

# Aiming High

A COUNTYWIDE COMMITMENT TO CLOSE  
THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

## Aspirando a lo Mejor

# RESOURCE

## AVID

*“If they come from a first-generation college student family, they don’t have anyone at home explaining how college works and why they have to take Algebra 1. That’s what we do.”*

*—John Murphy, AVID Teacher*

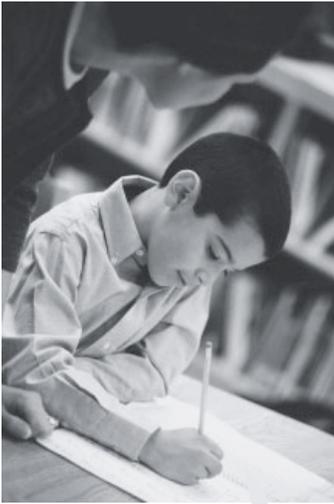


*AVID is not just about curriculum and instruction; it is a way of thinking. AVID teachers believe their students can learn and monitor student progress very closely. Teachers provide motivational activities that help students set personal goals, and achieve them.*

*—Gail Wright, Director,  
AVID North Coast Regional Center*



5340 Skylane Boulevard  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403-8246  
(707) 524-2600 ■ [www.scoe.org](http://www.scoe.org)



## *About this publication*

March 2005—This is the third in a series of publications focusing on effective instruction for all students, especially the English Learners in your classrooms. The topic of this brief is **AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination**, a program that has had exceptional success with the Latino student population.

AVID is a program that helps students historically underrepresented in college succeed in rigorous academic classes and gain entrance to state and private universities. The data collected over the last 25 years demonstrates that this program can achieve remarkable results! Minority students, English Learners, and others who are first-in-the-family to extend their education beyond high school say that AVID helped them form and fulfill college dreams.

Incidentally, this program is not just a high school initiative. AVID methodologies can be applied in grades 5-12. What makes AVID so successful is its distinct combination of effective research-based strategies, but there are aspects of AVID that all teachers may find helpful as they design and deliver instructional programs for English Learners.

A fundamental part of AVID is its emphasis on writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading. Developing organizational skills is another aspect, including specific instruction on note-taking. Tutorials provide individualized assistance when students need it, and all AVID tutors are trained to help students develop higher level thinking skills. (The Levels of Questioning developed by Benjamin Bloom is one frequently used strategy.)

But AVID is not just about curriculum and instruction; **it is a way of thinking.** AVID teachers *believe* their students can learn and monitor student progress very closely. Teachers provide motivational activities that help students set personal goals, and achieve them. At the middle and high school levels, AVID teachers establish site teams, so that students are supported and encouraged by their content area teachers, counselors, the AVID teacher, and the principal. In elementary schools, teachers often work together to incorporate AVID strategies into daily instruction, then meet regularly to review student progress.

It's no surprise that English Learners thrive in this type of instructional setting. As you read about the Del Norte High School program, you'll see the strong connection these AVID teachers have with their students. I hope their experiences and the information about AVID methodologies included in this publication pique your interest in this exceptional program.

—Gail Wright, Director, AVID North Coast Regional Center

### ***Bloom's Levels of Questioning build students' higher level thinking skills***

- ◆ Knowledge, recalling information  
*Sample: What facts do you know?*
- ◆ Comprehension, understanding meaning  
*What are you being asked to find?*
- ◆ Application, using learning in new situations  
*What would happen if...?*
- ◆ Analysis, seeing parts and relationships  
*Compare and contrast \_\_\_ to \_\_\_*
- ◆ Synthesis, creating a new whole from parts  
*Write a new ending to a story*
- ◆ Evaluation, judging based on criteria  
*How can you tell if your analysis is reasonable?*



