ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG LATINO HIGH SCHOOL SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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A Thesis

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Abstract

of

ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG LATINO HIGH SCHOOL SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

Alejandra Pérez

Statement of Problem

There is a serious problem with the educational attainment for Latino students. Historically, Latino students are not graduating from high school because they are not acquiring the necessary skills for academic achievement. Many factors contribute to the large number of Latino students that are not successfully graduating from high school.

Sources of Data

This study incorporates multiple methods for data collection including students and parents interviews, and compilation of student academic records. Researcher conducted semi-structured interviews gathering qualitative data. Interviews were directed individually to six Latino second language learner students and their parents. This study was conducted over the period of one year.

Conclusions Reached

Research concludes that secondary support programs are extremely important in the
academic success of Latino English Language Learners. Accesses to some support programs are limited to a small number of participants meeting particular criteria.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Adele Arellano, PhD

_______________________
Date
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Latino students continuously demonstrate poor academic achievement within the U.S education system. A large number of Latino students continue to be the “victims of destructive institutional practices that set low academic expectations and implement disciplinary policies that treat students as potential criminals” (Calaff, 2008). Latino/a students still attend schools that segregate them by tracking them in lower level academic courses which does not provide them with the opportunity to be challenged in advanced placement (AP) or honors courses. Consequently, many students lack the motivation and determination to overcome these obstacles and succeed in school.

The failure to attend to the needs of Latino students continues to be represented in many high schools therefore the needs of a great number of Latino have not been met. As Ladson-Billings suggests, “offering only low-level courses in schools serving Latino young people is a clear message that Latinos are not expected to achieve to high levels” (2004, p.189). As a result, Latino students tend to take low level skill courses because they are not well informed or do not have access to required course necessary for attending an institution of higher education.

Statement of the Problem

Historically, Latino students are not graduating from high school because they are not acquiring the necessary skills for academic achievement. The Latino dropout rate is the highest compared to other ethnic groups. In 1991, 35.3% of Latino students were out
of high school without a high school diploma, compared to 8.9% of Anglos and 13.6% of African Americans (Fashola & Slavin, 2001). However, there are many factors that contribute to such a high percent of Latino dropouts. In the past two decades one of the factors for high Latino dropout rate is immigration, 43% of the total Latino dropout population are immigrants (Fashola & Slavin, 2001). Latinos that recently immigrated to the U.S, have to learn English and have a difficult time coping with a different educational system.

In general, in this study I will focus on the academic achievement of a small group of high school English Learner students from one high school who have participated in the AVID (Advanced Via Individualized Determination) program and English Learners who have not participated in AVID. The purpose is to understand the factors that support Latino students academic success in school. Particularly, I am interested in answering the following questions:

1. What is the effect of an educational support program on the academic success of high school English Learners?
2. What is the effect of non-participation in an educational support program on the academic success of English Learners?

Purpose of the Study

The findings of this study will help high school educators better-understand the role of support programs, like AVID, for Latino students’ success. This study can also help educators better comprehend Latino students’ educational needs and identify the factors that help Latino students succeed in high school.
The results of this study may also contribute to validation of the AVID program and help educators understand how this program provides the necessary academic support to Latino students. The designers of the AVID program believe that students who participate in AVID acquire the necessary skills and tools to succeed in higher education such that the program prepares students to go on to a University. At the very least, this research can provide additional information on the impact of AVID on high school students’ academic success. Such information can assist programs like AVID to better meet the needs of Latino students identified as English Learners who are currently placed at risk for underachievement and dropping out.

Additionally, this study can also provide information explaining the academic factors that contribute to the success of English Learners that do not participate in any school support program.

Definition of Terms

To ensure better understanding of this thesis I will define the following terminology that will be used throughout the study.

*Advanced Placement courses*: Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered as electives. These courses prepare students to take college level courses.

*Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID)*: A support program in middle school and high school for first-generation students that provides necessary skills to succeed in school. Students must meet a criterion to be in this program.

