SUCCESSFULLY SERVING THE UNDERSERVED: PROFILES OF AVID TEACHERS

Lauren K. Handler
B.A., University of Colorado, 2003
M.S., Florida State University, 2004

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

FALL
2012
SUCCESSFULLY SERVING THE UNDERSERVED: PROFILES OF AVID TEACHERS

A Dissertation

by

Lauren K. Handler

Approved by Dissertation Committee:

_____________________________________
Dr. Pia Wong, Chair

_____________________________________
Dr. Carlos Nevarez, Program Director

_____________________________________
Olivia Castellano, Retired Professor

FALL 2012
SUCCESSFULLY SERVING THE UNDERSERVED: PROFILES OF AVID TEACHERS

Student: Lauren K. Handler

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this dissertation is suitable for shelving in the library and credit is to be awarded for the dissertation.

__________________________________________, Graduate Coordinator
Dr. Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner

Date
DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to all AVID teachers who foster the transformative learning and development of their students.

“Transformation is only valid if it is carried out with the people, not for them.”

Paulo Freire (1968) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This degree program would not have been made possible without the fearless support of my family. My mother Sharon, father David, sister Brittany, brother-in-law Kenny, nephews Aaron and Franklin, grandparents Helen and Max Handler and Dr. and Mrs. Frank Hussey Jr., uncle Bob Handler, The Houston Husseys, The Albuquerque Husseys, The Chicago Husseys and my dear best friend Rani Olson have given me the strength and perspective needed to embark upon and finish this program. Your continual encouragement, love, belief in me, and patience have allowed me to persevere through trying times and celebrate good times. Each of you in your own way models the very foundations of quality education; love and respect for others, critical dialogue, the act of quiet yet ferocious caring and the nurturing of your own, and by virtue others’, ever-changing and growing intellectual curiosities. Mom, you are an extraordinary woman. You have shown me infinite love and have taught me the meaning of strength through your humble yet steadfast kindness. You have offered me solace, shown me how to live with grace and even today continue giving me the tools to live happily in this world. Dad, quite simply you are my gentle and gigantic hero. You have protected me, honored my unique perspective, taught me to be persistent and honest, and continue reminding me that laughter, and the occasional trite joke, feed the mind and the soul. Brittany, my beautiful big sister, you have been my role model since we were children and you continue this role even as a young mother to your own children. Your compassion, grounded advice and smile remind me of the important aspects of life: family, love, and
of course laughter. Rani, what would I have done had we not met on the playground in
the 1st grade? You have taught me to slow down, to notice, to let go and to live fully and
purposefully. Your tender wisdom and insightful perspective have guided me throughout
my life. You have always encouraged my passion for learning, thank you.

I also want to thank my Dissertation Committee members for their critical
feedback and overall depth of support. Dr. Wong, thank you for inviting me into your
home and into your family. Working with you has been the single most positive
experience of this degree program as you have relentlessly cultivated a thought-
provoking and intellectually intimate relationship between teacher and student. Your
sharp understanding of social justice within education and your overall hopeful nature
carried me through the challenging albeit progressive writing process. I will always hold
dear our work at your kitchen table with dog Cooper playfully nipping at my feet while
your husband Bruce furthered my knowledge about the SPSS program! Professor
Castellano, Profesora, thank you for your deconstructive perspective, your perceptive
energy, and your treatment of me as your equal, and also as a part of your family. I will
never forget our conversations about life, teaching and the great classic theorists; you are
an inspiration. Dr. Nevarez, your relentless dedication to my success in this program has
helped me define what it means to be a transformational leader. Quite simply, you
embody the fundamental beliefs that drive this degree program. It has always struck me
that the day I called the Ed.D. office searching for an intellectually challenging doctoral
program you personally answered the phone and responded to my probably excessive
questions without frustration, ego or judgment. You not only believed I could complete this program but you have done everything in your power to help me meet that goal.

Additionally I want to acknowledge my stimulating, organized and thoughtful young friend Gabriela De Olive for helping me throughout the research process. Your collaborative spirit, attention to detail and ability to work amid strict deadlines, made the completion of this study possible. I want to thank Meredith Linden for her attention to detail, patience, flexibility, analytical perspective and remarkable editing skills. Meredith, you brought me great comfort and support during the final throes of the writing process. You are a delight to work with and I consider you my friend. I would like to thank Dr. Britt for her methodological and quantitative expertise. Dr. Britt, your candid advice and your ability to respond to my many statistical questions and queries in a positive, productive and nurturing manner have led me to the completion of this degree, I could not have made it without you. I want to thank Jerry and Sherry Smith and Matthew Barnes for their willingness to support me throughout this educational and professional endeavor. Without your grounded advice and belief in me, I could not have completed this incredible journey. Lastly, I want to thank the eclectic and knowledgeable faculty and staff at Sacramento State as your passion and guidance have contributed greatly to my educational growth.
CURRICULUM VITAE

Education
M.S. in Communication, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
B.A. University of Colorado Boulder, CO

Professional Employment
English Teacher, El Dorado Union High School District, February, 2006-Present
English & AVID Teacher, El Dorado Union High School District, August, 2009- May 2011
Teaching Assistantship, Florida State University, August, 2003-July 2004

Field of Study
Educational Leadership and Policy P-12
Abstract

of

SUCCESSFULLY SERVING THE UNDERSERVED: PROFILES OF AVID TEACHERS

By

Lauren K. Handler

This mixed-methods study utilized data generated by 100 voluntary survey participants and five voluntary interview participants to construct a robust profile of AVID teacher attitudes, knowledge sets and practices. The researcher used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient statistical test as well as qualitative open coding data analyses to answer the two research questions about AVID teacher attitudes, knowledge sets and practices. The K-12 public school system in California, and within the broader context of the United States, is increasingly diverse along cultural, linguistic, learning and socio-economic lines. This fact, in addition to the persistent achievement gap between high performing, mostly White and Asian students, and their underserved and underrepresented counterparts, typically African Americans, Latinos, low-income students, and English learners, brings to the forefront the need for recruitment, retention and development of teachers who can successfully serve diverse populations. This study recommends attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices helpful for teacher educators, school principals, and human resource directors in school districts to meet the needs of historically underserved students, as well as a highly diverse population of students. The
key attitudes driving the AVID teachers in the sample are as follows: they continually want to become better teachers, they believe all students can achieve high personal and academic goals, they believe they should be persistent in helping students meet their goals, believe students have different learning needs, believe in empowering students to be independent, believe in collaboration, believe motivation is a key factor of learning, believe students are whole beings, and believe programmatic success is multi-dimensional. The primary knowledge sets held and honed by the sample are as follows: they know inquiry-based curriculum and know the importance of student contexts in their learning. The dominant practices that emerged from sample are as follows: they show students they care, reflect about their teaching, practice culturally relevant, responsive pedagogy, link student knowledge, collaborate and integrate collaborative activities in their classrooms, motivate students by celebrating success and do not allow failure. This study finds that while educational policy documents, in general and more specifically the Council of Chief State School Offices (CCSSO), provide a comprehensive articulation of what quality teachers must know and be able to do they often are silent regarding attitudinal dispositions that are useful in serving historically underserved populations as well as highly diverse populations. The findings of this study suggest that AVID teachers exemplify the CCSSO’s 10 main indicators of teacher quality as well as demonstrate culturally relevant/responsive and caring frameworks of teaching. The overarching implication for this study is that both policy-makers and educational leaders should
retain, develop and recruit teachers who do or can be nurtured to, demonstrate such indicators and repertoire of attitudes, knowledge sets and practices.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication ................................................................. v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments ................................................................ vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Vitae ............................................................. ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables ...................................................................... xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures ................................................................... xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Statement ............................................................ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is AVID? A Brief History ............................................. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Context ........................................................... 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Achievement Gap .......................................................... 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Conceptual Frameworks ...................................... 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Study and Research Questions ............................... 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study ..................................................... 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Definitions ....................................................... 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations ............... 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion .......................................................................... 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ................................... 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Programs ................................................................... 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. CONVERGENCE OF QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE FINDINGS.............105
   Report of Quantitative Demographic Data ...........................................105
   Summary of Quantitative Data Addressing Research Question One ..........112
   Summary of Qualitative Data Addressing Research Question Two..........122
   Conclusion ............................................................................................146

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .........................155
   Overview of the Study ...........................................................................155
   Research Questions ................................................................................156
   Conceptual Framework ..........................................................................157
   Interpretation of the Findings ...............................................................158
   Recommendations ..................................................................................182
   Transformational Leadership Implications ..........................................186
   Policy Implications ..............................................................................187
   Suggestions for Future Research .........................................................190
   Conclusion ............................................................................................191

6. APPENDICES .......................................................................................193
   Appendix A. Human Subject Application and Approval .......................194
   Appendix B. Supplementary California Budget Information ..................203
   Appendix C. Survey Instrument .............................................................207
   Appendix D. Interview Questions ..........................................................229

REFERENCES ..........................................................................................231
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Statement Count for Survey</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Variables Used in the Analysis &amp; Corresponding Survey</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions/Statements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Significant Correlations for Learner Development Variable</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Significant Correlations for Learning Differences Variable</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Significant Correlations for Learning Environments Variable</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Significant Correlations for Content Knowledge Variable</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Significant Correlations for Innovative Application of Content Variable</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Significant Correlations for Planning for Instruction Variable</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Significant Correlations for Instructional Strategies Variable</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Significant Correlations for Reflection and Continuous Growth Variable</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Significant Correlations for Collaboration Variable</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Significant Correlations for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching Variable</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Significant Correlations for Caring Variable</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Summary of Variables and Correlations</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. AVID vs. Overall U.S. students completing four-year college entrance requirements</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. English/Language Arts CST</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mathematics CST</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Theoretical frameworks of this study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ethnic breakdown of AVID student population</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Percentage of students who have completed A-G requirements</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Completion of four-year college entrance requirements</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Distribution of unqualified teachers in California, 2001</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. CSU college-going rate</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. UC college-going rate</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ethnic breakdown of AP test takers</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Gender of participants</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Age of participants</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Subjects in addition to AVID that participants taught</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Total years taught</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Years teaching AVID</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Ethnicity of AVID students</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Top 10 counties from where survey participants came ........................................111

20. Figure B1. Major tax and license revenue ............................................................204

21. Figure B2. California State expenditures 2009-2010 ........................................205
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A democracy that will survive and thrive in a world that demands a well-educated citizenry must build a system that can ensure all students the right to learn. (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 331)

Current educational research supports the notion that good schools have good teachers: thus, a teacher’s effectiveness is one of the most salient issues surrounding education in the United States today (Barnes, 2006; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2009); Darling-Hammond, 2010). Effective teaching has recently become the focal point of educational debates, research, and subsequent policy, as “the disparities in access to well-qualified teachers are large and growing worse” (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 323). While most researchers and practitioners would agree that key contextual issues such as school leadership and education funding influence teacher performance, developing a robust knowledge base about teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices and how they are or can be nurtured is now especially warranted. Hence, it is valuable to develop profiles of teachers in multiple contexts to gain insight about what drives successful schools and programs. The focus of this study was to examine the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program teachers. Furthermore, the motivation for this research is to better understand how AVID teachers contributed to an international program that continually closes the achievement gap. This study addresses the lack of information in AVID
literature regarding common attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices shared by AVID elective teachers.

Philosophically, the researcher has a deep commitment to issues of social justice within the realm of education as it is her belief and assumption that education is one tool with the power to break binding cycles of poverty and improve the lives of all people. It is because of this commitment the researcher became a teacher and chose to teach the AVID elective course. The researcher taught English (five years) and AVID (two years) within the California public school system. She was drawn to teach the AVID elective course because the program addresses the achievement gap between high performing, mostly White and Asian students, and their underserved and underrepresented counterparts, typically African Americans, Latinos, low-income students, and English learners. The educational achievement gap between rich and poor, as well as between minority and majority students, is illustrative of how social problems are perpetuated within public schools. Throughout her two years of teaching AVID, the researcher’s students became her family and her touchstone for understanding the general needs of perpetually underserved students. It is because of her choice to teach AVID that the researcher honors her students with this research, as this study contributes further understanding regarding why the AVID program continues its success in closing the achievement gap.

For this mixed-methods study, the researcher surveyed and interviewed teachers working in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. Through
the use of survey and interview data, the researcher created an informative profile of the typical AVID teacher, which leads to better understanding of program effectiveness. This research seeks to inform teacher preparation programs, teacher hiring practices, and teacher professional development programs.

Problem Statement

Our future will be increasingly determined by our capacity and our will to educate all children well – a challenge we have very little time to meet if the United States is not to enact the modern equivalent of the fall of Rome. (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 319)

Across the United States, and specifically within California, there is an increasingly diverse cultural, linguistic, academic, and socio-economic population of students; hence, there is a need for our educational system to respond to such a change (Darling-Hammond, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2010; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2000, 2003, 2005). This study addresses the inequities in schools as evidenced by the current educational achievement gap between high performing, mostly White and Asian students, and their underserved and underrepresented counterparts, who are typically African American, Latino, low-income, and English learners. Specifically, this study speaks to such inequities by focusing on teacher quality. Teachers are a fundamental factor of successful programs and schools. Knowing more about the characteristics of today’s teachers who effectively serve a historically underserved and diverse population of students offers information about how to meet the challenge identified in Darling-Hammond’s (2007) statement opening the chapter, that of educating all children, rather than some, and thus addressing the achievement gap and inequities permeating schools.
Darling-Hammond (2007) noted the value of a good education for all children and that the United States’ very existence as a thriving society (such as that of Rome before it fell) is in jeopardy if this problem is not addressed.

The AVID program has an effective record of success in closing the achievement gap; its programmatic achievements are evidenced by the following data:

- Of the 2011 California seniors in AVID who participated in the senior data collection (n=15,596), 95% planned to attend post-secondary education
  - 61% in four-year institutions
  - 33% in community colleges
- 90% of all 2011 AVID seniors completed the UC/CSU “a-g” course requirements. (This is 2.5 times greater than the completion rate of 36% for the state overall in 2009-10, the most recent data available.)
- 89% of Hispanic and African American 2011 AVID seniors completed UC/CSU “a-g” entrance course requirements.
- The number of AVID 8th-grade students in Algebra is almost 50% higher than the national average.
- Of the 300 Dell Scholars named this spring (2012), 83 of the 96 (86%) Dell Scholars from California were AVID students. (Morse & Baratte, 2012, para. 2)

“AVID trains approximately 6,500 California educators every year” (Morse & Baratte, 2012, para. 2).
Furthermore:

Belief in the AVID system is so strong that, despite budget cuts in public school systems across the U.S., attendance in AVID’s eight Summer Institutes has increased by nearly 25%. This summer, AVID will train more than 22,000 teachers and administrators. Three of the Institutes are in California with 5,000 California educators participating. (Morse & Baratte, 2012, para. 3)

Knowing more about the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID teachers allows for understanding about programmatic success and successful student achievement, i.e., AVID program teachers foster the learning and development of historically underserved students and thus contribute to closing the achievement gap. Understanding a typical profile of AVID teachers helps educators, policymakers, and educational researchers know how to maintain and create successful equity programs that serve to close the achievement gap. It matters that AVID teachers are recognized because one can infer from the program outcomes that AVID teachers may be among today’s best and most effective teachers of highly diverse populations, the very population growing in the United States and specifically within California (California Legislative Analysts Office [LAO], 2011).

While research on the AVID program’s curriculum and positive student outcomes is robust, there is little research about who teaches AVID and what attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices they have. This mixed-methods study addresses the lack of research and understanding about the profile of AVID teachers. A typical profile of AVID teachers will help school administrators, teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers better comprehend the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of these AVID
teachers as well as their contributions to program effectiveness. Thus, this study has potential to inform teacher preparation programs about admissions screening criteria and program content. Another key objective of this inquiry is to provide information relevant to those involved with teacher induction and professional development programs. The conclusion of this study recommends attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices that will prove helpful to teacher educators, school principals, and human resource directors in school districts. Data from this study were used to address the research questions found later in this chapter.

What is AVID? A Brief History

The information for the following section is derived from the official AVID website, particularly the “About AVID” tab. The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program was created in 1980 by Catherine Swanson, an English teacher at Clairmont High School in San Diego, California. Swanson developed the AVID program in response to issues she observed among the many inner-city students bussed to Clairmont High School during the 1980s. Inner-city students were not prepared to meet the academic demands of Clairmont, a primarily suburban school; thus, Swanson designed the AVID elective class to help her students be successful in their new school environment (AVID Center, n.d.b). It is the philosophy of the AVID program that is most salient, as Swanson believed that holding students accountable to achieve the highest academic level while offering them social and academic support prompted non-traditional (low SES and minority) students to rise to the challenge and achieve at levels
never reached in the past. The goal of the AVID program is to ensure that underserved
and underrepresented students graduate ready to pursue education at the college level.
Today, AVID provides educational and social support to over 400,000 students in nearly
4,500 schools (elementary, middle, and high schools) in 47 states, the District of
Columbia, and in 16 countries (AVID Center, n.d.b).

Educational Context

During the past almost 80 years, a stark clash between the American value of
education as a right and the actual accessibility and appropriateness of that education for
all students developed. This clash between what we collectively value and how that
value plays out begins at birth and is socially and economically perpetuated throughout
life (Nieto, 2005). Sadly, disparities in educational quality and access are directly related
to where students live, as poverty is still the number one predictor of educational
“many young people in the United States, especially those who are low-income students
of color, do not receive even the minimum education needed to become literate and join
the labor market” (p. 318). Two fundamental perspectives underlie this educational and
ideological debate. Some contend the educational system needs to be shaken by fierce
competition while others assert the system will only improve with a purposeful,
systematic investment in both teachers and a comprehensive process of teacher education
and development (U.S. Department of Education Policy, n.d.).
Given the realities of educational access and quality, President Obama instituted The Race To The Top (RTTT) legislation in 2009. The driving purpose of President Obama’s legislation was to spark competition between states and improve achievement among all students, particularly among those perpetually underserved (U.S. Department of Education Policy, n.d.). Unfortunately, even given state and federal measures to reform education, the United States continues lagging behind other countries in reference to overall student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2010) noted still significant inequities in access to school resources. She further articulated that countries such as Finland, The Netherlands, Singapore, Korea, China, New Zealand, and Australia have made considerable gains in student outcomes. She posited, “the United States ranks poorly on many leading indicators, however primarily because of the great inequity in educational inputs and outcomes between White students and non-Asian ‘minority’ students, who comprise a growing share of the U.S. public school population” (p. 318). Moreover, Nieto (2005) demonstrated the most important paradox existing in educational policy today, that of education as appropriate and accessible for all in the United States. American education continues serving as an example of disproportionate access to educational resources and student achievement.

The Achievement Gap

Programs such as AVID were created explicitly to eliminate the racial and socio-economic inequities illustrated by the persistent achievement gap. Figure 1 compares the
rate at which AVID students and U.S. students in general complete four-year college entrance requirements along racial/ethnic lines.

**Figure 1.** AVID vs. Overall U.S. students completing four-year college entrance requirements.

Figure 1 displays the stark reality that AVID students, across the racial/ethnic spectrum, complete four-year college entrance requirements at a much higher rate than students belonging to the same racial/ethnic groups do throughout the U.S. Across the nation, the
AVID program addresses the problematic achievement gap, as displayed in Figure 1, along ethnic and economic lines, a goal of current federal and state educational policy. In California, the problem of the consistent gap between ethnicities in achievement is plainly demonstrated in both English Language Arts and Mathematics California Standards Test scores. Figure 2 illustrates English language arts achievement in California along racial/ethnic lines.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2.** English/Language Arts CST. (California Department of Education [CDE], 2011)

Figure 2 makes clear that Asian and White students outperform their Black and Hispanic counterparts and achieve at levels far above the statewide average. Figure 3 shows math achievement throughout California across racial/ethnic lines.
Similar to English Language Arts California achievement data, Asian and White students outperform their Black and Hispanic counterparts in math and achieve at above average levels as compared to overall achievement statewide. Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate the disparity in achievement between ethnic groups. Ogbu and Simmons (1998) suggested, “the treatment of minorities in the wider society is reflected in their treatment in education” (p. 161). Institutional and cultural barriers continue impeding underserved students from achieving at the same level as their White and Asian peers. The achievement gap thus serves as yet another indicator of larger socio-economic and ethnic inequities amid California’s, and the nation’s, marginalized students. The data portrayed in Figures 2 and 3 capture an historic reality in California – a gap in achievement largely determined by race and social class. Against such odds, the AVID program has posted
compelling data that reverse these historic trends. Several research studies have illuminated the keys to AVID’s success. Achievement data comparing AVID students with non-AVID students is prolific and further discussed in The Significance of the Study section of this chapter. Missing from these studies, however, is a detailed examination of a key factor in AVID’s success – its teachers. Thus, as stated earlier, this research adds to the AVID literature by providing in-depth information about the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of the AVID teacher that lead to student success.

Summary of Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual framework underlying this study is that efforts to close the achievement gap succeed when there is a thoughtful combination of high quality curriculum, strong leadership, and effective teacher performance (where teacher performance relies on the demonstration of specific teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices) (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Within this framework, and situated within the literature on effective teaching of marginalized students, quality teachers should have an ethical responsibility to actively care for all students, a strong commitment to student success, a keen sense of efficacy, an ability to make change and shape student behavior and performance, and a solid knowledge of their content area (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gay, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Oakes & Lipton, 2007), in this case, the AVID curriculum. When teachers with these attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices work in well functioning programs such as AVID, there is a high likelihood the disparities in student performance will decrease.
The AVID program defines clear goals for student achievement and methods for achieving such goals, both of which are considered throughout this study. The AVID program’s main goal is to prepare students for college readiness and success in a global society (AVID Center, n.d.b). To meet this challenge, “The AVID system accelerates student learning, uses research based methods of effective instruction, provides meaningful and motivational professional development, and acts as a catalyst for systemic reform and change” (AVID Center, n.d.b, para. 1).

The conceptual framework, further explained in Chapter 2, reveals that effective and socially just frameworks for effective teaching include culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and teaching and active caring for all students (Ayers, 2001, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2000, 2003; Noddings, 2005; Sleeter, 2001). The two constructs underlie the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of today’s quality teachers. Pinnacle authors who write and research within the realm of teacher quality and the factors influencing teacher quality (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Boyd et al., 2009; Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2007, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1997; Shulman, 1987) noted that critical factors such as school administration and access to, and use of, basic resources for teaching also greatly impact a teacher’s quality or effectiveness. They further argued that without content knowledge, thoughtful policy, challenging curriculum, basic educational resources, and a supportive administrative body, teachers are far less likely to be successful.
Accordingly, seminal authors such as Nieto (2000), Nieto and Bode (2012), Billings (1992), Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 2000), Gay (2002, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010), hooks (1994), and Oakes and Lipton (2007) provide the conceptual framework for effective teaching that also address perennial educational equality issues. The aforementioned authors each articulated that the U.S. educational system will continue struggling and lagging behind other countries until the treatment of all students is equitable. This group of researchers highlighted a student-centered notion of teaching in which a student’s culture, language, and experiences are at the forefront of the teacher’s mind and help drive pedagogical decisions (including the theory of culturally responsive/relevant teaching and the notion of caring). Figure 4 illustrates the three concepts utilized as the theoretical frameworks for this study.
Figure 4. Theoretical frameworks of this study.

Figure 4 demonstrates the merging of the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995), the theory of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2010) and the notion of caring Ayers, 2001, 2004; Gay, 2010; Lyman, 2000; Noddings, 1999, 2005). The merging of theories illustrated in Figure 4 brings to light that caring for students impacts how teachers think about as well as impacts their practice of teaching. Teachers who care about students see students as whole beings and want to
know their students as people. Teachers who care embrace the whole child and actively seek understanding about students’ language, culture, community, and overall interests. Figure 4 makes clear that when teachers care about students, value both academic and personal development and integrate a student’s language, culture, community, and overall interests into the classroom, students are more likely to achieve at high levels. While the scholars referenced above have helped define the key characteristics of effective teachers, especially for multicultural settings, rich profiles of teachers are still scarce. Thus, this research contributes to this knowledge base by providing additional details allowing us to envision how effective teaching ideas are put into practice.

**Nature of Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this descriptive, mixed-methods study, utilizing survey and interview data, establishes a profile of the typical AVID teacher. The researcher constructed the survey and interview questions by combing a breadth of literature from policy documents in use about teacher quality and educational research literature about teacher quality. The profile provides further understanding about the teacher dimension related to overall AVID program effectiveness. Furthermore, the principal objective of this study was to examine the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID program teachers. Ample research exists about the AVID program’s overall success, yet there is a major gap in research regarding the characteristics of AVID teachers and why they continue contributing to this successful program that serves students across the U.S., the District of Columbia, and in 16 countries (AVID Center, n.d.b). There is insufficient
literature from the voices of AVID program teachers, who serve a diverse and historically underserved population, in their words and derived from their experiences teaching in the AVID program relating to their attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. The primary objective of the study was to create a profile of AVID teachers by examining the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID program teachers and from that extrapolate and infer how the AVID teacher contributes to creating successful student outcomes. In an era of school accountability, the educational community is looking for progressive and innovative ways to support teacher effectiveness as research demonstrates teachers play a pivotal role in student success (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Again, the objective of this study responds to the previously mentioned gap in literature with regard to AVID teachers and their continued contribution to positive student outcomes. The specific research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What significant relationships exist between the following 12 variables, related to attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of middle and high school AVID teachers?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative Application of Content
- Assessment
- Planning for Instruction
- Instructional Strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching
1. In what ways do middle and high school AVID teachers exemplify the following 12 variables based on teacher attitudes, knowledge sets and practices?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching
- Caring

The concluding profile of the typical AVID teacher is constructed using both survey and interview data. The methodological strategy addresses key gaps within the survey data by utilizing in-depth interviews, which ultimately are used to create a representative case illustrating a typical profile of the AVID teacher. The construction of the typical profile is highly contingent upon how both the survey and the interview data are analyzed. The justification for employing a mixed-methods research design is that it made use of an attribute-based survey instrument and in-depth interviews to construct a cohesive narrative based on self-reported data. One hundred AVID teachers working at AVID Certified Sites throughout California were surveyed and five of these 100 participated in one 45-90 minute in-depth interview. The survey and interview questions were about the following: demographic information, attitudes toward and philosophies of
education, educational knowledge sets, and a repertoire of educational practices identified in the literature as especially effective with under-served populations (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Oakes & Lipton, 2007). A survey of AVID teachers revealed demographic data, philosophical attitudes about education, educational knowledge sets, educational practices, and AVID teachers’ own reflections of their experiences teaching in the AVID program. The survey data were used to find commonalities among AVID instructors (if commonalities existed) and informed the selection of five subjects with whom in-depth interviews were conducted. The interview data were used to generate an in-depth understanding of the typical attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID teachers. Both the survey and interview data were used to generate a general profile of the typical AVID teacher.

Significance of the Study

AVID teachers are, in some manner, a factor contributing to a successful national education program that closes the achievement gap. Thus, it can be assumed AVID teachers play a role in program success. AVID programs across the nation continue closing the achievement gap between underrepresented students and status quo students. AVID students come from a variety of ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, and historically lag behind their White, Asian, and status quo counterparts in academic achievement (thus creating the achievement gap). Figure 5 exhibits the ethnic breakdown of AVID students.
Figure 5. Ethnic breakdown of AVID student population.

Figure 5 notes that at the time of the study, AVID served a population of primarily Latino (50%), Black (19%), and White (21%) students. A noteworthy aspect of Figure 5 is that nearly 21% of AVID students are White indicating they are first-generation college-bound students of low socio-economic status. A student’s ethnic background is only important in that families of such students may lack an identifiable, “college-going tradition in their family” (AVID Center, 2011, para. 2). AVID students continue displaying the program’s success in that, “the proportion of Latinos taking AP exams is almost five times higher among AVID students than among U.S. students overall” (AVID Center, 2011, para. 4). Figure 6 displays the rate at which AVID students take the AP exam as compared to non-AVID students.
Figure 6. Ethnic breakdown of AP test takers: AVID vs. National.

The AVID program’s ability to document, monitor, and recruit non-status quo students to take AP exams is noteworthy as historically these exams were taken by White, Asian, and economically advantaged students. Moreover, Figure 6 demonstrates the high rate at which AVID Black and Latino students take the AP exam as compared to non-AVID Black and Latino students.

The AVID program’s effectiveness is also indicated by the UC College-going rate whereby California AVID students attend at twice the rate of overall California UC College-going students (AVID Center, 2011). Figure 7 demonstrates the percentage of AVID students in California as compared to overall California students who have completed A-G requirements.
Another key gauge of AVID’s success, indicated in Figure 7, is that 89% of California AVID students complete the college entrance requirements (A-G courses) while only 36% of California students overall complete such requirements (AVID Center, 2011). Figure 8 presents the rate at which AVID students in California and AVID students in other states meet four-year college entrance requirements as compared to non-AVID students across the nation.
Figure 8. Completion of four-year college entrance requirements.

Today across the U.S., AVID students complete university entrance prerequisites at a significantly higher rate than do non-AVID students, as presented in Figure 8. The national average for prerequisite completion is 36%; AVID students in the following states far exceed this national average: CA (89%), TX (92%), MD (95%), IL (91%), FL (90%) and WA (85%). Indicators of successful AVID programs are noteworthy and such indicators are growing each year.

Displayed above are noteworthy indicators of AVID’s programmatic success. However, this body of research offers little analysis about factors that contribute to such success and in particular the factor involving the AVID elective teacher. The central significance of this mixed-method, descriptive study is that it develops a robust profile of AVID teachers to better hypothesize the role of teachers in the AVID program and, by
extension, identifies successful efforts to close the achievement gap. While there is ample research about the AVID program’s success due to factors such as effective curriculum and professional development, there is still little research about the role AVID teachers play in such success. The contribution of this study is that it compares accepted criteria for highly effective teachers with typical AVID teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. Such a comparison adds to the knowledge base on effective teaching for teacher professional development, teacher preparation programs, administrative school leaders, and for overall AVID program effectiveness.

