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EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
AVID PROGRAM AT PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP  
HIGH SCHOOL

by  
Danielle T. Strother

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
At  
Rowan University  
(March 24, 2004)

Approved by  
Professor

Date Approved 4/15/04

© (March 4, 2004)

## Abstract

Danielle T. Strother

Evaluating the Implementation of  
the AVID Program at Pemberton  
Township High School.

2004

Dr. Robert Kern

Educational Leadership

Pemberton Township High School started AVID for the 2003-2004 school year. The AVID program is designed to prepare students for a college bound curriculum. The purpose of this study was to describe and evaluate the implementation of the AVID program at Pemberton Township High School. The population of the study consisted of the entire ninth grade class of 21 AVID students from Pemberton Township High School. The data was collected through the use of a six question, Likert-type survey and algebra first and second marking period grades. The survey was used to rate the AVID students' satisfaction of the five components of the AVID program. The students' algebra grades provided data on how successful the students were at completing their course work. The findings of the study show that the students are not satisfied with the AVID mentoring program, and family workshops. The students Algebra I grades are not acceptable. Based on the data collected, it is recommended that the AVID site team concentrate most of their efforts on the family workshops and the mentoring component of AVID. The AVID site team should seek more training on developing a successful AVID program.

## Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank the teachers, administrators, support staff, and students of Pemberton Township High School. I would especially like to thank my field mentor Dr. Doris Carpenter, the building Principal, for her guidance and support throughout my internship experience. She provided me with a true, first-hand experience of the role and expectations of an administrator. I want to thank Gary Horton, the tenth grade Assistant Principal, who provided me with a great amount of his time for observation and questions. His confident leadership style is an inspiration, and certainly is one I would strive to emulate.

I want to thank my two wonderful children, Kenneth III and Kaya, my true inspiration. Most importantly, I want to thank my husband Kenneth. If not for his love, support, and encouragement, this entire process would not be possible. It is his support for which I am most truly thankful.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Focus of the Study

The intern wanted to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the new Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. Pemberton Township High School started AVID for the 2003-2004 school year. The AVID program is designed to give the “B” and “C” students a boost into the next higher tier and prepare them for a college bound curriculum. The AVID program started in 1980 in one high school and has spread to more than 1000 schools across 23 states and 15 countries. Pemberton Township High School is the first in Burlington County to implement the new program.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and evaluate the implementation of the AVID program with the 9th-grade AVID students. The research intends to answer the following questions: How effective was the implementation of the AVID program on the students in order to increase their chances of receiving grades of A’s and B’s during their 9th-grade year? What were the different components of the AVID program? How did the school community support the AVID program? How did the AVID students and AVID staff define success or effectiveness of the AVID program?



## Definitions

There are some terms that will be identified and defined to allow the reader to follow the text of the thesis more effectively.

*Abbot District:* The Pemberton Township is an Abbot district. An “Abbot” district is a district specifically identified in the appendix to Raymond Abbot, et al v. Fred G. Burke, et al. Pemberton Township applied to the State to become an Abbot district and was accepted.

*Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment: (GEPA)* One component of the selection of AVID students was their Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). The GEPA took the place of the Grade 8 Early Warning Test and is aligned with New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content standards. The GEPA is intended to provide information for placement purposes and program planning so students will be able to pass the state’s graduation test, the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).

*Socratic Seminars:* The AVID students practice Socratic seminars. A Socratic seminar is a method to try to understand information by creating conversation or dialogue related to a particular text or subject instead of memorizing bits of information.

*Cornell Notes:* is a note taking technique developed by Walter Pauk to help Cornell University students better organize their notes. The Cornell Note taking technique requires students to follow six steps: record, reduce, recite, reflect, review, and summarize.

### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the 9th-grade AVID students at Pemberton Township High School. This study does not include the students who either did not apply to the AVID program or who did not get accepted. The study does not include the other AVID grade levels in the district. The program is limited to twenty-two 9th-grade students and an AVID team of 5 teachers, 1 facilitator, and 1 director.

### Setting of the Study

Pemberton Township High School is a public school, which draws kids from a rural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial community. According to the United States Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), 66% of the population is white, 23.1% is Black or African American, 3.2% is Asian, .1% is Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 2.9% are another race, and 4.2% are two or more races. The total population is 28,691. The community consists of 10,778 total housing units with 728 (68%) vacant. Seventy-five percent of the housing units are owned and 26.6% are rented. Fifty one percent of the housing units are worth \$50,000 to \$99,000 and 40.7% are valued at \$100,000 to \$149,000. One hundred percent of the renters pay less than \$1500 for rent but 42.1% pay \$500 to \$749 per month. There are 18,049 people who are 25 years of age or older. Eighty percent of those people are high school graduates, 9.4% have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. Twenty one percent are civilian veterans and 23% of the population ages 21 to 64 years are disabled. The median household income is \$47,394 and the median family income is \$52,860. Six percent of the families and 9.3% of the individuals are below the poverty level.