# Del Norte High School's AVID Program

A presentation by

**John Murphy, Alison Eckart, and Randy Fugate**

Teachers at Del Norte High School

## School profile

Del Norte High School (DNHS) is located in a rural area on the North Coast of California, almost to the Oregon border. The high school has about 1,200 students. Approximately 64% of the students are on free and reduced lunch. DNHS has been successful in testing 95% of its EL students, and the results are excellent. Sixty-one percent of the EL students passed the math portion of the exam and 84%

"We've been doing AVID for nine years. It did not get off to a terrific start that first year, but we stuck with it and have become very successful. All 23 of last year's seniors were accepted to four-year colleges, and 20 students actually attended. Ten of these students are Hmong, the largest immigrant group in Del Norte County. All the Hmong students were non-English speaking when they entered kindergarten."

—John Murphy,  
AVID teacher

how three AVID teachers describe their use of the AVID program to close the achievement gap for low socioeconomic students as well as for second language learners.

## AVID success: the numbers tell the story

Of the total population of 226 seniors at DNHS, 77 completed the "a-g" requirement. That is over 30%. It is significant that 21 of the 77 were AVID students, so the program is having a big impact.

As the chart shows, in 2003-2004, we had 23 graduating seniors and of that number, 20 actually went to a four-

passed the English Language Arts portion. These results are extremely high compared to the statewide percentages. Del Norte's EL student scores rank among the top three high schools in the North Coast region—and the other two schools do not serve a student population that is 64% free and reduced lunch and highly immigrant.

DNHS began implementing the AVID program nine years ago as a way of preparing their traditionally underserved students for entry into four-year colleges. The following is a summary of

2003-04 AVID SENIORS	DNHS %	Number	State AVID %	State Overall %
Applied to 4-year college	100	23	80	NA
Accepted to 4-year college	100	23	---	---
Accepted by UC	24	5	24	7.5
Accepted by CSU	100	23	61	10.7
Attended 4-year college	87	20	77	20.5

year college. All of them applied and all were accepted—five by UC and all by CSU.

In 2002-2003, we had 14 in the cohort and 10 went to four-year colleges—again, a pretty high percentage. The year before that, in 2001-2002, we had 20 students in the cohort

and all of them were accepted to a four-year college.

We don't formally keep track of the students after they leave high school, but actually, they follow us through college.

*NOTE: Statewide, 34% of graduating seniors complete college preparation classes, known as the "a-g" requirements. These classes are required to gain admission into CSU or UC campuses. Nationwide, 42% of graduating seniors attend four-year colleges.*

They email us with questions and they come back for recommendations.

This success is really exciting for us. The whole purpose of the program is to have these kids experience academic success, both by getting into four-year colleges and by seeing themselves as achievers, as lifelong learners.

What makes the program so successful is the rapport the teachers develop with the students. They know we care and that we're trying to help them get into college. That's key. The other key is simply the cultural acceptance. Institutionalization of this program has occurred at Del Norte High School.

## Who are the AVID students?

The following table shows the ethnicity of both the total student population at Del Norte High School and the AVID students.

The most striking fact is the disproportionate represen-

# CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

## AVID STUDENTS

	African American	Asian	Native American	Hispanic	Filipino/Pacific Is.	White	Total Population
Del Norte County	3%	2%	5.5%	11%	1.5%	77%	29,390
DNHS	0.6%	7.2%	12%	9.8%	.8%	69.6%	1,219
AVID	0%	39%	12%	3%	0%	47%	111

tation of Asian students in AVID (39%) compared to their percentage of the student population (7.2%). Another noticeable discrepancy is between the Hispanic population at the high school (9.8%) and their representation in the AVID program (3%). The representation of the Native American students in AVID (12%) corresponds to the school population.

"In their freshman year, the push for going to a four-year college is still just an idea for many of the AVID students. It really begins to mean something—it becomes more real for them—in their sophomore year. The students talk to the juniors and seniors and see that it's happening for them."

—Randy Fugate,  
AVID teacher

For whatever reason, the Hmong community immediately saw AVID as an opportunity and they have been taking advantage of it. This is largely a first-generation immigrant population. The parents want something better for their kids, and they demand that they go to school, that they behave, and that

they succeed. We currently have the siblings of previous graduates in the program.