*California English Language Development Test (CELDT)*: The CELDT is required by California law to assess the English language proficiency of all students who have a
primary language other than English. The test is aligned with the English Language Development standards approved by the State Board of Education. The CELDT measures a student’s proficiency of English language skills in the following domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. CELDT 2008–09 Edition Test Interpretation Guide. California Department of Education.

*California Standard Test (CST):* CST is administered to second through eleventh grade students in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, social science, and science.

*College preparatory courses:* Referring to high school courses like (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Social Science, Performing Arts) that require high school students to practice and apply high level skills in order to apply to a University.

*Educational Academic Outreach Program (EAOP):* EAOP is a support program that assists first generation students providing information about universities. Usually, EAOP meets with students once a month.

*English Language Development Program (ELD):* ELD is an English language development program for English learners. In this program language lessons are specifically designed to maximize English literacy development (Kenfield, 2004).

*English Language Learners (EL):* The term refers to students that speak a different language than English at home that are currently learning English. The acronym EL will be used to refer to English language learners.

*English Learners’ Advisory Committee (ELAC):* ELAC are monthly English Learners’ parent meetings.

*English Second Language (ESL):* ESL is use interchangeably with ELD.
*Fluency English Proficient (FEP)*: FEP refers to students at an advanced level of English that have reclassified into the mainstream English program.

*High School Grade Point Average (GPA)*: The grade point average is based 4.0 but students can obtain a higher G.P.A if taking advanced placement courses. G.P.A is used to determine the average high school grades.

*Latino*: This term will be used in the study to identify a population consisting of individuals from Mexico, Central American, South American, Puerto Ricans origin; it could mean that an individual was born in the United States or in any Latin country.

*Learning Center*: Westlake high school tutoring learning center provides one-to-one academic assistance to students.

*Limited English Proficient (LEP)*: LEP refers to students at beginning and intermediate level of learning English as a second language.

*Minority language*: This term refers to the native language of English language learners.

*Moral Support*: a practice that stresses the value of education and hard work encouraging students to study (Auerbach, 2006).

*Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)*: SDAIE strategies used to teach college preparatory courses to English learners.

Theoretical Framework

This research incorporates a modified model of supportive practices discussed in a study conducted by Percy Calaff (2008). Calaff’s study focuses on supportive practices that prepare culturally and linguistically diverse students to attend college. Calaff “explores how schools can bridge…borders and prevent the damage done by…devaluing
Latino students’ worlds of home, school, peers, community, and university partnership programs” (pp. 92). In this study I will focus on a similar notion, examining supportive school practices that can impact students’ motivation and preparation for college.

Other studies have analyzed practices that have influenced Latino students’ academic success. In this study, I will also build upon the findings of research by Auerbach (2006) that “examines moral support…in which parent roles in education are structured by social class and race/ethnicity, while being mediated by cultural belief systems and parent-children relationships” (p. 277). This study will look at the importance of parent involvement in the schooling of their children.

The Youth Resiliency Framework (Hammond, 2001) will also be utilized to analyze Latino students’ academic success. I will focus on some key components of the framework that previous research has demonstrated: Latino’s success in school is related to a number of variables, including (a) early exposure to school experiences, (b) psychological factors such as self-esteem and aspirations, (c) familial support, and (d) positive high school experience and enrichment programs (Montero-Sieburth & Batt, 2001). A visual representation of key components for Latino students’ academic success is shown in the following diagram.
Limitations

This study will only focus on one high school support program, AVID. It must be taken into consideration that there are many support programs that assist Latino students thus this study’s findings may not apply to other support programs. Additionally, this study focuses on Latino EL who are academically succeeding in the U.S education system. The results of this study may not apply to the educational experiences of all Latino students. Finally, the small sample of this research is also a limitation. The present study is limited to 3 EL taking AVID and 3 EL not taking AVID that were purposely selected based on a range of academic success indicators.
Conclusion

The succeeding chapters of this study include Chapter 2 where I present and analyze the literature on educational support programs for Latino high school students; Chapter 3, an explanation of methodology used in the study; Chapter 4, the analysis of the data; and Chapter 5, the conclusion drawn from the analysis of data and educational recommendations.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two will review literature related to the educational experiences of Latino high school students who have participated in an educational support program and explore the difference, if any, these support programs have on Latino students’ educational attainment and achievement. The review focus will be on the factors that have contributed to Latino high school student success. The chapter will be divided into three sections: (1) historical achievements of high school Latino students, (2) the effect of Latino parent involvement and support in their children’s education and (3) successful supportive practices for first generation Latino students.