Pemberton Township is an Abbot district, which uses Coalition of Essential Schools as their model for whole school reform. The district has programs that start at age three and extend to 12th-grade. The majority of the school funding is from the state. According to the New Jersey School Report Card 2000 (New Jersey Department of Education, 2000), 73.7% of the 4th-grade students were proficient or advanced proficient on the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) in language arts literacy. Fifty-four percent of the 4th-grade students were proficient in mathematics on the ESPA. Eighty percent of the 8th-grade students were proficient or advanced proficient in language arts literacy on the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). Forty nine percent were proficient or advanced proficient in mathematics on the GEPA and 84.0% were proficient or advanced proficient in science on the GEPA.

Pemberton Township High School currently enrolls 1450 students. The school ranges from 9th-grade to 12th-grade. The average class size is 22. The length of Pemberton Township High School's school day is 6 hours and 30 minutes with an instructional time of 5 hours and 20 minutes. Approximately 17% of the teaching staff currently holds an academic Bachelors of Art or Bachelors of Science Degree. Twenty-two percent of the staff has a Masters Degree, and one percent has earned a Doctor Degree. The curriculum ranges from special education, standard, academic, honors, and enrichment. Eighty seven percent of the general education students were proficient in language arts literacy on the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). Only 21.7% of the special education students were proficient in language arts and 12.5% were proficient in mathematics on the HSPA. Thirty-one percent of the Pemberton Township 2002 seniors planned to attend a 4-year college and 27% planned to attend a 2-year college.

### Significance of the Study

This study will make a contribution to the AVID students, Pemberton Township High School, and the school community. An evaluation of the implementation of the AVID program will allow the teachers and district an opportunity to improve. Pemberton Township High School is the first school in Burlington County to implement the AVID program; therefore other schools in the Burlington County are waiting for the success or failure of this program. The federal government even has a stake in the program because Pemberton Township High School has been given a \$16,630 federal grant to begin the program. The AVID program is intended to help average students. The intern wanted to know if 90% of the freshman AVID students would receive an “A” or “B” during the first and second marking period. The intern intended to answer the following questions: Did the school community and administration view the program as successful? Did the AVID students view the components of AVID as a key element to their success in school? Lastly, did the site team follow through with their duties such as training, recruiting, mentoring, family workshops, and training the staff?

### Organization of the Study

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an introduction to the study and include insight into the focus and purpose of the study. This chapter also defined terminology pertinent to the study, as well as limitations and setting of the study. Chapter 2 will focus on a review of the literature as it relates to the major concepts of the study. Chapter 3 will consist of the design of the study and will include the research design, the instruments used, a description of the sampling, sampling techniques, description of the data collection approach, and description of the data analysis plan. Chapter 4 is a presentation

of the research findings and chapter 5 will present implications of the study on leadership and organizational change. Finally the last chapter may stress the need for further study.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

AVID began in 1980 at Clairemont High School in the San Diego Unified School District by Mary Catherine Swanson. Unfortunately, “Students from linguistic and ethnic minority backgrounds and low-income families do poorly in school by comparison with their majority and well-to-do contemporaries. They drop out at a higher rate, score lower on tests, get lower grades, and do not attend college as often.” (Hubbard & Mehan, 1999, p. 83) AVID was originally designed to meet the needs of the low achieving ethnic and linguistic minority students from low-income families. According to the article, “AVID Year in Review” (AVID Center, 2002), in 23 years AVID has spread to 1500 schools in 23 states, and 15 countries. AVID has also altered its objective since its inception. Now AVID is designed to increase school wide success in learning and performance. The mission of AVID, as stated in the “AVID Summer Institute Participant Materials” (AVID Center 2003), is to:

...ensure that all students and most especially the least served students in the middle capable of completing a college preparatory path: will succeed in the most rigorous curriculum, will enter mainstream activities of the school, will increase their enrollment in four-year colleges, will become educated and responsible participants and leaders in a democratic society. (Swanson, 2003, p.3)

AVID has been a very successful program and has increased the expectations of teachers and students. Mary Catherine Swanson stated:

It is not possible to make a difference in the lives of underachieving students by adding on a support period for just a few minutes a day. They need more than that.

We cannot make a difference in the lives of underachieving students by focusing on basic skills. They can and must achieve more than that. We cannot make a difference by asking teachers to do more with fewer resources. They need more than that.

(Swanson, 2003, p.1)

#### Selection of AVID Students

According to the AVID Strategies for Success (Bamberg et. al., 1996), AVID requires a specific procedure for setting up AVID in a school or school district. Every AVID school uses the same procedures, letters to parents, student applications, student criteria, and interview questions. AVID has specific criteria for selecting AVID students. An AVID student must have average to high standardized test scores so that they can be in the daily AVID elective class instead of a basic skills class. An AVID student must also have a grade point average of 2.0-3.5 at the time of selection into the program. A potential AVID student must also have college potential with support, determination, and desire. An AVID student must also meet one or more of the following criteria: The student will be the first to attend college, come from a low-income family, or have special circumstances.

Any student that meets the criteria for AVID, is invited to attend an informational meeting with their parents. At the meeting, the parents receive information about AVID and receive an application. All applicants are interviewed and approximately 25 are

selected for each AVID class. After the interview committee selects students to enter AVID, acceptance or rejection letters are mailed to the parents. The parents then have the opportunity to accept or reject the invitation into the AVID program.