Operational Definitions

The following are definitions of terms utilized in this study. The researcher arrived at the operational definitions by combing a breadth of literature from policy documents in use about teacher quality and educational research literature about teacher quality. The first 12 are the actual study variables.

Assessment (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to document learner progress, and to inform the teacher’s ongoing planning and instruction” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 10).

Caring (Independent variable in the study)

Defined as the interactive connection between teachers and students where teachers value and thus practice teaching the whole or complex student, far
beyond the given content focus (Ayers, 2001, 2004; Gay, 2010; Lyman, 2000; Noddings, 1999, 2005)

Collaboration (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher collaborates with students, families, colleagues, other professionals, and community members to share responsibility for student growth and development, learning, and well-being” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 10).

Content Knowledge (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 9).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Independent variable in the study)

This term is derived from Ladson-Billings’ (1994, 1995a, 1995b) work. This term is defined as the practice of linking students’ home cultures with knowledge taught in the classroom. Ladson-Billings’ definition includes three primary factors: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (Independent variable in the study)

This term is derived from Gay’s (2002, 2004, 2005, 2010) work. It is defined as the interactive teaching practice of meeting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. The definition of culturally responsive teaching is that it is validating, comprehensive, multi-dimensional, transformative, and emancipatory.
Innovative Application of Content (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical/creative thinking and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 9).

Instructional Strategies (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to access and appropriately apply information” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 10).

Learner Development (Independent variable in the study)

The teacher understands how children learn and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences. (CCSSO, 2010, p. 9)

Learning Differences (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that allow each learner to reach his/her full potential” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 9).
Learning Environments (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher works with learners to create environments that support individual
and collaborative learning, encouraging positive social interaction, active
engagement in learning, and self motivation” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 9).

Middle and high school

Contains students in grades 6-12

Planning for Instruction (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher draws upon knowledge of content areas, cross-disciplinary skills,
learners, the community, and pedagogy to plan instruction that supports every
student in meeting rigorous learning goals” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 10).

Reflection & Continuous Growth (Independent variable in the study)

“The teacher is a reflective practitioner who uses evidence to continually evaluate
his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others
(students, families, and other professionals in the learning community), and
adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 10).

Knowledge Sets

Defined as the intellectual awareness held by teachers regarding the 12
independent variables used in this study (learner development, learning
differences, learning environments, content knowledge, innovative applications of
content, assessment, planning for instruction, instructional strategies, reflection
and continuous growth, collaboration, culturally responsive/relevant teaching, and caring).

Status-quo Students

Defines the students whose educational needs have historically been met by the educational system and who have in turn benefited from positive student outcomes. The current educational system is structured around supporting such students.

Teacher Quality & Effective Teaching

Terms used interchangeably and defined as a teacher’s ability to meet the current demands of a highly diverse student population. This ability includes the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Oakes & Lipton, 2007), The Center for Research on Education Diversity & Excellence (CREDE), culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2000), and Caring (Ayers, 2001, 2004; Delpit, 1995, 2002; Delpit & Dowdy, 2006; Lyman, 2000; Noddings, 1999, 2005) frameworks of teaching.

Teacher Attitudes

Defined as the complex grouping of beliefs and values held by teachers about the 12 independent variables used in this study (learner development, learning differences, learning environments, content knowledge, innovative applications of content, assessment, planning for instruction, instructional strategies, reflection
and continuous growth, collaboration, culturally responsive/relevant teaching, and caring).

Teacher Practices

Defined as the particular methods used for teaching. This includes a teacher’s actions and teaching strategies.

Underserved/Marginalized Students

These terms are used interchangeably and define the students whose educational needs have not been met by the public education system and who have, historically, suffered unequal educational outcomes.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

The central assumption underlying this study is that AVID teachers are indeed a factor in both student and programmatic success.

The limitations for this study are:

- The survey and interview data rely almost entirely on self-report.
- The scope of this study is limited because the researcher did not have the opportunity to purposefully or deliberately sample respondents so factors such as gender, experience, school size, region, etc. could be controlled.
- The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient can only relate two variables at a time.

The delimitations, or parameters, of this study are:

- There was no representative sample.
The focus of the study is on only one aspect of a program designed to address the achievement gap; therefore, the results cannot be easily generalized.

The study generates information about a group of teachers, which cannot be easily generalized.

Conclusion

The classroom teacher is a significant component of successful programs and schools. This study utilized a mixed methods approach for the purpose of better understanding the role of AVID teachers in program effectiveness and in closing the achievement gap. This study focuses the practice of culturally responsive teaching and the notion of caring, as these constructs define and situate the current literature on effective teaching. The literature on effective teaching continues to emphasize teacher competencies in working with diverse populations; necessary dimensions of competencies for effective teaching include the practice of culturally responsive teaching and an ethic of caring. This study contributes to an already robust amount of AVID research on overall program effectiveness. As previously mentioned, AVID research related to program outcomes is abundant, yet there is a significant lack of attention paid to the role and profile of AVID classroom teachers. Who are these individuals attracted to, recruited, or even haphazardly chosen to teach the AVID elective course? Are there similarities among AVID teachers who choose to work in the program? Are there attitudinal and philosophical trends exhibited by AVID classroom teachers? To what
extent do typical AVID teacher qualities (as defined by this study) correspond to those identified in policy documents and the research literature as highly desirable? Despite the noted limitations, this study makes a contribution because it is the first of its kind to provide systematic data about AVID teachers’ philosophical attitudes, intellectual knowledge sets, and teaching practices based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative self-reported data.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who also believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (hooks, 1994, p. 13)

The organization of the literature review includes the following sections: a brief discussion of equity programs similar to AVID; identification of the importance of teacher quality; and a review of research on particular attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices indicating quality teachers. This section then offers a review of significant studies on culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching, discusses the construct of caring within education, and provides an overview of AVID research studies about teachers.

Equity Programs

Various programs across California, the nation, and the world address the ever-present achievement gap between status quo students and their underserved counterparts. Considering the other programs aimed at closing the achievement gap, AVID stands out as being the most comprehensive program; it has served the most students for the longest number of years and is, thus an appropriate program for learning about teacher quality and overall program effectiveness (AVID Center, n.d.b). AVID continues generating rigorous curriculum, student outcome research, and professional development programs that guide and drive such programs. There are three similar programs reviewed in this
study, Puente, GEAR UP, and Summer Bridges EOP. The commonalities among these programs include continual collaboration among students, teachers, counselors, families, and the professional community; high academic standards; an acute focus on writing; extensive professional development; and the indoctrination of program students into the university system and culture.

The Puente program currently exists within 33 high schools, 59 community colleges, and serves about 14,000 students across California. The mission of this program is to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students entering four-year colleges, earning college degrees, and returning to their communities as leaders (Puente, n.d.). Puente began in 1981 at Chabot Community College in Hayward, California. From its inception, Puente has sought out underserved Latino and Mexican American students who historically displayed low academic achievement. Today, the Puente program targets all groups of underserved students, rather than only targeting Latino students. The three main elements of the Puente model are as follows: “rigorous language arts instruction, sustained academic counseling, and mentoring by members of the professional community” (Puente, 2011, para. 2). The Puente program, just like AVID, seeks to increase the representation of marginalized students in four-year universities and colleges and to prepare students for the challenges of university academic and social life.

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program is a federal discretionary grant program with the goal of increasing
the number of low-income students at postsecondary institutions (California Gear Up, 2012a, para. 1). The GEAR UP program was instituted during the 1998 Higher Education Act to “give more low-income students the skills, encouragement, and preparation to enter and succeed in postsecondary education” (California Gear Up, 2012b, para. 1). GEAR UP is a national, six-year grant program existing in 46 states across the U.S. (California Gear Up, 2012b). The California GEAR UP program serves over 236,000 students in 260 schools, 106 school districts, and 25 countries across the world (California Gear Up, 2012b). This program was created to address the disparity among students with regard to their transition from middle school to high school to postsecondary education. Therefore, students participating in the GEAR UP program begin the program in eighth grade.

The primary goal of GEAR UP is to “develop and sustain the organizational capacity of middle schools to prepare ALL students for high school and postsecondary education through the establishment of a statewide network of support” (California Gear Up, 2012b, para. 4). GEAR UP’s core beliefs are as follows: all students deserve an equitable education; students must master rigorous academic standards; students need to be able to envision themselves in college; and in order to meet the needs of underserved students, educators, families, and community members need to demonstrate continual support of GEAR UP students (California Gear Up, 2012b). GEAR UP is similar to both AVID and Puente as it shares the same mission to help support perpetually underserved
students in achieving higher academic goals while increasing the rate at which these students attend four-year universities.

The Summer Bridges Program was created by the California State University system to help students successfully transition from high school to the university system and culture (CSUMentor, 2012). The Summer Bridges program is a part of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), created to increase access and retention of historically underserved, low-income students (CSUMentor, 2012). The Summer Bridges program offers assistance to meet students’ admission, academic, and financial needs. This three- to six-week summer program for incoming students incorporates both a rigorous academic and residential experience. Summer Bridges’ goal is to prepare students for the unique demands of large public universities. Students in Summer Bridges live in on-campus residence halls with other Bridges students, allowing students to form a community with students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Students take academic college courses that count for credit; these courses always include math and writing. This program targets incoming students who have been educationally underserved, are considered low-income, and thus, have unique transitional needs.

Yet another equity program targeting historically underserved students is the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) established by the University of California system. The goal of this program is to open the doors for under-represented students to a challenging and appropriate education provided by the University of California system. This program gives students, who would otherwise not have the opportunity, the support
they need to obtain a UC college education (University of California, 2012). The EAOP serves 39,000 students at 43 middle schools and 266 high schools across California using academic enrichment, entrance exams, academic advising, and college knowledge as vehicles to foster success (University of California, 2012).

As previously stated, the programs identified above, as well as the AVID program, all share qualities. Each of the programs incorporates the broader goal of closing the achievement gap by targeting historically underserved students. This group of students has unique needs that have been honed in on, researched, and systematically addressed by programs such as AVID. All the above programs and AVID value: community collaboration, high academic standards, a focus on developing students’ writing skills, thoughtful professional development for teachers and administrators, and the acculturation of students in acquiring college-going dispositions.

Importance of Teacher Quality/Effective Teaching

The teaching profession is currently under significant public scrutiny as a vital component of positive and improved student outcomes, is the individual classroom teacher. A teacher’s contribution to successful student outcomes is largely categorized as teacher effectiveness, quality, or impact. Today, the importance of high quality teachers is well documented, as the problem underlying the achievement gap is not the demographic shift in diversity but how educators have responded (Brown, 2007; O’Hara & Pritchard, 2008). Ladson-Billings (2005) noted that not only does one in every four children in the United States currently live in poverty, but there is also an increase in
overall cultural diversity across the U.S. population. Nieto and Bode (2012) explained teachers must adapt to this demographic shift by

- Integrating anti-discriminatory practices into curriculum
- Honoring the basic right of all students to receive a rich artistic and academic education
- Refuting the notion that multicultural education is only for linguistically diverse students of color
- Facilitating the pervasiveness of multicultural education far beyond the narrow context of the classroom
- Empowering students to act and advocate for social justice, and
- Practicing methods of critical pedagogy where student experience is at the heart of learning and knowledge for true change to occur in education.

It is within the context of these significant demographic and socio-economic changes in population that culturally responsive teaching, and the action-oriented practice of caring, become even more important. For that reason, the need for high quality teachers is particularly strong among marginalized, culturally diverse, and low socio-economic status students, those students targeted and served by the AVID program. Figure 9 illustrates the aforementioned point. It displays the percentage of California students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, are considered an ethnic minority, and who occupy either the highest or lowest achievement quartile taught by teachers without credentials.
Figure 9. Distribution of unqualified teachers in California, 2001. (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 323)

Figure 9 measures teacher quality by noting the percentage of teachers who do not hold full credentials. It also shows more than 75% of students who receive free and reduced lunch are taught by over 20% of faculty who are not fully credentialed. Figure 9 demonstrates that more than 90% of minority students are taught by over 25% of faculty without full credentials and displays that students who occupy the lowest achievement quartile are taught by the least qualified faculty. The figure indicates low-socioeconomic, minority, and low achieving students are taught by 25% of faculty without full credentials, and low-socioeconomic, minority, and low achieving students are taught by the lowest quality teachers.
The majority of literature on teacher effectiveness, or quality, focuses on strategies leading to positive student outcomes among a highly diverse cultural and socio-economic student population. Accordingly, Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2006) clearly stated, “nearly all observers of the education process, including scholars, school administrators, policymakers, and parents, point to teacher quality as the most significant institutional determinant of academic success” (p. 1). Countries such as Canada, England, and Finland have successful educational systems in part due to superior teacher preparation and professional development programs. Superior teacher preparation programs produce teachers who are successful with their students from early on in their careers. Corresponding teacher development programs ensure that teachers remain well-supported throughout their careers. Tangentially, in these societies, teachers are well-respected by society and fairly compensated.

Darling-Hammond (2008) articulated that teacher quality hinges on the traditional notion of student teaching, which she termed teaching residency. In such teacher residency programs, teachers would gain critical practice from the highest quality teachers (of diverse students) just as medical doctors gain acute practice during their residency periods. Threaded throughout the literature on teacher quality is the notion that all teachers should employ culturally and linguistically appropriate pedagogical practices, which become even more important for teaching perpetually marginalized students. As the literature exemplifies, culturally conscious pedagogy is not simply reserved for underserved students but can be helpful with status quo students. At the heart of
culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) is the idea that each student is an individual, has individual needs, and thus inherently demands an individually focused education. Conceptually, quality and effective teaching are not novel constructs in the realm of educational research. However, what is new and continually changing is how the educational community defines what it means to be a quality teacher, and how we know this to be true. The following section discusses this knowledge base.

Indicators of Teacher Quality/Effective Teaching

Research-based Indicators

Current measures do not sufficiently capture student, teacher and school outcomes. Such measures do not provide adequately robust data to allow researchers to determine causal factors for high or low quality outcomes. The educational community continues its effort to broaden accountability measures to get closer to understanding school, program and teacher quality. The current criteria indicating teacher quality only consider particular measures, such as student outcomes and teacher outcomes on traditional assessments. Furthermore, how such measures are carried out and at what point during a teacher’s career they are performed is noteworthy within the realm of teacher quality indicators. The following discussion brings to light such issues.

In a 2011 study on teacher effectiveness measures, Corcoran, Jennings, and Beveridge (2011) revealed that traditional measures of teacher effectiveness such as credentialing and teaching experience do not necessarily, or comprehensively, measure
teacher effectiveness, as these indicators alone are too limited and narrow. Corcoran et al. (2011) claimed measures including teacher attitudinal characteristics, coupled with traditional indicators, such as certification status and professional experience, are effective indicators in identifying current or prospective teacher effectiveness. The Corcoran study compared teacher performance on two tests measuring teacher effectiveness and concluded that teachers who scored well on high-stakes (certification and experience) measures do not consequently perform well on low-stakes (characteristics) tests. Essentially, Corcoran et al. (2011) were critical of current measures of teacher success; they argued these high-stakes measures neglect a more comprehensive profile of the effective teacher.

Sleeter (2001) reviewed 80 studies of strategies used in teacher preparation programs that focus on preparing teachers for a culturally diverse population. Sleeter argued that to serve a growing number of diverse students, teachers should be culturally aware and responsive, these strategies should be built into teacher preparation programs. Other researchers have extended Sleeter’s purview to examine new teacher characteristics. Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, and Staiger (2008) brought light to the gap in literature pertaining to characteristic and attitudinal assessments of teacher quality and effectiveness. Their study utilized in-depth survey and interview data collected from new teachers about their content knowledge, cognitive ability, personality traits, feelings of self-efficacy, and scores on the Haberman Star Teacher PreScreener Performance assessment. Rockoff et al. investigated how to utilize traditional predictors (i.e., teaching
experience, educational background, and certification type), coupled with non-traditional predictors (i.e., persistence, fallibility, perception of students living in poverty, and ability to work in a Bureaucracy), to account for teacher effectiveness. The purpose of their study was also to measure the validity and reliability of such predictive tests. They concluded there is no single factor that can be used to predict teacher effectiveness; however, a variety of variables and indicators can help increase the quality of new teacher applicants. Rockoff et al. (2008) advocated for expanded criteria that measured teacher effectiveness due current measures being too narrow.

Other scholars have researched the ways in which school and other contextual factors shape teachers’ work and, potentially, their effectiveness. Oakes and Lipton (2007) stated that combining school context (i.e., recognizing the diversity of students) with student outcomes will create useful indicators of school success, but without this contextual information and understanding, student outcomes (and by extension, teacher effectiveness) cannot be understood or addressed in an authentic manner. They also noted the U.S. educational system does not live up to the values of a truly democratic society, as schools are not equitable. Oakes and Lipton explained this inequity is indicated by the current achievement gap between status quo and non-status quo student achievement in part due to disparities in teacher quality when schools are compared. Oakes and Lipton posited a solution to this gap and disparity through the use of multicultural education. They stated a focus on multicultural education allows hard
working and persistent teachers to create this ideal democracy in classrooms, as social justice is at the heart of multicultural educational attitudes, knowledge sets, and beliefs.

The struggle for such teachers is challenging societal norms that do not value education as a truly democratic practice. Oakes and Lipton (2007) argued that an assessment of school context data, coupled with student outcome data, generates useful indicators for school success. They made clear that understanding school context could critically inform educational policy decisions and trends. Furthermore, solely using student outcome data to drive legislation and school-site decision-making is insufficient for understanding the true impact of a school as an intricate and complex institution (Oakes & Lipton, 2007). They explained the current shift in education where relations of trust foster student empowerment, individual decision-making, and tolerance among teachers and students; such practices are at the heart of effective teaching. Oakes and Lipton (2007) suggested schools are intricate and complex, necessitating a wide scope of research methods to understand chief variables such as effective teaching. The focus of their critical work was to increase social justice within the educational system, a key function of equity programs such as AVID. The AVID program’s key function is to close the achievement gap, making schools more equitable and thus increasing social justice within schools.

Association- and State-based Indicators in Use

For this section of the literature review, key policy documents were reviewed in order to create an applied and working definition of what it means to be an effective
teacher. This definition combines common indicators identified by a range of educational organizations and selected state criteria for teacher quality. The researcher chose to examine policy documents from the following educational organizations as this grouping of organizations offers a range of criteria about quality teaching. Moreover, such educational and professional organizations drive and shape the policy discussion about teacher quality. Similarly, the researcher chose to examine policy documents from four states that are highly visible within the policy literature and discussion about teacher quality. The researcher chose California, Texas, Ohio, and New York as they are in spatially different areas across the U.S., educate a high number of students as compared to most other states and educate a culturally and socio-economically diverse population of students (United States Department of Education, n.d.). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS; 2012), the National Education Association (NEA; 2011), the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE; 2011), and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO; 2010) each establish explicit criteria for effective teaching.

The NBPTS (2012) celebrates teachers across the United States who demonstrate five core professional teaching principles; the state of Texas uses this set of standards as a measure of teacher success. This set of standards is named the five core propositions; the list of criteria follows:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning (para. 3)
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students (para. 4)

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning (para. 5)

4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience (para. 6)

5. Teachers are members of learning communities (para. 7)

While the NBPTS touches on important factors of quality teachers, as Corcoran et al. (2011) noted, these criteria are too narrow; thus, a broader and more comprehensive profile of quality teachers is needed. Similarly, Rockoff et al. (2008) indicated the need for further measures of teacher quality that broaden this definition and include an understanding of a teacher’s personality traits, feelings of self-efficacy, overall cognitive ability and content knowledge (the NBPTS account for content knowledge). The NBPTS is useful as it serves as a basic jumping off point for understanding teacher quality but does not include the complex comprehensive indicators, noted by Corcoran et al. (2010) and Rockoff et al. (2008), and needed to truly comprehend the intricacy of teacher quality.

Similarly, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) articulates competencies associated with effective teaching. These competencies are intended to guide teacher preparation program development throughout the state. The CCTC assert that effective teachers possess the following (p. 1):
1. An ethical concern for students and society
2. An extensive subject matter competence
3. Thoughtfully selected pedagogical practices
4. An in-depth knowledge about their students

The CCTC references a critical component identified in research-based indicators of teacher quality, that of considering the context in which a school and, thus a student, functions. This Commission takes the position that quality teachers value students and families, an idea echoed in Oakes and Lipton’s (2007) work on multicultural and socially just education. Oakes and Lipton (2007) reveal the necessity of teachers to consider contextual information, such as culture, language, community, family, and society, to institute socially just and democratic practices in schools.

At the national level and from a labor perspective, the National Education Association (NEA; 2011) maintains the vision of a great public school for every student (NEA, 2011). To this end, they uphold high professional standards for educators and advocate for equitable status, compensation and respect credited to all professionals (NEA, 2011). It is due to such high professional standards that the NEA developed seven domains governing their Teacher Leader Model Standards and revised these standards in both 1999 and in 2010 (NEA, 2011). The seven main domains are as follows:

1. Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning
2. Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning
3. Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement
4. Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning
5. Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement
6. Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community
7. Advocating for student learning and the profession. (p. 9)

The NEA’s domains highlight the need for teachers to be a part of collaborative and supportive learning communities, a primary factor of today’s leading equity programs. The equity programs discussed above (AVID, Puente, GEAR UP, and Summer Bridges EOP) reveal a distinct focus on collaboration between students, teachers, counselors, families, and the professional community.

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) established five standards for effective teaching and learning. CREDE posited the standards are valuable for all cultural and socioeconomic groups (CREDE, 2011). The five standards are as follows:

1. Joint productive activity (p. 1)
2. Language development (p. 1)
3. Contextualization (p. 2)
4. Challenging activities (p. 3)
5. Instructional conversation (CREDE, 2011, p. 4).

CREDE proposed an acute focus on multicultural education and socially just frameworks of teaching identified, and partly created by, Oakes and Lipton (2007).
CREDE, and the focus of Sleeter's (2001) research, each considered the increasingly diverse population of students and thus the necessary change in teaching and educational practices. Additionally, both CREDE and Sleeter (2001) identified a key issue in schools today, that of providing an equitable and multicultural education for all students that in turn closes the achievement gap. There is a clear connection between CREDE’S standards for quality teachers and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010), and the concept of caring (Ayers, 2001, 2004; Gay, 2010; Noddings, 2005), discussed later in this chapter and serving as the theoretical and conceptual foundation for this study.

Ultimately, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO; 2010) revealed the most comprehensive and critical teaching standards out of the foremost educational organizations and specified states. The standards are referred to as the Model Core Training Standards. This professional organization noted four main areas of criteria and lists 10 total standards falling under the broader umbrella of the four primary categories. The four categories are the Learner and Learning, Content Knowledge, Instructional Practice, and Professional Responsibility. This set of standards considers all the standards outlined by the other organizations and states and goes beyond those standards with a progressive and critical lens. The CCSSO specifies 10 core model teaching standards:

1. Learner development

2. Learning differences
3. Learning environments

4. Content knowledge

5. Innovative applications of content

6. Assessment

7. Planning for instruction

8. Instructional strategies

9. Reflection and continuous growth

10. Collaboration (p. 3)

A litany of auxiliary *Essential Knowledge* skills further clarifies each given standard. Yet again, the CCSSO incorporated the standards of not only the reviewed organizations and states, but further articulated and attended to issues surrounding the achievement gap stemming from poverty and cultural diversity. Therefore, throughout this study, the researcher utilized the 10 standards and subsequent essential knowledge skills to define a good, effective, and successful teacher and to develop both the survey and interview questions.

The New York State professional teaching standards generally mimic the aforementioned policy documents but do not acutely and critically consider how community contexts affect teaching quality and effectiveness. The New York State *teaching standards and elements* articulate seven standards as follows: a) knowledge of students and student learning, b) knowledge of content and instructional planning, c)
instructional practices, d) learning environment, e) assessment for student learning, f) professional responsibilities and collaboration, and g) professional growth.

Considering the three states’ (Texas, New York, and Ohio) teaching standards, Ohio’s standards stand out as being the most rigorous, critical, and comprehensive. Not only are the standards thoroughly articulated but within every standard are indicators, and subsequent levels, for meeting the standard. Ohio’s standards for the teaching profession follow:

1. Teachers understand student learning and development and respect the diversity of the students they teach
2. Teachers know and understand the content area for which they have instructional responsibility
3. Teachers understand and use varied assessments to inform instruction
4. Teachers evaluate and ensure student learning
5. Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction that advances the learning of each individual student
6. Teachers create learning environments that promote high levels of learning and achievement for all students
7. Teachers collaborate and communicate with students, parents, other educators, administrators, and the community to support student learning
8. Teachers assume responsibility for professional growth performance and involvement as an individual member of a learning community. (Ohio Department of Education, 2012)

The state of Texas fully adopted the teaching standards set forth by the NBPTS. Of the three states, it is Ohio that has crafted the most progressive standards that truly consider major shifts in the world and in education.

Each of the educational association- and state-based indicators reviewed in this section displays its own criteria defining the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of quality teachers. All the reviewed criteria are useful for gaining a broad understanding about teacher quality and inform, to some degree, the overall design of the methodological instruments used in this study. In Chapter 3, how these criteria, coupled with the leading theoretical research on effectively teaching diverse populations, guided the design of both the survey and interview questions is further discussed.

Studies on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching

The discourse surrounding effective teaching focuses on the utility of culturally responsive teaching and the act of caring underlying such instruction. The following studies make an argument for, and offer strong evidence that, the notion of culture is an important factor in the educational process. Early educational theorists and researchers within this realm asserted at the very least that culture matters. This section demonstrates culture is a fundamental factor of teaching and learning from literacy practices in a student’s home, to a teacher’s cultural assumptions about her students, to how cultural
practices shape how students engage with a given educational setting or curriculum. Furthermore, this group of studies focuses on cultural groups that have been systematically marginalized and underserved by the educational system, precisely the population of students the AVID program serves. Such studies contribute to an overall better understanding of the construct of culture within the field of education and within the learning process. The particular significance of these studies is to identify a shared definition of what culturally relevant pedagogy is and to identify some acutely powerful ideas related to those shared definitions. Many of the following studies utilize qualitative ethnographic methods and while ethnographic work was not feasible for this study (as the researcher did not have the means to create a sample that supported such methodology) these studies are acutely significant as they identify the intellectual foundations of the construct of culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. The teachers described in the following studies shape the practice of culturally relevant teachers and are thus valuable in the construction of both the survey and interview questions for this study.

As previously articulated, successful schools have successful teachers. Oakes and Lipton (1998) described how culturally relevant teachers and pedagogy can transform their classrooms into apprenticeships for democracy where students are able to share their experiences and diverse cultural experiences. Ladson-Billings (2000) defined culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it
teaches to and through the strengths of these students. Billings (1992) and Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2006) explained that culturally responsive teachers focus on the whole child and educating the whole child includes integrating a combination of intellectual, social, emotional, and political knowledge.

Nieto (2000, 2003) noted the demographic context in public education is also changing and our public schools are not equipped to meet the challenges. Despite growing diversity, our schools are seriously segregated and poverty continues to be a serious problem in our nation. Feelings such as love, engaging with intellectual work, the hope of changing students' lives, a belief in the democratic potential of public education, and anger at the conditions of public education are all at the heart of what makes for excellent and caring teachers (Nieto, 2000, 2003). Attitudes and values such as a sense of mission; solidarity with, and empathy for, students; the courage to challenge mainstream knowledge and conventional wisdom; improvisation; and a passion for social justice are teachers’ motivations for entering the profession (Nieto, 2005). Oakes and Lipton (2007), Gay (2010), Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2006), and Nieto (2000, 2005) articulated the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of culturally responsive and thus, successful teachers. These authors broadly define teacher and expertise as well as desired outcomes for a multicultural, democratic society. What is not as well detailed is how teachers develop and deepen these skills and what kinds of school or programmatic contexts best hone these skills and expertise. It is known the AVID program consistently produces results that close the achievement gap. It is also known the structure of the
AVID program continually achieves improved student outcomes. What is yet to be discovered is a typical profile including a set of attitudes, knowledge, and practices held and employed by AVID teachers who ultimately contribute to overall program effectiveness.

Given the significant demographic shifts seen across the United States, research about effective teaching for diverse student populations largely focuses on the practice of culturally relevant teaching strategies. Darling-Hammond, Bradsford, LePage, Hammerness, and Duffy (2005) noted that, “thirty years from now (by 2035) demographers project that students of color will constitute a majority of the student population in the United States,” and thus teachers should be equipped to teach a highly diverse population (Hodgkinson, 2001; U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000) (p. 232).

Today’s teachers:

Need to be aware of – and be prepared to influence – the structural conditions that determine the allocation of educational opportunity within a school: the kinds of courses, curriculum, and teaching that are offered to different students, the kinds of student groupings that are created, the ways in which students are assigned to teachers, and the kind of norms and expectations that govern their treatment and the treatment of their families. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005, p. 233)

Darling Hammond et al. referred to the concept of “The Demographic Imperative,” which articulates that today’s teachers need to be committed to change the disparities in opportunities and impact of such opportunities that are deeply woven into the fabric of American culture. Specified groups such as English Language Learners or students living in poverty are not offered the most skillful teachers at schools; this distribution is distorted and does not represent equitable treatment of all students.
(Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Furthermore, English Language Learners are also a rapidly growing population, thus adding to the growing need to prepare our teachers for a student population with specific linguistic features and language development needs. There is an increase in the range of academic needs of our current and prospective students primarily due to mainstreaming students with unique needs into general education classes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). The homogeneity of the current teaching force, as only 16% of U.S. teachers are people of color, contributes to the challenges surrounding meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse population. Darling-Hammond’s (2005) research is crucial to this study because she not only articulates a snapshot of the current student population but she also highlights the need for further research indicating the characteristics of quality teachers and the subsequent nurturing of such qualities within the realm of teacher preparation, professional development and educational policy.