History of High School Latino Student Achievement

Low Expectations

It has been documented that, historically, Latinos have one of the highest dropout rates of any group (Fashola & Slavin, 2001). In 2007, only 73 percent of Latinos completed high school compared to 94% of Whites and 89% of African Americans (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). At the same time, Latinos are the largest and most rapidly growing minority in the country, but academically they perform far below compared to the other ethnicities mentioned above (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). There are many factors that contribute to the high rates of Latino student dropouts.

According to researchers Martínez, DeGarmo, and Eddy (2004) high poverty, language issues, and recent immigration status have been shown to correlate with higher Latino high school drop-out rates. Lack of resources, learning a new language, and
migration are factors that contribute to the lack of success of Latinos. Additionally, Latino students continue to experience the negative results of ineffective educational approaches that devalue their linguistic and cultural heritage. Even though schools are aware of the Latino drop-out rate, many have not implemented educational approaches that promote the social capital of Latino students that ultimately can support their academic needs.

Social capital is interpreted as “those connections to individuals and to networks that can provide access to resources and forms of support that facilitate the accomplishment of goals” (Stanton-Salazar, 2004, p. 18). Research on social capital shows a positive influence on student academic achievement by students’ commitment to school extracurricular activities, high school grades, and educational attainments while reducing the probability of dropping out of high school (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). Consequently, schools that avoid promoting the social capital of Latino students diminish the opportunity for Latino student academic success. As Calaff discusses in his study on supportive practices for Latino students, they are often the victims of destructive institutional practices that set low academic expectations (2008). Some destructive institutional practices can be understood as the marginalization of English learners through academic tracking or implementation of disciplinary policies that treat students as potential criminals (Calaff, 2008). Often English Learners students have been labeled as low performing denying them the opportunity to be challenged in the educational arena.

Despite the fact that Latino students still face many educational barriers there are some Latino students that succeed in education. As Calaff (2008) explains some students
take a resilient attitude and manage to beat the odds to graduate and enroll in a 4-year university with the support of outside sources. The study shows the contributions of students’ home, school, college preparation program, and community that have supported students in academic success. In addition, the study explains supportive school environments and outside sources that have contributed to the success of Latino students: (a) resilient attitudes, (b) high expectations, (c) promoting culturally and linguistic diversity, and (d) collaboration with college partnership programs that help reduce student dropouts. As Gándara writes, “resilience theory has the potential to help explain the phenomenon of high achievement among Latinos in spite of adversity” (2004, p. 18). Furthermore, many of these areas of support have been researched in various schools in order to better understand academic achievement among Latino students.

Resiliency

Resilience theory has the potential to help explain the phenomenon of high achievement among Latinos in spite of adversity (Gándara, 2004). A study that focuses on risk and resilience in Latinos explains that resilience is “the process of overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure or the ability to cope positively with adversity” (Shetgiri, Kataoka, Ryan, Miller, Chung, & Schuster, 2009, p. 1). Resilient attitudes can be important in the educational experiences of many Latino students which in turn can promote protective factors that help improve the chances of success for at risk individuals (Shetgiri, Kataoka, Ryan, Miller, Chung, & Schuster, 2009). Protective factors include both intrinsic (self-efficacy, self-esteem, motivation, etc.) and extrinsic (family support, high academic expectations, adult role models, positive school experiences, etc.) characteristics that ultimately can create a purposeful environment fostering academic
achievement among Latino students (Shetgiri, Kataoka, Ryan, Miller, Chung, & Schuster, 2009). Even though Latino students may face many obstacles to achieve academically intrinsic and extrinsic factors help us understand how students manage to realize academic success.