### Components of AVID

AVID students are involved in various activities and utilize specific study methods and techniques. AVID students must enroll in a daily AVID elective class, which consists of two days of AVID curriculum, two days of tutorials, and one day for binder evaluation, field trips, media center, speakers, or motivational activities. The AVID elective class is usually taught by a teacher with an extensive writing background and focuses heavily on writing, college, careers, and strategies for success. AVID tutorials are conducted by local college students and involve collaborative study groups, writing groups, and Socratic seminars.

An AVID classroom should be a place where students feel comfortable congregating before, during, and after school hours. The students should be allowed to study, socialize, and plan their futures in the AVID classroom. The classroom should have posters and banners promoting college and higher education. These posters and banners should hang from every available wall and ceiling. The AVID classroom should also contain information indicating where students can get college and career information. The college banners can also contain a list of colleges and universities that AVID students are now attending. A list of scholarships awarded to AVID students should also be displayed. The dates of college entrance exams should be posted and announced. An AVID classroom should also contain a collage of AVID photos. The AVID photos should consist of students participating in academic and extra curricula activities. Inspirational quotes and



goal statements by AVID students, teachers, or other sources should be displayed in the AVID classroom. Student's best work and accomplishments should be displayed on a bulletin board. Lastly, the desks should be physically grouped to foster a cooperative learning environment.

AVID students are taught strategies to use in helping teachers and fellow students enjoy a pleasant classroom environment. Students are instructed to sit in the front of the classroom so that they will be able to pay better attention to lessons and will be able to interact more freely in classroom activities and discussions. The students are encouraged to lean forward in the desk and nod their head often when their teacher looks at them during a lesson. Leaning forward in the desk will give the impression that the student is very interested in the lesson and nodding their head will cause the teacher to interact with that student more often and perceive that student as being a positive class influence. The student is also taught to ask questions and talk to the teacher daily.

AVID students must participate in monthly Socratic seminars. The teacher or student leads Socratic seminars. Socratic seminars require the participants to read a specific text and have teacher or student led dialogues. The participants collaborate and question the meaning of the text and develop habits of thoughtfulness and analysis. The leader of the seminar does not guide participants to a specific conclusion but leads them to discover their own interpretation and opportunity for a clear self-expression. Bamberg states:

This interaction is essential because universities offer more than career preparation for the professions; they also draw participants into the great discussions of the human race, including questions about power, duty, justice, truth, equality, beauty, and the like. In a full sense, these are what education is about. For AVID students, the

supportive environment of the AVID classroom is an appropriate place to begin to feel comfortable as a part of this academic life. The oral language emphasis in Socratic Seminars is on active participation. (Bamberg, et al, 1996, p.128)

AVID students are expected to attend cultural field trips such as museums or theatres.

Mary Catherine Swanson stated:

I believe that opening windows and doors for persons releasing them to use their imaginations and their minds and their perceptual capacities, may save lives as well as carelessness to overcome: feelings of malaise, hopelessness, powerlessness. The arts will not lessen the evils and the brutalities afflicting the modern world. But they will provide a sense of alternatives to those of us who can see and hear; they will enhance the consciousness of possibility if we learn how to attend. (Bamberg, et al, 1996, p. 134)

The AVID schedule allows one day a week for field trips and is viewed as an integral component to the success of AVID.

In addition to the AVID elective class, AVID students must also use an AVID binder for every class, take and use Cornell Notes, and use AVID study skills. The AVID binder is three inches in width and is used to keep the notes, handouts, homework, class work, tests, and quizzes from all of the students' classes. AVID students are also required to attend family workshops with their parents. There are approximately five family workshops a year. These workshops are intended to increase the communication between the students, school, and parents. AVID provides a specific curriculum for the family workshops and focuses heavily on preparation for college. AVID students are also provided with trained AVID teachers and counselors. AVID students will become apart

of a college going culture and must complete rigorous academic course work. The entire school staff must have high expectations of their AVID students.

AVID can also be used for limited English proficiency or English as a second language students. The AVID teachers in these classrooms can use an open curriculum in which they have freedom to meet the needs of their students. These students must be exposed to American culture through field trips, speakers, and other motivational activities. The main objective of the AVID students in the 6th-grade through 9th-grade is to prepare the students to exit ESL by the end of the 9th-grade. The reason for this objective is because colleges will only accept one year of ESL credits. The AVID teacher must assist the bilingual students by making a few adjustments. The bilingual students must be provided with bilingual tutors. The students must also be allowed to keep their learning logs in Spanish and gradually be encouraged to shift to English. Note taking and essays are written in the students' primary language and translated into English. The students must have collaborative writing and talking groups in which the students use both languages. The teachers must have opportunities to receive second language acquisition training.

AVID trained teachers support the students by using AVID methodologies. The AVID teacher requires their students to take and use Cornell Notes, and allows the students to collaborate with their notes. AVID teachers require the students to use a three-ring binder that includes notes, assignment sheets, and a calendar. The students are occasionally evaluated with open-note tests and open-ended questions. AVID teachers also plan collaborative activities for students and facilitate the advancement of AVID students to enrichment and advanced placement courses.