Much of the research on culturally responsive teaching views teachers as cultural researchers whereby they investigate the intricacies of their students’ individual cultures as a way to link curricula to students’ specific experiences. Gay (as cited in Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) asserted teachers should be prepared to act as cultural brokers between themselves and their students. To this end, Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) posited that overgeneralizing culture and viewing non-status quo groups as culturally deficient and hence, inferior to that of the dominant culture is a view that is ineffective in teaching diverse student populations. Instead, they advocate for a more individualized view of
students that does not assume a shared cultural experience. Underlying this view and approach is that each student has unique life experiences that should be considered in the context of their educational development and learning.

Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) examined individual experience and actions rather than individual traits for the purpose of comprehending the role of culture within an educational context. The authors made clear that culture is not a trait and cannot be thought of in a normative way. Furthermore, Gutierrez and Rogoff contended culture is not inherent within individuals, thus, it cannot be assumed that given cultural groups learn in the same way or have similar experiences. The researchers use cultural-historical theory to deconstruct the assumption that members of the same cultural group share the same cultural learning style. Within the cultural-historical perspective, “we can examine people’s usual ways of doing things, trying to understand individuals’ history of involvement in the practices of varied communities, including ethnic or national communities as well as others such as academic or religious communities” (Rogoff as cited in Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003, pp. 21-22). The researchers made salient the linguistic and cultural-historical repertoires, which consider each individual person and his/her participation in a myriad of cultural communities. Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) highlighted that generating complex student linguistic and cultural-historical repertoires helps teachers understand each individual student. They contended students participate in a myriad of cultural and linguistic communities rather than belonging to one narrow and rote cultural group. Furthermore, they noted a teacher’s ability to research and learn their
student’s individual cultural-historical experiences determines their effectiveness in the classroom. This work is of particular importance to this study as it brings to light the essential practice of teachers’ treatment and consideration of, their students as multi-dimensional human beings that carry with them a vast repertoire of experience.

The notion of teachers functioning as cultural researchers and ethnographers permeates the literature on culturally responsive teaching. Heath (1982) studied how the cultural practice of reading at a child’s bedtime is treated within three markedly different literacy communities in the Southeastern region of the United States. The study demonstrated how literacy activities are either congruent with what is expected in school or discordant. When such activities are discordant, students are typically meant to feel their home practices are inferior and therefore, literacy activities at school become oppressive. These methods of literacy for some children become instinctive by the time they enter school, and for others are seen as activities of oppression. Her ethnographic study investigated the relationship between language use and written materials in three distinct cultural/linguistic communities and compared them with literacy activities in the schools which served all three communities. Heath’s research links theory to practice and is useful for understanding culturally relevant and responsive teaching. Her study brings to light the importance of teachers knowing about their students in various contexts as a means to meet their developmental and learning needs. Heath’s research is important to this study as it illustrates the practice of culturally relevant and responsive
teachers as cultural researchers. This practice is a critical means for understanding their students’ experiences and thus, knowing how best to facilitate learning.

Au’s (1980) study of reading achievement among Hawaiian children illuminates the need to integrate cultural communication events with classroom activities. The study focused on a reading group of 20 Hawaiian students whereby students were blindly selected, videotaped during an ideal reading lesson in the context of Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP). The KEEP school was a program with the goal of improving the educational success of native Hawaiian children. Au’s study made the case that reading achievement increases when schools mimic the culture with which students identify. Au noted minority children come from different discourse communities and thus encounter various school problems. To better understand the problems, the method of inquiry is as follows: the teacher of the participating students was asked to display an ideal reading lesson lasting approximately 20 minutes; the classroom activity was videotaped; and the researcher observed the communicative rules, or speech economies, governing the lesson. The analysis driving this study focused on the various types of communicative turns constructed and maintained by the participants (both students and teachers).

Au concluded the lesson was appropriate for this group of children as it echoed or mimicked a major speech event from the children’s culture (talk story) whereby the same rules that governed the lesson governed the speech event. Children were familiar with this verbal and non-verbal context, making the reading lesson seem natural or inherent
rather than foreign. The method of inquiry was suitable as the researcher was able to critically analyze the rules governing the minority children’s dominant culture within a controlled context. This hybrid context offers insight into the key differences between a conventional classroom and a culturally responsive classroom, one that draws upon students’ prior cultural and communicative norms. While the applications of Au’s work are limited given that it is rare in most educational settings today to find the homogeneous classrooms she researched, her work still underscores the importance of explicitly accounting for effects of culture and cultural norms on the teaching and learning process.

Research on culturally responsive teaching is also necessarily research on school structure. How a school is structured often favors some groups while marginalizing others. Lee et al. (1995) analyzed data on more than 1,100 students enrolled in 820 high schools across the U.S. The data were derived from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) collected during students’ last two years of high school. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) was used as the primary method to analyze students’ engagement and achievement in math, science, history, and reading. Lee et al. found the departure from conventional models of school produced better student achievement whereby students were better served by smaller class sizes where there was a sense of shared responsibility. The researchers concluded that high school restructuring from a bureaucratic structure to an organic or communal (common academic curriculum, authentic instruction, shared sense of responsibility) structure had a positive impact on
student engagement and achievement. Lee et al. (1995) argued, “we contend that there is now strong evidence that schools, especially high schools, should move toward smaller, more organic structures in order to do a better job” (p. 11). The sample size for this study was significant and allowed for a broad view of longitudinal student achievement data within both bureaucratic and organic school contexts. This study is important to research on quality teaching as it has helped lay the groundwork for more individualized, differentiated, and prescriptive education rather than the dominant bureaucratic structure seen across the U.S. today.

Gandara’s (2002) comparative, longitudinal study centered on the impact of the Puente program on approximately 2,000 high school students’ (1,000 Puente students and 1,000 non-Puente students) GPAs, aspirations, attitudes toward school, and preparation for college. The Puente program, much like the AVID program, addresses the achievement gap between underserved Latino students and their status quo counterparts. This study is well triangulated as the researcher surveyed participants, conducted transcript analyses, and conducted ethnographic work to better understand program impact. This study obtained a strong sample of 2,000 students from 18 high schools across California and explored the characteristics of the Puente program that likely drove and supported the findings that there are noteworthy differences between Puente and non-Puente students regarding attitudes toward school, preparation for college, aspirations to attend college, and percentage of four-year college-bound students. Gandara’s study found Puente students reported attending a four-year college at nearly double the rate of
non-Puente students who earned the same grades and test scores. Gandara’s complex study serves as a foundation for this study, which employs a similar methodology of utilizing survey and interview data to ultimately generate a comprehensive case about the typical AVID teacher. While the focus of Gandara’s study was on students and the present study’s focus is on teachers, this is a useful comparison as each study concludes with a general case about one factor (students or teachers) within the complex sphere of education.

Gonzalez, Moll, and Amati’s (2005) research, in *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*, illuminated how teachers are more effective when acting as researchers of student culture. Their study utilized extensive in-home interview data with which teachers served as anthropologists and educational researchers with the goal of better serving an ethnically and socio-economically diverse student population. The term “funds of knowledge” refers to the knowledge that exists and could be seen as a resource rather than a deficit or problem stemming from cultural dysfunction. The authors posited we can learn about students’ knowledge bases by studying their culture and elements of their home and community practices, thus better informing teachers about what students know and how they perceive reality. Furthermore, the authors suggested a different approach to teaching diversity, as teacher preparation programs currently approach issues of culture, and race in a generic, rather than critical, manner. The critical observations and interviews, supported by a Vygotskian theoretical underpinning (knowledge is bound by language and culture),
serve the purpose of creating a space in educational research and program development for this type of ethnographic research. Gonzalez, Moll, and Amati’s (2005) far-reaching study concluded there is an infinite amount of knowledge, and thus resources, to be utilized in minority family homes. Additionally, the study concluded that unfounded assumptions about low-income or the working-poor families cripple our ability to serve this growing population. The authors advocated educators make use of the knowledge base existing in student homes as a means to better hone curricular design and thus, better serve typically underserved students. This study is particularly important for the current research as it articulates the importance of understanding teachers’ attitudes toward their students’ cultural and socio-economic status.

Cochran-Smith’s (1995) study analyzed self-reported data, specifically essays written by mostly White student teachers about their experiences with race, culture, and their personal suppositions about such constructs, as a means to understand how teacher assumptions impact their teaching. Cochran-Smith put forth that exposing students to generic customs or traditions of a given culture is not sufficient for addressing issues of educational equity. She further asserted that to earnestly change a defective system, teachers, and specifically new teachers, need to share the goal of critically changing the educational system, as color blindness does not translate into educational equity. Cochran-Smith recommended:

What we need are generative ways for prospective teachers, experienced teachers, and teacher educators alike to work together in communities of learners – to explore and reconsider their own assumptions, understand the values and practices of families and cultures that are different from their own, and construct
pedagogy that takes these into account in locally appropriate and culturally sensitive ways. (p. 495)

Her study serves as a call to action for new and veteran teachers to get involved in intellectual communities grappling with issues of race, culture, and language diversity in teaching. Cochran-Smith’s study is one of the foundational pieces of research about how teachers conceptualize and experience race, culture, and language and serves as an example of early studies on culturally relevant and responsive teaching. Cochran-Smith’s study is useful as it supports a primary method of data collection for this study, which is based solely on self-reported survey and interview data. Furthermore, Cochran-Smith’s study serves as one of the foundations for teachers’ self-reported accounts of their experiences, a fundamental part of the in-depth interview segment of the current study’s research design. Similar to Gonzalez, Moll, and Amati’s (2005) work, Cochran-Smith’s study brings to light that a teachers’ attitudes about culture and language influence learning and thus should be researched and studied critically.

Barnes (2006) studied how novice teachers experienced the culturally and linguistically diverse students typical of schools across the United States. Barnes selected a total of 23 ethnically diverse participants enrolled in the same teacher preparation program at a private Christian university in the Midwest. All the participants were Juniors and Seniors enrolled in a nationally accredited (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE]) program at the aforementioned private Christian university. The type of data collected was autobiographical poems and cultural artifacts, cultural diversity awareness inventories, book discussion groups, inquiry
projects, and structured field experiences. The data gathered for this inquiry are rich and varied adding to the overall comprehensiveness, validity, and reliability of the findings. The study ended with a “concluding thoughts” section (Barnes, 2006) outlining five primary methods for teacher success within an ethnically and linguistically diverse student population. Barnes articulated that pre-service teachers need to deconstruct their own assumptions and biases, use culturally responsive teaching methods, understand that every student is a part of a complex web of culture influencing students’ educational growth, use a range of pedagogical strategies to encourage academic achievement, look critically at their contributions to a larger educational system, and identify how that role either hinders or helps students achieve. The implications for her research on the current study are that all pre-service teacher preparation programs should prepare teachers to “integrate content in a culturally responsive way by focusing on academic achievement, cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness” (Barnes, 2006, p. 93).

Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching

Ladson-Billings (1994) researched the practices and reflections of eight exemplary teachers of African American students to better understand culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings conducted in-depth (videotaped) observations and interviews and conducted a collaborative and reflective discussion among eight model White teachers of African American students. Each of the eight teachers was nominated by both the community and respective principal as a quality and effective culturally relevant teacher. The context of the study was a small, mainly African American, low-income
elementary school in Northern California. As other studies on culturally relevant pedagogy have revealed, it is an important practice to mimic students’ home cultures so students are comfortable with the language, linguistic norms, and communication genres. Furthermore, her inquiry revealed that culturally relevant pedagogy bridges the gap between students’ orientations with both school and individual cultural experiences. The findings of the Ladson-Billings (1994) study outlined the importance of shared experience between White and African American teachers, the necessity of using dialogue as a means for assessing knowledge, the need to employ the ethic of caring and of personal accountability, the need for culturally relevant teaching and cultural competence, and the significance of culturally relevant pedagogy as a means to increase student achievement. The key contribution of this study, however, is that White teachers made an explicit effort to seek out such a shared experience, a primary factor in what made them exemplary. Her study serves as a primary basis for this study as “research grounded in the practice of exemplary teachers will form a significant part of the knowledge base on which we build teacher preparation” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 483). The current study is driven by the same contention that knowledge about effective and quality teaching is useful knowledge that will ultimately contribute to a just and quality education for underserved students.

responsive to students’ individual cultural identities. She identified five realms of teaching that are vital focal points for teacher preparation programs. They are as follows: develop a culturally diverse knowledge base, design culturally relevant curricula, demonstrate cultural caring and build a learning community, build effective cross-cultural communications, and, deliver culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2001). Overall, Gay provides the basic framework of culturally responsive teaching and serves as the primary conceptual underpinning of today’s highest quality teachers. Her work helps define the attitudes, knowledge sets and practices of teachers who successfully teach diverse and often underserved populations.

Caring

It appears trite stating that the notion of caring is a component of a quality teacher, yet there are specific attitudes and actions associated with the practice of caring that drive effective teaching today. Noddings (2005) noted caring is the foundation for strong pedagogy and is at its core, a relational and interactive practice. She illustrated that the act of caring about students is interactive and exists reciprocally, between people; thus, caring for students is based on action rather than caring about students, solely based on emotion (Noddings, 2005). Creating and maintaining relations of care and trust are not the only factors needed for effective teaching but are the foundation of socially just pedagogy in which the whole student is considered (Noddings, 2005). Caring for students means engaging them in dialogue about their lives and experiences and using that insight to drive curriculum (Noddings, 2005). William Ayers agrees a caring,
interactive, and reciprocal foundational relationship between student and teacher is the root of quality teaching practice. Both Noddings (2003, 2005) and Ayers (2001, 2004) illustrated that teaching is multifaceted and what is needed for one student is not automatically needed for the next; thus, the process of differentiating and getting to know students as complex beings is crucial. Ayers (2001) articulated that caring for a student means to notice him and see him as a complex being with unique needs, abilities, and experiences. Ayers noted the process of caring begins with a fundamental question teachers should pose to themselves, “who is this person before me; what are his interests and areas of wonder; how does she express herself and what is her awareness of herself as a learner; and what effort and potential does she bring?” (p. 29). Knowing students means knowing their culturally unique experiences. Noddings (2003) wrote:

Not only must a teacher acquire and continually extend her store of broad cultural knowledge, she must also be committed to establishing and maintaining relations of care and trust. This is necessary if teachers are to meet responsibility for the development of their students as whole persons. (p. 250)

Ayers articulated that caring about students means believing there is value in all students and drawing out students’ strengths and talents allows a student to be understood as complex, changing, human beings with lives (Ayers, 2001). Ayers also noted current systems of education and curriculum are based on a deficit model instead of one identifying and utilizing student strengths as a jumping-off point. In 2001, he explained, “As I look at it, the deficiencies list tells you almost nothing about me – about my experiences, needs, dreams, fears, skills, or know-how – and as a teacher it provides you with information of only distant, peripheral value” (p. 30). His overall message about
caring is that the process begins with seeing a student as complex and noting their strengths before noting their deficiencies or weaknesses.

Also at the heart of caring for students is the belief that failing is not an option; therefore, teachers have an ethical responsibility to identify ways for students to be successful given their diverse linguistic backgrounds (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002). Furthermore, actively permitting students to fail is unethical at the very least and largely due to a teacher’s cultural and linguistic misunderstandings about student academic abilities (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Gay, 2010). Delpit (2006) noted creating a sense of family and caring for historically underserved students increases academic achievement. However, caring alone is not enough as Noddings (2005) appropriately argued, “I do not mean to suggest that the establishment of caring relations will accomplish everything that must be done in education, but these relations provide the foundation for successful pedagogical activity” (p. 3). Noddings (2005) made clear that teaching is, by nature, a moral endeavor and it is the primary responsibility of teachers and educators to care about their students. As stated, caring is at the very center of socially just practices of teaching and is at its core, interactive. Noddings (2003) summarized the act of caring when she stated:

Finally, we must teach them, and show by our example, that caring in every domain implies competence. When we care, we accept the responsibility to work continuously on our competence so that the recipient of our care-person, animal, object, or idea—is enhanced. There is nothing mushy about caring. It is the strong, resilient backbone of human life. (p. 37)
Gay (2010) adds an action-oriented dimension to notions of caring, arguing this is a fundamental underpinning of culturally responsive teaching. Within her framework on culturally responsive teaching is the notion of culturally responsive caring and how it manifests in today’s culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Gay makes the clear distinction between caring about and caring for students such that caring for students assumes action. Caring “thus encompasses a combination of concern, compassion, commitment, responsibility, and action” (Gay, 2010, p. 48). Gay echoed both Noddings’s and Ayers’s premises that seeing and understanding students as complex human beings is germane to the practice of caring. She wrote:

In other words, teachers who really care for students honor their humanity, hold them in high esteem, expect high performance from them, and use strategies to fulfill their expectations. They also model academic, social, personal, and moral behaviors and values for students to emulate. (p. 48)

The most innovative notion Gay articulated is that teachers who earnestly care for their students have better student outcomes or higher rates of student success than those who ignore the interactive and moral practice of teaching and learning (Gay, 2010). Such caring teachers also foster successful students because, as the aforementioned scholars noted, failure is simply not an option; hence, caring teachers work relentlessly to facilitate successful students (Gay, 2010). Gay (2010) argued, “When combined with pedagogical competence, caring becomes a powerful ideological and praxis pillar of culturally responsive pedagogy for students” (p. 75). This grouping of care theorists serve as a foundation for serving historically underserved students such as AVID
students. It is important to note the interactive and active practice of caring is a critical part of culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings) and culturally responsive (Gay) pedagogy.

AVID Data and Research

AVID students, due to their ethnic and socio-economic characteristics, are typically underrepresented in AP courses at both the high school and at the university level. The profile of the average AVID student is that of a minority, low SES, and first-generation college-bound student; the academic cards are stacked against most AVID students from the time they enter elementary school (AVID Center, n.d.b). Along with the aforementioned demographic profile, AVID students are described as being highly intelligent but unorganized, unfocused, and with poor study habits. Despite their underrepresentation in advanced learning and their socio-economic disadvantages, AVID students continue outperforming their peers on nearly every significant measure of national educational achievement. The next section gives the reader a broad overview of AVID research. There is something to be learned from each facet of the program including specifically the profile of the average AVID teacher.

Figure 10 compares the California State University college-going rate of California AVID students as to overall California students.
As Figure 10 displays, AVID students plan to attend the 23 California State University campuses at over three times the rate of all of California's high school graduates. Figure 11 exhibits the UC college-going rate of AVID students in California as compared to overall students in California.
Figure 11 demonstrates that while fewer than 7.5% of all California graduates attend one of the University of California's nine undergraduate campuses, more than 13% of AVID graduates plan to enroll in the country's best public university system.

Opening access to Advanced Placement courses for all students, regardless of ethnicity or economic background, is essential to leveling the academic playing field. Figure 12 illustrates the percentage and racial/ethnic makeup of AVID students as compared to students nationally, who take Advanced Placement (AP) tests.
As Figure 12 demonstrates, AVID students, who take many AP tests every year, show greater ethnic diversity than AP test-takers do overall. The proportion of Latinos taking AP exams is almost five times higher among AVID students than among overall U.S. students (AVID Center, n.d.b).

AVID has displayed its positive impact on student achievement from its inception. The following information is derived from AVID’s 2010 research summary on their homepage (AVID.org, 2012). Each of the authors, as cited in this summary in different ways, displays AVID as a successful equity program. Mehan, Watt, Guthrie, and Black (as cited in AVID.org, 2012) articulated the AVID elective course causes a significant difference in student performance. Furthermore, Mehan et al.’s (as cited in AVID.org, 2012) research noted there was little correlation between a student’s
socioeconomic status and the ability to remain in the AVID program. The most notable finding within AVID research as it pertains to this study is Mehan and Guthrie’s finding (as cited in AVID.org, 2012) that AVID elective teachers, serving as mediators and academic trainers, make a key difference in the lives and performance of students. Mehan (as cited in AVID.org, 2012) found students need significantly different types of support and scaffolding. The research surrounding this program also supports the notion that professional development is vital for AVID teachers (Mehan et al. as cited in AVID.org, 2012). Research within this arena also demonstrates that principals, a fundamental part of the AVID program, should view teachers as leaders (Watt as cited in AVID.org, 2012). To this end, continual professional development is essential to a successful AVID program (Watt & Guthrie as cited in AVID.org, 2012). Given the well-documented success of AVID students, and consequent success of the overall program, it is important we understand the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID teachers. The major assumption underlying this study is that teachers are a fundamental part of positive student outcomes.

Teachers play a complex and vital role in a student’s educational success. The previous chapter outlined the importance of teachers in the positive learning and development of students. At the heart of equity programs and the criteria set forth by educational associations and states are teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices, fundamental factors for student success. Educators, governments, and public and private organizations spend valuable and considerable resources, including fiscal resources,
trying to define and understand the single factor of *the teacher* within the complex context of student learning and achievement. Teachers, because they see their students on a weekly and often daily basis and interact closely with them within equity programs such as AVID, have incredible impact on student outcomes and achievement. As Chapter 2 articulated, this impact is positive given a thoughtful combination of educational and environmental variables that help support and define quality and socially just teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. This study expands upon such salient research.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

TEACHERS ARE ON THE FRONTLINES working with students every day; teachers know best how to improve student achievement. (Teachers Network Leadership Institute [TNLI], n.d., para. 1)

Introduction

Chapter 3 outlines, and offers the rationale for, using this specific mixed-methods design. This chapter first defines the utility of a mixed-methods approach. The role of the researcher, the setting, the sample, and survey response are described. The next portion of this chapter explains the survey instrument and the nature of the specific survey questions. The subsequent section discusses the qualitative methodology supporting the interview process. This discussion also offers a clear understanding about how the survey and interview questions were constructed, with a specific focus on the criteria driving the survey and interview questions. Following this description of the criteria is a rationale for generating a final typical profile of AVID teachers. The chapter then focuses on the sample of 100 AVID teachers working at a California AVID Certified site. This section also offers a discussion about the specific California, public school setting in which participants work. The process for data collection and analysis are identified at the end of the chapter.

This mixed-methods study identified key characteristics of AVID teachers. This study answered the following research questions:
1. What significant relationships exist between the following 12 variables, related to attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of middle and high school AVID teachers?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative Application of Content
- Assessment
- Planning for Instruction
- Instructional Strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching
- Caring

2. In what ways do middle and high school AVID teachers exemplify the following 12 variables based on teacher attitudes, knowledge sets and practices?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching
- Caring
Research Design and Approach

This study used a mixed-methods design, as this approach best addressed the two research questions. Creswell (2009) explained mixed-method research as using qualitative and quantitative data together. Research question 1 required quantitative analysis; research question 2 required qualitative analysis, and a concurrent triangulation research design was used (Creswell, 2009). The researcher used multiple sources of data and cross-checked the data (Merriam, 2009). The researcher achieved triangulation by utilizing two forms of data, the quantitative data derived from the survey and the qualitative data derived from the interview questions.

The Pearson correlation was used to determine if there was a significant relationship among the variables. The researcher triangulated the qualitative interview data by checking the data first using Creswell’s (2009) qualitative data steps, and then combing the qualitative data specifically looking for the 12 variables identified in the literature. The 12 variables that drove the construction of both the survey and interview questions were derived from an in-depth inquiry about attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of quality teachers.

Data were analyzed concurrently to triangulate for convergence, differences, or a combination of both (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative section of this study offers statistical correlation analysis of the variables identified in the literature as important for effective teaching, especially those related to teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. The qualitative section of this study delves further into an explanation of
AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices based on the variables derived from the literature and findings from initial analyses of the survey data. This study investigated the relationship among the variables derived from the literature on quality teachers. The survey design provides a numeric description of a sample (Creswell, 2009), and for this study, the survey design provides such description about attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID teachers.

Quantitative research begins with general data. This general data is used to display particular standards, notions, and conceptual frameworks in a given body of literature. Creswell (2009) makes clear, “quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables;” these relationships and variables are typically explained as being causal and at the very least, related (p. 4). The 12 quantitative variables used for this study and further discussed later in this chapter are Learner Development, Learning Differences, Content Knowledge, Innovative Application of Content, Assessment, Planning for Instruction, Instructional Strategies, Reflection & Continuous Growth, Collaboration, Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching, and Caring.

Qualitative research works inductively in terms of which specific phenomena are studied and themes in the data emerge and are coded by the researcher. Creswell (2009) described qualitative research as “the process of research [that] involves emerging questions and procedures, [where] data are typically collected in the participants’ setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes” (p. 4). The
purpose of the survey in this study was to collect demographic, attitude, knowledge set, and practice-oriented data ultimately used to create a typical profile of AVID teachers. The survey data guided the selection of up to five respondents who then participated in in-depth interviews, which assisted the final formation of a typical profile of AVID teachers. This mixed-methods design enables the researcher to gather and grapple with survey and interview data to further articulate the intricacies of a typical AVID teacher profile.

The ultimate purpose of this study was to glean a set of attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices, thereby constructing a typical profile of successful AVID teachers. This profile will add to the growing body of research on attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices, and the relationships among variables pertaining to effective teachers. The purpose of this study was also to better explain the factor of teaching within the realm of AVID program effectiveness.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was to collect and analyze the quantitative and qualitative data provided by the sample of AVID teachers further explained in this chapter. The role of the researcher was to look critically at an abundance of data with the goal of understanding the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID teachers. The role of the researcher included analyzing how such factors might align with what leading researchers say about quality teachers of underserved students. The researcher maintained an observer’s perspective by choosing not to teach the AVID elective course
during data collection and analysis periods. As a former AVID teacher, the researcher was granted access to the myAVID.org website and subsequent perspective participant contact data, information typically reserved only for active AVID teachers and administrators. Thus, the role of the researcher in this capacity was as guardian and protector of privileged AVID data. The researcher was allowed this access by Dr. Dennis Johnston, the Director of Research and Evaluation for the AVID program, to complete the data collection process. The researcher did not work professionally with any of the participants of the study. The role of the researcher was to protect the respondents and participants of the study. A detailed description of this process is outlined in the approved Human Subjects application (see Appendix A). The role of the researcher at the time of the study was a High School English Teacher at a Title I, rural school in Northern California.

Setting

Why California?

There are multiple rationales for why California is a suitable platform for this study. California’s schools educate the most complex student population as this population is more diverse than in any other state; its students are largely poor and there is a high number of English learners. It is partly due to such factors that California schools are failing compared to those of most other states in the nation. California serves as a critical and appropriate context for the study of characteristics of quality teachers because if one can effectively teach in California, it is likely one will be able to teach in
any other state or context. Even given California’s perpetually failing schools, its immense cultural diversity, and its funding structure (see Appendix B), AVID programs persist in closing the achievement gap throughout the state. Therefore, it is noteworthy that AVID students in California, the most diverse state in the nation with school funding under national averages, continue outperforming non-AVID students. Furthermore, the researcher chose California as the setting of this study because its schools educate one in every eight children in the United States (LAO, 2011); hence, understanding program effectiveness in California helps the educational community better comprehend facets of successful programs across the nation.

California was a useful context for this study as the researcher is located in Northern California, making it more accessible to travel for the second phase of data collection (face-to-face or in-depth phone interviews). In addition to the fact that California exemplifies a state with highly significant educational challenges and is, therefore, an interesting context for this study, it is also a state housing a high proportion of AVID programs as well as AVID Certified sites. The nature and a clear explanation of what AVID Certified sites are is discussed in the following section. With this in mind, however, the researcher used the myAVID.org website to calculate the percentage of AVID Certified sites as compared to AVID sites without certification in California. Fourteen out of the 43 states have a 70% or higher average ratio of AVID Certified Sites/Total AVID sites. California is included in this list of 14 states, making it a useful setting for this research.
What Does it Mean to Be an AVID Certified Site?

An AVID Certified site has met certain stringent criteria for program implementation (discussed later in this chapter). Therefore, using AVID Certified sites narrowed the range of factors that might be shaping teacher practice. AVID Certification provided some measure of assurance that the school was implementing its AVID program with fidelity. The certification standards were created by the AVID program to measure the quality, stability, and implementation reliability of AVID programs within the United States and across the world (Johnston, Nickel, & Marcus, 2010). To achieve the AVID Certified Site status, sites collected and presented two phases of data to AVID program administrators (Johnston et al., 2010). The Initial Self-Study (ISS) is used to gain a basic idea of the level of implementation of the 11 AVID Essentials (Johnston et al., 2010). The data collected from a given site’s ISS is used to pinpoint objective areas for improvement documented on the Certified Self Study (CSS) (Johnston et al., 2010). A site’s ability to illustrate its mastery of all 11 Essentials established whether the site was considered an AVID Certified Site (Johnston et al., 2010). During this process, the site seeking Certification that met each of the 11 AVID Essentials at Level 2 (Routine Use) became eligible to become AVID Demonstration Sites, which are considered to be at the highest level of merit (Johnston et al., 2010). The two phases of data collection for site certification, the ISS and the CSS, are considered reliable measures of program effectiveness and overall success and thus, explain why it is useful for this study (AVID Center, n.d.a). There are only 64 Demonstration sites in all of California and the
researcher wanted to gain a broader understanding of AVID teacher characteristics. Thus, she chose to focus on Certification Sites, as this allowed for a larger pool of possible participants. Based on the certification process described above, it is reasonable to assume that a site with AVID certification is also a site that best exemplifies implementation of the AVID program. Thus, the researcher chose to focus only on AVID Certified Sites inferring that by doing so, contextual variables related to teacher qualities would be better controlled (AVID Center, n.d.a).