### How do we recruit students for AVID?

The AVID program is based on the belief that there is a group of kids who have been historically underrepresented in college prep classes because of income, ethnicity, language, or lack of support from home. They will be the first generation to attend college in their families. These students enroll in the "a-g" college classes, and we give them a lot of support so they are successful. When we recruit students for the program, we are looking for students with a 2.5 or 3.0 grade point average who will excel with some support.

We take English Learners in the program. We don't turn them away because of language. If they are willing to do the

ESL class and the academic literacy class to address the language issues, we take them. Like everyone else, they need to take the "a-g" college prep classes.

We have current AVID students talk to 8<sup>th</sup> graders. We send information to all parents and we bring in students who can speak Hmong and Spanish, so

the kids can be talking to other kids. We also talk with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, and get their recommendations. We do this before the 8<sup>th</sup> graders register so they can arrange their electives and there are no conflicts. One of the problems with offering one AVID class at each level is that there is only one period of the day it can be taken.

*NOTE: There are many ways to offer AVID electives in a school's master schedule. Some schools combine grades 9/10 and grades 11/12.*

We look at math and reading scores, but the ultimate criterion is that students have to *want* to be there. The program is voluntary. It is not remedial or for at-risk students. It is a college prep course. That's a powerful message, and it is slowly becoming the common perception among students and teachers. We feel that it is important that, as AVID teachers, *we* make the decision about who comes into the program—not the counselor. Students now have the expectation that AVID will help them go to college. They have seen this happen for other students.

We've taken some kids in the past who were not recommended by their teachers, or whose families didn't want them to be in the program. We look at GPA and test scores, but they are not the main factor. We don't care so much about the data as we

*NOTE: Recruitment is key to creating a successful AVID program. Many schools identify students using GPA, test scores and teacher recommendations. After potential candidates are identified, they are interviewed by teachers to determine whether they have a desire to prepare for college. The student interviews can be the most important factor in creating a successful class.*

do about the student's desire to go to college.

We've gotten better at student selection over the years. In the first year, the students that we recruited were more at-risk students who were lucky if they made it through high school. So we had some problems with that and we had to start modifying our recruitment and selection process.

## *Meeting the needs of English Language Learners*

We have two ESL classes: one for freshmen/sophomores, and one for juniors/seniors. We do not offer non-college English at our school. Also, we have adopted an academic literacy program at our high school. Any 8<sup>th</sup> grader who scores

"We tell them, 'You can do this, and we are here to help you do it.' If they come from a first-generation college student family, they don't have anyone at home explaining how college works and why they have to take Algebra 1. That's what we do."

—John Murphy,  
AVID teacher

in the lowest 25<sup>th</sup> percentile is automatically enrolled in this program. Are these really AVID students? We say, "Yes." They stay in academic literacy until the reading specialist says they have attained a level that's only one grade level below where they should be. Then they go back into a regular elective course. Since they are in AVID, we keep working with them because they have to meet the "a-g" requirements. We are hopeful that the academic literacy program will help address their issues around reading and language.

We provide tutorial support and supplemental curriculum support. This is particularly important

for the Hmong students. They are not used to conjugating verbs so they need extra help with that. Other types of support are also needed. For example, in the Hmong community, girls are not usually encouraged to go to college. We tell them to go ahead and apply. When they are accepted and get financial aid, then it becomes okay for them to go to college.

It's important to keep encouraging them to be successful, and it works because that's what they need—someone to be there believing in them and supporting them. Because of this consistency and attention, something happens that is sort of like family. The kids get to know each other, everyone gets comfortable, and the students feel free to ask a question or to speak their mind. And they start looking after each other.

## *Program structure and content*

When you go to the AVID institute in the first year of training, the AVID curriculum is presented as the way to do the program. But in reality, there may be some things about your student population that require modifications. We have modified the program but we meet the criteria to be an AVID demonstration school.