It is a requirement of AVID that the participating teachers and counselors volunteer to be a part of AVID. AVID is not to be assigned to a teacher as a duty. A committee selects 2 English teachers, 1 math teacher, 1 science teacher, 1 social studies teacher, and 1 counselor. Two English teachers are selected because one of the English teachers must teach the AVID elective class. The selected teachers and counselor make up the school site team. The AVID institute trains the entire school site team. The training is approximately 27 hours in length and focuses on six participant outcomes. The AVID institute wants each site team member to know and understand the mission of AVID as well as the necessity of the AVID elective class in achieving the mission. The AVID site team must also understand the need to guarantee AVID students access and succeed in honors and advanced placement classes. AVID site team members must learn and understand writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading as the basis for instruction across the curriculum to improve the student's learning. Trained AVID site team members must understand how AVID can be implemented through out the entire school and become a catalyst for school restructuring and improvement. Lastly, each AVID site team member will also be trained on their individual role as a member of the AVID site team and must help to develop a school wide action plan, which creates a college going culture.

#### Research to Support AVID

The Center for Research Evaluation and Training in Education (CREATE) conducted a study titled, "Longitudinal Research on AVID 1999-2000: Final Report" of over 1100 AVID students enrolled in the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade and 11<sup>th</sup>-grade. Over 500 of the students selected were enrolled in AVID during their middle school years. CREATE studied three areas: high school grade point average, A-F credits earned, and SAT-9 standardized test

scores. CREATE also analyzed the students' enrollment in advanced placement courses. The following is a summary of the research presented in the CREATE Longitudinal Research on AVID (1999-2000) Executive Summary. (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2000) The study found that the AVID students earned a "C" average in high school, and they were definitely in the middle of their class. Middle school AVID also helps to increase the students' chances of success. Guthrie & Guthrie (2000) found the following:

The difference in credit accumulation for students with two years of middle school AVID and those with no middle school AVID was once again statistically significant ( $p=.05$ ). This suggests that enrollment in two years of middle school AVID provides students with the necessary early preparation to place them on track for gaining admission to 4-year colleges and universities. (p.2)

Guthrie & Guthrie (2000) also stated:

Seventy-five percent of Cohort 1 students with 2 years of middle-grade AVID earned 100 credits or more and were thus well-positioned for meeting 4-year college entrance requirements. Only about 66% of those with one year of AVID or no AVID had built up that many credits. (p. 2)

The standardized test scores for the AVID students were not remarkable because the scores were below the national average and the AVID students' mean score was slightly lower than the mean of the non-AVID students. The AVID program did increase the amount of advanced placement courses the students were enrolled in because "12.5 % of students with two years of middle school AVID took three or more advanced placement classes, compared to less than 5% of 1-year or no AVID students." (p. 12)

CREATE also conducted research on eight high school AVID programs in California titled, "The Magnificent Eight: AVID Best Practices Study Final Report" (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2000). The eight high schools were chosen because their AVID students always have high academic achievement, great college acceptance rates, and excellent attendance. The remainder of this subsection will present the findings from the document titled, "The Magnificent Eight: AVID Best Practices Study Final Report."

The first school evaluated was Central Union High School in El Centro, California. Central Union High School enrolls approximately 1600 students and 80% of them are Hispanic. Over half of the students receive free or reduced lunch, and fewer than 20% of the graduates meet the University of California entrance requirements. In the year 2000 fifty students met the University of California a-g requirements, and 37 of them were AVID students. "In 2001, 21 of the 28 seniors in AVID were accepted to a four-year college; 10 were accepted to three or more." (p. 19) The AVID program also helped increase the number of students taking advanced placement courses. During the 2001-2002 school year, 20 percent of the advanced placement students were AVID students.

The second school was Coachella Valley High School in Thermal, California. Coachella Valley High School is overcrowded with 3000 students in a facility planned for 1500 students. Most of the 98% Latino students who attend the high school are sons and daughters of immigrant workers. Most of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch, therefore Coachella Valley High School qualifies as a Title 1 school wide program. AVID continues to place more students in AP courses each year. "In 2001-02, AVID students accounted for over 30 percent of the students in AP even though they represent only six percent of the total student population." (p. 24) AVID students also

have a higher college going rate than the entire school population. “Coachella High School’s college-going rate is only 16%; in 2001, of almost 500 seniors, fewer than 70 entered college. Of these, 24 were from AVID-more than one-third.” (p. 24)

Colton High School in Colton, California, is a school known for their athletic program and low test scores. AVID has also been successful at Colton High School because out of the 36 AVID seniors in 2001, 34 were accepted to four-year colleges and universities. AVID has changed the school community by raising the number of AVID students taking advanced placement exams. In four years the number of students taking advanced placement exams grew from 5 to over 30. Since the inception of AVID the number of Colton students taking the SAT has increased from 76 in 1992 to 178 in 2000.

Fallbrook High School is located in Fallbrook, California and is another High School studied with a successful AVID program. “In the 2001-02 school year, more than half of AVID seniors took at least one AP class; of 33 seniors, 24 enrolled in either an AP or a college course.” (p. 36) Fallbrook also had 100% of their AVID students accepted to four-year universities for four years in a row.