Sample

The process of choosing who participated in the study is significant as AVID is an international program; therefore, the population of all AVID teachers is considerable. There are a total of 1,389 AVID sites in California. Within the 1,389 AVID middle and high schools in California, 967 are designated as AVID Certified sites. Within the top six regions in California with the highest number of AVID Certified sites, there are a total of 825 sites. It can be estimated there is a total of roughly 2,475 AVID teachers working at such sites. To arrive at this estimation, the researcher approximated an average of three teachers working at each site. The researcher used the average of three teachers per site because the total number of Certified sites includes both middle and high school sites. Hence, there could be between two and four AVID teachers at each given site, but there is no way of knowing how many middle versus high schools there are in the total 967 as this number simply indicates middle and high schools together.
Using myAVID.org, the researcher looked at a narrow slice of all AVID teachers to obtain a segmental snapshot of AVID teachers. To gain access to the myAVID.org database, the researcher contacted Dr. Dennis Johnston, the AVID Director of Research and Evaluation, and requested access to the database. The researcher used the myAVID.org website to identify the counties in California with the most AVID Certified middle and high schools as a means to gain the largest prospective sample for survey distribution and subsequent participation in the in-depth interviews. The researcher used the Community tab and the Data Reporting Site sub-tab to access data about the total number of AVID sites in California (1,389). The researcher chose to focus on AVID Certified sites, as previously mentioned and further discussed later in this section. The researcher utilized the Certification Data Entry System feature on the myAVID.org site to view the 2010-11 Certification Reports for the 11 total regions of California AVID Certified sites. The researcher chose the top six regions with the most AVID Certified sites and utilized the Contact Roll feature of the myAVID.org website to communicate with AVID Site Coordinators. The researcher then asked the AVID Site Coordinators to voluntarily distribute the survey link to the AVID teachers at their site.

**Criteria for Participants to Participate in the Study**

The researcher was able to establish selection criteria for the sample but was unable to create a purposeful or random sample. Selecting specific criteria for the sample helped the researcher manage the multiple factors that might have influenced survey volunteers. The researcher used three main criteria to construct the sample: the length of
time a respondent had been teaching the AVID elective course, the certification status of
the site where the respondent worked, and the respondents’ reasons for teaching in the
AVID program. These criteria were important for creating the best sample for the study
conditions. At the onset of the survey distribution, participants had to be working as
AVID teachers and teaching at an AVID Certified site for one year or more. This
allowed the researcher to gather data from somewhat experienced AVID teachers rather
than from novice AVID teachers. The AVID Certified site status also helped control for
teacher experience to some degree, as AVID sites sustaining AVID Certification status
rely on the quality and performance of their teachers in meeting programmatic goals.
The researcher chose to focus only on AVID teachers working at an AVID Certified site,
as certified sites must meet rigorous standards pertaining to program quality and
effectiveness. Choosing to distribute the survey only to teachers working at an AVID
Certified site gave the researcher assurance that the AVID program, for which the
respondents worked, was robust and displayed a high level of overall AVID curriculum
and program adoption. In essence, it was assumed the teachers working at these sites
displayed a commitment to programmatic ideology, culture, and goals. The last key
criterion was that participants had chosen, on some level, to be a part of the AVID
program and were not forced into the position simply to keep their jobs. The researcher
utilized the criterion as a way to deduce some kind of relationship between the AVID
program and the AVID teacher. Out of the total 128 responses, six respondents were
excluded based on this criterion; however, none of the six respondents finished the survey
and, thus were not considered part of the total sample of 100 participants. The sample for this study included a total of 128 AVID teachers who started the survey, and 100 of 128 who completed the survey.

Survey Response

One hundred twenty-eight respondents started the survey and 100 respondents completed the survey. The researcher emailed the AVID Site Coordinator (one coordinator per site) at each of the 825 AVID Certified sites and asked them to distribute the survey to the AVID elective teachers at their sites. It is unknown how many of the site coordinators sent the survey to the AVID elective teachers at each site. It is also unknown how many of the AVID Site Coordinators also served as AVID elective teachers and thus, completed the survey. What is known, however, is that the total number of responses allowed for the possibility of statistical significance for the Pearson Correlation statistical test (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, the number of responses also enabled the researcher to gain a small segmental, yet noteworthy, description of the sample.

Instrumentation and Materials

A survey and interview protocol were used to garner responses to answer the two research questions. To understand the definition and criteria for how the educational community defines a successful and effective teacher, and therefore, what drove the content of the survey and interview questions, the researcher categorized the criteria outlined in policy documents from nine major educational and governmental
organizations that shape education today as noted in the section titled “Indicators of Teacher Quality/Effective Teaching” in Chapter 2. The researcher identified the key domains of teacher effectiveness as characterized by a representative cross section of research and policy documents. Once such domains were identified, the researcher used the domains to create the survey questions and subsequent interview questions. The goal of this process was to understand the extent to which AVID teachers exemplified, agreed with, and upheld the domains.

After identifying the teacher effectiveness criteria, the researcher coded the criteria into domains. The researcher coded 152 total items into five broad domains. The domains are student learning, content knowledge, professional development, data-driven (practice), and collaboration and communication. The student learning domain includes facets of student education including cognitive development and teaching methods that prove to be effective among all (diverse) students. The category of professional development is comprised of elements of professional development including professional learning. The content knowledge category integrates knowledge of the given subject with specific strategies for teaching the content. The data-driven category consists of ways in which the teacher should use both student data and educational research to assess student performance and inform practice. The collaboration and communication category outlines the nature of interaction between teachers, their school community, and their students. The five domains are seen at different rates within this body of literature. Student learning (SL) and content knowledge (CK) are noted 13
times, respectively. The professional development (PD), data-driven (DD), and collaboration and communication (CC) domains are noted roughly six times each. PD and DD are listed 50% fewer times than SL and CK. This set of data reveals the immense value our educational and policy community places on SL and CK.

The objective of this definitional and criteria-based inquiry was to survey a broad, rich set of regularly recognized standards to find commonalities, inconsistencies, and trends with regard to critical professional teaching standards. The researcher found the most rigorous, common, and progressive set of standards, as they were used to shape the type and content of both interview and survey questions. To narrow and define what it means to be a good and effective teacher, the researcher first selected major educational and governmental organizations, and then located the criteria they used to define effective teaching practices. The researcher chose to review the particular professional organizations and state-based policy documents in Chapter 2 because such bodies are active in policymaking about quality teacher development and largely define the indicators of quality teachers. These groups, in particular, have sometimes worked against each other while shaping the national policy dialogue on what it means to be a successful teacher. Additionally, the researcher investigated the treatment and articulation of professional teaching standards in four major states, as often, state teaching standards are generated, upheld, and function to propel effective teaching. The researcher chose the states of New York, Ohio, and Texas because they are at the forefront of the national debate surrounding education reform. California was also
included as it serves as a critical and appropriate backdrop for this study given the high rate of poverty among California children and its culturally diverse student population, the very same population the AVID program serves.

*Survey Question Construction*

A vital purpose of the survey instrument was it allowed for a broad and basic understanding of a group of volunteer respondents about their educational opinions (Creswell, 2009). This specific group consisted of AVID teachers working at an AVID Certified site in California. The goal of the survey was to acquire a broad idea about AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices regarding the teaching of underserved students. Attitudes and knowledge sets drive practice; having identified the particular aspects of AVID teachers further informs a comprehensive profile of the group of respondents. An auxiliary aim of the survey instrument was to better understand AVID program effectiveness, therefore illustrating how to serve perpetually underserved populations (precisely those students the AVID program targets). The survey enabled the researcher to observe attitudinal and behavioral trends and correlations among AVID teachers. The survey was the preferred type of instrument, as this study offers comprehensive data about why AVID teachers contribute to a program that successfully closes the achievement gap. Creswell (2009) illustrates that surveys are often used in social science research to inquire about the relationship among variables.

The researcher developed this study’s survey, which begins with questions about respondents’ demographic characteristics (degrees and credentials held, years of
experience, types of experience, current and past assignments, among others) (see Appendix C). The researcher constructed the survey questions by utilizing the complete distillation of teacher quality indicators set forth by both the leading educational researchers on teacher quality and the policy documents generated by lead organizations of teacher quality. Therefore, the first step in the process of constructing the survey was to comb a large body of research literature and policy documents that would ultimately come to define the 12 variables comprised of quality teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. Some variables were easier to capture in terms of the response construct while it was more difficult to capture other variables via the response possibilities; thus, such variables required more questions or statements. The researcher constructed at least two questions/statements per variable. Table 1 indicates how many questions/statements were offered for each variable.

Table 1

Statement Count for Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of Questions/Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of Questions/Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Continuous Growth</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Teaching</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey included a total of 78 questions, one of which asked the respondents to voluntarily consent to taking the survey and one asking participants if they would like to be contacted for the subsequent interview. The total number of survey items and the types of response constructs allowed the researcher to accurately capture each of the 12 variables and inform the Pearson product-moment correlation test addressing research question #1.

The researcher carefully constructed each question or statement, and each item on the survey was reviewed several times by both the researcher and her committee chair to ensure the given item captured what the researcher wanted to know. Three main types of questions/statements are represented in the survey. The survey items were comprised of
74% Likert-type scale questions and 9% open-ended questions. Nineteen percent of the questions were questions/statements with which the researcher generated possible responses based on the distillation of literature about indicators of quality teachers. The total number of 78 questions offered the researcher a wide range of data used to inform the final profile about AVID teachers attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices.

**Interview Question and Protocol Construction**

The interview questions added to the broad-spectrum view of the respondents, to gain a deeper and richer understanding (Merriam, 2009) about the variables driving AVID teachers. The interview questions are listed in Appendix D. The interview questions were constructed based on the same distillation of research and policy documents about quality teaching. The researcher constructed a total of 19 open-ended interview questions to capture how respondents displayed the 12 pre-selected variables based on attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of quality teachers. The goal of the research questions was to obtain self-reported experiential data whereby respondents were able to articulate, in their own words, how they demonstrated the 12 pre-selected variables. The researcher constructed a preliminary draft of the interview questions after reviewing the survey data. The researcher scrutinized this set of interview questions so it filled in any informational gaps generated by the survey. The researcher constructed the final draft of interview questions, which were reviewed by her dissertation committee chair with the goal of ensuring respondents were able to describe their attitudes,
knowledge sets, and practices based on the 12 pre-selected variables about teacher quality.

Data Collection

Quantitative

The researcher gathered the quantitative data by sending an email link to roughly 300 possible participants. As mentioned in the section of this chapter describing the sample, the researcher chose the top six regions with the most AVID Certified sites and utilized the Contact Roll feature of the myAVID.org website to communicate with AVID Site Coordinators. The researcher then asked approximately 100 AVID Site Coordinators to voluntarily distribute the survey link to the AVID teachers at their site, or access the link personally as some of the site coordinators were also AVID teachers. To access the online survey (see Appendix C), participants were required to read and voluntarily consent to the terms outlined by the researcher before they began the survey. The researcher used the Survey Monkey Gold package, which created a link to the online survey, and this link was emailed to prospective participants. The researcher received survey data back by accessing her password-protected and encrypted Survey Monkey account where all data were stored. The specific details of this collection process are articulated, and were approved, by the California State University, Sacramento Human Subjects Review Board, as well as by the researcher’s doctoral committee. Quantitative data were taken from survey answers to the Likert-type scale regarding what the literature says about quality and effective teaching. The quantitative data were used to address
research question 1: What significant relationships exist between the following 12 variables, related to attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of middle and high school AVID teachers?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative Application of Content
- Assessment
- Planning for Instruction
- Instructional Strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching
- Caring

The researcher rated each of the 100 participants who completed the survey on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 was the highest rating and 1 was the lowest) in terms of their positive responses to display each of the 12 variables. The researcher then identified the survey respondents with the highest ratings for all 12 variables. The survey consists mostly of statements about attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices that the research and policy literature uses to define quality teachers. Therefore, high ratings on any particular survey item indicate a positive self-report about any given variable about quality teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. Thus, ranking the survey respondents provides some indication of the extent to which the group of respondents corresponds with what the literature says quality teachers who are also necessarily, culturally responsive teachers
should be doing. It is significant that 83% of the total 100 survey respondents responded with ratings of 4s and 5s in either 11 or all 12 of the categories.

Qualitative

The qualitative data for this study were collected from the in-depth interviews noted in the instrumentation section. The researcher was restricted by the number of respondents who agreed to participate in the interview. Of the total number of respondents, eight agreed to be contacted and interviewed. The researcher contacted all eight respondents and five respondents out of the total eight voluntarily agreed to participate in the interviews; thus, the researcher conducted five in-depth 45-90 minute interviews. The qualitative data addressed research question 2.

The researcher found it noteworthy that two of the five interview respondents displayed the highest rating, as explained in the previous section, illustrating 5s in all 12 variable categories. The researcher also noted that two of the five interview respondents demonstrated 5s in 10 out of the 12 variable categories and one interview respondent demonstrated 4s or 5s in 11 of the 12 variable categories. One of the interviews took place at the Sacramento County Office of Education in a private conference room and the remaining four interviews took place over the phone; each interview lasted from between 45 and 90 minutes. The 45-90-minute time format allowed for flexibility in the speed at which participants understood the interview questions and served as a method to accommodate differences in communication styles among respondents. The 45-90-minute time frame permitted the researcher to clarify questions and summarize responses
for understanding if needed. Each of the interview participants reported his/her attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices aligned with what leading researchers on teacher quality noted as being essential and important.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

The researcher entered the quantitative data from the survey into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A total number of 12 variables from research question 1 were analyzed and a Pearson correlation was conducted as the primary analysis between the 12 variables. The 12 variables focused on teacher quality, and specifically on teacher quality among underserved and diverse populations. “A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) assesses the degree that quantitative variables are linearly related in a sample… The significant test for r evaluates whether there is a linear relationship between two variables in the population” (Green & Salkind, 2011, p. 256).

Qualitative

The researcher followed Creswell’s (2009) steps for qualitative data analysis. The researcher chose this method of analysis as the process starts with the rawest particular data and ends with the researcher’s interpretation based on a deep coding process. Creswell’s steps are as follows: raw data, organizing and preparing data for analysis, reading through all data, hand coding the data, identifying themes and descriptions, interrelating the themes and descriptions, and finally interpreting the meaning of the
themes and descriptions. Adhering to Creswell’s steps for analysis, the researcher organized the qualitative interview data (the interview transcripts) in a separate Word document, merging all interview responses together.

The researcher read and combed through the data and made hand-written notes in the margins, looking for segments of data that related to research question 2: In what ways do middle and high school AVID teachers exemplify the following 12 variables based on teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching
- Caring

The researcher then began the selective coding process organizing the qualitative data into conceptual clusters and generating codes. The researcher critically analyzed the codes by delving deeply, re-organizing and re-establishing the codes several times to ensure the codes were valid and reliable as Creswell (2009) defined them. The researcher then observed themes or descriptions that clearly emerged from the coding process. The researcher searched through data and identified how the themes were represented by the specific interview responses, answering the question, how are the themes actually
represented in the interviews, what do they look like? Adhering to Creswell’s final step, the researcher interpreted and made meaning of the qualitative data. For the purpose of this study, Creswell’s final step was also carried out by the construction of the final profile in Chapter 5 about common attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID teachers. The following section offers a brief discussion of the foundation for the criteria used to construct the final profile.

The Teachers Network Leadership Institute (2012) articulated standards for a good case profile including richly communicating the issue, the characters, the situational context, the decision/action forcing moment, and the discussion questions. The researcher distinguished the factors of a good case and let those guidelines drive the construction of the final profile. The profile for this study uses “the characters” piece of “case” criterion about how to conduct action research outlined by the Teachers Network Leadership Institute (2012). The researcher did not use the full criteria set forth by the Teachers Network Leadership Institute and thus did not write a full “case,” as the researcher did not have sufficient data to accomplish this. The researcher used “the characters” “case” criterion as a general guide to construct the final profile in Chapter 5.

The components the Teachers Network Leadership Institute “case” identified are as follows: #1 The Issue, #2 The Characters, #3 The Situational Context, #4 The Decision/Action-forcing Moment, and #5 Discussion Questions (TNLI, 2012).

What follows is a brief discussion of the case criterion through which the researcher focused on the characters piece as a general guide for the profile. The
situational context should clearly illuminate the central issue of the given context. The broad context of this study is situated in the California public school system, and more specifically, within AVID Certified sites. The particular issue central to this context is the persistent achievement gap between status quo White and Asian students and their Black, Latino, and low socio-economic status counterparts. Furthermore, the central issue propelling this study is how best to meet the needs of underserved students who historically contribute to the unwavering gap in achievement among America’s diverse K-12 student population. The characters in a strong case are complex and have specific motivating factors affecting their actions. The primary characters for this inquiry are AVID teachers working at a California, AVID Certified site and particularly those who report to mirror the qualities outlined in the survey.

The decision/action-forcing moment component of a strong case brings to the forefront the major decisions and consequences acted out by the characters. The goal of a strong case is to understand how the central issue affects character decision-making processes. The decision/action-forcing moment for this study are the decisions of AVID teachers driving their ability to successfully meet the needs of their diverse AVID student population. AVID teachers make countless choices within their teaching; these decisions and actions contribute to a clear case about why AVID teachers act the way they do. The final element adding to a strong case is the set of discussion questions posed in an open-ended fashion that “take the particulars of the [your] case and generalize them to the larger issues addressed” (TNLI, 2012, p. 6). Using this specific research design and
approach, the researcher was able to gain a broad view of AVID teachers via the survey as well as gain a deeper, critical, and more descriptive insight, via interviews, about who AVID teachers were and what drives their practices in the classroom.

Issues of Validity and Reliability

*Quantitative*

The researcher values and took measures to ensure quantitative validity and reliability. Quantitative research works deductively so data are originally general and ultimately test a particular theory. Creswell (2009) made clear “quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables;” these relationships and variables are typically explained as being causal and at the very least, related (p. 4). The researcher generated the survey instrument used to collect quantitative data for this study. The survey was carefully constructed using Albert Bandura’s Self Efficacy survey as a jumping-off point. The researcher based the questions for the survey on what lead researchers and professional organizations say about teacher quality. The survey instrument was reliable as it was based on peer-reviewed literature and leading educational professional organizations. Conversely, the survey instrument had not yet been used, and thus it was not possible to determine quantitative reliability. The researcher also added validity to the survey by conducting a small pilot survey whereby five AVID elective teachers, who met the researcher’s criteria for participation, voluntarily completed the online survey. Based on their responses the researcher reconstructed survey questions that were noted as being confusing for the
respondents so as to better capture the attitudes, knowledge sets and practices of AVID teachers as indicated by the 12 pre-selected variables.

Qualitative

The researcher values and took measures to ensure qualitatively valid and reliable research. Creswell (2009) described qualitative research as “the process of research [that] involves emerging questions and procedures, [where] data typically collected in the participants’ setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes” (p. 4). It is important educational researchers attempt to ensure internal validity (how accurate the findings are) by posing the pertinent question, “do the findings capture what is really there” (Merriam, 2009, p. 213)? External validity is equally important and asks the question, “can findings inform other phenomena with similar contextual situational variables” (Merriam, 2009, p. 226)? Merriam straightforwardly stated, “to a large extent, the validity and reliability of a study depend upon the ethics of the investigator” (p. 228). Merriam called attention to the simple fact that the individual researcher is ultimately the primary indicator of ethical research as “although policies, guidelines, and codes of ethics have been developed by the federal government, institutions and professional associations, actual ethical practice comes down to the researcher’s own value and ethics” (p. 230).

Conversations about validity are typically followed by discussions of reliability, which asks, do the data support the results (Merriam, 2009)? Merriam explained, “the question then is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are
consistent with the data collected” (p. 221). While there is no perfect research design, the researcher worked tirelessly to get closer and closer to answering the two research questions. The researcher utilized safeguards such as triangulation speaking directly to the noteworthy issue of internal validity. Merriam defined triangulation as, “using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at different times or in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people” (Merriam, 2009, p. 216). The researcher also maintained these standards by choosing not to teach the AVID elective course throughout the course of data collection and analysis. The researcher chose to utilize a hired assistant to transcribe the qualitative interview data as a way to maintain a critical focus on extracting the themes and codes of the data.

Measures Taken to Protect Participants’ Rights

The researcher took great care in protecting the participants’ rights. The research purpose, procedures, methodological design, survey instrument, and interview questions were approved by the dissertation chair, and the California State University, Sacramento Human Subjects Committee before any data were collected. The researcher did not have access to any contact information without voluntary consent or to information that might jeopardize a participant’s employment status. All participants voluntarily consented to take the survey by agreeing to the terms on the first page of the survey. The survey would not have let them continue if they withheld consent. Participants voluntarily consented to participate in the interviews verbally when asked by the researcher. All data
for this study will be destroyed six months after the submission of this study to the university.
Chapter 4

CONVERGENCE OF QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

This chapter includes the data results of this study’s quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data. The quantitative survey data address Research Question # 1 and the qualitative interview data address Research Question # 2. The first section of this chapter illustrates demographic data derived from the quantitative survey data. The second section states Research Question # 1, explains the Pearson Correlation statistical analysis, identifies the variables used in the analysis and the corresponding survey questions and statements, and exhibits the significant correlations between the 12 variables, as there were no significant, negative correlations. The third section exhibits demographic data derived from the qualitative interview data, states Research Question # 2, and displays the qualitative data in two primary ways. The first method establishes how each of the 12 variables in the study is represented in the interview data. The second explains the themes that emerged during the qualitative coding analysis process (Creswell, 2009) and offers examples of how the given theme is represented in the data. The final section of this chapter reviews the summary of both the quantitative and qualitative data and introduces the connections among the data further examined in Chapter 5.

Report of Quantitative Demographic Data

The California AVID teacher demographic data largely mirror that of overall California teacher demographic data. This is noteworthy, as the findings and
recommendations borne out of this study can also be considered useful in the broader context of California. Figure 13 shows the breakdown of the study participants’ genders.

![Figure 13. Gender of participants.](image)

The majority of teachers who participated in this study were female. Similarly, the most recent categorization of California teachers’ genders notes that California employs more than 310,361 total teachers, 72% of who are female and 28% of whom are male. The ratio of female to male in the study is nearly that of the whole of California teachers (EdSource, 2009).

Figure 14 illustrates the age range of AVID teachers who participated in the study.
Figure 14. Age of participants.

Over half the participants are between the ages of 36 and 50 and are assumed to have had more teaching experience than those in the 20-35 age range, the second highest age range of the sample. In California, 55.7% of teachers are under the age of 46, which roughly mirrors the age range of the teachers in this study, as 52% of teachers are between the ages of 36 and 50, and 28.9% of participants are between 20 and 35. It is unknown, however, how many participants within the 52.1% in the current study are under the age of 46, which is one of the primary age range indicators used by California. Approximately 25% of California teachers are between the ages of 46 and 55. The percentage of teachers over the age of 55 in California and teachers who participated in this study are almost exactly the same, as 18.9% of teachers in California falling within this category and 19% of participants indicating such age range (CDE, 2012b). Figure 15 displays the subjects in addition to the AVID elective course participants taught.
Figure 15. Subjects in addition to AVID that participants taught.

Figure 15 indicates the majority of AVID teachers also taught English. This demographic data could imply that AVID teachers who teach at a Certified site, in large part, teach English as this content knowledge perhaps helps them teach the AVID curriculum due to the significant focus on critical reading and critical writing strategies. Figure 16 demonstrates participants’ total years taught.

Figure 16. Total years taught.
The data in Figure 1 are significant as they suggest AVID teachers are attracted to and recruited to teach the AVID program throughout their teaching careers. While roughly 35% of participants have taught for a total of 6-10 years, almost 40% of participants taught from 16-21 years or longer. Figure 17 displays how long the participants had taught the AVID elective course.

![Pie chart showing teaching duration]({% # Figure 17. Years teaching AVID.}

This demographic data suggest that over 80% of the sample taught AVID from between 1 and 10 total years. Figure 17 demonstrates that after 10 years of teaching AVID, there is a significant decrease in the number of participants who taught AVID. This data shows the decrease of the ratio of teachers who taught AVID after the 10th year, as 12% of teachers taught AVID for 11-15 years and only 0.08% of teachers taught AVID for 21 years or longer. The researcher posits this could be due to a high ratio of time AVID teachers dedicate to their AVID class as compared to the other core classes they teach. Simply put, AVID students need more, or are perceived to need more, than
non-AVID students; thus, AVID teachers spend a large proportion of their total teaching time meeting the needs of their AVID students. As teachers mature in their careers, perhaps their ability to dedicate the necessary energy needed to be an AVID teacher impedes them from choosing to teach the course.

Figure 18 exhibits the ethnicity of AVID students taught by the participants of the study.

![Figure 18. Ethnicity of AVID students.](image)

The participants of this study indicated the majority of students they served were Latino. The second largest percentage, 12.3%, were White. In California, the racial/ethnic makeup of students is as follows: 51.43% Hispanic or Latino, 26.63% White, 8.52% Asian, 6.69% African American, 2.56% Filipino, 1.81% two more races, 0.7% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.58% Pacific Islander, and 1.08% none reported. The noteworthy comparisons between the student racial/ethnic demographic are that the largest percentage of students in both the study and in California is Latino (CDE, 2012c).
Figure 19 indicates the top 10 counties in California from where participants came.

![Bar chart showing percentage of participants from each county.]

*Figure 19. Top 10 counties from where survey participants came.*

This demographic data echoes California demographic data concerning the largest and smallest public school districts whereby the largest districts in that for the most part, the counties with the largest districts, serving the most students, are also those with the highest number of AVID Certified sites. The counties from where participants taught reflect the demographic data across California in that Riverside, San Diego, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Orange, San Bernardino, and Kern counties are all listed as the largest districts in California (CDE, 2012a).
Summary of Quantitative Data Addressing Research Question One

The quantitative data analyzed for this study address #1: What significant relationships exist among the following 12 variables, related to attitudes, knowledge sets and practices of middle and high school AVID teachers?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Caring

A Pearson correlation was conducted to discover significant relationships between 12 independent variables and address research question #1. The 12 variables emerged from the literature about effective and quality teaching of today’s most underserved students who continue perpetuating the achievement gap. The 12 independent drive the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of today’s quality teachers. The survey questions related specifically to these identifiers as they are factors highlighted in the literature as having a positive impact on the educational achievement of marginalized students, the types of students served by the AVID program. Table 2 displays the independent variables, the driving factors, in successfully serving our most underserved students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Question/Statement # 1</th>
<th>Question/Statement #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learner Development</td>
<td>I implement activities to learn about my students as people</td>
<td>I implement activities so my students link new knowledge to prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning Differences</td>
<td>I design my classroom activities so that each student is academically challenged</td>
<td>I regularly review the AVID curriculum and modify it to better meet the changing needs of my students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learning Environments</td>
<td>My students and I develop expectations together for respectful, open, and supportive academic dialogue</td>
<td>I gather information from my students about their experience in the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Content Knowledge</td>
<td>I am confident I can explain the concepts that are fundamental to the AVID curriculum</td>
<td>I am well-versed in current education policy and research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Innovative Applications of Content</td>
<td>I engage my students in evaluating new and innovative solutions to global problems</td>
<td>In my class students think critically about a variety of ways to view an issue or concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Assessment</td>
<td>Students know how they are doing in my class because (please select all that apply)</td>
<td>My assessments are designed so that students can apply concepts to real-world issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>Even if I spend a long time planning a lesson, I have no problem changing it to better serve my students’ needs</td>
<td>I know my student’s exceptional learning needs (both disabilities and giftedness) and use strategies to meet these needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>My students consistently work together in my classroom</td>
<td>All my classroom activities build students’ capacity to respectfully interact face-to-face with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reflection &amp; Continuous Growth</td>
<td>I am reflective about my own thinking and practice because I… (please select all that apply)</td>
<td>I want to get better at my teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Question/Statement # 1</th>
<th>Question/Statement #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Collaboration</td>
<td>I get some of my best ideas from my colleagues</td>
<td>I make the effort to seek input from (… % of my students’ parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching</td>
<td>I can’t plan effective classroom activities if I don’t incorporate my students’ unique experiences, talents, culture, language, family, and community values</td>
<td>In my classroom we discuss events happening in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Caring</td>
<td>I feel responsible for helping students develop into ethical and moral people</td>
<td>Motivating my students is part of my job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 3-12 illustrate significant correlations between the 12 independent variables and display significant correlations among the variables. The symbol $r$ is the Pearson correlation coefficient ranging from -1 to +1. It is calculated using the degrees of freedom, which in this case is 98. The symbol $p$ is the probability of an observed result happening by chance under the null hypothesis. Sig of $p < .01$ states there is a 99% Confidence Interval (CI), meaning the researcher is 99% certain the correlation is not due to chance. Sig of $p < .05$ states there is a 95% Confidence Interval (CI), meaning the researcher is 95% certain the correlation is not due to chance. Effect size (Cohen) describes the strength of the correlation: 0.1 = low, 0.3 = medium, and 0.5 = high. An effect size of 0.7 or higher is considered collinear and is not included as significant in this study. Collinearity occurs when two variables are so closely related – highly correlated – that they should be combined into one variable. A positive correlation indicates that as
one variable increases, the other variable increases as well. A negative correlation shows that as one variable increases, the other variable decreases.

The correlation between the variables Learner Development and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching, $r(98) = 0.43$, $p = .01$, and the correlation between the variables Learner Development and Innovative Application of Content are significant, $r(98) = 0.47$, $p = .01$. The correlation between the variables Learner Development and Learning Differences is significant, $r(98) = 0.35$, $p = .01$, as is the correlation between the variables Learner Development and Learning Environment, $r(98) = 0.36$, $p = .01$. The correlation between the variables Learner Development and Planning for Instruction, $r(98) = 0.29$, $p < .01$, and the correlation between the variables Learner Development and Collaboration are significant, $r(98) = 0.24$, $p < .05$ (see Table 3).

