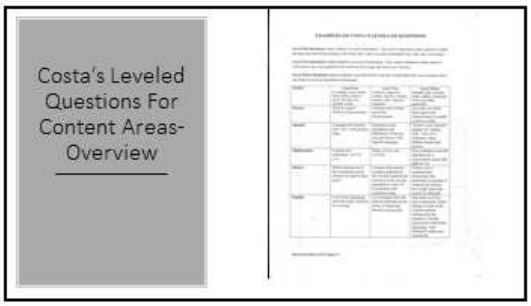

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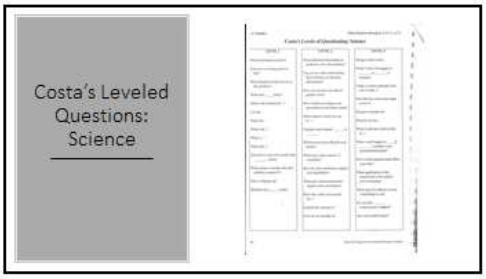

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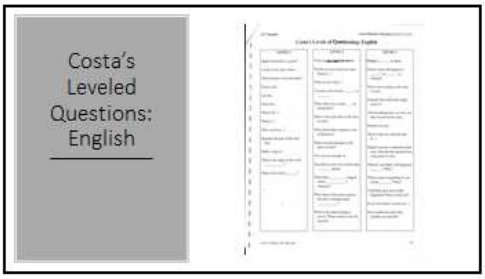

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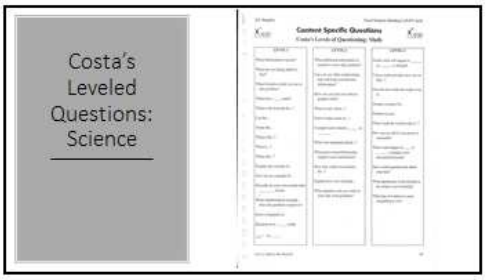

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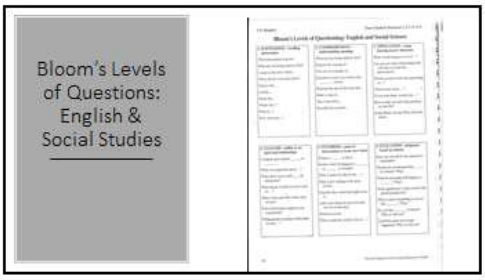

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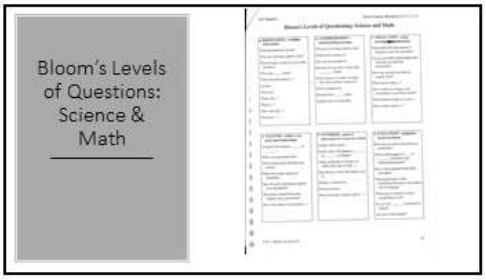

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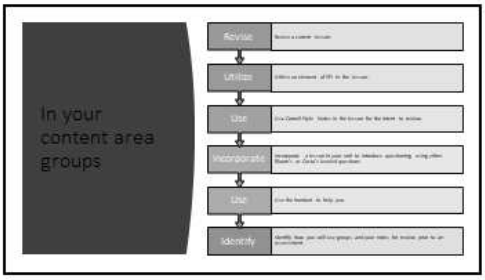

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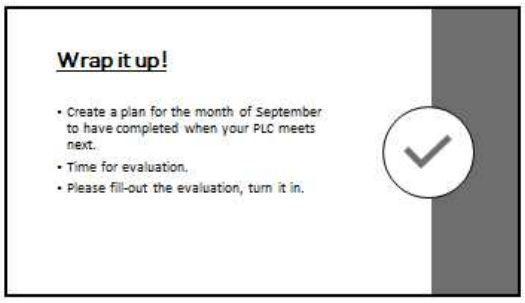
Slides 37-38



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Session 3: Evaluation Questions for Reflection and Future Planning Session

1. Explain how you see the connection between Cornell Style notes and collaborative groups.
2. Briefly describe your lesson plan for using collaborative groups for reviewing.
3. On a scale of 1 to 5 was today's learning objective was met?

   Objective Not Met 1 2 3 4 5 Objective Met
4. Provide any suggestions you may have for improving today's training experience.
5. What is one takeaway from today's session that will help you as you plan instruction?
6. What is one personal goal that you have as a result of today's session and you shared with your PLC?

How can the training facilitators and your PLC assist you meeting your goal?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. How many years were you a part of AVID?
2. Do you feel you can learn new things in classes easily? Why or why not?
3. Can you tell me about your experience with the AVID tutorials in high school? Please Describe what you learned.
4. How do you prepare for challenging assignments and tests?
5. Can you name a specific assignment or test that you succeeded at and describe how you succeeded? Be specific on what you did and felt before, during and after completing the assignment or test.
6. Were you surprised or confident about the outcome of the assignment or test? Why?
7. Can you explain a time where you did not succeed on a test or assignment in college? Please describe what you did prior to the assignment or test.
8. How did you change after the experience of not doing well to improve for your next task in the course?

Appendix C: Information letter and request for interview

Information Letter and request to be interviewed

September 1, 2018

Dear **(Insert Participant's Name):**

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Doctoral degree in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at Walden University under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Brown. The purpose of this study is to better understand what instructional strategies you learned to support your post-secondary education and how you have used the strategies.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 45-60 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital recorder to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for 5 years in a locked filing cabinet separate from any identifying information. Only I will have access to the filing cabinet. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. I am a teacher in the school district you graduated from. However, my role as a researcher is not connected to my position in the school district. I am not representing the school district in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by e-mail. You can also contact my supervisor.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board at Walden University. However, the final decision about participation is yours. I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to the local school district and their inclusion of students in AVID and Walden University to help cause social change.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Mueller
Teacher, Doctoral candidate
Walden University

Appendix D: Email Response for Interview

Dear **(Insert Participant's Name):**

Thank you for responding to my letter of invitation. As mentioned in the previous letter I am conducting as part of my Doctoral degree in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at Walden University under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Brown. The purpose of this study is to better understand what instructional strategies your learned to support your post-secondary education and how you have used the strategies.

Please let me know of a date and time that I can interview you at the Starbucks conference room on South Hill. Below is an additional reminder of all the specifics outline in the contact letter. When we meet I will bring the consent form I mailed to you for signing.

Reminders:

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 45-60 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be recorded with a digital recorder to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for 5 years in a locked filing cabinet separate from any identifying information. Only I will have access to the filing cabinet. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. I am a teacher in the school district you graduated from. However, my role as a researcher is not connected to my position in the school district. I am not representing the school district in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by email. You can also contact my supervisor.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board at Walden University. However, the final decision about participation is yours. I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to the local school district and their inclusion of students in AVID and Walden University to help cause social change.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Mueller
Teacher, Doctoral candidate
Walden University