The fifth school of the magnificent eight is Loara High School in Anaheim, California. Loara High school consists of 50% Hispanic, 30% White, and 15% Asian students. The community consists of a huge number of hotel and restaurant workers because the area is home to Disneyland. The area is very poor and is notorious for drugs and drive-by shootings. “No one from Tijuana went to college before the AVID program was in place.” (p. 37) The AVID program has definitely improved Loara High School’s statistics because now, “Loara has a tradition of gaining university acceptances for all AVID seniors. Last year, everyone was accepted, and in 2001-2002, all 30 seniors received

early acceptance to a four-year university through on site admissions by November 2001.” (p. 41)

Ramona High School in Riverside, California, houses the largest AVID program in the state of California and has an enrollment of nearly 400 AVID students. One-fifth of the school is enrolled in AVID and, almost all of the students are accepted to four year colleges. Actually, in 2001, seventy-four of the 79 graduates were accepted to four-year colleges or universities, the other five students enrolled in a community college or joined the military. The AVID program also has a great impact on the advanced placement enrollment because the AVID students account for approximately nearly half of the students in advanced placement courses but only represent 20% of the total student population.

The seventh school researched was Southwest High School in San Diego, California. Guthrie & Guthrie (2003) describe Southwest High School as:

The southern-most high school in the United States. Eighty-two percent of the students are Hispanic, and another 11 percent, Filipino; 80 percent come from homes where English is not spoken, and one-third are English learners. Many of the families in the community face poverty; 35 percent of the students are eligible for free/reduced price lunches and Title 1. A few years ago, because of these challenges and other school slipped into a state of poor performance and low expectations. (p. 48)

AVID is credited for improving the school’s academic program. The number of students enrolled in advanced placement courses doubled since the inception of AVID and the number of advanced placement sections increased from 16 to 24. (p. 51) Before AVID



less than 250 students took the advanced placement test, but now over 720 students take the advanced placement exam. Guthrie & Guthrie (2003) state:

AVID students make up nearly 20 percent of the students in AP, even though they account for only 10 percent of the total student population. More than one-fourth of the students in AP Economics, AP Spanish Literature, and AP US Government are AVID students. Graduating seniors in 2001 took an average of over four AP courses each year. (p. 52)

AVID also increases the number of students attending four year colleges because nearly 100% of AVID students attend four-year colleges.

Valley High School in Elk Grove, California is another successful AVID school in California which enrolls approximately 2500 mostly minority students who speak 32 different languages. "In the fall of 2001, 45 percent of AVID students were enrolled in AP or honors classes. Among the 28 AVID graduates in 2000, all but one received acceptance to a four-year university; in 2001, all but four of 26 did." (p. 57)

AVID has been successful in its goal to increase their enrollment in 4-year colleges. The AVID Center Fact Sheet (2003) stated:

Independent research statewide in California, and national yearly data collection by the AVID center have shown the AVID program to be effective in preparing so called average students for college. For example, since 1990, 30,000 AVID students have graduated from high school and gone on to four year universities or colleges. (p. 1)

Ninety five percent of AVID students reported enrolling in college. (CREATE, 2000)

Seventy seven percent of the AVID students who enrolled in college, enrolled in four-year institutions and 17.2 % enrolled in community colleges. (CREATE, 2000) AVID

students not only enroll in college but also are very successful. Eighty five percent of AVID students graduate from college in four to five years and their mean college grade point average is 2.94. (CREATE, 2000) Research from San Diego University concluded that AVID students are successful even in college because, “AVID graduates earned a cumulative average of 2.47, while the overall freshman average was 2.83” (Swanson, 1989, p. 64)

AVID is very successful in increasing the probability of success for minorities. African-American AVID students who participate in AVID for three years enroll in college at rates that are higher than the national average. Fifty-five percent of African-American AVID students enroll in four-year colleges even though the national average is 33 %. (Mehan, et al, 1999, p.84) The average for Latino AVID students attending 4-year colleges is 43% compared to the national average of 29%. (Mehan, et al, 1999. p.84)

AVID has been a program that has been proven to work in all parts of the United States and various countries. Through data analysis and research, AVID has proven to be a successful program. AVID uses the tools students need to be successful in their high school years and the students can utilize these techniques to be successful in college.

## Chapter 3

### Design of the Study

#### The Research Design

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the success of the implementation of the AVID program at Pemberton Township High School. The Pemberton Township High School AVID students participated in the study. The students were given the same Likert-type scale survey two times, one for the first marking period and one for the second marking period. The survey asked the students to rate the components of AVID. The AVID students' Algebra I grades were used to determine the success of the AVID program on preparing the students for success in high school.

#### Development and Design

The survey instrument was developed by the intern and the lead AVID teacher offered suggestions. One Likert-type scale survey with six questions relating to the AVID program was used. The survey asked the participants to rate how well the AVID class, tutorials, binder, family workshops, and mentors prepare the students to be successful during their ninth grade year. The rates were on a scale of one to five and ranged from excellent (1) to poor (5). One survey question asked for the participant's age. These survey questions were used because they relate directly to the major components of AVID.