As Gándara suggests in her study geared to models that fosters Latino students academic success, “resilience is not a "trait" that some individuals have, but a "state" that can be nurtured and supported and that is evident in some contexts and not in others (2004, p.19). In Gándara’s study, she explains that resiliency in Latino students can be demonstrated within intrinsic attitudes and desires of succeeding academically by earning good grades despite the academic obstacles they have to face. Intrinsic attitudes are the individuals’ own desire or willingness to achieve a goal despite the obstacles that arise. Morrison, Robertson and Harding explain educational resilience in students as “the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments, despite environmental adversities brought by early traits, conditions, and experiences” (1998, p. 218). However, intrinsic attitudes can be influenced by extrinsic forces that permit individuals to make important decisions.

Resilience is a state of mind that is also influenced by extrinsic sources that impact students’ academic achievement. Extrinsic sources are outside factors like family, school and friends that can influence an individual state of mind to achieve a goal. Individuals have to be open to the help and guidance from others that would allow for opportunities to develop intrinsic elements such as a sense of competence and self-esteem. Supportive and caring adults that eventually nurture academic achievement also can play a major role (Gándara, 2004). Parental involvement can be a crucial factor in the
education of students as previous research has concluded “parental involvement, in the form of school related discussion while in high school, was an important protective factor that significantly increased students’ likelihood of going on to college” (Gándara, 2004, p. 19). There are many other factors that can attribute to student resilience that can impact students’ academic success. As Gándara suggests in her study, “an individual may demonstrate resiliency in the face of certain kinds of challenges, but not necessarily in others. And much depends on the resources and support he/she receives” (2004, p. 19).

**High Expectations**

Setting high expectations for students can promote a safety net and disciplined academic environment. A study by Calaff based on school visitations and observations suggests that some of the supportive practices that contribute to the success of Latino students include:

…setting high expectations, helping students envision a positive future, providing access to a rigorous curriculum, providing tutors and mentors for students, valuing students’ linguistic and cultural heritage, and increasing parent involvement (2008, p. 97).

The study notes that schools that implement these supportive practices can enhance the educational experiences of many Latinos students. For example, Latino students that were given the opportunity and provided supportive school practices like holding high expectations fostered academic success (Calaff, 2008). In sum, students may “respond positively to high expectations, educational environments characterized by caring and respect positive and close relationship with their teachers” (Nieto, 1999, p. 189).
Promoting Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

As Auerbach (2006) discusses, promoting cultural and linguistic diversity creates an academic ladder to reach to the high expectations set for all students. Calaff’s study (2008), consisted of investigating the practices of a United States high school that helps promote Latino academic achievement. She found that environment is vital for students’ success. The author illustrates that creating an environment in the school that celebrates students’ cultures and languages and embraces diversity is crucial in supporting their social cultural development. Instead of isolating Latino students, schools need to provide a welcoming environment so that students feel that they are part of the U.S education system. A safe environment for students starts in their own classroom where teachers should provide a welcoming atmosphere in different ways in order for them to feel included. A welcoming environment can include relevant curriculum to the lives of students Niento (1999) explains that positive teacher practices, for instance connecting learning to their student’s backgrounds can have a positive impact. When students can relate to the material that is given to them they will perform academically and will positively respond to higher expectations (Nieto, 1999). Thus, teachers are crucial in students education not only because they teach subjects but because they become part of the students lives.

Dropout prevention approaches

In the past, the U.S. educational system has failed to serve the academic needs of many Latino students. Even though “the prevention of dropping out among students in general has been a high priority since the 1950s, when high school graduation first became a goal for all students” many Latino students were still not graduating from high
school (Fashola & Slavin, 2001, p.69). And this remains the case today. In order to decrease Latino student dropout rates, prevention approaches like support programs have been put in place throughout school districts. A study on outreach program suggests:

- generally, schools with low state calculated Academic Performance Index (API) rankings, high percentages of English Learners, and low-income students were more likely to have a significantly greater number of outreach programs than their higher performing and higher-income counterparts (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2002, p. 45).