Table 3

**Significant Correlations for Learner Development Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>$sig$</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium/High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium/High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>$p &lt; .01$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The correlation between the variables Learning Differences and Planning for Instruction is significant, $r(98) = 0.35, p = .01$. The correlation between the variables Learning Differences and Learner Development is also significant, $r(98) = 0.35, p = .01$. The correlation between the variables Learning Differences and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching, $r(98) = 0.24, p < .05$, and the correlation between Learning Differences and Innovative Application of Content are significant, $r(98) = 0.21, p < .05$. The correlation between Learning Differences and Instructional Strategies is significant, $r(98) = 0.21, p < .05$, as is the correlation between the variables Learning Differences and Culturally Relative Teaching, $r(98) = 0.24, p < .05$ (see Table 4).

Table 4

**Significant Correlations for Learning Differences Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between the variables Learning Environments and Learner Development, $r(98) = 0.36, p = .01$, and the correlation between the variables Learning Environments and Innovative Application of Content are significant, $r(98) = 0.36$,.
p = .01. The correlation between the variables Learning Environments and Planning for Instruction is also significant, r(98) = 0.24, p < .05, as is the correlation between Learning Environments and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching, r(98) = 0.27, p < .01 (see Table 5).

Table 5

**Significant Correlations for Learning Environments Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>p = .01</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>p = .01</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between the variables Content Knowledge and Reflection and Continuous Growth is significant r(98) = 0.27, p < .01. The correlation between the variables Content Knowledge and Caring is significant, r(98) = 0.25, p = .01 (see Table 6).

Table 6

**Significant Correlations for Content Knowledge Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Continuous Growth</td>
<td>.277</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>p = .01</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As illustrated in Table 7, the correlation between the variables Innovative Application of Content and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching, \( r(98) = 0.42, p = .01 \), and the Correlation between the variables Innovative Application of Content and Learner Development are significant, \( r(98) = 0.47, p = .01 \). The correlation between the variables Innovative Application of Content and Learning Environment is significant, \( r(98) = 0.36, p = .01 \), as is the correlation between the variables Innovative Application of Content and Learning Differences, \( r(98) = 0.21, p < .05 \). The correlation between the variables Innovative Application of Content and Planning for Instruction is also significant, \( r(98) = 0.20, p < .05 \).

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( r )</th>
<th>( \text{sig} )</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>( p = .01 )</td>
<td>Medium/High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>( p = .01 )</td>
<td>Medium/High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>( p = .01 )</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>( p &lt; .05 )</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>( p &lt; .05 )</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between the variables Planning for Instruction and Learning Differences is significant, \( r(98) = 0.354, p = .01 \). The correlation between the variables Planning for Instruction and Learner Development, \( r(98) = 0.29, p < .01 \), and the correlation between Planning for Instruction and Learning Environment are significant,
r(98) = 0.24, p < .05. The correlation between the variables Planning for Instruction and Innovative Application of Content is significant, r(98) = 0.20, p < .05, along with the correlation between the variables Planning for Instruction and Collaboration, r(98) = 0.26, p < .01 (see Table 8).

Table 8

**Significant Correlations for Planning for Instruction Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td>p = .01</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significance of the correlation between the variables Instructional Strategies and Learning Differences, r(98) = 0.21, p < .05, can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9

**Significant Correlations for Instructional Strategies Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between the variables Reflection and Continuous Growth and Content Knowledge is significant, r(98) = 0.27, p < .01 as shown in Table 10.
Table 10

*Significant Correlations for Reflection and Continuous Growth Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>.277</td>
<td>$p &lt; .01$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between the variables Collaboration and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching is significant, $r(98) = 0.24$, $p < .05$. The correlation between the variables Collaboration and Learner Development, $r(98) = 0.24$, $p < .05$, and the correlation between the variables Collaboration and Planning for Instruction are significant, $r(98) = 0.26$, $p < .01$ (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Significant Correlations for Collaboration Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Teaching</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>$p &lt; .01$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between the variables Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching and Innovative Application of Content is significant, $r(98) = 0.42$, $p = .01$. The correlation between the variables Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learner Development, $r(98) = 0.43$, $p = .01$ and between the variables Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching
and Learning Differences are significant, $r(98) = 0.24$, $p < .05$. The correlation between the variables Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Environment is significant, $r(98) = 0.27$, $p < .01$, as is the correlation between the variables Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching and Innovative Application of Content, $r(98) = 0.42$, $p = .01$. The correlation between the variables Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching and Collaboration, $r(98) = 0.24$, $p < .05$, and the correlation between the variables Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching and Caring are significant, $r(98) = 0.203$, $p < .05$ (see Table 12).

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium/High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>$p = .01$</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>$p &lt; .01$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significant correlation between the variables Caring and Culturally Relevant Teaching, $r(98) = 0.20$, $p < .05$ is shown in Table 13.
Table 13

Significant Correlations for Caring Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>P &lt; .01</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Teaching</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Qualitative Data Addressing Research Question Two

Report of Qualitative Demographic Data

The researcher conducted five in-depth interviews that lasted 45-90 minutes. There were two male participants and three female participants. Two of the interview participants were between 51 and 65 years in age, two were 36-50 years in age and one was 20-35 years in age. In addition to teaching the AVID elective course, four participants taught English and one participant taught Physical Education/Health Science. Two of the participants had been teaching for 21 years or longer, one had been teaching for 16-20 years, one for 11-15 years, and one for 6-10 years. Four of the participants taught in schools in Southern California, two taught in Riverside County, one taught in San Diego County, and one taught in Ventura County. One participant taught in Northern California in El Dorado County. Four participants taught at high schools and one participant taught at a middle school.

From each of the five interviews, the researcher chose to display one illustration exemplifying the theme, as the themes were products of the coding process and thus, warranted a variety of examples. The researcher chose one example from the total five
interviews that best represent each of the 12 variables, as the variables were pre-selected and emerged from an in-depth inquiry of the literature about teacher quality. Hence, they do not warrant extensive examples. The qualitative data from the interviews address research question # 2:

In what ways do middle and high school AVID teachers exemplify the following 12 variables based on teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Caring

*Presence of Independent Variables in Qualitative Data*

Each of the five interview respondents displayed all 12 of the independent variables used in this study. The respondents communicated each of the 12 respective variables in slightly different manners. However, the definition-oriented and thematic link is present among all five interview participants regarding each of the 12 variables used in this study. There are several AVID teacher traits and some direct interview excerpts that could easily be related to more than one independent variable. The researcher selected one example from the total five interviews that best captured each of the 12 variables.
Learner Development

This variable is illustrated in a variety of different ways within the qualitative data. Participants stated they treated each student differently as students have fundamentally different cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical needs. The respondents communicated that part of being an AVID teacher meant recognizing these needs and fostering them in the best way they knew how, taking care to never give up on any student, however successful or frustrating that developmental process might be. Respondents reported that learner development began with student trust; that teachers know what information is going to most help students and they share that information, keeping the student’s individual best interests in mind. The respondents noted that if students did not trust them as facilitators of credible and useful knowledge, student development is not likely to occur. Respondents reported the utility of identifying each student’s learning strengths and needs as the foundation of student development.

Respondents illustrated that students develop academically and personally at different rates and that it is important for the AVID teacher to recognize this and implement learning strategies that do not discredit the ranging rates at which students solve problems and develop educationally and emotionally. Respondents communicated their ability to listen and be perceptive about what students needed to develop and used strategies such as individual meetings and listening to students to foster the developmental needs of their AVID students. Respondents illustrated they could identify with their students. They also communicated they could understand that every student has
unique experiences. The qualitative data illustrated the teachers gave up traditional control so students were able to be independent; AVID teachers communicated that this approach is salient to student development. Respondents illustrated they tried to teach students to know their personal needs and thus how best to take care of themselves.

Respondents identified that empowerment is derived by a student’s ability to solve problems in their lives and take responsibility for their actions.

They mature emotionally. They move from rule followers to people who are truly in charge of their education. They agonize over what classes to take rather than just taking classes that their counselors recommend for them. They have a strategy. By the time they are juniors and seniors they realize that if they don’t do it that nobody is going to do it for them. They start looking at their education with the end in sight. Where do I want to end up? What do I want to do? And work backwards from that. What classes do I need to take to get into the college that has my major so that I can go on and have the career I want? A good example of what I was just describing is when they do Cornell notes as freshman and sophomores because they’re expected to and because they have to. They move from that to their junior year to, I take Cornell notes anyway and I don’t need you to be checking every week, it’s just a waste of time and I notice that it kind of is. It’s nice to watch that progression. I pick them up as sophomores and I have notes checks and binder checks by the junior year those are just annoying to the kids. I’ll do spot checks and walk around and I’ll notice that they’re doing Cornell notes and they don’t even have to because they recognize the intrinsic value of them. So that’s nice to see, it’s sort of indicative of the educational and emotional growth that they experience. (Participant A)

*Learning Differences*

Respondents stated that when students were organized, came to school with the basic materials, and sat in front of the class, they began the process of acting like a learner. They explained that once that basic behavior is exhibited, students began honing in and defining how they learned best, which might be the same as, or different from other students. Respondents reported they played different roles in student development
as each student was different and had different needs. Respondents reported their students matured at different rates. Respondents noted they recognized students are complex individuals with a multitude of human experiences and because of this, learning occurs and looks differently for each student. Respondents identified that language contributes to how a student learns.

It’s that awareness of understanding how the kid processes and thinks and allowing him the time to do that and honoring that thought process. Don’t look at it as a drawback. Don’t say we need to get through this problem, don’t list it as a problem. It’s them, it’s who they are and you let them know that they’re okay. You are good. That is how you do things and it’s going to work for you.

(Participant B)

Learning Environments

Each of the five respondents provided examples pertaining to this variable. The respondents reported that positive student development is a team effort but that AVID teachers played a central role in facilitating dialogue among all parties. Respondents reported they valued an environment in which students were emotionally safe. Respondents noted the importance of creating an environment where students could express their knowledge and experience without judgment and where students felt free to ask critical questions. The respondents illustrated the strategy of setting standards for the respectful treatment of one another. The respondents noted they listened to students as a strategy to let students know they were safe to communicate with each other and with the teacher. Respondents reported they promoted and modeled speaking in a positive manner about and to students and set ground rules for such talk. Respondents communicated they utilized AVID teaching strategies, such as Socratic Seminars and Tutorials, to foster
democratic, engaging, collaborative, and respectful communication between students and teacher. Respondents noted they created a motivational learning environment where the teacher identified how individual students are motivated, and used strategies to tap into such motivation. Respondents illustrated that part of creating a positive and supportive environment is by discussing issues surrounding identity. Respondents reported the importance of modeling an inclusive learning environment that encourages positive social interaction and cultivating an environment that believes in the AVID philosophy and strategies.

It has to be a safe haven for the kids to come in that door and know that they can ask any question. That they can respond any way that they believe to be true and that they will be received with dignity, their integrity will be kept in tact and that this is a place where they can grow, this is a place where they can expose their misunderstandings or their myths that they have because of their family. We all have certain things that we believe and they’re not always true. So those issues have to be dealt with very delicately. (Participant B)

**Content Knowledge**

Respondents demonstrated a deep belief in, and continual practice of, the inquiry model of teaching and learning, which is the foundation for the AVID curriculum. Respondents noted they had a deep understanding about the college admissions process and academic funding structures; the respondents stated this part of their content knowledge is continually changing and thus, they had to perpetually adapt and learn new information. Respondents illustrated that part of the content knowledge within the context of the AVID program is knowledge about the AVID teaching strategies such as the use of Socratic Seminars and Tutorials (teaching strategies based on the discovery of
meaning and inquiry). Respondents stressed the importance of communicating to their students how content is relevant to their lives. Respondents illustrated the importance of communicating why students are learning a given concept or practicing engaging in a given strategy. Respondents noted this content knowledge is made available and accessible through AVID trainings. Respondents demonstrated the utility of the AVID curriculum’s focus on critical thinking and critical writing skills for overall student learning and development.

A lot of our conversation centers on knowing why we do things in addition to how we do things. I always tell them, he who knows why is the master of he who knows how. When we talk about community service for example we say, why do you do community service? The students say, well because so much of the college application is about community service and we say, okay fine but why do you think that is? Why do colleges look for people who are active in their community? Well it’s because they’re giving they’re able to repay and so on. So we start getting into larger issues than I need twenty hours of community service. I’m doing this actually because it’s good for the community, it’s good for the world to be doing community service. So they go into it with that mindset rather than I got to log an hour and a half more and then I’m done. Why do you even come to school? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? They go always thinking of that and I think the conclusions that they come to when they ask is really the foundation to the type of person that they are. They’re becoming citizens not because we’re telling them to but because they realize it’s a good thing if they’re good citizens. We’re looking at, okay you bomb this class, let’s examine why. What can you do next time to improve, what does this speak to you and your personality and the larger picture, so a lot of self-reflection and looking at the big picture. (Participant A)

**Innovative Application of Content**

The respondents communicated that AVID strategies and curriculum are the foremost ways of connecting concepts and engaging students in critical thinking. The respondents reported that strategies centering on inquiry, such as the AVID program supports, are the most innovative strategies they used. They noted that methods of
critical thinking and writing are not the focus at their schools, testing is, and thus, AVID inquiry strategies are, relatively speaking, the most innovative ways of teaching. They illustrated they used AVID strategies as the vehicle for teaching specific content (for example using the Tutorial method to teach Chemistry or Math concepts). Respondents reported that one way to engage students in critical thinking and problem solving is to create a team atmosphere in which students celebrated shared success, illustrating this is a way for students to consider other student’s perspectives. This practice is an innovative teaching practice at it strays from current teacher-centered paradigms and gives students the collaborative opportunity to analyze and create knowledge going far beyond preparation for high achievement on standardized tests. The AVID curriculum is based on the notion of inquiry, and of meta-cognition whereby students interact with their peers, this interaction helps students learn to navigate their individual process of thinking and to delve deeply into peer facilitated problem solving. Working together is conceptualized as an innovative application of content as recent teaching strategies have focused more on direct instruction and on test-taking strategies rather than on collaborative and deconstructive methods of learning.

I also believe that the emphasis on writing and on reflection and critical thinking is huge because we don’t teach that in our school anymore. They’ve learned how to bubble things in and the emphasis is on testing. When they have to step out of a multiple-choice answer it’s very difficult for them to problem solve so the AVID curriculum is [teaches] one of the critical skills [for closing the achievement gap]. Inquiry and critical thinking, that is non-negotiable and that’s part of everything you do in AVID. (Participant D)
Assessment

Respondents reported they used student data such as GPA, course sequence, student’s schedule (i.e., the number of Honors and AP courses in which a student was enrolled), scores on college entrance exams (SAT, ACT), proficiency rates on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), and scores on the California State Tests (CST’s) as indicators for how to plan their classroom activities and how to drive programmatic decisions. Participants noted they used the same achievement indicators that display overall AVID programmatic success such as number of students enrolled in AP courses, number of students who complete their A-G college entrance course requirements, and number of students who enroll in University of California and California State universities. In addition to the use of traditional AVID student achievement indicators, participants also used achievement data directly generated within the context of their school site and within their AVID classrooms. Respondents used achievement data such as grades to drive their programmatic actions and planning. They also used formative assessment data such as written annotations, critical summaries, scores on college entrance essays and performances during Socratic Seminar discussions to inform how best to meet the individual needs of their AVID students.

The respondents reported they collaborated by talking with their AVID site team about student data to assess student learning. Respondents stated they used student assessment data as a means to generate dialogue, and substantiate decisions, when communicating with school counselors, parents, or their AVID site team. They noted
they shared and analyzed student assessment data with their AVID site team and worked as a team to assess student growth. Participants also demonstrated they communicated with students one-on-one about the individual student’s assessment data and worked together to identify learning goals and future academic and career plans. Respondents illustrated they used AVID student feedback about what students wanted and needed from the AVID program.

I think overall data driven decision-making and so when we look at our data and see who’s in AP, Honors, and passing math and higher math and who is in Algebra II. We look at the data and we try to make changes throughout that school year a part of those changes come from new counselors on our sight team, having an assistant principal on our sight team. So the people who are the movers and shakers at the school bought into what we do. (Respondent E)

Planning for Instruction

Respondents illustrated they considered their students’ individual goals to design classroom activities. They reported they used knowledge acquired from the AVID Summer Institute training to guide the content focus of their classes. Respondents suggested that much of their programmatic planning is done with their AVID site team and illustrated they supported students by using student feedback to plan and sequence AVID courses and course content. Respondents noted they used student data to guide their instruction.

When I first took over several years ago, we asked the kids what they wanted out of AVID, they were all very gracious and basically said if it’s going to be the same thing for four years they don’t want to take it. They’ll take it the first year and then they’ll use that class period for something else. We’ve changed our curriculum and I’ve got multiple trainings in other areas as an example I am Why Try trained. So what we did is we really focused on our freshman with organizational skills and attitude, and getting them to understand how to take
control of their own life. Fundamental writing skills, with our sophomores we focused on more critical reading, critical analysis, and a lot of math, stuff for preparation for the Exit Exam. For our juniors we really hit on critical thinking and on writing skills and we also tutor train all the juniors so that they can peer tutor so they can tutor our school. Our seniors we just focused on getting them, going out, fast information, scholarship information and getting their applications to colleges. We found that we would bring out 70-80 freshman and by the next year we would have 50-60 sophomores, and then 30-40 juniors, 20-30 seniors. (Participant B)

**Instructional Strategies**

Respondents demonstrated this variable by noting they used the AVID instructional strategies including the Socratic Seminar method and the Tutorial method. Respondents illustrated they focused on building a collaborative team atmosphere to build skills and discover knowledge. They demonstrated that building teams in the classroom began with students respecting one another. Respondents shared the common strategy of learning to respect one another by having students share their life experiences and begin the process of deconstructing myths about their own identity, and the identities of those around them. Respondents reported the foundation of instruction is trust and noted students must trust them and that the information they give them is accurate.

Participants also illustrated students must trust one another so learning can occur.

So they learn how to question, they learn how to problem solve, they learn how to work together and not just divide and conquer. It’s not the cooperative paradigm where you do this part, you do this part, you do this part and we’ll put it together and call it a project. Really conversing and discussing and collaborating and trying and failing, that’s the most progressive, revolutionary part of what we do. It seems so basic but usually when we talk about tutoring we’re talking about one person sitting down with the kid and telling them how to do the problems and that’s the end of it. The AVID tutorial puts all of the emphasis on the students and the tutors are just bumps on the side of the road to keep them going the right way and that’s it. (Participant D)
Reflection & Continuous Growth

Respondents demonstrated that becoming an AVID teacher changed the way they approached education and practiced teaching. To this end, respondents attributed this shift to accepting and believing in the AVID philosophy and strategies. Teachers reported that becoming an AVID teacher spurred reflection and growth in their teaching practice and caused them to look at their practice differently. Participants reported that teaching in the AVID program reminded, or in some cases taught, them to never give up on a student’s academic and personal development. They mentioned the AVID program changed their thinking about what it means to teach and learn. Specifically, respondents illustrated, through their AVID teaching experiences, each individual student has different needs, and it is the charge of the teacher to try and meet those needs.

Respondents credited the AVID professional trainings and their experiences as an AVID teacher for teaching them how to integrate student-driven critical thinking and critical inquiry into classroom activities. They demonstrated that a factor of being a successful AVID teacher is continuous personal development or it takes time and reflection to know how to effectively work in a group setting.

I am an insatiable learner. My whole purpose in life is to be a basketball coach. That’s what I did, that’s what I loved, that’s why I have so many diverse experiences in it. I was constantly changing to get a different experience and a different understanding. I went to every clinic and every seminar I could. I got to know coaches and I would call them and talk to them. I would seek them out and I always wanted to know why they chose to do what they did. Don’t tell me what you did, tell me why you chose to do it. I can figure out what you did just by watching it, I wanted to know why you chose to do it that way. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out the foundation, the purpose. I am just constantly looking, looking for new ways to connect, new ways to say, and a new ways to assess. I think that probably my latest growth has been in the area of
allowing less restrictive acceptance of effort and seeing what it tells me. Whenever we assess, whenever we test, whenever we do that we’re trying to figure out where the kid is. I don’t spend so much time looking at their responses as validation of my teaching as I do looking at their responses of indicators of what I need to do next. (Participant B)

Collaboration

This variable is displayed in a variety of ways yet each of the five respondents discussed this variable. Respondents reported they worked closely with, and communicated often with, parents, counselors, AVID tutors, local community colleges and universities, and their AVID students’ teachers. Respondents illustrated their communication and interaction with these parties helped students develop and helped break cultural and linguistic barriers. Respondents demonstrated they communicated with their AVID site teams to plan for student, and thus, programmatic success. They illustrated the importance of communication among all parties surrounding a given AVID student and noted the utility of open, albeit strategic, communication between themselves, their students, their counselors, their students’ other teachers, and their students’ parents. To this end, however, respondents noted they found it important to teach students respectful ways of communicating with each other in the classroom, on the school site, and with those in the broader context of the lives (i.e., families, jobs, sports teams, extracurricular groups). Participants noted they collaborated with school administrators by talking with them about the importance of the AVID program. They illustrated the utility of teaching students to communicate in healthy and productive ways
and reported that teaching students to respectfully communicate and advocate for themselves is important.

I do a lot of talking to parents and getting tutors. The tutors are also very helpful in that arena because most of my tutors were my AVID students or an AVID student at a different school. So they come from the same place as students do and they can bridge the gap between me and my students if I don’t understand what’s going on. Sometimes they’ll sit me down with the student and explain what’s going on, here’s how I need to help. A lot of them speak Spanish and I am passable but it’s a lot easier because I can have them make phone calls and speak more with the parents because of the language barrier. If it’s not a language barrier then it’s an attitude barrier. I try to work with the kids about how to deal with that and how they are going to talk to their parents and explain to them why this is what you want to do. (Participant D)

*Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Respondents communicated that community events and contexts shaped their pedagogy. They stated they read, perceived, interpreted, and made sense of a student’s home culture and community to know how such contexts impacted their identity and goals. Respondents noted they exposed their students to different types of art that expanded their cultural knowledge about their own culture and other cultures. They mentioned the Socratic method develops students’ abilities to communicate respectfully and democratically about overall differing opinions and about their respective personal backgrounds and experiences. Participants reported they used invited guests from the community to highlight role models who had overcome cultural and language barriers; this was also a way to involve families in the students’ education. Respondents reported using AVID tutors as models of success, which they noted being an effective teaching
strategy because AVID tutors, often former AVID students, shared similar academic and cultural experiences with AVID students.

Respondents illustrated they integrated students’ background and cultures into the classroom by having students share facets of their lives, including food, language, and dress. Interviewees also noted that by having students share such experiences and facets of culture, teachers are able to validate a variety of individual student cultures. They reported exposing their students to literature written by authors with different cultural backgrounds, but that all shared similar messages about leadership to teach students that there are leaders advocating for social justice in every culture.

The other time, I had a young lady all four years with us and she is just a typical kid. She is sharp, her learning curve is not smooth but she stayed with it and got better and better and all of a sudden her fuse got lit and she got really excited about what she is going to be able to do for herself. One day she came in and said that her mom wanted to have a meeting with me and I said anytime, anywhere, just let me know. She then told me her mom didn’t speak English and is undocumented and scared to come onto campus but she wants to talk. I said that everybody goes home by five o’clock and if she would be willing to come in through the side gate when everyone has gone home. She went and asked her mom and she said yeah and I asked the young girl because I don’t speak Spanish if she wanted to be the translator and she said no that her mom didn’t want her in the room. So I had this guy, he’s my data analyst, Mr. Green [not actual name], he went to Valley [not actual name] High School, grew up in the area and is a language learner himself and is now a math teacher at the school. The young lady said that Mr. Green [not actual name] will be perfect and so I call Angelica [not actual name] and say here’s the deal and so he came to my classroom at about four thirty and we just sat there with the door open. We were talking and all of a sudden there is another presence in the room, she came in like smoke, I mean she is so stealthy and all of a sudden she is standing in the room. I greeted her and we spoke cordially for a couple of minutes then she sat down and said, “I’m going to jump right to the point here. Are you going to break my daughters heart?” I said, “What do you mean? She said, “You got her believing that she is going to be able to go to college. Are you just dangling a carrot on a stick in front of her to get her to do good? And it’s not going to happen.” Her only concern is that it is a myth,
you know, she had no point of reference. She didn’t know anybody that had ever
gone but for all she knew they walked away empty. She did not know the process,
she wanted to believe in it but she is just scared to death that we were going to
break her daughter’s heart. Her daughter had turned into such a believer of her
success and we guaranteed her that we were not going to break her heart. Her
daughter got admitted. It is all good. (Participant B)

_Caring_

This variable is seen throughout the qualitative data. Each of the five interview
respondents reported valuing and fostering an interactive relationship with their students.
The respondents reported they continually interacted with their students by being
emotionally and academically available to them. They illustrated this interactive
relationship by perceiving their students’ changing and varied needs based on current
events in their communities and events happening in their lives. Respondents reported
they were involved in multiple contexts of their students’ lives by attending student
sports, community, and familial activities.

Participants reported they believed all their students could achieve success and
noted they held high expectations for their students and worked diligently to help
students meet such expectations. Respondents reported they held high academic
standards for their students and believed students could meet such standards. They
reported they listened to students when they talked and valued knowing their students
knew they were being heard. Respondents reported they celebrated student success and
built on student success as a means for creating further student success.

Interviewees also identified student strengths before identifying areas needed for
growth. Respondents reported they made interventions to help their students develop
both academically and emotionally. They reported they played a variety of roles in their students’ lives depending on individual student needs. Respondents demonstrated they took responsibility for their students’ emotional well-being and reported the importance of teaching the whole student and not simply the academic content. Interviewees noted that showing students they can achieve at high levels was a fundamental part of being an AVID teacher. Respondents stated the AVID teacher was responsible for making sense of student communication, as often students do not know how to effectively communicate their needs.

I listen to everything they say when they come in and tell me they did well on a test or something is happening at home I listen. I look them in the eye when they’re giving speeches and I don’t grade while they’re giving speeches. I watch and they have my attention. I send the message that you matter. I give them high-fives, I call home, I say that I’m so proud of you and give them their kudos. When they’re not doing well I pull them aside and say what’s going on and that I’m here and they have my ear. (Participant C)

Themes that Emerged during the Coding Process

1. Teacher as Facilitator of Independent Development
2. Teacher as One Who Respects Culture
3. Teacher as Liaison
4. Teacher as Custodian of Caring
5. Teacher as AVID Practitioner

Theme: Teacher as Facilitator of Independent Development

The qualitative interview data exhibit that AVID teachers relinquish traditional control in the classroom. The interview responses illustrate that AVID teachers guided
and facilitated students as a means of teaching more than when they used direct instructional techniques. The respondents stated that AVID teachers play an important role in teaching students to be responsible and self-sufficient decision makers in their lives, and that teaching students to be independent is important. The qualitative data suggest the importance of teaching students the attitude and practice of independence and that students have the internal tools to solve problems in their lives. According to the interview responses, AVID teachers actively identify with and understand their students as individuals with unique backgrounds and needs.

The qualitative data also suggest that allowing students moments of frustration and failure leads to student success and that never giving up on students is salient to the role of teacher as facilitator of student achievement and development. Interview responses illustrate the importance of changing students’ perception of themselves so they see themselves as learners thus, students are able to identify, for themselves, how they learn best. The qualitative data suggest teachers believe the intelligence of their students is not based on the speed at which they learn or solve problems. The responses suggest there is a strong curricular focus on helping students develop the capacity to make sound academic, personal, and financial decisions as a means toward independence. They also illustrated students learn best when their teachers are patient and flexible which helps teachers facilitate independent learning. Qualitative data illuminate that interacting with students is a means of learning their academic and personal needs, and the data
demonstrate the importance of student collaboration. Sample interview responses are displayed in the next section.

Examples of teacher as facilitator of independent development in interview responses.

One of my colleagues put it as, instead of being the sage on the stage being the guide on the side. (Participant A)

We have to teach the kid until we don’t have to teach them anymore. That means we have to allow for the failure without getting frustrated. We work towards the independence we want them to exhibit, if they don’t show it we need to reel them back in, reteach and try to assess what’s blocking their success and continue to build and teach and just keep trying. It’s a never give up attitude about giving the kid independence as a motivated learner. (Participant B)

It [AVID] really needs someone who can be flexible and not say, okay this is the rule for Johnny so it has to be the rule for Janey. (Participant C)

It’s organized chaos all the time. You walk into a tutorial and go what the heck is going on because it sounds like total chaos and they’re arguing about calculus but it’s a beautiful noise. It’s being able to manage a room with seventy-five different things going on and you’re almost a circus conductor. (Participant D)

Senior year I teach them about credit cards and interest rates and how to make smart financial decisions. What does it mean to take out a loan? What does it mean to go into default? Things like that because when I look back at my education in AVID and my choices that I made personally in college, they were based on things that I just didn’t understand. That a lot of Americans don’t understand. I really want my kids when they leave their senior year to understand what it means when you sign on the bottom line for anything. (Participant E)

Theme: Teacher as One Who Respects Culture

The qualitative data display the necessity of understanding where their students’ parents were coming from philosophically, culturally, and socioeconomically, as a means of opening the lines of communication. Additionally, respondents revealed that knowing
the roles students played outside the AVID classroom was critical to student
development. The respondents noted that AVID teachers consider students’ individual
backgrounds and life experiences when teaching and differentiate instruction based on
this data. Interview data demonstrate AVID teachers use strategies to show students that
others have had their same experiences and are successful adults, and student
achievement increases when students know and see others who have had the same
linguistic, academic, and life experiences they have had and are successful. Qualitative
data also exhibit the necessity for the AVID teacher to know the events happening in
student communities and adapt classroom activities to address such events and
community contexts, as AVID teachers know these events affect learning.

Examples of teacher as one who respects culture in interview responses.