The second instrument used for data collection was the students' first and second marking period Algebra I grades, collected from the participants' report cards. The

algebra I grades were used because all AVID students are required to take Algebra I their freshman year.

Data were collected and analyzed using two quantitative techniques and a variety of qualitative techniques. Among the quantitative techniques were surveys and marking period grades. The qualitative techniques were nonparticipant observations, participant observations, and formal and informal interviews. Teachers, administrators, and students were informally interviewed through out the entire implementation period.

#### Sample and Sampling Technique

The entire class of twenty-one, Pemberton Township High School, AVID students participated in the study. The data collected for this study was collected at Pemberton Township High School. The school was selected because the intern is a math teacher and an AVID teacher for the ninth grade AVID program. The entire class of 21 Pemberton Township High School, AVID students was used for the study. The average age of the students was 14. Thirteen of the students were male and 8 were female. The students were Black, White, and Hispanic. All participants volunteered to participate in the AVID program and participated in a rigorous interview and application process. The participants volunteered to complete the survey.

#### Data Collection Approach

The AVID students were administered the six question Likert-type survey at the end of the first and second marking period. First the intern received approval to administer the survey to the ninth grade AVID students, from the principal and Rowan University. Next, the intern distributed the surveys to the AVID teacher. Then the AVID teacher distributed the surveys to all of the ninth grade AVID students who were present in class.

that day. The AVID teacher distributed the surveys the next day to the students who were absent. Finally, when all of the surveys were complete, the AVID teacher returned the completed surveys to the intern. The students were asked to complete the voluntary survey and return it immediately. The AVID teacher was not expected to give any directions or explanations. A total of 21 surveys were distributed and 21 were returned (100%). The process was repeated for the second marking period.

### Data Analysis

After the surveys were completed and collected, the intern compiled the data. The intern divided the six questions into categories and found the average rank for the AVID class, AVID tutorials, AVID binder, AVID family workshops, and AVID mentors. The averages ranked from one to five. The score of one represented excellent, three represented average, and five represented poor. The data for the first and second marking period was averaged and compared to evaluate if the ranks improved or worsened. The last question, which referred to the students' ages, was only used for the first marking period survey. The intern averaged the students' ages for one overall average age of the AVID class.

The intern collected the first and second marking period grades from the AVID lead teacher. The first and second algebra I grades were used to determine the average marking period grade for the AVID class. The intern also compared the first and second marking period grades to determine if there was an improvement of the Algebra I grades between the two marking periods. The grades were also compared to the students ranking of the AVID program to determine if there was a correlation.

## Chapter 4

### Presentation of Research Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of the data obtained from an AVID component survey and the students' first and second marking period algebra grades. The purpose of the survey was to determine how good or poor the AVID ninth grade students rate the components of AVID. The intern wanted to gauge the students' feelings about the implementation of the AVID program. The intern collected the first and second marking period Algebra grades to determine the effectiveness of the AVID program in the high school and how well the AVID program prepares the students to pass vigorous course work.

In November, one survey was distributed to the ninth grade AVID students. All of the ninth grade AVID students were selected for the sample population. The head AVID teacher distributed the surveys to the entire population of 21 AVID students. The intern received 100 percent return rate but only 15 of the 21 surveys were complete. This represents a 71 percent sample of the total AVID student population at Pemberton Township High School. In January, the second survey was distributed to the same ninth grade AVID class. The survey was identical to the survey distributed in November. The lead AVID teacher distributed the surveys and returned the completed survey to the intern. The intern received a 100 percent return rate but only eighteen surveys were complete. This represents an 86 percent sample of the total AVID student population at

Pemberton Township High School. Table one presents a breakdown of the survey by population for the months of November and January, first and second marking periods.

Table 1

Breakdown of Population Surveyed

Marking Period	Total Population	Survey Population	Surveys Completed	% of Total Population
1 (November)	21	21	15	71%
2 (January)	21	21	18	86%

In November, the intern received all of the 21 AVID students' Algebra grades. One of the 21 AVID students is in Algebra II. The intern received the grades from the head AVID teacher. In January, the intern received the AVID students' Algebra grades for the second marking period. The intern gathered this data from the lead AVID teacher.

Scoring of the Data

The data was obtained and compiled manually from the 33 completed surveys and 42 first and second marking period grades. The intern analyzed the marking period grades and surveys separately from the second marking period grades and surveys. The survey listed five components of AVID and asked the students to rate their satisfaction for each component presented. The scale ranged as follows: 1- Excellent, 2 – Above Average, 3 – Average, 4 – Below Average and 1 – Poor. Three methods were used to tabulate the collected results of the survey. First, the frequency of each rating was listed. Second each component of AVID was identified by the percentage of each rating category. The intern tabulated each marking period separately using the methods mentioned above, and lastly

compared the mean of the first and second marking period for each component of AVID. This data will provide the intern with a student ranking to determine which components of AVID were proclaimed to be an excellent, above average, average, below average, or poor component of AVID. The grade distribution of the algebra first and second marking period grades was also presented along with the percentage of the population with the corresponding grades. The number of students with algebra grades of a “C” or better was presented along with the percentage of the population with grades of “C” or better for both the first and second marking period.