Many of the implemented support programs focus on giving students a sense of purpose for completing school, in essence making the long-term consequences of high school completion and college attendance more apparent on a day-to-day basis (Fashola & Slavin, 2001).

Important factors have been discussed in this section that contribute to the academic success of some Latino students. Some of these include: (a) resilient students attitudes, (b) maintaining high expectations for Latino students, (c) creating a safe school environment for students that embraces cultural and linguistic diversity, and (d) dropout prevention approaches. In my study I will look for the presence of these factors in the support program provided to some of my research participants.

The Effect of Latino Parent Involvement/Support in their Children’s Education

Historically politicians and educators have assumed that minority language parents are not involved in the education of their children because many parents do not
participate in school events (Daniel-White, 2002). Schools presume that parents need to be responsible in meeting school’s requirements without providing parents with the adequate tools and without adapting efforts to meet the needs of parents (Daniel-White, 2002). Often schools discuss the fact that Latino parents do not attend school related activities. Latino parents tend to avoid going to school for various reasons, ranging from lack of Spanish-speaking school staff and logistical barriers to feeling discomfort, shame, or alienation in dealing with educators, and parents’ own limited schooling (Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004). However, the fact that parents do not attend school related activities does not mean that Latino parents are not involved in their children’s education.

The Role of Latino Parents in Education

Auerbach (2006) reveals that the role some Latino parents play in their childrens’ education is a focus on moral support. The notion of moral support can be expressed by parents through verbal support that provides encouragement and motivation in educational matters (Ceballo, 2004). Even though many Latino parents do not provide academic support in the US interpreted sense, they instill the value of continuing education and encouraging their children to do well in school (Auerbach).

In the study, Auerbach further explains that Latino parents expressed their value in education through consejos (advice) which are narratives of indirect teaching that guide young people. Additionally, Latino parents had a different definition of what is a well-educated individual. Auerbach explains that for many Latino families, a well-educated person is one with good behavior and respectful manners, who follows the right path in life, including education. Therefore, students are aware of their parents’ sacrifices and they are grateful for the provided moral support. Moreover, some students are
accustomed to making their own school decisions and as a result those Latino parents expect corresponding actions from their children.

Indirect Academic Parent Support

Despite the fact that many Latino parents are not involved in their children’s academics nor participate in school activities, their indirect support is greatly appreciated by their children. In Auerbach study’s (2006) even though Latino parent academic support was indirect, they managed to provide moral support that was rooted in their limited college knowledge, traditional beliefs, and perceptions of as well as relationships with their children. According to Auerbach, college moral support consisted of verbal exhortation, encouragement, and consejos (advice). Consejos covered an immense amount of ground but the general meaning of consejos in the Latino culture boils down to a simple general statement or rule of behavior that was often explicitly stated by the individual doing the lecturing (Valdés, 1996). Many Latino parents feel that if they are not able to provide academic support at least they are contributing to their children’s education indirectly through moral support or consejos. Valdés explains, “consejos were tailored to the age of the children and generally began when a child was considered to be able to understand” (1996, p. 125). For instance, some consejos are geared to encourage children to search for a better life, finish school, and get a college education (Reyes, 2008). According to Auerbach, students valued and credited their families for motivating them and giving them the fortitude to persist towards their goals despite the obstacles. Although Latino parent support may seem invisible, it actually serves a critical role and their children value the moral support or consejos that parents are able to provide.
Defining Parent Involvement

Parental involvement has different meanings for some Latino parents and for educators. Educators often assume that parents need to be involved in school activities to demonstrate their support. In a study that focuses on Mexican immigrant parents, research suggests some Latino parents are “hardworking and loving parents who are not typically engaged in the expected ways due to a variety of cultural and economic characteristics they possess which make them ill-equipped to participate in their children’s education” (Reyes, 2008, p.66). Additionally, many Latino parents do not participate in school activities because they lack the language (Reyes, 2008) and instead they support their children from home. Many Latino parents believe that educating their children includes teaching children how to behave, how to act around others, and also what is good and what is moral (Valdés, 1996). Generally, Latino parents teach the expectations of the rules of conduct that have to be followed in order to be successful (Valdés, 1996). As previously discussed, these teachings occur through consejos (advice) that parents constantly repeat to children so as to internalize them thoroughly (Valdés, 1996).