AVID is an elective at the high school, and it is also an

elective for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at our large middle school. At the high school, it is a problem that freshmen have only two electives. If they choose AVID, it leaves only one. As they advance from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade AVID program, we've been encouraging our entering freshmen to take the computer technology requirement in summer school to open up their schedules a bit.

The amazing thing is that despite all of that, our numbers are growing. In the first year of the program, we started with 24 students and by the time we got to senior year we were down to 14. Last year's graduating class was 23. This year's senior class is 26.

Our program has become institutionalized. There is a growing number of kids who perceive AVID as an incredible opportunity and are taking advantage of the opportunity without a whole lot of encouragement. That is the individual determination part.

For further information about the Del Norte High School AVID program, contact Jan Moorehouse, principal, 707-464-0260.

## **SONOMA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

Sonoma Valley High School is a new AVID site begun in fall 2004. The school is located in the city of Sonoma, a small rural-suburban town. SVHS enrollment is 1,600, with 70% White and 26% Latino. Teacher Tammy Rivera put time upfront recruiting her first AVID class. In the spring, she and the counseling staff screened the freshman class based on GPA and test scores, looking for "kids in the middle." She sent notices out to 80 families asking if students would be interested in learning more about the AVID college preparation elective. The school set up a parent/student introductory meeting, accepted applications, and conducted interviews. Tammy was looking for students who were willing to work hard and had the goal to attend college. Tammy also recruited AP students to work as tutors. SVHS began its AVID program in the fall with a class of sophomores. Next year, SVHS hopes to recruit at the middle schools during the spring in order to create an incoming freshman class.

For further information about the Sonoma Valley High School AVID program, contact Roberto Castro, principal, 707-933-4010.

## CLEAR LAKE HIGH SCHOOL

Clear Lake High School is located in Lakeport, California, 120 miles north of San Francisco. The school has a current enrollment of 470 students, 36.5% of whom are on free and reduced lunch. The AVID program was started in 2001 and presently offers three AVID sections to a total of 66 students. AVID is taken very seriously at CLHS in order to motivate more students to enter college than might be expected. This preparation of the AVID student can begin as early as middle school. At Terrace Middle School, the middle level feeder school, students learn to monitor GPAs, take Cornell Notes, use agendas and binders, and get organized. These skills help build self-esteem and confidence and prepare the students for a challenging high school experience where they will be expected to complete college preparation classes, or the "a-g" requirements.

AVID students have a demanding schedule because they are expected to take college preparatory classes and AP classes in their junior and senior years. They must maintain good grades and strive to become well-rounded students by participating in extra-curricular activities.

Because of this philosophy, AVID programs across the state are highly regarded by the CSU and UC university systems. Students who have participated in AVID are often accepted over non-AVID students, because admission officials know these students have been well prepared to succeed in college.

This year in June 2005, CLHS will graduate its first set of seniors who have taken AVID all four years of high school. The AVID teacher is confident that 80% of his seniors will apply and be accepted to four-year colleges. One student, he is proud to report, who came to the U.S. as a 5<sup>th</sup> grader from Mexico is even applying to Stanford.

CLHS is a National Certified AVID school. This certification ensures that the school has met all of the AVID program essentials. These essentials include: recruitment of students; training of tutors; curriculum that focuses on writing, inquiry, and collaboration; and a commitment by the administration to support the program within the master schedule and with funding. The AVID teachers believe that one of the most important aspects of their program is that teachers, staff, students, and parents all "choose to participate." CLHS has done an exemplary job of expanding the AVID program over the past three years.

For more information about the Clear Lake High School AVID program, contact Steve Gentry, principal, 707-262-3010.