Table two displays the frequency for the range of satisfaction for students in the five AVID components for the first marking period. The results of this table are mixed. It clearly shows that most of the AVID students do not think the components are excellent. The ratings range from three students believing the mentors are excellent to three students believing the mentors are poor. The students are most pleased with the AVID class. Two students rate the class as excellent, seven rate the class as above average, and five rate the class as being average. Only one student believes the class is poor. The AVID class clearly rated the best.

Table three presents the components and the percentage of the population that fell into each particular rating. Of the five components of AVID, family workshops had the largest percentage. The highest percentage for the AVID class and AVID binder, 46.67 and 26.67 respectively, fell under the category of above average. Both the AVID tutorial and AVID family workshops highest percentage fell under the category average, with percentages 40 and 53.33 percent. Unfortunately, the AVID mentor category had the highest percentage of students’ rate that component as below average.



Table 2

Marking Period One Frequency of the Rating of the AVID Components

	Excellent (1)	Above Average (2)	Average (3)	Below Average (4)	Poor (5)
Class	2	7	5	0	1
Tutorials	2	4	6	2	1
Binder	1	4	4	3	3
Workshops	1	3	8	1	2
Mentors	3	3	2	4	3

Table 3

Marking Period One Percentage of the Population for the Rating of the AVID

Components

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
Class	13.33	6.67	33.33	0	6.67
Tutorials	13.33	26.67	40.00	13.33	6.67
Binder	6.67	26.67	26.67	20.00	20.00
Workshops	6.67	20.00	53.33	6.67	13.33
Mentors	20.00	20.00	13.33	26.67	20.00

Table four represents the frequency of the ratings of the AVID components for the second marking period. Table five represents the frequency in a percentage format. The AVID binder category ranked the best with 38.89 percent and 33.33 percent ranking the

binder as above average and average, respectively. The AVID class ranked the second best with one student rating the class as excellent, three students rating the class above average, and eleven rating the class as average. The binder was ranked excellent by 6.67 percent of the students. The next best category was the AVID family workshops because 11.11 percent rated the workshops as excellent, 16.67 ranked the workshops as above average, and 38.89 percent rated the workshops as average. The second to last category was the AVID tutorials because none of the students rated the tutorials as excellent. Four students rated the tutorials as above average and eight rated the tutorials as average. The AVID mentor category was rated very low because eight students, 44 percent rated this component as poor.

Table 4

Marking Period Two Frequency of the Rating of the AVID Components

	Excellent (1)	Above Average (2)	Average (3)	Below Average (4)	Poor (5)
Class	1	3	11	2	1
Tutorials	0	4	8	5	1
Binder	2	7	6	1	2
Workshops	2	3	7	4	2
Mentors	2	1	4	3	8

Table 5

## Marking Period Two Percentage of the Population for the Rating of the AVID

## Components

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
Class	5.56	16.67	61.11	11.11	5.56
Tutorials	0	22.22	44.44	27.78	5.56
Binder	11.11	38.89	33.33	5.56	11.11
Workshops	11.11	16.67	38.89	22.22	11.11
Mentors	11.11	5.56	22.22	16.67	44.00

Table six compares the mean score of the six question survey for the five components of AVID. The mean was computed by assigning one point for excellent, two points for above average, three points for average, four points for below average, and five points for poor. The intern used that scoring method to find the mean of each component for both the first and second marking period. The closer the mean was to 1.0 the better the score was because 1.0 represents excellent and 5.0 represents poor. The AVID class ranked first during the first marking period with a mean of 2.13 but ranked in second place the second marking period with a mean of 2.94. The AVID tutorial ranked second the first marking period but improved the second marking period by 0.06. The AVID family workshops were rated third for the first marking period with a mean of 3.0 but went to fourth place for the second marking period with a mean of 3.06. The mentoring program meaningfully received a bad rating of 3.1 the first marking period and 3.78 the second marking period. The AVID binder rated fifth the first marking period with a mean of 3.2

and moved to the best ranking of first for the second marking period with a mean of 2.67. The range of the means for first marking period was 2.13 to 3.1 which translates from above average to average. The second marking period mean ranges from 2.94 to 3.78, average to below average.

Table 6

Mean of First Marking Period and Second Marking Period Rating

Components:	Scale: 1-Excellent      5-Poor	
	First Marking Period	Second Marking Period
AVID Class	2.13	2.94
AVID Tutorials	2.73	3.17
AVID Binder	3.20	2.67
AVID Family Workshops	3.00	3.06
AVID Mentor	3.10	3.78

It is clear to the intern that the students are becoming less satisfied with the AVID program. The AVID site team needs to concentrate most of their efforts on the family workshops and the mentoring component of AVID. It is crucial that the site team meet with their assigned AVID students because the students are not happy at all with the mentoring component of AVID. The teachers cannot expect the students to perform at the highest levels if the teachers are not mentoring and guiding the students.

Table seven represents the grade distribution of first marking period Algebra grades. Three students received an "A", nine received a "B", four received a "C", three received a "D", and two received an "F". The largest concentration of students received a "B" and

the least number of students received an “F.” Table eight presents the grades and percentage of population that each received. These grades are better than AVID site team expected because the students are adjusting to high school expectations, new teachers, and a new environment.