In order to increase Latino parent involvement in the schools, parental support programs need to be in place. As Daniel-White discusses:

… programs should contextualize involvement, address language issues, making appropriate home-friendly assignments, valuing parents knowledge, acknowledging child raising differences, and assessing home use of print, traditional parental involvement paradigms can shift toward a more inclusive future (2002, p.37).
Parents who want their children to go to college desperately want more information and support to help their children reach their goals, but may be too isolated or intimidated by schools to seek help (Auerbach, 2006). In addition, Latino parents can be intimidated by the fact that they do not speak the language and they are not familiar with the U.S education system (Reyes, 2008). As Auerbach points out, schools need to take the first step in reaching out to parents to make them feel welcome and appreciated and to engage parents in learning about college pathways.

From the studies reviewed in the section, it is clear that parental involvement is critical in the education of students. However, many times Latino parents are not knowledgeable about the process and many schools are not reaching out to the parents. Consequently, parents are not acquiring the necessary tools to guide their children through the academic process. The presence of role models and mentors from support programs can contribute to Latino students’ academic achievement (Ceballo, 2004) and can provide the added support that some Latino parents are ill-equipped to provide. In the following section, an example of academic support programs that help first generation Latino students will be discussed.

Supportive Programs for Latino High School Students

Support Programs

Latino students often lack academic support at home and therefore many high schools have implemented special programs that have been evaluated to promote academic and social growth (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1997). Support programs are funded through multiple sources; a report on Budget Act 2001-02 claims:
approximately $127 million to fund 19 different outreach programs designed to encourage and support high school students to attend college. Since some programs also receive additional funds from federal, private, and local school districts the combined outreach program revenue is even greater. Over the past five years, the number of outreach programs has increased and the state’s funding commitment has quadrupled in an attempt to counterbalance the effects of new policies restricting university admission based on race, gender, and ethnicity. (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2002, p.i)

Funding is an essential factor for the existence of support outreach programs and in order to receive funding programs must demonstrate effectiveness. Several support programs attempt to close the academic gap among some Latino students and ultimately reduce dropout rates (Fashola & Slavin 2001). Additionally, Auerbach’s (2006) study suggests that Latino students that lacked the information and assistance needed to negotiate the college application process may join a support program that can guide the process of entering a university. In concurrence with other studies, Latino students that have participated in support programs are more likely to attend a 4-year university (Calaff, 2008). “Effective programs have clear goals, emphasize methods and materials linked to those goals, and constantly assess student’s progress toward goals” (Fashola, Slavin, Calderón, & Durán, 2001, p.49). This review will include explanation of some support programs like, EAOP (Educational Academic Outreach Program), Puente project, and AVID (Advanced Via Individual Determination) that have been implemented in many schools to increase academic success among Latino English learners.
Educational Academic Outreach Program

EAOP (Educational Academic Outreach Program) is a university outreach program that works closely with many high schools to provide assistance to first generation students wanting to attend a university. In order to be part of the program “school teachers and counselors identify potential EAOP students at the elementary and junior high school levels and students receive services through high school graduation” (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2002, p. 17). A report focusing on support program reveals that the EAOP program between 1998-99 and 2001-02 increased the number of UC-eligible participants by 51% (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2004). This figure shows that students who enrolled in the EAOP program had a better opportunity of attending a four-year university. According to California Postsecondary Education Commission (2002), the main goal of EAOP is to help and support low-income underrepresented students who would be the first in their family to successfully enter college as well as support students from low performing schools navigate the path towards college.

A study focusing on support programs for at-risk students concurs that EAOP guides students individually to enroll in and complete college preparatory courses that will eventually lead to eligibility for university admission (Fashola & Slavin, 2001). Many students take advantage of EAOP program and in 2008 the program results show that over 39,000 students in California received assistance from the program (www.eaop.org, 2009). The major ethnic groups served by EAOP include: Chicano/Latino, African American, Asian, White, American Indian, and other. In 2005, the percentage of students in EAOP was 59% for Chicano/Latino students compared to
the second highest, Asian with 14% student enrollment for California schools (www.eaop.org, 2009).