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For more information about all the elements that make up an AVID program please go to [www.scoe.org/avid](http://www.scoe.org/avid) or [www.avidonline.org](http://www.avidonline.org)

Gail Wright, AVID Regional Director, 707-524-2805  
Annette Murray, AVID Regional Coordinator, 707-524-2817

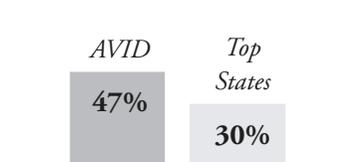
This presentation was part of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Administrator Conference "Closing the Achievement Gap for EL Students" presented at the Sonoma County Office of Education in April 2004. Publication support was provided by the California Department of Education: Regional Support Plan for High Schools  
AVID Regional Director: Gail Wright ■ AVID Regional Coordinator: Annette Murray ■ Editor: Carol Lingman

# Why AVID works

- ◆ AVID *accelerates* underachieving students into more rigorous courses instead of putting them in dead-end remedial programs.
- ◆ Students receive the *intensive support* they need to succeed in tough academic classes.
- ◆ Socratic methods (teaching by asking rather than telling) and study groups *specifically target the needs* of underachieving students.
- ◆ The *role of the teacher is redefined* from lecturer to advocate and guide. Counselors become facilitators rather than gatekeepers.
- ◆ The program *changes the belief system* of entire schools by showing that low-income and minority students can achieve at the highest levels.
- ◆ AVID strategies are *based on research* about tracking and peer influences on student achievement.

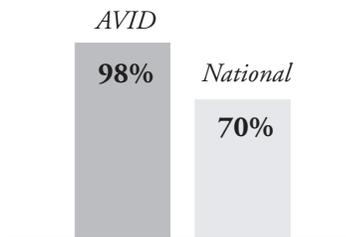
Writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading (WIC-R) form the basis of the AVID curriculum. These methodologies can be used in an elective period or incorporated into the daily schedule—or they can be applied schoolwide—to supplement and support students’ participation in rigorous academic classes. AVID methodologies are also excellent for supporting English Learners, who benefit from the WIC-R emphasis and the program’s focus on organization and note-taking (see back page).

<p><b>WRITING</b></p> <p>Promotes clear thinking, effective learning, and long-term academic success</p>	<p><b>INQUIRY METHOD</b></p> <p>Immediately engages students in their own thinking processes</p>
<p><b>COLLABORATION</b></p> <p>Brings students together to take responsibility for their own learning, serve as sources of information for each other, and provide feedback</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <p>Gives students the opportunity to handle increasingly difficult texts so they can achieve high standards across the curriculum</p>



## ***Eighth-graders taking algebra***

Students who take algebra in eighth grade are prepared for more advanced coursework in math and science once they reach high school. They are also more likely to attend college. AVID encourages its middle school students to pursue college-preparatory coursework such as algebra—and they complete it at an impressive rate.



## ***High school graduation rates***

What makes AVID students stay in school when others drop out? The support they receive, the commitment to success they feel, the inspirational teachers they encounter, the self-determination they exercise—all these factors combine to make them persevere despite considerable challenges.

## **SONOMA COUNTY SCHOOLS WITH AVID PROGRAMS**

### ***Middle Schools***

Brook Haven Middle  
 Cali Calmécac Charter  
 Comstock Middle  
 Cook Middle  
 Healdsburg Junior High  
 Roseland Accelerated Middle  
 Twin Hills Middle  
 Windsor Middle

### ***High Schools***

Analy High  
 Elsie Allen High  
 Healdsburg High  
 Roseland University Prep  
 Sonoma Valley High  
 Windsor High

## **SCHOOLWIDE AVID**

### ***Roseland University Prep***

opened its doors in southwest Santa Rosa last fall with a founding class of 80 ninth-graders, 90% of whom come from minority communities.

Prior to the start of the school year, principal Amy Jones-Kerr and the school’s three teachers attended AVID’s summer institute with the goal of creating one AVID class at their new school.

After spending the week talking to other teachers and staff developers, they decided to expand their thinking and take AVID schoolwide. The school now has three sections of AVID and Sonoma State University has formed a special partnership with the school, guaranteeing SSU admittance to every Roseland University Prep graduate who completes college entrance requirements.