I know that they’re influenced as much if not more by the things outside of school
than they are when they’re inside my four walls. Not just their family, their
friends, their mini-culture they create. The high school students outside of their
families and school have their own sort of tendencies. I feel like I’m able to
influence them in a little portion [of their lives] so I better make it good.
( Participant A)

[For the topic of leadership] we had Mahatma Ghandi, Cesar Chavez who grew
up down here and is kind of a hero. We had Bill Gates we have Ray Crock, the
guy who started McDonalds. We identified as many different sources. We’ve got
a Chief Crazy Horse quote about mankind and the human spirit. You just try and
find what it is you’re trying to teach and then explore how many different sources
comment on it and then diversify your utilizations. (Participant B)

A lot of times I just try and have guest speakers who come in and say I was you. I
know what it’s like, I know what it is like to be really smart, in honors programs
in different countries, and then come here and they’re teaching me how to spell
cat. Showing me baby books, I have one person [student] who said they couldn’t
believe they were being shown baby books in the honors program. (Participant C)
The patience and flexibility and being able to read your students and know that today whatever your lesson you had going is not going to work because someone is shot in their neighborhood this weekend and they really don’t care about what SAT prep you were doing. (Participant D)

I think for me [my biggest asset as an AVID teacher] my experience as an AVID student because I always tell my kids that if it weren’t for AVID I wouldn’t be where I am… I also think that myself being an African American teacher, young teacher, [is an asset as an AVID teacher] because when I grew up in Greenville [for protection of the respondent’s privacy the researcher referred to this town as Greenville] I didn’t have a Hispanic teacher, or an Asian teacher, or a Black teacher. All my teachers were White and there’s nothing wrong with that but that cultural connection never happened with me. (Participant E)

**Theme: Teacher as Liaison**

The qualitative data display that AVID teachers work with multiple parties, such as parents and school counselors, to meet the varied needs of students. The respondents illustrated AVID teachers offer tools with which students can communicate their needs to their teachers and other adults. The data suggest AVID teachers advocate for students by communicating with school board members and district administrators about the importance of the AVID program and how it serves students. The respondents demonstrated that AVID teachers work directly with school counselors to identify prospective AVID students and to discuss the needs of current AVID students. The interview data suggest that because of AVID teacher communication with various school employees, they directly impact the courses AVID students take and for which they are eligible. Respondents also mentioned they talked with other teachers and administrators to explain a given student’s reason for academic or personal behavior. This data illustrate a primary role of AVID teachers is to talk with students’ parents about students’
particular strengths and illustrate that AVID teachers communicate with other academic institutions such as universities and community colleges.

*Examples of teacher as liaison in interview responses.*

In a very real sense I am in the counseling office advocating why a student should be placed in the AVID program, even though, they were not recommended by their last English teacher. (Participant A)

The first thing I did was make sure that I had all of our counselors AVID trained and I had to do a lot of that myself to get them to understand that it’s not a free for all, an elective, and it’s not for at-risk kids. I now can go into any counselors office with any kid, any issue for a kid, and get it resolved. There are time periods during the year when counselors are so overburdened that kids can’t get to them but I can get through a door anytime that I want because the counselors believe in our program and understand that I understand their workload. (Participant B)

I call parents and have meetings when the kid is doing poorly in school but I go about it from both sides because sometimes the parents will start laying into the kids and I say that I’m here to share how bright your child is. (Participant C)

It’s not just about filling out applications and knowing your options in your state, your city, your community. What’s going on at the local community college? So having the willingness and ability to communicate with the people in your school and other institutions. (Participant D)

Sometimes I’m an angel or sometimes I’m a bulldog. It depends on who I’m talking to. We really are advocates for our kids. So that means if I have to have meetings with the AP teachers to talk about how can we make the AVID kids more successful in your class. What can I do as an AVID teacher to make them more successful in your AP classes? Talking with the counselors and talking about what type of students fit into our AVID program, into our model, and what can counselors do to support our AVID kids. Even when it comes to simple things, I remember last semester I got into a huge battle with the assistant principal about getting our kids fee waivers. (Participant E)

*Theme: Teacher as Custodian of Caring*

The interview responses show caring about students is action-oriented and interactive. The data reveal that knowing when students are stressed and knowing where
they are emotionally weakened is important to student learning and development. The participating AVID teachers believe students can achieve at high levels and they cultivate confidence in their students by eliminating student fear about taking AP or Honors courses. The interview data exhibit AVID teachers believe it is important for students to trust their AVID teachers have their best interests in mind and curriculum is useful in students’ lives. The qualitative data suggest that administrative recognition of individual student success and strength displays support for students and thus, encourages further success. Through the interviews, AVID teachers said they showed their students they cared by listening to them. The qualitative data suggest that making sense of student communication is crucial to student learning and development. Also, the respondents suggested that celebrating student success is important to students’ future success. The data reveal AVID teachers focus on what students can do, and what they are good at, as a means of building student confidence.

*Examples of teachers as custodian of caring in interview responses.*

To notice them, to notice when they have a big test coming and you ask them the next day how it went. To notice that they’re scowling one day and to ask what’s going on; to sort of be a safe place where they can share what’s going on in their lives and feel confident that their best interests are going to be safe. Just to kind of know what’s going on in their lives, their boyfriends and girlfriends, who’s buying a new car and the students having a conflict with this teacher or getting along really well with this teacher; just little things like that because I notice that they come from families where they get kind of lost and they’re not treated as special and they’re not told that they’re capable and they begin to believe it. So it’s sort of training in being cared about. (Participant A)

So we spend a lot of time and I have about four different writing exercises where I have them list all of the traits that they believe about them that are positive. I’m a good friend, I’m a good flute player, I’m a good dancer, I’m a
good friend, I’m a good brother. Find the good and we work and work and work and we do it many times throughout the year. I come at it from different directions but I am constantly asking the kids to remind themselves who they are because they’re always reminded who they aren’t. So we really work hard at celebrating us. (Participant B)

Just believing in a child helps them to perform so much more. (Participant C)

Listening, it’s listening and taking an interest and being willing to work past contract and yeah the union rep may smack me in the head but caring about students is a lot like being a parent. You have to set boundaries and set expectations and you have to hold them to the expectations. (Participant D)

Whenever I’m sitting down one on one with my kids and we’re planning for the next semester what they’re going to take some say, I’m too scared to take that. Well why? There are five other people that are going to take AP language Arts in this AVID class. (Participant E)

Theme: Teacher as AVID Practitioner

The interview responses reveal it is important for students to know how the AVID curriculum applies to their lives and why the AVID curriculum is useful. The qualitative data suggest the salience of the AVID program’s curricular focus on critical writing and argumentation skills for student development and success. Furthermore, respondents attributed the strength of the AVID curriculum to the acute focus on student inquiry or the discovery of meaning and on student collaboration. The qualitative data suggest the importance of the AVID curriculum’s focus on respectful and democratic communication styles and techniques between students and teachers. The interview responses also reveal the need for AVID professional training and development. Participants suggested that school site and administrative understanding and support of the AVID philosophy are
crucial to student and thus programmatic success. The qualitative data also suggest that funding for the AVID program is the foundation of the program’s existence in schools.

*Examples of teacher as AVID practitioner in interview responses.*

I always tell them, he who knows why is a master of he who knows how. When we talk about community service for example we say, why do you do community service? The students say, well because so much of the college application is about community service and we say, okay fine but why do you think that is? Why do colleges look for people who are active in their community?... Why do we even come to school? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? (Participant A)

I have a site team member who’s a good data analyst and we took all of our numbers, all of our AVID kids from the past four years, we looked at GPA, we looked at CST, we looked at EXIT EXAM scores, we looked at AP classes taken, AP tests passed, we looked at everything we could conceivably use to measure success. Our numbers at our school were consistent with the national norms of state and the regional norms. That is a huge cause for celebration because the average income around our school is 22,000/yr. Most of our kids’ parents work in the strawberry fields, they’re migrant. (Respondent B)

I have great support from my administration, they’ve both been AVID teachers and AVID tutors. They totally believe in the program and think it’s a privilege to be in the class. (Participant C)

The emphasis the AVID center puts on training and the mandatory training. You can’t just walk into an AVID classroom, teach whatever you want and then call it AVID, the certification that they insist on maintains integrity in the program. (Participant D)

Obviously money and finances, paying for the tutors is a large part, it’s a foundation of what AVID’s about. So obviously that financial support, whether that be from the district or from school funds from your principal. (Participant E)

**Conclusion**

This study used both quantitative and qualitative data to address the research questions. The quantitative data derived from the survey were used to answer Research Question # 1. The qualitative data derived from the interview responses were used to
answer Research Question # 2. A Pearson correlation analysis was used to identify significant correlations between the variables defining the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of today’s highest quality teachers. Research question # 1 addressed the possible positive or negative significance and the strength of the correlation between any two variables within the total of 12 variables (see Table 14). The 12 variables were derived from the literature on the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of quality teachers.

Research Question # 1: What significant relationships exist among the following 12 variables, related to attitudes, knowledge sets and practices of middle and high school AVID teachers?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative Application of Content
- Assessment
- Planning for Instruction
- Instructional Strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching
- Caring
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner Development correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching</td>
<td>medium/high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>medium/high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Differences correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Environments correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Knowledge correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Continuous Growth</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Innovative Application of Content correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching</td>
<td>medium/high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>medium/high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning for Instruction correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Strategies correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection and Continuous Growth correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Instruction</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Application of Content</td>
<td>medium/high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Development</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Differences</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caring correlates with</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy &amp; Culturally Responsive Teaching</td>
<td>low/medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlations emerging from the quantitative data are central to understanding the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID teachers. Some variables display significant correlations with a higher number of other variables than do others. The
researcher posits this is due to the overall importance of the given variable in teaching underserved populations. The number of correlations also indicates such variables are more or less critical components of an AVID teacher’s characteristics as a quality educator. This does not mean variables displaying a lower number of correlations are unimportant, but what it does highlight is that such variables are simply less central components of an AVID teacher’s characteristics as a quality educator. It is a matter of the level or degree of importance each variable has in the overall profile of AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. Furthermore, it is important to note that all the correlations reported in this study were positive and significant, yet some can be conceptualized as having a larger impact or influence on the total profile of AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices.

The quantitative data exemplify six positive and significant correlations between Learner Development and other variables used in the study. The Learner Development variable and its relation to over half the other variables is an indicator that AVID teachers not only attend carefully and intensively to the variable, but focus on this variable is a central factor of quality teaching. This variable is critical to AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices as the overall individualized development and consequently increased achievement is the goal of the AVID program and of AVID elective teachers. This variable centers on students’ specific learning processes and that such processes are different for every student based on factors across cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical realms. This variable is also critical to the
general profile of AVID teachers as it displays their practices of knowing what their students need and designing AVID curriculum around meeting such needs.

The quantitative data exemplify six positive and significant correlations between the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching variable and other variables used in the study. The Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Responsive Teaching variable and its relation to over half the other variables is an indicator that AVID teachers not only exhibit the variable but that this variable is fundamental to quality teaching. This variable is critical to teaching AVID students as they are categorized as being a diverse and also underserved population of students. Given this population, it is appropriate that, as Ladson Billings’ (1994, 1995a, 1995b) research noted, teachers link students’ home cultures with their education and quality pedagogy includes academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. Similarly, the high number of correlations between this variable and other variables related to AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices exhibits that culturally responsive teaching, as Gay (2002, 2004, 2005, 2010) defined it, is critical to quality teaching. The correlation between this variable and six other variables demonstrates the function and importance of culturally comprehensive, multi-dimensional, transformative, and emancipatory teaching to other major variables considered part of quality teaching. The two variables Learner Development and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching are critical to the profile of AVID teachers and, thus, crucial to serving diverse and underserved populations.
The Collaboration and Learning Environments variables each only displayed three out of 11 significant correlations indicating these two variables are less critical to AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. Perhaps these variables in isolation are important to AVID teachers’ overall practice; however, their relationship to and impact on the other variables is not as critical as compared to the two variables Learner Development or Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching. Finally, Content Knowledge, Caring, Reflection and Continuous Growth, and Instructional Strategies had significant correlations with only one or two other variables. This is an indicator not that these variables in isolation are important to quality teaching but that their relationship to and influence on other variables is not as strong. Essentially, the degree to which this set of variables impacts other variables is low.

The qualitative data from the interview responses were analyzed to answer Research Question # 2: In what ways do middle and high school AVID teachers exemplify the following 12 variables based on teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Caring
There are rich connections between the themes that emerged during the coding process after the use of open-ended interviews focusing on 12 pre-selected variables. The qualitative data displayed links among variables whereby many times one interview response served as support for more than one pre-selected variable. Furthermore, the links between the qualitative codes that emerged from the data, and the display of the 12 variables within the qualitative data are discussed in Chapter 5. Due to the in-depth qualitative analysis it is clear the qualitative data support the quantitative data, as all 12 variables are not only illustrated but are also related. These links are further explained in Chapter 5 but are introduced here. The theme of Teacher as Facilitator of Independent Development and the variables Learning Environments, Learning Differences, and Learner Development are closely interlinked. The theme of Teacher as One Who Respects Culture and the variable Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching are tightly interwoven. The theme of Teacher as Liaison and the Collaboration variable are clearly tied. There are seamless connections between the theme of Teacher as Custodian of Caring and the Caring variable. There are intricate connections between the theme Teacher as AVID Practitioner and the variables Reflection and Continuous Growth, Instructional Strategies, Planning for Instruction, Assessment, Innovative Application of Content and Content Knowledge. Chapter 5 offers a brief overview of the study, states the research questions and interprets the quantitative and qualitative findings. Additionally, the researcher interpreted the findings by creating a typical profile of the AVID teacher organized by their essential attitudes, knowledge sets, and
practices. The next section of Chapter 5 offers recommendations for teacher recruitment and teacher preparation programs, discusses the implications for both transformational leadership and educational policy, makes suggestions for future research and provides a conclusion about the overall utility of the study.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Believe that you and your story can transform your piece of the universe – then go and do it. Despite thorns and fire, do it anyway. Light, growth, and grateful recipients of social justice await you. (Soberhart, 2012, p. 214)

Overview of the Study

This study addresses the inequities in schools as indicated by the current educational achievement gap between high-performing, mostly White and Asian students and their underserved and underrepresented counterparts, who are typically African American, Latino, low-income, and English Learners. In particular, this study addressed such inequities by focusing on teacher quality, as teachers are a fundamental factor of student, programmatic, and school success (Darling-Hammond, 2010). This study examined the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of AVID program teachers who successfully teach a culturally, linguistically, academically, and socio-economically diverse population of students, a population growing in the U.S. and within California (Darling-Hammond, 2007, 2008, 2010; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2000, 2003, 2005). As stated in Chapter 1, knowing more about the characteristics of teachers working in a highly successful equity program offers data about how to meet the challenge of closing the achievement gap and educating all children to high standards (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

The primary motivation for this research was to better understand how AVID teachers contribute to an international program that continues closing the historic achievement gap largely for California’s and the nation’s students. As noted in Chapter
1, despite the historic reality that educational access, quality, and achievement are based largely on race and social class (CDE, 2011), the AVID program continues presenting powerful data that reverse such trends (Morse & Baratte, 2012, para. 2). Understanding a typical profile of AVID teachers helps district and school site administrators, teacher educators, policymakers, and educational researchers of teacher quality know how to support teachers who are central in the effort to maintain and create successful equity programs serving to close the achievement gap. This mixed-methods study developed a typical profile of teachers working in the AVID program using survey and interview data to inform this critical discussion.

Research Questions

Research question #1: What significant relationships exist among the following 12 variables, related to attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of middle and high school AVID teachers?

- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Caring

In what ways do middle and high school AVID teachers exemplify the following 12 variables based on teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices?
- Learner Development
- Learning Differences
- Learning Environments
- Content Knowledge
- Innovative application of content
- Assessment
- Planning for instruction
- Instructional strategies
- Reflection & Continuous Growth
- Collaboration
- Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Caring

Conceptual Framework

As communicated throughout the study, and particularly in Chapter 2, teachers are critical factors in the educational process and in school and programmatic success. The policy documents reviewed in Chapter 2 indicate there is a general set of attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices driving the discussion about teachers. Such indicators are integrated into the variables within the two research questions. The researcher chose to add the last two variables, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching and Caring, to the set of indicators from the Council of Chief State School Officers, as they clearly emerged from the research literature on characteristics of quality teachers of underserved populations. However, despite allusion to such variables as indicators, they are not explicitly articulated or at the forefront of policy issues and should be. Thus, they could not be ignored as points of interest for this study. What the conceptual frame demonstrates is that not only do teachers matter, but it is particular knowledge sets, dispositions and skills that matter most, especially for those teaching populations of underserved students, the AVID program’s focus. The following
Interpretation of the Findings is organized around middle and high school AVID teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices and the 12 variables of the study are organized in this way. Furthermore, a richer, more practical discussion of the data can emerge with the articulation of more generalized attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices so teachers, school administrators, and policymakers can come to understand the varied data gathered and analyzed in this study.

Interpretation of the Findings

The following interpretation of the findings of this mixed-methods study integrates and considers both quantitative and qualitative data and respective analyses. This discussion constructs a typical profile of middle and high school AVID teachers based on the quantitative and qualitative data and analysis pertaining to the 12 pre-selected variables comprised of quality teacher attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. This discussion is derived specifically from the data reported and analyzed in Chapter 4. Threaded throughout this discussion are particular data examples that help capture the given attitude, knowledge set, or practice. However, some sections of the discussion display data examples and some sections do not; the sections for which there are no explicit examples are no less valid or no less driven by the data. Rather, the assertion alone is clear and does not warrant further explanation. The following discussion demonstrates that the sample of AVID teachers exemplify the variables imbedded in the two research questions. More specifically, AVID teachers displayed the 10 indicators of teacher qualities generated by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The data also
suggest the sample integrate culturally relevant/responsive and caring frameworks of teaching, key indicators absent from the CCSSO’s 10 main indicators of teacher quality but included in the research literature about quality teachers. As described in the Qualitative Data Collection section of chapter 3, the researcher rated each of the 100 survey participants with regard to their positive responses to display the 12 variables used in the study. It was concluded that 83% of the total 100 survey participants responded with ratings of 4s and 5s (5 was the highest rating and 1 was the lowest) in either 11 or all 12 of the categories. The outcome of rating the participants indicates that the overall sample exemplifies the criteria set forth by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Through the transformation of their students, AVID teachers serve as educational beacons of hope amidst dismal economic times where jobs and educational funding are scarce and poverty is growing among children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Even given difficult economic and social factors in the U.S. and throughout California, AVID teachers continue doing the difficult work of teaching those most in need, eagerly and with honor. One interview response in particular captured the overarching tone of the following profile. Participant B stated:

Probably the fact that when I went into teaching, I always felt that it was an honor that people would trust their most precious possession, their kid, with you. I’ve always been very honored to be a teacher and I’ve always taken that very seriously, that’s quite a tribute for somebody to give you that possession for a while. That keeps me grounded.
Answering Research Question 1

The quantitative data and quantitative analysis answered Research Question # 1. This study revealed significant correlations between the 12 pre-selected variables using the Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient statistical analysis. Eleven of the variables were significantly correlated and one variable, Assessment, displayed no significant correlations. However, this variable was consistently represented throughout the qualitative data and analysis.

Addressing Research Question 2

The qualitative data and qualitative analysis answered Research Question # 2. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data by identifying how, if at all, the 12 pre-selected variables were represented in the interview data. It is noteworthy that each of the five interviewees strongly exhibited each of the five qualitative themes. The qualitative themes are as follows: Teacher as Facilitator of Independent Development, Teacher as One Who Respects Culture, Teacher as Liaison, Teacher as Custodian of Caring, and Teacher as AVID Practitioner. The researcher discovered connections between the themes that emerged during the coding process and the identification of the 12 pre-selected variables in the interview data. In addition to the themes emerging during the coding process, so too did specific representations of the 12 pre-selected variables as supported by the interview data.
**Attitudes**

The typical AVID teacher holds certain attitudes about professional growth, students and student achievement, epistemology, the learning process, the practice and goal of teaching, student motivation, programmatic success and the skills needed for students to further a socially just and democratic society. As the discussion below further explains, AVID teachers hold the following key attitudes: AVID teachers continually want to become better teachers, believe all students can achieve their goals, believe they should be persistent in helping students meet their goals, believe students have different learning needs, believe in empowering students to be independent, believe student and professional collaboration is critical to learning, believe motivation is a key factor of learning, believe programmatic success is multi-dimensional and believe students are whole beings.

**AVID teachers continually want to become better teachers.** AVID teachers work within a successful equity program that displays consistent data indicators of closing the achievement gap. Even considering their position within such a program, they still want to continually progress and become better at their teaching practices. Survey item number 65 stating, “I want to get better at my teaching” clearly captures this attitude. Ninety-five percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. This survey item indicates the Reflection and Continuous Growth variable. The robust descriptive statistical and qualitative display of this variable indicate this variable is important to AVID teacher characteristics. Interview respondents keenly indicated this
variable by way of their participation in, enthusiasm for, and belief in the AVID programmatic trainings where they reported they had the space and time to grow as educators and reflect about their teaching practice. Participant D described how AVID teachers experience AVID training as she stated:

I think AVID teachers tend to fall in love with it [the AVID program] and believe in what they’re doing and are able to be successful and see success in their students because the AVID center has provided the tools to be successful and they’re able to do the work because they see the benefits.

Participant D underscored that AVID teachers value and rely on AVID training and overall support in the development of their practice. Similarly, Participant C candidly explained her determination to learn and to further her understanding of the AVID methods as she stated:

We have zero professional development in our school right now because of the lack of funding. On my own I go to technology stuff, I pay for it on my own and I do this also for English trainings. Even when and I hate to say this but our district wants to train us on AVID stuff but they only pay one person to go to training and then ok now that person is going to train all the AVID teachers. I say no I don’t want second hand news. I want the best so sometimes I’ll just pay on my own and just go or I’ll talk to my principal and ask if we can fund it through the school. So I’ll just do it through the school and somehow she comes up with the funding and I’ll be able to go. Even the tutoring, I didn’t go to Summer Institute that summer and they [her district] weren’t going to give me the tutoring training until February. That’s insane so I paid for it on my own then finally got the school to pay for it and went in September and it’s like okay now I know what I’m talking about.

AVID teachers believe developing as professionals is critical to their students’ success and persist in doing whatever they can to participate in both AVID trainings and other trainings that help them perpetually develop into more effective teachers.
AVID teachers believe all students can achieve high personal and academic goals. AVID teachers hold strong foundational attitudes about their students in general and about their students’ achievement. AVID teachers maintain a deep belief in their students’ abilities to achieve their goals. Item 73, an indicator of the Caring variable, on the survey captured AVID teachers’ overall attitudes about their students. The survey statement reads, “All of my students have promise and possibility,” and 98% of respondents said this statement was either very true or true of what they believe. AVID teachers think all students can learn and achieve at high levels and believe giving up on helping a student develop is unethical at best. Item 28 on the survey, an indicator of the Caring variable, asked participants to respond to the statement, “I believe all students can learn and achieve at high levels.” Ninety-one percent of participants identified that this statement was either very true, or true of what they believe. This attitude is directly in line with the AVID program philosophy that holding students accountable to achieve the highest academic level while offering them social and academic support prompts non-traditional students to rise to the challenge and achieve at levels never reached in the past (AVID Center, n.d.b). Participant A, a teacher of 41 years and an AVID elective teacher of nine years demonstrated the AVID philosophy of holding high academic standards and offered an account of what closing the achievement gap between non-traditional or marginalized students and status-quo students served well by the educational system actually looked like from a teacher’s perspective. He stated:

My view of the achievement gap is I see students from the whole spectrum. I teach some AP students and I teach AVID students. My evidence that I’m closing
the achievement gap is that my AVID students are able to hang with the AP students who are very good at school and have learned to play the game very well. AVID students by and large haven’t but they’re learning but they are often surprised at their success in AP classes; that’s one of the most satisfying things to see is that they’ve earned that self-confidence. That’s the fulfilling part for me, to see that new growth that they didn’t necessarily have in them nearly a year ago.

As demonstrated throughout the study, AVID teachers hold the critical attitude that all students have the ability to learn, and they believe all students deserve a chance at the opportunity of reaching their fullest intellectual and individual potential.

*AVID teachers believe they should be persistent in helping students meet their goals.* As seen throughout the study, AVID teachers are relentless in their support of their students. The responses for survey item 56, an indicator of the Caring variable, displayed this attitude of never giving up, as 91% of participants identified that the statement, “If I try hard enough, I can positively impact the learning of any student,” is very true or true of what they believe. AVID teachers simply believe failure is not an option, thus believing if they support their students, they will be able to succeed. AVID teachers believe in allowing students to experience moments of frustration and failure, but believe also in supporting their students in achieving their goals by not giving up on them. A clear contextual example of this attitude of never giving up on students within the qualitative data was captured by Participant B, a veteran teacher of 36 years, “As a teacher we have to be very patient and the term that comes to mind is being an incessant teacher.”

*AVID teachers believe students have different learning needs.* AVID teachers believe all students have differing learning needs and experiences and develop and
process information differently. Accordingly, AVID teachers do not consider the speed at which students learn and solve problems as an indicator of a student’s intelligence. AVID teachers understand that every student has a unique background and experiences, which are valid. They also deem teaching a student to define how they learn best as crucial to student development; thus, students begin to feel empowered knowing they are part of their educational success (Gay, 2001, 2010). Survey item 31, an indicator of the Caring variable, asked participants to respond to the following statement, “Adapting to students’ individual needs is just part of what I do as a teacher.” Ninety-five percent of respondents noted it was either very true or true of what they believed. This survey item highlights AVID teachers’ attitude that adapting to students’ individual needs and identifying ways for them to be successful is fundamental to teaching and to student growth. Correspondingly, Survey item 17, an indicator of the Learning Differences variable, asked participants to respond to the statement, “I know the learning needs of each individual student.” Due to AVID teacher’s belief that students have different learning needs, almost all (91%) participants noted this statement was true for either 100% or 80% of their students.

AVID teachers believe in empowering students to be independent. AVID teachers also maintain students have the internal tools to solve problems in their lives and that all students have the capacity to identify and develop such problem-solving skills. AVID teachers agree that training students to be independent in all facets of their lives is the main pillar of education. Given this sentiment, AVID teachers feel responsible for
teaching students to be self-sufficient decision makers in their lives. AVID teachers also contend they have failed when their students do not act independently or take responsibility for their actions. The Learner Development variable, which again showed a high number of correlations to other variables, was also displayed in the qualitative interview data and shares similarities with the qualitative code Teacher as Facilitator of Independent Development. Participant A demonstrated this attitude of self-sufficiency as he explained:

Again I think it’s helping them realize that they have the keys and the tools for their own success. It’s sort of teach myself out of a job in a way, I really enjoy the kids and like being in their lives after they graduate. I’m still in touch with a lot of students who have graduated. I just don’t want them to need me and I don’t want them to need anybody else beside themselves. Probably the biggest role that I play is bowing out of their lives and letting them realize that they have everything they need to survive. They come up against any problem in their life, that they can figure it out and that they can solve it.

*AVID teachers believe in collaboration.* AVID teachers also maintain the attitude that student collaboration is salient to the learning process and students’ experiences should be a part of this collaboration. AVID teachers believe collaboration among professionals is key to both teacher and student development. The Collaboration variable was significantly correlated to the two most critical variables revealed in this study, Learner Development and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Culturally Responsive Teaching. Survey item number 21, an indicator of the Collaboration variable, states, “I get some of my best ideas from my colleagues.” Seventy-seven percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Participants’ positive attitudes toward the notion of collaboration were not only illustrated by the correlative and
descriptive statistics but was also ever-present throughout the qualitative interview data.

Participant C explained the importance of teaching his students and AVID colleagues to work together as he stated:

So what needs to be sustained is that understanding that if we all work together, we all survive; we all don’t need the biggest share, we all just need to have enough. They teach that element in Coca Cola, Boeing, and all sorts of different places, on getting their executives to understand that they’re on the same team.

Similarly, Participant A explained the utility of rich intellectual conversation among he and his AVID colleagues as he noted:

I really enjoy conversations with my colleagues, my AVID colleagues, for example when my friend Deb [not actual name] I drive down from Pineville [for protection of the respondent’s privacy the researcher referred to this town as Pineville] we have an hour and a half of talking and it’s built on the Socratic model. We are both really stimulated by thinking and by talking and ironing out issues that way. Going to professional development three times a year is priceless. Just talking with other AVID professionals whether they’re regional staff or classroom teachers and comparing notes and talking about what’s current.

The belief in collaboration is woven into the fabric of AVID teachers’ attitudes.

AVID teachers believe motivation is a key factor of learning. Survey item 39, an indicator of the Caring variable, demonstrated AVID teachers’ agreement that motivating students is fundamental to teaching. Eighty-one percent of respondents noted they strongly agreed or agreed on item 39, stating “Motivating my students is a part of my job.” This attitude illustrates Gay’s (2001, 2010) notion of empowering, within her conception of culturally responsive teaching, that praising student actions and achievements serves as motivation for students to achieve further success. Participant B
articulated this belief that success is a continuous developmental process and should be celebrated:

A singular success does very little for you. That instilled in me that willingness along with the ability to every day regardless of what happened then night before, to show up and be excited about being there and being able to have a short memory when it comes to bad experiences and a long memory when it comes to good experiences. You learn to celebrate little successes.

AVID teachers believe when students experience success, they are more motivated to learn and attain further success. Participant A captured the link between motivation and the nature of success in the learning process as she explained:

I have to come around a different way where I have to really focus on motivation and build on those skills. Memorizing vocabulary words and practicing math so that’s teachable but getting them to be individually determined and getting them motivated and getting them the taste of success. Sometimes with a taste of success they thirst for more and so sometime that’s the thing I really have to help them with more than knowing what the fifty states are.

Furthermore, AVID teachers feel students display higher achievement when they know and see others who have had the same linguistic, academic, and life experiences as they have had achieve success. Additionally, AVID teachers believe administrative recognition of positive student achievement encourages further success.