EAOP’s “components include: tutoring, mentoring, SAT and other test preparation, summer enrichment programs, and academic/career counseling for students and families” (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2002, p. 17). These EAOP components provide more opportunities for student success. Results from 2004-2005 academic year demonstrate that 72% of EAOP students completed a-g requirements twice the rate compared to 34% statewide students (www.eaop.org, 2009).

Puente Program

The Puente program is a California statewide academic program that supports Latino community college students to achieve their academic goals (Meznek, McGrath, & García, 1989). The program started at a community college in 1981 in response to the low number of Latino students transferring to a four-year university (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Puente serves as a bridging program that supports Latino students academically. A study in support programs explains specific goals of the Puente project are to increase retention, general education requirement completion, and transfer among Hispanic students to a 4-year university (Avalos & Pavel, 1993). The Puente program was created to smooth the progress of “three major areas that prevent Latino community college students from achieving success: lack of writing skills, lack of professional role models, and lack of knowledge about educational systems” (Meznek, McGrath, & García, 1989, p. 5). Researchers Gándara & Contreras explain in their study on support intervention programs for K-12th that students who have been part of Puente “had a significantly higher desire to be good students and to be known as such” (2009, p.280).
In addition, students that participate in the Puente program are more likely to apply and attend a four-year University at nearly double the rate of non-Puente students, 43% compared to 24% (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

**Advance Via Individual Determination (AVID)**

One support program that was established for middle schools and high schools is AVID, which stands for Advanced Via Individual Determination. According to Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1997), AVID is a college preparatory program for disadvantaged students of all ethnic backgrounds. In concurrence with this statement, the AVID Program Evaluation Report explains that the program is designed to support disadvantaged students who have the academic potential to enter into colleges or universities. AVID is an elective class that meets year round and AVID students take a one period class per academic semester that focuses on explicit instruction (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In AVID, students

- learn specific study skills, receive information about how to prepare for college,
- are counseled into taking college preparatory courses, go on field trips and hear motivational talks to stimulate their desire for college, and form supportive college-bound peer group (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 286).

As part of the program to support students, the class provides tutorials to help fill the gaps in their educational backgrounds (Oswald, 2002). The purpose of the strategies provided by the AVID class are to: (a) increase enrollment of participants in advanced classes, (b) increase participants’ school attendance, (c) improve participants’ scores on standardized test scores, and (d) increase enrollment in higher education (Oswald, 2002).
The Center for Research, Evaluation and Training in Education (CREATE) was funded by the AVID center in 2001 to conduct a study on the best AVID Practices. Data from the CREATE study supports AVID as a successful program. Evidence for this success includes the finding that 25 percent of students from an AVID program were taking Advanced Placement courses. Additionally, these students were followed after graduation and from 70 students that were surveyed, 80 percent enrolled continuously in a four-year university. These data show that the design of the program is helping students succeed academically by graduating from high schools and then enrolling in a 4-year university (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002). Overall, the study reveals that support programs like AVID can motivate students to succeed academically in their schooling while preparing them to enter into a four-year university.

This section focused on some practices that help the academic success of Latino students. Some of the successful practices are part of the AVID program implemented in many middle schools and high schools. Evidence demonstrates that the AVID program supports students through various strategies to achieve academic growth. Overall studies suggest, “student-centered programs include the panoply of programs and activities that target specific students for intervention to raise their achievement, reduce dropout rates, and often [help them] go on to college” (Gándara, 2004, p. 29).

Rationale

The decision to undertake this study was based on research comparing the success of Latino English Learners who participate in AVID with Latino English Learners that do not participate in the program. The literature reviewed here reveals information on the academic success of Latino students when there is, parental involvement and a support
program like AVID. Latino students, and in particular English Learners, continue to suffer in the US educational system. In particular English Learners have other obstacles like acquiring a new language while learning content that obstruct their success in school.