Table 7

First Marking Period Grade Distribution

Number of Students:	Marking Period Grades:
3	A
9	B
4	C
3	D
2	F

Table 8

First Marking Period Percentage of Student Grade Distribution

Percentage of Students:	Marking Period Grade:
14.29	A
42.86	B
19.05	C
14.29	D
9.52	F

Table nine represents the grade distribution of second marking period algebra grades. One student received an “A”, seven received a “B”, three received a “C”, five received a

“D”, and five received an “F.” The largest concentration of students received a “B” and the least number of students received an “A” or “D”, but none received an F. Table ten presents the grades and percentage of population that each received. The second marking period grades are worse than the first marking period because three more students failed the second marking period, and one more student received a grade of “D.”

Table 9

Second Marking Period Grade Distribution

Number of Students:	Marking Period Grades:
1	A
7	B
3	C
5	D
5	F

Table 10

Second Marking Period Percentage of Student Grade Distribution

Percentage of Students:	Marking Period Grade:
4.76	A
33.33	B
14.29	C
23.81	D
23.81	F

Table eleven represents the number and percentage of students that received a grade of “C” or better by marking period. The students scored significantly worse the second marking period. Sixteen students, 76.19 percent, received a grade of “C” or better for the first marking period but only 11 students, 52.38 percent received a grade of “C” or better the second marking period.

Table 11

Number and Percentage of Students with a “C” or Better

	Number of Students	Number of Students with a “C” or better	Percentage of Students with a “C” or better
First Marking Period	21	16	76.19
Second Marking Period	21	11	52.38

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

This study rated the success of the implementation of the AVID program. The population of the study consisted of 21 AVID students from the Pemberton Township High School.

The intern used a survey method and student algebra grades to obtain data. A six question Likert-type survey was used to rate their satisfaction of the five components of the AVID program. The students completed the survey for both the first and second marking period. The students' algebra grades provided data on how successful the students were at completing their course work. The data collected was analyzed and presented in tabular form.

#### Conclusions

The analysis of the results of the student surveys and Algebra grades yields four major findings in the success of the implementation of the AVID program:

1. The students are not satisfied with the AVID mentoring program. Seven out of 15 rated the mentoring program as below average or poor the first marking period and 11 out of 18 students rated the mentoring program below average or poor the second marking period.
2. The students see the need to improve the family workshops. Fourteen out of 15 ranked the family workshops as average or lower the first marking period and 13



out of 18 ranked the family workshops as average or lower the second marking period.

3. The students' algebra grades are not improving, but getting worse. The number of students receiving a "C" or better went from 76.19% the first marking period to 52.38% the second marking period.

### Implications

This study gave the intern the opportunity to conduct action research that will contribute to the implementation of the AVID program at Pemberton Township High School. The result of this study will be used to inform the AVID site team of the areas that need improvement. The site team will have the opportunity to dialogue about what is right and wrong with the AVID program. The knowledge acquired by this study will encourage the Pemberton Township High School community to continue their commitment to provide support, resources, and time to the AVID program and students. Through out this study, the intern was able to develop leadership skills that emphasized effective communication and interactions with the AVID site team, administration, AVID students, AVID teachers, and school community in order to learn, participate, and conduct research on the implementation of the Pemberton Township High School AVID program.

### Further Study

Based on the findings of this study the intern makes the following recommendations for further study:

1. How do the parents rate the components of AVID?
2. Are the parents pleased with the student's grades?

3. How are the students performing in their other courses?
4. How do the teachers and administrators rate the success of the AVID students and AVID program?
5. How does the community rate the success of the AVID program?
6. What improvements should be made to the AVID mentoring program?
7. What improvements should be made to the family workshops?
8. What was the AVID students' performance on the Tie-net test?

The AVID program will be evaluated on a yearly basis. Pemberton Township High School must submit data yearly to the AVID headquarters. The AVID site team will evaluate the components of AVID on a quarterly basis and accept input from the entire school community.

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**Appendix A**  
**Research Instrument**

## ***AVID SURVEY***

Please take the time to take this confidential survey. This survey will help the AVID teachers evaluate the AVID program. This survey is strictly confidential and your name will not be used to identify you. As a participant of the survey, you do not need to respond to all questions. Your class standing will not be affected in any way based on participation. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Pemberton Township's AVID Program – How would you rate our

(Please circle your response)

	Excellent	Average			Poor	
AVID class?	1	2	3	4	5	
AVID tutorials?	1	2	3	4	5	
AVID binder?	1	2	3	4	5	
AVID family workshops?	1	2	3	4	5	
AVID mentors?	1	2	3	4	5	

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU!**

## Biographical Data

<b>Name</b>	Danielle T. Strother
<b>High School</b>	Willingboro High School Willingboro, NJ
<b>Undergraduate</b>	Bachelor of Arts Secondary Education/Mathematics The College of New Jersey Ewing, NJ
<b>Graduate</b>	Master of Arts School Administration Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
<b>Present Occupation</b>	Mathematics Teacher Pemberton Township High School Pemberton, NJ