*AVID teachers believe programmatic success is multi-dimensional.*

Programmatic success depends on a multitude of factors. In the context of this study, AVID teachers identify factors including strong curriculum, teacher training, administrative support, and funding. AVID teachers consider the AVID curriculum and strategies are effective factors in closing the achievement gap and developing students’ critical thinking skills. They believe the AVID curriculum to be strong due to its acute
focus on collaboration and student inquiry as the best means of learning. As articulated throughout this study, the participants demonstrated their strong belief in, and use of, both AVID curricular and professional training structures, each of these factors came through clearly within the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. However, what was not as clearly articulated in the descriptive and correlative quantitative data was AVID teachers’ belief that the AVID program works due to factors other than strong curriculum and professional development. Qualitative data revealed, in particular, as illustrated in the Teacher as AVID Practitioner qualitative code, that AVID teachers believe administrative and monetary support are just as fundamental factors of programmatic success as are curriculum and professional development. Additionally, AVID teachers agree funding for the program is crucial to build and improve the program.

AVID teachers also believe student, school, and programmatic success depend on the capacity of school site employees and administrative bodies to understand and support the AVID philosophy of high academic success among underserved populations. Participant E described such understanding critical to the funding of her AVID program; she noted:

I think you need buy-in from the staff. People have to believe in what your doing and what your program values. When you have people buy in on your campus it just really changes the culture and the outlook on how people see your program. In that sense it changes the perspective of how kids see the program. Kids have to see this as something like, wow this is where the smart kids are, this is where the kids are that are going to college. This is the program where I need to be. So the school culture, obviously money and finances, paying for the tutors is a large part, it’s a foundation of what AVIDs about. So obviously, that financial support, whether that be from the district or from school funds from your principal; you also need community resources too, you need contacts at these different
universities, for people to come out and support your AVID program and support your kids and be guest speakers in your classroom.

As participant E explained, the roots of a successful program begin with understanding the purpose and philosophy of the program, which then encourages funding and community partnerships, helping enrich and sustain the program. Included in the buy-in Participant E defined, Participant D illustrated the critical component of administrative support. She made clear:

It’s crucial to have an administrator as part of that team. If you don’t have district support it’s not going to get very far. Aside from that, having the administrative team being fully supportive and doing everything in their power to make it successful is crucial.

*AVID teachers believe students are whole beings.* AVID teachers understand their students as whole and intricate beings who need to feel safe and valued for the process of learning to occur, and for them to develop and ultimately achieve at high levels. To this end, AVID teachers believe students should feel valued as individuals. Item 29 states, “My students feel valued as individuals in my classroom,” and 99% of participants identified this statement to be true for either 100% or 80% of their AVID students.

*Knowledge Sets*

AVID teachers’ particular knowledge sets continually change, are honed, and react to cultural, economic, and population shifts. Their knowledge-based reactions, largely supported and grown by current AVID professional trainings, help AVID teachers respond to the overall needs of their underserved students. Their continual responses and
growth displays are typical of AVID teachers’ agility, flexibility, and willingness to acquire knowledge of the mind and intellect. AVID teacher knowledge sets include knowledge of the AVID curriculum and inquiry-based pedagogical strategies, and the contexts of the communities in which they teach.

_AVID teachers know inquiry-based curriculum._ Knowledge about the AVID curriculum and strategies is crucial for student success and development. Simply put, AVID teachers know the content they teach. They understand the curricular focus on critical writing and argumentation skills and know how to create classroom activities that nurture such skills. Survey item 41, an indicator of the Content Knowledge variable, states, “I am confident that I can explain the concepts that are fundamental to the AVID curriculum,” and 86% of participants responded they either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. AVID teachers have a deep knowledge about the inquiry-based, collaborative teaching strategies promoted and partly developed by the AVID program.

AVID teachers’ acute knowledge of inquiry-based strategies is supported by their responses to survey item 33, an indicator of the Assessment variable that states, “My students display their opinions in the following ways (please select all that apply to you).” Ninety-eight percent of participants noted their students displayed opinions during class discussion. Ninety-six percent of participants illustrated their students shared opinions via responses during small group activities, and 96% of respondents indicated their students displayed responses through written responses. All three methods of instruction are inquiry-based.
*AVID teachers know the importance of student contexts in their learning.* AVID teachers know about their students. They know a myriad of their students’ unique backgrounds and experiences and know where their students’ parents are coming from philosophically, culturally, and socioeconomically. AVID teachers know this contextual knowledge helps open lines of communication between families, teachers, and students and helps overcome cultural and linguistic barriers. They also know the events happening in the community in which the school is located and the varied communities in which their students interact. In response to survey item 35, an indicator of the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching variable, 89% of respondents indicated they discussed events happening in the community on either a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. AVID teachers know the contexts in which students participate impact their achievement. This knowledge set helps AVID teachers differentiate instruction and meet the individualized needs of their students. Participant C demonstrated this point as she stated:

_Honestly they [AVID teachers] have to have flexibility and differentiation. In my experience I just feel it [AVID teachers] has to be the kind of teacher that can differentiate based on every student’s different background. They have to understand that some people go home and have a tutor waiting for them and a computer and a printer and their parents help them. Some go home and have to raise their siblings while their mothers gone and have to feed them and don’t start their homework till ten o’clock; yet, teachers are expecting the exact same results from these students. It’s really important that teachers recognize strengths and weaknesses and then tries to level the playing field by making sure they are helping them get over whatever obstacle is in their way._
Practices

AVID teachers reveal and utilize an extensive collection of teaching practices based on flexibility and patience. The teaching practices discussed in this section are driven by their attitudes and knowledge sets, which are the foundations of their actions. The key practices illustrated by AVID teachers are their practices of reflecting about their teaching practice to inform their teaching and teaching the whole child.

AVID teachers use inquiry-based teaching practices. Much of AVID teachers’ practice utilizes the Socratic Seminar. This method of inquiry is based on the philosopher Socrates who deemed collaboratively discussing and discovering knowledge through democratic and respectful dialogue, thus validating individual experience, to be the most valuable way of learning. This process in practice is a controlled discussion whereby the AVID teacher is not directly involved in the dialogue but ensures the specified rules of interaction are adhered to. The AVID Tutorial method is a student-centered inquiry process of a student posing questions to a small group of other students about any topic. The particular student who poses the question during this process explains why he or she does not understand a given concept and seeks understanding from other students. This process is not to be confused with the traditional notion of tutoring as it necessitates students’ understanding of why they do not understand and requires reflection about ways in which they come to understand and will come to understand in the future.
Participant E, a former AVID student, also noted the importance of inquiry-based teaching strategies as she explained, “Educationally teaching them the inquiry process with tutorials. Teaching them how to think something through and obviously learning how to help each other is not only helping them academically but helping them with their social and people skills.” AVID teachers facilitate learning and development through student-centered activities and the use of the AVID inquiry- and discovery-based methods rather than top-down instructional techniques. Interview responses indicate the AVID curriculum and inquiry-based teaching strategies focus on critical thinking, problem solving, and overall inquiry and deconstruction, a departure from curriculum geared only toward increasing test scores. Such strategies are better suited in a facilitator-led classroom. Participant D, an AVID teacher for 10 years and a teacher for a total of 15 years, illustrated the utility of inquiry-based strategies such as the Socratic Seminar as she noted:

Socratic seminar is one of them and I started using, AVID has a program called AVID Weekly, which is a certain number of topical articles, I think it’s twelve to fifteen every month. Covering a wide range of topics like nuclear war or saggy pants or any of the newest hit on the key thing that’s going on and teaching the kids how to talk about issues without attacking each other. I think the Socratic seminars and topical articles really do that and I think that’s a component of democracy that we don’t see very much on television.

*AVID teachers show students they care.* AVID teachers take notice and make sense of student communication as a means of creating an interactive caring relationship (Ayers 2001; Noddings, 2005). Survey item 74 illustrated the strength of such caring practices. An indicator of the Caring variable, it states, “In my class, my students would
say we have created a caring community,” and 97% of participants indicated this statement was true for either 100% or 80% of their students. AVID teachers communicate how the AVID curriculum applies to their lives and why it is useful. This practice is in line with Ladson-Billings’ (1994, 2009) work stating that providing educational self-determination through meaningful curriculum pertaining to students’ lives is more effective in increasing achievement than local, state, and federal policies providing the reason and content for individual educational determination. AVID teachers listen deeply to what their students say and know how to interpret student language and methods of communication. Additionally, this theme displays AVID teachers’ practice of nurturing an interactive, holistic relationship between teacher and student. They cultivate confidence by eliminating fear about taking challenging courses. AVID teachers show students they care about them by listening to them and engaging them in dialogue. Such activities are supported by Noddings’ (2005) research.

AVID reflect about their teaching practice. AVID teachers’ practice of reflection is a crucial part of their growth and a primary contributing factor that supports their ability to continually meet the needs of underserved students. Survey item 51, an indicator of the variable Reflection and Continuous Growth, states, “I am reflective about my own thinking and practice because I (please select all that apply to you).” Ninety-three percent of respondents noted they thought about how they could improve their practice and 84% of respondents stated they asked for advice about their practice. Similarly, survey item 61, an indicator of the variable Reflection and Continuous Growth,
states, “I get my best ideas for teaching by reflecting on what worked and what did not work in my classroom,” and 90% of respondents indicated this was very true or true of what they do.

*AVID teachers practice culturally relevant, responsive pedagogy.* AVID teachers integrate students’ unique cultural experiences into classroom activities and contexts. They respect student culture and continually integrate cultural experiences into classroom activities and curriculum, helping students become socially literate and helping them know how they fit into the broader context of their communities and global world (Gay, 2010). Articulated above is the practice of incorporating student’s background and culture into the context of the AVID classroom. Participant D offered a strong example of such practice:

Some of it’s through Socratic seminar. A lot of it is through getting to know you activities. Where we’re doing oral presentations during the year, talk about who you are, bring something in from your culture. Talk about a holiday, at the holidays I try do something outside of just Christmas and Hanukkah. What are the holidays in your culture? Or maybe your culture doesn’t have any holidays or your religion and so giving them a way to share those things. When one of them is having a Quinceañera, I ask them to share with the class what your doing and what that is. So the kids who don’t have Quinceañeras know what they’re talking about and the ones that do feel validated. I try listening to where they are and have them explain what they’re experiencing. Sometimes just get into a big circle and what do you need to share, what do you need to get off your chest, what crap do you need to get out and then throw it in the waste basket in the center of the circle. That helps them just get it off their chest.

*AVID teachers practice comprehensive culturally responsive teaching as they teach the whole child,* in that they discover and honor students’ self-perceptions (Gay, 2010). The collected quantitative and qualitative data and subsequent analyses
established that AVID teachers play a variety of significant roles in students’ lives, ultimately centered around developing students to become socially just citizens. Survey item 20, an indicator of the Caring variable, displays this commitment to social justice as 91% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement, “I feel responsible for helping students develop into an ethical and moral persons.” AVID teachers listen to and observe students as a means of perceiving their array of individual needs based on their cultural backgrounds and experiences. AVID teachers then adapt their classroom activities to address events happening in the community. Survey item 32, an indicator of the Planning for Instruction variable, captured this practice as it stated, “Even if I spend a long time planning a lesson, I have no problem changing it to better serve my students’ needs.” Ninety-five percent of participants responded this was either very true or true of what they do. Ayers (2001) revealed the current educational system is built on a deficit model instead of one that treats student strengths as a starting point for student development and learning.

Such a strategy is a direct reflection of Gay’s (2010) culturally responsive teaching framework as she explained that when teachers identify positive student attributes and praise student action and achievement, teachers empower students. A way AVID teachers support students in identifying their strengths is by using each student’s individual background and life experiences as a starting point for such identification. Additionally, AVID teachers differentiate instruction based on diverse student experiences, backgrounds, and strengths. AVID teachers also use strategies to show
students that others have had their same experiences and are successful. It is done as a means of connecting what students do in the classroom with their futures beyond the classroom. A critical component of the AVID program is individual determination, which begins with student empowerment. AVID teachers empower students by validating their cultural, experiential and linguistic identity in their daily practices.

   **AVID teachers link student knowledge.** AVID teachers practice such validation by implementing activities linking the knowledge they have to new knowledge, thus communicating to students they bring crucial knowledge and experiences to the AVID classroom. Survey item 48, an indicator of the Learner Development variable, states, “I implement activities so my students can link new knowledge to prior knowledge.” Ninety-one percent of respondents stated this practice was either very true or true of what they did. Gay (2010) noted validating a student’s culture makes learning appropriate for students by connecting their home culture to their learning in the classroom. The process of linking new knowledge to old knowledge including linking student experience with curricular concepts validates both student knowledge and experience (Gay, 2010). AVID teachers know this practice helps students feel empowered knowing they are part of their educational success (Gay, 2010).

   **AVID teachers collaborate and integrate collaborative activities in their classrooms.** At the center of what AVID teachers do is work with others to support student success. AVID teachers communicate with and work collaboratively with parents, counselors, and their AVID site team members to increase student achievement.
To this end, they communicate with school site employees and directly impact the courses AVID students take and for which they are eligible. AVID teachers advocate for students by communicating with school board members and district administrators about the importance of AVID and how it serves students. They also advocate for students by talking to students’ parents about student strengths.

A foundation of the AVID program is the necessity of working with a team to increase student achievement. Considering this foundation, AVID teachers collaborate with their AVID site team and the broader AVID community within the context of established AVID professional trainings. AVID teachers participate in ongoing professional growth and educational trainings. They collaborate with individuals from the community who serve to overcome language barriers and communicate with a myriad of people to support student success. AVID teachers work and communicate with a variety of individuals. Participant C described how she communicated with her students’ teachers as a way of advocating for and supporting her students:

Well when I know a circumstance, personally, I’ll talk to the teacher and I don’t necessarily go into detail but I’ll just say listen they’re trying to reach out by being in the drama program and for you to not to give them a little leeway with the homework because they’re trying to be more involved with the school. So can you please give them a little more time to handle it because they’re really trying to balance everything.

Similarly, Participant A displayed the collaboration between, and reliance on, the AVID regional staff. He explained:

I believe that you need the support of your regional staff. They [AVID regional staff] visit often and they just sit in classrooms and they give us really good
objective feedback on how things are going. They give us advice on things we don’t see.

AVID teachers work with their site teams to plan both classroom activities and sequence curriculum for the overall program and activities that best meet the needs of individual AVID students. AVID teachers also act as liaisons when they communicate with local businesses and community members regarding the skills most looked for when hiring new employees and plan their instruction based on the information. A method for achieving such integration is AVID teachers’ practice of creating and nurturing a safe team-like environment where students feel comfortable exploring assumptions about knowledge and identity. Survey responses to item 49, an indicator of the Instructional Strategies variable, stating, “My students consistently work together in my classroom,” resulted in 96% of participants articulating this as either very true or true of what their students did. AVID teachers work diligently to help shape students’ self-perceptions by helping them see themselves as learners and discover how they learn best. A critical method for fostering this discovery is to integrate collaborative and highly interactive activities into the classroom. Eighty-one percent of participants responded it was very true or true of what they did with regard to item 44, an indicator of Instructional Strategies, which states, “All my classroom activities build students’ capacity to respectfully interact face-to-face with others.” The strong descriptive statistical display as well as the prevalence of the Instructional Strategies variable throughout the qualitative interview data offers support that this variable is a vital factor of AVID teachers’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices.
AVID teachers motivate students by celebrating success. AVID teachers motivate their students by celebrating their successes, as they understand the current educational system is based on a deficit model in which students are continually reminded about what they do not know or cannot do, rather than being reminded about what they do know and can do. AVID teachers practice celebration and identification of student strengths as a strategy to engage their students in their own learning and for them to celebrate the knowledge they bring to the classroom. AVID teachers celebrate student success and focus on what students can do and what they are good at as a method of building confidence.

AVID teachers do not allow failure. As articulated throughout this study, attitudes drive practice and while AVID teachers clearly persist in not allowing students to fail, they do so because of their deep belief that students should not fail. While AVID teachers hold the attitude that moments of student frustration often spur intellectual and personal growth, they persist in doing whatever they can to ensure student development and prevent students from failing (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002). Given such student-driven, inquiry-based, deconstructive learning, AVID teachers are patient when students experience moments of frustration and perceived failure during such activities and use those moments to foster individual student development and growth. AVID teachers consider the different pace at which students learn and discover meaning. AVID teachers never give up trying to help students develop and grow. An Example of this practice is seen in chapter 4 under the subheading Instructional Strategies on page 130 whereby
participant D describes how she utilizes strategies, which allow her students to work together, trying and failing continually to solve problems. Also in chapter 4 under the subheading *Examples of teacher as facilitator of independent development in interview responses* on page 138, Participant B explains his practice of being patient and not becoming frustrated when students experience failure. He illustrates the practice of permitting students to experience failure without giving up on helping students achieve success.

**Recommendations**

Creating a quality teaching force begins with recruitment into the profession (notably teacher preparation programs). Important formative experiences for pre-service teachers are profoundly tied to the quality of the curriculum of teacher preparation programs. Therefore, the recommendations derived from this study can be influential for teacher preparation programs, both in terms of whom they recruit and on what their curriculum focuses. Furthermore, there should be recruitment and development of teachers who can respond to today’s highly diverse student populations. Nieto and Bode (2012) outlined specific criteria for this charge, which is discussed below.

**Teacher Preparation Programs**

There should be a thoughtful investment in teacher preparation programs that hold high expectations for the graduates of such programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010). As Sleeter (2001) argued, to serve an increasing number of diverse students, teachers should be culturally aware and responsive, and opportunities to develop these dispositions and
knowledge sets should be built into teacher preparation program coursework and practice. This criterion includes recruiting and developing teachers who integrate anti-discriminatory practices into curricula and honor the basic right of all students to receive a rich, artistic, and academic education. Another noteworthy recommendation of this study is to recruit and develop teachers who refute the notion that multicultural education is only for linguistically diverse students of color. In addition, educators and educational policymakers should help develop and recruit teachers who further the pervasiveness of multicultural education far beyond the narrow context of the classroom. This criterion includes the recruitment and development of teachers who empower students to act and advocate for social justice and practice methods of critical pedagogy, the heart of learning and knowledge, for true change to occur in education (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

**District Personnel and School Site Administrators**

District and school site administrators should identify tools that will allow them to recruit culturally responsive teachers who are, in turn, highly qualified to teach today’s increasingly diverse student population. Moreover, school administrators and teacher preparation programs should make efforts to recruit and retain teachers who:

- continually want to become better teachers
- believe all students can achieve high personal and academic goals
- believe they should be persistent in helping students meet their goals
- believe students have different learning needs
- believe in empowering students to be independent
– believe in collaboration
– believe motivation is a key factor of learning
– believe programmatic success is multi-dimensional

This study also displays the importance of recruiting and developing teachers who care for their students (Ayers, 2001, 2004; Gay, 2010; Lyman, 2000; Noddings, 1999, 2005), as AVID teachers increase student achievement in part due to their persistent, interactive, relational caring for students and their conceptualization of students as whole and complex individuals. Moreover, school and district administrators should recruit, and teacher preparation programs should develop, teachers who practice and believe in social justice (Oakes & Lipton, 2007). Such teachers create classrooms that are apprenticeships for how to effectively live within a social democracy (Oakes & Lipton, 2007).

A study recommendation echoed by Rockoff et al. (2008) as well as by Corcoran et al. (2011) is to recruit, screen, and retain culturally responsive, caring, and quality teachers by utilizing attitudinal- and characteristic-based assessments of teacher quality and effectiveness, as current indicators are too narrow. The final recommendation derived from this study focuses on the importance of fostering teacher teams and teacher collaboration. This study offers critical support that educational policymakers should consider and implement policy giving teachers the systematic opportunity to share knowledge with their colleagues and collaborate as a routine part of their daily practice as noted by Darling-Hammond (2010).
AVID Program

Teacher preparation programs and district/school employers are guided by policies set at the state and national levels, many of which derive from policy documents like that which outlines the 12 indicators of teacher quality identified by the Council of Chief State School Officers. While this study suggests these indicators are indeed reflective of the practices and values held by teachers like those in the AVID program, this research also indicates that policies and criteria about teacher effectiveness should be expanded to include culturally relevant, responsive, and caring frameworks of teaching. While the CCSSO offers a largely comprehensive set of factors to be considered when identifying, evaluating, and researching teacher quality, such standards fail to include the frameworks pervasive throughout the qualitative and quantitative data generated by this study.

Therefore, a key recommendation that emerged out of this study is for the CCSSO and other policy bodies to expand their primary indicators of teacher quality to include culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and caring frameworks of teaching. A key recommendation borne out of this study is to integrate the AVID teaching strategies and foundational philosophy into schools with significant populations of underserved students. Additionally, the AVID program should continue integrating Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2010) frameworks into their professional development programs. This research makes the case that the AVID equity program works in part due
to teachers; thus, funding for the development of such teachers and the AVID program should continue.

Transformational Leadership Implications

Tension, debate, and critical discussion about how we conceptualize the role and contribution of teachers have always existed. This study supports the notion Nieto and Bode (2012) keenly posited that teachers are not only powerful in creating transformational change within the classroom, but they are powerful in creating transformational change on both school structural and policy levels. The AVID teachers in this study embody precisely what Nieto and Bode (2012) noted, that teachers are heroes, have choices in the classroom, and can choose how they interact and connect with students. AVID teachers also support what Nieto and Bode (2012) articulated, that teachers have power and can collaboratively create power; they can ask questions such as, “what kind of society do we hope they will create?” (p. xvi); they believe in quality public education and that multicultural education is appropriate for every student, “regardless of ethnicity, race, language, social class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or other differences” (p. 6); and they believe teachers are central in shaping the lives and identities of students.

Freire’s (1968, 2009) work supports the idea that separating the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of K-12 teachers from the notion of transformative leadership is unproductive, as within the context of this study teaching is by nature transformative. Thankfully, the educational community has begun referring to teachers
as teacher-leaders and thus begun the process of earnestly integrating the day-to-day practices of teachers with the construct of educational leadership. This study serves as an example among many that educational leadership exists within many contexts, under the guise of many titles and within the realm of a multitude of environments. Given the critical work of AVID program teachers and their role as transformative, emancipatory leaders among their students, colleagues, and within the AVID community, we can begin to validate the practice of teaching (Noddings, 2003) as necessarily the practice of leadership. Furthermore, this study brings to the forefront not only the need to recruit, retain, and develop teachers who care, but it also indicates school leaders and decision makers should practice and model such a framework. School and educational leaders too should consider the seemingly soft ethic of caring. As Nevarez and Wood keenly articulate, “concepts such as compassion, understanding, and trust undergrid this ethic [ethic of care]. When addressing dilemmas from this paradigm, leaders are concerned with supporting, affirming, and empowering the disadvantaged (Nevarez & Wood, 2010, p. 113).

Policy Implications

Teacher characteristics including attitudes and dispositions are critically important to the broad statewide and national policy discussion about expanding the criteria for understanding good schools, teachers, and programs. Moreover, creating policy structures that allow teachers with these attitudes, knowledge sets, and subsequent practices to truly learn about their students as whole people enables them to then advance
their learning on many dimensions. Where policy documents tend to focus on more easily measurable indicators that are narrowly defined and assessed such as content knowledge and assessment, the data in this study reveal it is the soft skills AVID teachers exhibited with the most consistency. The implications for teacher preparation and for professional development, as well as for recruitment, are that attitudinal characteristics, which foster the consideration of the whole child, should be nurtured in such realms.

While the participants of this study illustrated the 12 pre-selected variables, generated by state-based educational organizations and educational researchers, their representations of the variables as compared to the definitions of the variables were discursively different. However, even though the language used by AVID teachers and the language used by the Council of Chief State School Officers and leading educational researchers differed, they were conceptually the same. As Darling-Hammond (2010) illustrated, it is an issue of intellectual and practical accessibility due in part to the difference in language.

Darling-Hammond (2010) also noted this disconnection as she explained teachers need time to share knowledge with their colleagues based on research, yet the intended audience of research is not teachers so there is a disconnection between current educational research and policy written about quality teaching practices. Darling-Hammond (2010) further articulated an acute disparity between current educational knowledge and research about effective teaching practices and teacher access to, with time to access, that knowledge. Darling-Hammond (2010) explained, “a far greater
percentage of U.S. teachers’ work time is spent teaching than in most countries – about 80%, as compared to 60% on average for secondary teachers in the 31 OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] countries” (p. 201).

Therefore, policymakers should consider and implement ways to make educational research more accessible for teachers and should integrate funding strategies that allow teachers to conduct their own action research.

There is a disconnection between policy dialogue and how teachers explain what they do, displaying the need for action research conducted by actual educational practitioners that could inform how policymakers interpret educational needs. This study also serves as support that quality teachers are a crucial factor in positive student achievement and increased success among underserved populations (Barnes, 2006; Boyd et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Thus, as Darling-Hammond posited (2010), investing in teachers is essential to the well-being and development of our country, and developing competent teachers means developing an infrastructure for quality teaching.

Students in the U.S. experience unequal education (Darling-Hammond, 2007, 2010; Nieto, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2005) as evidenced by a persistent achievement gap. A way for policymakers to close this gap is to have a, “policy strategy that creates a 21st-century curriculum for all students and supports it with thoughtful assessments, access to knowledgeable, well-supported teachers, and equal access to school resources” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 327)
Suggestions for Future Research

This study creates a critical space for AVID teachers to conduct ethnographic, qualitative research about their experiences working within the AVID program. Future research might also include qualitative studies that use in-depth field notes, and interviews to offer insight about why middle and high school AVID teachers contribute to closing the achievement gap and meet the needs of historically underserved students. The researcher created an extensive survey instrument based on 12 main variables that captured the attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices of today’s highest quality teachers. Future studies might utilize the survey developed for this study as it would speak to Corcoran et al.’s (2011) research suggesting measures including teacher attitudinal characteristics. The specific focus of the survey used for this study, coupled with traditional indicators, such as certification status and professional experience, are effective indicators in identifying current or prospective teacher effectiveness. This study suggests significant relationships between variables fundamental to quality teaching and could be further understood using a quantitative regression analysis of the Pearson product moment-correlation results to predict teacher quality. Future research is also needed about the relationship between teachers’ rhetorical and discursive display of their attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices as compared to how policy represents such facets. This study makes clear that further action research, meaning research conducted by those who practice teaching, is needed as those who serve the needs of marginalized students know their needs and meet their needs each day.
Conclusion

A key element of programmatic and school success is the quality of its teachers. This study further develops our understanding about the AVID program’s success in closing the achievement gap and serving a highly diverse population by knowing more about the vital characteristics of quality teachers. This study adds to the already extensive body of AVID research but fills in the gap about common attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices shared by AVID elective teachers. This research is significant in that knowing more about the characteristics of quality teachers who serve historically marginalized populations is one way for our educational system to respond to the need to create and recruit quality teachers who can meet the varied needs of an increasingly diverse cultural, linguistic, academic, and socio-economic population of 21st-century students. This study also beckons teacher educators and school and district administrators to be strategic and rigorous in their selection of and support for teachers, making sure that new teachers are purposefully hired and carefully nurtured to develop into professionals that display the knowledge, skills and dispositions of the AVID teachers in this sample. Moreover, this study supports teacher educators, school and district administrators, and educational policymakers to meet the challenge of educating all students, rather than some, and thus closing the ever-present achievement gap. Research, such as this study about teachers who meet the needs of perpetually underserved students, addresses educational inequities by focusing on teacher quality, as
again teachers are not only fundamental to successful students, schools, and programs, they can also be transformational in this realm.

An overarching concept running through the quantitative and qualitative data was that AVID teachers are deeply committed to their students’ development, are philosophically driven, and maintain the goal of transforming their students’ lives using education as the primary vehicle. Each action of the typical middle and high school AVID teacher, however seemingly miniscule, is propelled by the sheer persistence to transform and empower students. Simply put, their practice is prophetic. AVID teachers willingly offer their hearts, minds, perspectives, and experiences to students because they know quality teaching and education is holistic and considers the complexity of the human experience. They respect their students and perceive teaching and interacting with their students as a distinct honor. While AVID teachers work within the same bureaucratic and restrictive structure of many public school teachers, they create positive transformative change in their students’ lives daily, relentlessly. The average AVID teacher accomplishes above average student achievement supporting the notion that teachers indeed have the power to transform students, classrooms, programs, and schools.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Human Subject Application and Approval

Request for Review by the Sacramento State Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (Revised 09/2010)

Submit 11 copies of this form and any attachments to the Office of Research Administration, Hornet Bookstore, Suite 3400, mail code 6111. Please type your responses or use a word processor. Handwritten forms will be returned without review.

Project Title: Successfully Serving the Underserved; Profiles of AVID Teachers

Funding Agency (if any): NA

Name(s) and affiliation(s) of Researchers: Lauren Krista Handler EDD Candidate, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies, College of Education

Mailing address (or Department and campus mail code): 701 21st Street, apt B, Sacramento, CA, 95811

Phone number and E-mail address of researcher: 916-293-1140 lhandler21@gmail.com

Anticipated starting date: December 1, 2011

Name of faculty sponsor (for student research) Dr. Pia Wong

E-mail address of sponsor: wongp@csus.edu

1. Who will participate in this research as subjects (e.g., how many people, from what source, using what criteria for inclusion or exclusion)? How will you recruit their participation (e.g., what inducements, if any, will be offered)? How will you avoid any conflict of interest as a researcher?
This study involves two phases of data collection and synthesis. The first phase includes surveying participants (AVID teacher). The second phase includes interviewing 3 of the survey participants (AVID teachers), and creating case studies based on both survey and interview data.

Based on the survey data, and trends that emerge, I will identify 3 teachers that typify AVID instructors. I will conduct phone or face-to-face interviews, which will ultimately inform case studies of individual AVID teachers. The format will be determined by the location of the interviewee.