# Note-taking: a success strategy

Researcher Robert Marzano has identified note-taking as one of nine instructional strategies with the greatest potential for positively impacting student achievement. That's because note-taking requires students to stay alert, helps them become engaged in lectures and readings, gives them a resource for actively contributing to group discussions, and provides them with study guides for tests.

AVID teaches its students the Cornell Note-Taking System (described below), which provides a framework for students to process, refine, and remember information.

**First, students prepare note-taking paper and binders.**

- ◆ Put loose-leaf paper into a binder.
- ◆ Add rules to each page as illustrated in the diagram at right.

**During class, students record notes on the right-hand side of the paper.**

- ◆ Write notes in paragraphs, skipping lines to separate information logically.
- ◆ Don't force an outlining system, but do use any obvious numbering.
- ◆ Strive to get the main ideas down rather than details and examples.
- ◆ Use abbreviations for extra writing and listening time.
- ◆ Use pictures or drawings when they're helpful.

**After class, students refine their notes.**

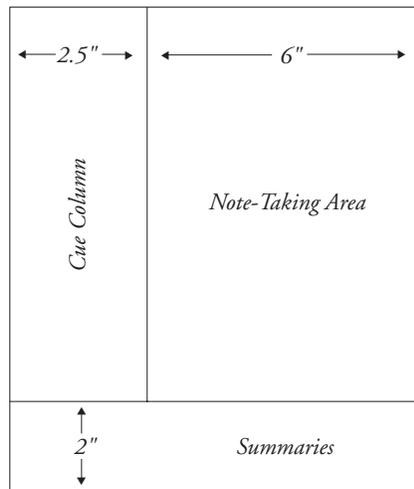
- ◆ Write questions in the left-hand "cue column."
- ◆ Check or correct incomplete items; expand on the notes that are too sketchy.
- ◆ Read the notes and underline key words and phrases.
- ◆ Read underlined words and write recall cues in the left-hand column.
- ◆ Sum up each page by writing a sentence or two at the bottom of the sheet.
- ◆ If possible, compare notes with a study buddy.

**Students recite their notes in three ways.**

- ◆ Cover up the right side of the page, read the questions, and recite information as fully as possible. Uncover the sheet and verify information frequently.
- ◆ Reflect on the organization of the lecture or reading. Overlap the pages to cover the notes section and read the recall cues in the left column. Study the progression of the information. This will stimulate relationships, inferences, and personal opinions. Write down all of these insights!
- ◆ Review by reciting, reflecting, and reading insights.

**The process in brief: Record, refine, recite, reflect, and review.**

*A few reminders:* Verbatim note-taking is not effective; notes should be considered works-in-progress; the more notes that are taken, the better.



## WEBSITES FOR FURTHER STUDY

**AVID Center**  
[www.avidonline.org](http://www.avidonline.org)

**AVID North Coast Regional Center** [www.scoe.org/avid](http://www.scoe.org/avid)

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**AVID Summer Institutes**  
July 18-22, 2005 in Sacramento  
August 1-5, 2005 in San Diego  
Information: [www.avidonline.org](http://www.avidonline.org)

**Site Presentations**  
The AVID North Coast Regional Center staff is available to visit school sites interested in finding out more about the program and methodologies. Contact Gail Wright, [gwright@scoe.org](mailto:gwright@scoe.org) or (707) 522-3209.

## PUBLICATIONS

**Write Path: English Language Development** is a curriculum series designed to teach critical reading and writing strategies to grade 7-12 English Learners. It can be effectively used at schools with or without AVID programs.  
*Available at [www.avidonline.org](http://www.avidonline.org)*

**Student Success Path** introduces students to writing, inquiry, and collaboration, with a special emphasis on binder organization, note-taking, and time management. Teacher and student guides are available for the upper elementary, middle school, and high school levels. The series is appropriate for schools with or without AVID programs.

*Available at [www.avidonline.org](http://www.avidonline.org)*