The specific criteria for selecting the teachers who will participate in the interviews, is as follows: I will analyze the survey data to find respondents who consistently and uniformly display positive response patterns, and respondents whom matched a typical, or average, profile of an AVID teacher (opinions, attitudes, beliefs, education, and teaching background). The average cases will offer insight into the next level of effectiveness for AVID teachers; the case studies will also illuminate attitudinal similarities amongst AVID teachers.

The Myavid.org allows me to identify AVID Certified schools in California (955 Certified schools in California), and also gives me the contact information for all AVID teachers, and their Site Coordinators. I will forward the survey link to each teacher’s Site Coordinator and participants will voluntarily agree to take the survey. I am choosing not to contact AVID teachers directly, and will in turn distribute the survey link via the Site Coordinator as I want their identities to remain anonymous to me. I will recruit participants by emailing and/or calling each AVID teacher’s Site Coordinator and will ask the Coordinator to distribute the survey link (by email) to AVID teachers at their school. I will ask the Site Coordinators to explain that their participation is voluntary, but will help AVID research.

A perceived conflict of interest is that I am surveying and interviewing AVID teachers and I have taught the AVID elective course. I began addressing this issue when I asked not to teach the AVID elective course this year (2011-12) as not to further bias my research about effective teaching. I also plan to avoid this conflict of interest by using major educational organizations and governing bodies (for example the: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Education Association, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, & Council of Chief State School Officers) to define what it means to be a good teacher (opposed to my personal, or the AVID program’s set of criteria) which I achieve in Chapter 2 of my dissertation proposal. Additionally, I have also stated the reason for conducting my research, what the data will be used for, and my philosophical ideas about education, within the cover page of the survey (cover page, consent form, survey). The cover page includes the following: the
purpose of my study, a thank you to participants, an articulation of who I am and what I am doing, my research questions, what my research will do, how many respondents I hope to get, and that I will issue each participant a login (once they have a login all information is protected).

2. How will informed consent be obtained from the subjects? Attach a copy of the consent form you will use. If a signed written consent will not be obtained, explain what you will do instead and why. (See Appendix C in Policies and Procedures for examples of consent forms, an example of an assent form for children, and a list of consent form requirements. Also see the section on Informed Consent in Policies and Procedures.)

The participants of my study will be given a consent form and must consent before they can access the online survey, or participate in the interview. The consent forms are attached to this document. The consent forms include the following information, the: purpose of the research, research procedures, risks, benefits, confidentiality, compensation, contact information, signature of consent to participate in the online survey, and signature of consent to participate in the interview.

3. How will the subjects’ rights to privacy and safety be protected? (See the section on Level of Risk in Policies and Procedures. For online surveys, also answer the checklist questions at the end of Appendix B in Policies and Procedures.)

1. The Survey Monkey Gold package provides me with a record that captures the participant’s consent before starting the survey. This record is logged with a time and date stamp.

2. The Survey Monkey software uses https encryption. Furthermore, the Survey Monkey Gold package prevents respondent from accidentally entering survey data via the http protocol and the server displays an error message.

3. The access to the research database is limited to authorized persons by means of a username and password. The Survey Monkey company has signed a confidentiality agreement that prevents it from improperly accessing or disclosing the information contained in the research database.

4. The servers that contain the research data are located in data centers that have physical security and environmental controls.

5. The Survey Monkey program backs up in real time continuously. There is no limited time period in which a deleted dataset can still be retrieved but after which
the data will be permanently destroyed. In order to retrieve deleted information I will need to provide Survey Monkey support staff with my user name, survey title, the date of deletion, and the collector name so they can attempt to retrieve the deleted information.

6. The respondent's IP address is masked from the researcher (me).

Participants’ names will not be used in the research. Participants’ right to safety will be ensured by the nature of the survey questions. The survey and research questions are about teaching, a typical, and a culturally and professionally appropriate topic of discussion amongst teachers (my participants).

4. Summarize the study’s purpose, design, and procedures. (Do not attach lengthy grant proposals, etc.)

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to create an informative profile of the typical AVID teacher and develop case studies exemplifying AVID teachers as to better understand program effectiveness. This research seeks to inform teacher preparation programs, teacher hiring practices, and teacher training programs. This study seeks to develop a robust profile of AVID teachers so we might better hypothesize the role of teachers in the AVID program.

Procedures & Design
Survey data will inform attribute and philosophical commonalities amongst AVID teachers. Also based on this data, I will create case studies that exemplify attributes and knowledge sets shared by AVID teachers. This study contributes to the gap in literature regarding attributes and a prototypical profile of AVID teachers. The conclusion of this study will recommend attributes and knowledge sets desirable within the teaching profession, specifically for those working with underserved students.

5. Describe the content of any tests, questionnaires, interviews, etc. in the research. Attach copies of the questions. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use?

The survey and interview questions reveal participants’ beliefs about teaching and education. Please see the attached information for a copy of the complete survey, and list of interview questions. There is minimal risk, discomfort, or harm involved in participants taking the survey and answering the interview questions. This survey is based on other similar surveys about teaching such as Albert Bandura’s Self-Efficacy survey. There is minimal risk for participants as they are sharing their opinions and I have
no way to connect their opinions with their current teaching positions; I would be unable to use this information to impact participants’ employment status.

6. Describe any physical procedures in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use? (The committee will seek review and recommendation from a qualified on-campus medical professional for any medical procedures.)

NA

7. Describe any equipment or instruments and any drugs or pharmaceuticals that will be used in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use? (The committee will seek review and recommendation from a qualified on-campus medical professional for the use of any drugs or pharmaceuticals.

I will be using an audio-recorder to record the interviews. There is minimal risk in using this device.

8. Taking all aspects of this research into consideration, do you consider the study to be “exempt,” “no risk,” “minimal risk,” or “at risk?” Explain why. (See the section on Level of Risk in Policies and Procedures.)

I consider this study to be minimal risk because the topics on the survey are those that could be carried out in everyday, and real-world conversation. The protocol for participation begins with participants’ informed consent and then participants are issued a login making reported information anonymous. I also consider this research to be minimal risk as I have no established link to individual participants or their employment status.
For protocols approved as “at risk”, the researcher is required to file semiannual reports with the committee that describe the recruiting of subjects, progress on the research, interactions with the sponsor, and any adverse occurrences or changes in approved procedures. In addition, the committee reserves the right to monitor “at risk” research as it deems appropriate. Failure to file the required progress reports may result in suspension of approval for the research.

______________________________  ______________________
Signature of Researcher                   Date

______________________________  ______________________
Signature of Faculty Sponsor
(for student research)                   Date

Signature of your department or division chair confirms that he or she has had an opportunity to see your human subjects application.

______________________________  ______________________
Signature of Department/Division Chair                  Date

Questions about the application procedures for human subjects approval may be directed to the Office of Research Administration, (916) 278-7565, or to any member of the committee. Questions about how to minimize risks should be directed to a committee member. Applicants are encouraged to contact a committee member whose professional field most closely corresponds to that of the researcher. See www.csus.edu/research/humansubjects/ for a list of committee members and the current year’s due dates for submitting an application.
To assure prompt review of your application, ALL researchers should complete this checklist:

- Have you written an appropriate answer for each question on the application form? (Please do not attach research proposals, grant applications, etc. as the committee cannot read such documents.)

- Have you answered all of the questions on the application form? (Please enter “N/A” if a particular question does not apply to your research.)

- Have you provided an e-mail address and a phone number where you can be reached on the application?

- Have you (and all co-researchers) signed the application form? Has your department or division chair also signed the application form?

- Have you included your consent form with your application? Does that consent form identify you as the researcher and your department?

- Does your consent form clearly describe what participants will be asked to do in your research? Does it clearly describe any direct benefit they will receive as a result of their participation? Does it clearly describe any risks they will be exposed to during their participation, and what you will do to minimize those risks?

- Have you included with your application any screening forms that will be used to determine the eligibility of participants for your research?

- Have you described in your application any potential conflict of interest between your role as a researcher and any other relationship you may have with the participants or with an organization that is a source of your participants? This could occur if some or all of the participants are your students, employees, co-workers, friends, etc. Have you also described how you will avoid any such conflict of interest?

- Have you included with your application all tests, questionnaires, surveys, interview questions, focus group questions, etc. that will be used in your research?

- Have you checked the grammar and spelling throughout all of your documents?
Have you prepared 11 copies of your complete application packet, including all attachments, for the committee? Does one of those copies have original signatures?

Have you retained an electronic copy of your application that can be edited and resubmitted with any changes requested by the committee? (This will be forwarded to your Dean.)
STUDENT researchers must also complete this checklist:

- Have you met with your faculty advisor before preparing your application? Has your faculty advisor thoroughly reviewed all of your materials before you submitted your application?

- Have you provided an e-mail address and a phone number where you can be reached on the application? Did you also include your home address on the application?

- Have you included the name of your faculty advisor and that person’s e-mail address on your application?

- Has your application been signed by you, any co-researchers, and your faculty advisor? Did you submit an original copy of your application with all of those signatures?

- Does your department have an approved Human Subjects committee that reviews student research projects? (As of July 2009, the approved departments are Child Development; Communication Studies; Criminal Justice; Economics; Educational Leadership & Policy Studies; Kinesiology & Health Science; Nursing; Psychology; Public Policy & Administration; Social Work; Sociology; Special Education, Rehabilitation & School Psychology; and Teacher Education.) If your research is in one of these departments, it must be reviewed and approved by that department’s committee first. Has your department’s committee completed the following form?

DEPARTMENT HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Project Title: _____________________________________________

Student Researcher: _______________________________________

Faculty Sponsor: __________________________________________

The ____________________________ Department’s human subjects committee has reviewed and approved this application. It requires review by the CPHS because the research is considered (circle one) Minimal Risk or At Risk.

__________________________________________ ______________________
Name of department’s human subjects chairperson E-mail address of chairperson
APPENDIX B

Supplementary California Budget Information

The Public Policy Institute of California outlines past and current aspects of California’s budget structure and legislative history that play a noteworthy role in California’s low academic achievement. There are various nuances contributing to problems surrounding education in California, yet the PPIC dissolves this multitude of factors into roughly three salient areas. These three areas consist of California’s *limited and volatile revenue sources, budgetary process, tax structure, and expenditures*. The PPIC reveals that California relies more profoundly than other states on economically unstable sources of revenue. Ninety percent (PPIC, 2010) of California’s state revenue is derived from a fundamentally fickle and restricted source, income tax. Income tax, as the PPIC stated, “is a volatile revenue source because it relies on a narrow slice of taxpayers (in 2007, the top 1% of filers paid 48% of the tax) whose earnings tend to fluctuate with the economy [as do sales taxes]” (PPIC, 2010). Figure B1 displays California’s dependence on personal income tax, and thus the state’s acute reliance on a thin segment of the population to fund its vast programs and institutions.
California’s budget is defined as a *process* rather than as an actual product (California Department of Finance [DOF], 2012). The California state budget, a working document, is cycled through many governmental entities. This procedure begins in individual governmental departments, is bounced back and forth between the governor, assembly floor, senate floor and eventually back to the governor for official approval. As a result of this intricate process, only four out of the last 20 California budgets have met the June 15th deadline (LAO, 2011).

Currently California spends roughly $118 billion on public employee benefits and salaries, including post-employee services such as health care and pensions (PPIC, 2010). Simply put, California spends more on its public employees and local government, such
as K-12 education, than do most other states. While California ranks among the top 10 economies in the world (high GDP), it also spends a great deal on services (high expenditures) such as education, health, and social (PPIC, 2010). Figure B2 illustrates California’s disproportionate ratio of spending. One main reason for this imbalance is California Proposition 98. Prop 98 directs approximately 40% of the state’s general fund to be spent on K-14 education. Critics of prop 98 claim it is not fiscally responsible to spend almost half of the state budget in any one area; and specifically on an institution which is arguably failing. Others argue, educational spending is appropriate as, “California is by far the largest state [in the U.S.] and educates one in eight public school students in the United States (LAO, 2011).

![Figure B2. California State expenditures 2009-2010. (LAO, 2011)](image)
It is salient to understand the setting and structure of public school funding in California as it helps to explain why California students continue failing as compared with students in other states across the country.
APPENDIX C

Survey Instrument

AVID Teachers - Handler

You are being asked to participate in research that will be conducted by me, Lauren Handler, a Doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy at California State University, Sacramento. This study examines characteristics of AVID teachers in an effort to understand the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers who participate in this successful program.

The purpose of this study is to create an informative profile of the typical AVID teacher and develop case studies exemplifying AVID teachers as to better understand program effectiveness. This research seeks to inform teacher preparation programs, teacher hiring practices, and teacher training programs. The specific focus of this study is to address the lack of research regarding the profile of AVID instructors’ attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices. This study is driven by the notion that effective pedagogy alone is not enough to positively impact student outcomes. While research about AVID curriculum and positive student outcomes is abundant, there is little information about who teaches AVID, why they choose to do so, and what characteristics they have. This mixed methods study seeks to understand the profile of AVID teachers to better understand program effectiveness. Survey data will be used to investigate the commonalities amongst AVID teachers. This study will begin to address the gap in literature regarding attributes, and a profile of AVID teachers. I anticipate that the entire study will be completed by April 2012.

Your participation in this study consists of responding to an online survey. This survey will take 30 – 40 minutes to complete. You do not need to answer every question in the survey and you may skip questions. If you have any concerns please contact my faculty sponsor Dr. Pia Wong at (510) 278-4918, wong@csus.edu.

You will encounter a series of questions on the survey which are derived from professional, governmental, and organizational teaching standards set forth by the National Education Association, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, CUNY, and Council of Chief State School Officers. I expect over 100 participants will respond to the survey.

Your name will not be used in the research. The survey questions are about your experiences and attitudes about teaching and education. Your candid responses are much appreciated.

You may gain insight into your personal teaching practice, and your ideas about education through completing the survey. Ultimately, your participation in this study will allow the researcher to recommend attitudes, knowledge sets, and practices that help teachers succeed in the classroom. Another possible utility of this research is to inform schools and other educational agencies as they seek to hire employees and plan professional development.

The confidentiality of your identity is important to me. All survey (including personal) data will be stored in an encrypted format using the Survey Monkey Gold program.

You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact me via email at handler21@gmail.com or 916-289-1140.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Checking the box before accessing the survey, indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research.

1. Do you consent to the terms outlined above?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No
2. Please identify your age range.
   - 20–35
   - 30–50
   - 51–65
   - 65 and older

3. Please identify your gender.
   - Male
   - Female

4. In what county do you teach?

5. What are you credentialed to teach? From where did you obtain your credential? What year did you earn your credential?

6. Please list information about your B.A. (year, institution, major) and any additional degrees you have earned (Master’s and/or Doctoral degrees – year, institution, focus).
7. In addition to the AVID elective course, what subject(s) do you teach (please select all that apply to you)?

☐ math
☐ science
☐ history
☐ performing arts
☐ computer technology
☐ art
☐ physical education
☐ special education
☐ science
☐ general elective course (psychology, sociology, living on your own, medical arts, etc.)

Other (please specify)

8. What grade-level span is served at the school where you teach?

9. How many years total have you been teaching?

☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-10
☐ 11-15
☐ 16-20
☐ 21 years or longer

10. How many years have you taught the AVID elective course?

☐ 0-5 years
☐ 6-10
☐ 11-15
☐ 16-20
☐ 21 years or longer

11. What were the top 3 reasons you chose to be an AVID instructor?
AVID Teachers - Handler

12. What % of students are English learners in your AVID class?

13. What % of students are considered low socio-economic status?

14. Choose the statement that best describes your AVID class.
   - the majority of my students are White
   - the majority of my students are Latino
   - the majority of my students are Black
   - the majority of my students are Asian
   - Other (please specify)

15. What was the extent of your involvement in the AVID Certification process for your site?
   - highly involved in the certification process
   - moderately involved in the certification process
   - not involved at all in the certification process
AVID Teachers - Handler

Thank you for completing the demographic portion of the survey. The following sections of the survey are divided into different components of teaching and learning. I would like to thank you in advance for offering your most candid and representative responses to each question.

Directions: Read each statement carefully and select the response that best represents your opinion and your experiences. IN ALL SECTIONS "STUDENTS" REFERS TO YOUR AVID STUDENTS ONLY. When responding to each question, please consider only your AVID class and students.
16. I design my classroom activities so that each student is academically challenged (please place yourself on the following continuum from 1-5 where 1 represents “ideal, but impossible”, and 5 represents “possible, done daily”).
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5

17. I know the learning needs of each individual student.
   - [ ] true for 100% of my students
   - [ ] true for 60% of my students
   - [ ] true for 57% of my students
   - [ ] true for 40% of my students
   - [ ] true for 20% of my students
   - [ ] true for less than 10% of my students

18. In general my students’ home cultures positively affect their learning in my classroom.
   - [ ] strongly disagree
   - [ ] disagree
   - [ ] neither agree or disagree
   - [ ] agree
   - [ ] strongly agree

19. In general my students’ primary languages positively affect their learning in my classroom.
   - [ ] strongly disagree
   - [ ] disagree
   - [ ] neither agree or disagree
   - [ ] agree
   - [ ] strongly agree
AVID Teachers - Handler

20. I feel responsible for helping students develop into an ethical and moral person.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

21. I get some of my best ideas from my colleagues.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

22. I make the effort to seek input from.
   - 100% of my students' parents
   - 80% of my students' parents
   - 60% of my students' parents
   - 40% of my students' parents
   - 20% of my students' parents
   - Less than 10% of my students' parents

23. When I think about most of my students' parents, I think...
   - Partner
   - Colleague
   - Information provider
   - Agitator
   - Absent
   - Other (please specify)
   
   [Blank space for input]
AVID Teachers - Handler

24. I assess my students to know how to design my classroom activities.
   ○ daily
   ○ weekly
   ○ monthly
   ○ yearly

25. I implement activities to learn about my students as people.
   ○ daily
   ○ weekly
   ○ monthly
   ○ yearly

26. I know my students’ exceptional learning needs (both disabilities and giftedness) and use strategies to meet these needs.
   ○ very true of my daily practice
   ○ true of my daily practice
   ○ somewhat true of my daily practice
   ○ somewhat untrue of my daily practice
   ○ untrue of my daily practice

27. I can’t plan effective classroom activities if I don’t incorporate my students’ unique experiences, talents, culture, language, family, and community values.
   ○ very true of what I believe
   ○ true of what I believe
   ○ somewhat true of what I believe
   ○ somewhat untrue of what I believe
   ○ untrue of what I believe
28. I believe all students can learn and achieve at high levels.
   - very true of what I believe
   - true of what I believe
   - somewhat true of what I believe
   - somewhat untrue of what I believe
   - untrue of what I believe

29. My students feel valued as individuals in my classroom.
   - true for 100% of my students
   - true for 80% of my students
   - true for 60% of my students
   - true for 40% of my students
   - true for 20% of my students
   - true for 10% of my students

30. I do the following to meet the individual learning needs of my students (please select all that apply to you).
   - I adjust time
   - I adjust tasks
   - I adjust my communication
   - I adjust my assessments
   - I adjust environment

31. Adapting to students’ individual needs is just a part of what I do as a teacher.
   - very true of what I do
   - true of what I do
   - somewhat true of what I do
   - somewhat untrue of what I do
   - untrue of what I do
AVID Teachers - Handler

32. Even if I spend a long time planning a lesson, I have no problem changing it to better serve my students' needs.
   ○ very true of what I do
   ○ true of what I do
   ○ somewhat true of what I do
   ○ somewhat untrue of what I do
   ○ untrue of what I do

33. My students display their opinions in the following ways (please select all that apply to you).
   ○ student responses during class discussion
   ○ student responses during small group activities
   ○ student written responses
   ○ electronic medium (blogging, message board, email, etc.) responses
   Other (please specify)

34. Students know how they are doing in my class because (please select all that apply).
   ○ I keep the online data system updated daily
   ○ I provide timely feedback on assignments
   ○ I conduct individual student conferences outside of regular classroom time
   ○ I use a rubric to evaluate all assignments
   ○ I have my students evaluate each other (peer evaluation)
   ○ I offer regular progress checks during class
   ○ during class I discuss how student grades are calculated

35. In my classroom we discuss events happening in the community.
   ○ daily
   ○ weekly
   ○ monthly
   ○ rarely
   ○ on special occasions
AVID Teachers - Handler

36. Activities where students collaborate constitute _____ of class time.
   - 10%
   - 25%
   - 40%
   - 55%
   - 70%
   - 85%
   - 100%

37. Please place yourself on the following continuum from 1-5: (1 represents "I find out students' strengths and then build on them through class activities" and 5 represents "I find out students' weaknesses and then construct activities to strengthen them").
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

38. My students and I develop expectations together for respectful, open, and supportive academic dialogue.
   - Very true of what we do in my class
   - True of what we do in my class
   - Somewhat true of what we do in my class
   - Somewhat untrue of what we do in my class
   - Untrue of what we do in my class

39. Motivating my students is a part of my job.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree
AVID Teachers - Handler

40. In my classroom, I spend more time listening and observing my students in discussion than I do delivering a lesson to them.
- very true of what I do
- true of what I do
- somewhat true of what I do
- somewhat untrue of what I do
- untrue of what I do

41. I am confident that I can explain the concepts that are fundamental to the AVID curriculum.
- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neither agree or disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

42. I regularly review the AVID curriculum and modify it to better meet the changing needs of my students.
- very true of what I do
- true of what I do
- somewhat true of what I do
- somewhat untrue of what I do
- untrue of what I do
- very untrue of what I do

43. I know the AVID curriculum like the back of my hand.
- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neither agree or disagree
- agree
- strongly agree
AVID Teachers - Handler

44. All my classroom activities build students’ capacity to respectfully interact face-to-face with others.
   - very true of what I do
   - true of what I do
   - somewhat true of what I do
   - somewhat untrue of what I do
   - untrue of what I do
   - very untrue of what I do

45. I engage my students in evaluating new and innovative solutions to global problems.
   - very true of what I do
   - true of what I do
   - somewhat true of what I do
   - somewhat untrue of what I do
   - untrue of what I do
   - very untrue of what I do

46. In my class students think critically about a variety of ways to view an issue or concept.
   - 100% of the time
   - 80% of the time
   - 60% of the time
   - 40% of the time
   - 20% of the time
   - 10% of the time

47. I tie local issues into my lessons.
   - never
   - rarely
   - sometimes
   - often
   - always
AVID Teachers - Handler

48. I implement activities so my students can link new knowledge to prior knowledge.
- very true of what I do
- true of what I do
- somewhat true of what I do
- somewhat untrue of what I do
- untrue of what I do
- very untrue of what I do

49. My students consistently work together in my classroom.
- very true of what my students do
- true of what my students do
- somewhat true of what my students do
- somewhat untrue of what my students do
- untrue of what my students do
- very untrue of what my students do

50. My assessments are designed so that students can apply concepts to real-world issues.
- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neither agree or disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

51. I am reflective about my own thinking and practice because I (please select all that apply to you)...
- I ask for advice about my practice
- I ask to be observed by my professional peers
- I have a mentor
- I have a friend that is honest (a critical friend)
- I think about how I can improve my practice
- Other (please specify)
AVID Teachers - Handler

52. My students know what quality work looks like for the classroom because I ... (please select all that apply to you).
   - show them model assignments
   - create exams
   - use written guidelines
   - Other (please specify)

53. I modify assessment formats to meet the varied needs of my students by adjusting (please select all that apply to you)...
   - the time
   - the task
   - the environment
   - Other (please specify)

54. I gather information from my students about their experience in the class.
   - daily
   - weekly
   - monthly
   - randomly
   - on special occasions

55. I use the following type of information to improve my teaching (please select all that apply to you).
   - scholarly research
   - opinions of colleagues
   - student assessment data (history of grades)
   - family situation
   - community affiliation
   - religious orientation
   - personal observation
AVID Teachers - Handler

56. If I try hard enough, I can positively impact the learning of any student.
   - very true of what I believe
   - true of what I believe
   - somewhat true of what I believe
   - somewhat untrue of what I believe
   - untrue of what I believe
   - very untrue of what I believe

57. I love teaching AVID!
   - strongly disagree
   - disagree
   - neither agree or disagree
   - agree
   - strongly agree

58. My students assess their own progress in my class.
   - daily
   - weekly
   - monthly
   - rarely
   - on special occasions

59. My students would most likely refer to me as their ________
   - instructor
   - facilitator
   - coach
   - friend

   Other (please specify)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVID Teachers - Handler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60. I spend _______ of my time in the classroom listening to student discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ 55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 61. I get my best ideas for teaching by reflecting on what worked and what did not work in my classroom. |
| ○ very true of what I do |
| ○ true of what I do |
| ○ somewhat true of what I do |
| ○ somewhat untrue of what I do |
| ○ untrue of what I do |
| ○ very untrue of what I do |

| 62. I feel supported by my students' family and parents. |
| ○ very true for me |
| ○ true for me |
| ○ somewhat true for me |
| ○ somewhat untrue for me |
| ○ untrue for me |
| ○ very untrue for me |

| 63. I am well-versed in current education policy and research. |
| ○ very true for me |
| ○ true for me |
| ○ somewhat true for me |
| ○ somewhat untrue for me |
| ○ untrue for me |
| ○ very untrue for me |
AVID Teachers - Handler

64. I leave work feeling frustrated about the day.
   ○ never
   ○ rarely
   ○ sometimes
   ○ often
   ○ always

65. I want to get better at my teaching.
   ○ strongly disagree
   ○ disagree
   ○ neither agree or disagree
   ○ agree
   ○ strongly agree

66. I advocate for providing adequate resources for my students.
   ○ never
   ○ rarely
   ○ sometimes
   ○ often
   ○ always

67. I actively address my personal biases because I know they can affect my students.
   ○ very true of what I do
   ○ true of what I do
   ○ somewhat true of what I do
   ○ somewhat untrue of what I do
   ○ untrue of what I do
   ○ very untrue of what I do
AVID Teachers - Handler

68. The constructive criticism that is most valuable to me comes from my...
   - students' parents
   - colleagues
   - administrators
   - students
   - personal friends
   Other (please specify)

69. I have influence over decisions made at my school.

Please place yourself on the following continuum from 1 to 5. 1 represents “very influential” and 5 represents “not influential at all”.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

70. I ask for feedback about my students’ work from my AVID site team.
   - very true of what I do
   - true of what I do
   - somewhat true of what I do
   - somewhat untrue of what I do
   - untrue of what I do
   - very untrue of what I do
### AVID Teachers - Handler

#### 71. I am active in the educational community... (please select all that apply to you).
- [ ] union
- [ ] professional organization
- [ ] PTA
- [ ] school site committees
- [ ] district site committees
- [ ] student club advisor
- [ ] activity or sport coach
- [ ] Other (please specify) [ ]

#### 72. I use AVID strategies in the other classes I teach.
- [ ] very true of what I do
- [ ] true of what I do
- [ ] somewhat true of what I do
- [ ] somewhat untrue of what I do
- [ ] untrue of what I do
- [ ] very untrue of what I do

#### 73. All of my students have promise and possibility.
- [ ] very true of what I believe
- [ ] true of what I believe
- [ ] somewhat true of what I believe
- [ ] somewhat untrue of what I believe
- [ ] untrue of what I believe
- [ ] very untrue of what I believe
AVID Teachers - Handler

74. In my class, my students would say we have created a caring community.
   ○ true for 100% of my students
   ○ true for 80% of my students
   ○ true for 60% of my students
   ○ true for 40% of my students
   ○ true for 20% of my students
   ○ true for less than 10% of my students

75. I will do whatever it takes to prevent a student from failing.
   ○ strongly disagree
   ○ disagree
   ○ neither agree or disagree
   ○ agree
   ○ strongly agree

76. I teach my students strategies for successfully addressing discrimination and racism.
   ○ very true of what I do
   ○ true of what I do
   ○ somewhat true of what I do
   ○ somewhat untrue of what I do
   ○ untrue of what I do
   ○ very untrue of what I do

77. It is my duty to help my students develop a positive racial identity.
   ○ strongly disagree
   ○ disagree
   ○ neither agree or disagree
   ○ agree
   ○ strongly agree
AVID Teachers - Handler

78. Thank you so much for completing this survey. The next phase of my research involves conducting a set of 5-8 interviews with survey respondents. The interviews will be conducted in person or by phone, depending on the location of the interviewee. They should last no longer than 90 minutes. If you are willing or interested in participating in an interview, please click the "yes" box below. If you have any questions concerning this please contact me at 916-293-1140.

If "yes", please include your contact info (email or phone)

☐ Yes
☐ No

☐ Other (please specify)
APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

(45-90 minute interviews)

Directions: Please consider your AVID students and your AVID classrooms when responding to the following questions and prompts.

1. Explain your experience teaching in the AVID program

2. What skills are essential for AVID teachers to know?

3. What is your biggest asset as an AVID teacher? What is it about your practice, personality, or your perspective that most helps you be an AVID teacher?

4. Do you believe your work contributes to closing the achievement gap? How do you know? AVID, as a program, has had documented success in accelerating the achievement of historically underperforming groups. What general factors would you attribute to AVID’s success in this area? What factors related specifically to AVID teachers do you attribute to AVID’s success in this area?

5. What is the most innovative strategy you have used?

6. What is the role you feel you play in your students’ success?

7. Explain how you advocate for your students.

9. What resources and support do you need to be an AVID teacher?

10. Explain how your AVID students develop as learners.

11. In your AVID class, what factors do you consider essential to student development?

12. What are specific strategies you use to ensure your students are developing, educationally and developing as people?

13. What are the differences between teaching AVID students, and teaching non-AVID students?

14. Explain how your student’s home culture and language affects their learning?
15. What strategies do you use to make the AVID curriculum culturally relevant to your students?

16. What strategies do you use to learn about your students’ home culture?

17. What does it mean to care about students?

18. What strategies do you use to show students you care about them?

19. What professional development, or your own professional learning, do you participate in? How do you stay current on state, federal, and academic educational information/trends?
REFERENCES