*Bilingual Education*

In order to meet the needs of second language learners, support practices have been in place to enhance students’ educational experiences. Bilingual education is one of the services that provide academic support to English learners that increase the opportunities for student success. Gándara explains, “bilingual education is a structural intervention that has been particularly targeted to the Latino community, given that up to half of Latino students begin school as English learners” (2004, p. 27). “Students who enter school with limited English proficiency are among the most likely of all students to be at risk for school failure” (Slavin & Madden, 2001, p. 207). It is extremely important that schools make a note of limited English proficient students in order to provide adequate services to support these students’ academic growth in teaching English as a second language and content areas. To meet the academic needs of limited English students, bilingual programs have been implemented in numerous schools. Research suggests that bilingual programs are at least as affective as, or more effective than English-only instruction (Slavin & Madden, 2001).

Bilingual education is structured with various components designed to support English learners in their academic education. As Gonzales explains “effective bilingual education programs help LEP students achieve high levels of English proficiency, maintain subject-matter knowledge through the use of the native language, develop a positive self-concept, and more years of schooling” (2004, p. 117). Overall, bilingual
education is intended to ensure that students do not fall behind in subject matter while they are learning English (Cummins, 2004). True “bilingual” education at the secondary level uses primary language in core academic courses to ensure curriculum access to EL students (Calderón & Carreón, 2001). The primary language support programs for EL’s in high school are ELD or SDAIE. There are many components to a bilingual education program but only a few will be explained in this section. The focus will remain on the component of English as a second language (ESL or ELD) and SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) instruction. English as a second language is a course with no instruction through the minority language that is taught as a subject (Collier, 2004). As Peregory and Boyle explain “SDAIE highlights grade appropriate, cognitively demanding core curriculum for English learners who have achieved an intermediate or advanced level of English language proficiency” (2004, p. 43). These two components of “bilingual” education will be described in the following sections.

**English Language Development**

“In virtually every part of the country, middle and high schools are now seeing expanding enrollments of students whose primary language is not English” (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007, p. 1). It is clear that the nation can no longer afford to ignore the pressing needs of ELs in its middle and high schools who are struggling with reading, writing, and oral discourse in a new language (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). As Short & Fitzsimmons discuss, “the academic performance of English language learners is front and center in terms of school, district, and state accountability, and educators are seeking ways to improve EL achievement” (2007, p. 7). Consequently, some schools have implemented English Language Development (ELD) courses to teach EL students how to
speak, read, and write in English. These courses are usually taught by qualified ELD teachers (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). To identify EL students there are multiple criteria and methods, including language-proficiency tests and home language surveys (Valdés, 2001). Other factors that are taken into consideration include previous grades, referrals, and scores on achievement test, teacher observations, informal assessments, and criterion-referenced tests (Valdés, 2001). Once students have been identified as potential EL, they are assessed in English language proficiency to appropriately place students (Valdés, 2001) in sequenced ELD courses. Even though some limited English students are enrolled in ELD courses, they still have to overcome the challenges brought by not knowing the English language. Students are learning English at the same time they are studying core content areas through English and being held to the same accountability standards as their native English-speaking peers (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). “English language learners must perform double the work of native English speakers in the country’s middle and high schools” (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007, p. 1). Even though EL’s have to perform double the work, studies have shown that well-articulated ELD programs can have an effective impact on the education of EL students (Slavin & Madden, 2001). “As is true of bilingual education, the quality of classroom instruction, ESL instruction, and the integration of the two are essential in determining the success of Latino students” (Fashola & Slavin, 2001, p. 4).

**Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English**

In addition to ELD, some middle and high schools incorporate SDAIE courses that provide support in content area subjects to secondary English learners. In SDAIE or sheltered courses, the curriculum is designed around content area themes with content
objectives as well as language objectives with a primary focus of learning content (Calderón, 2001). The purpose of this class is for students to learn English through content, thus contextualizing language learning, and for EL’s to learn content through English so as to prevent them from falling further behind in their development of content knowledge (Calderón, 2001). “The focus of instruction should be the same core academic curriculum that students in other programs experience” (Calderón & Carreón, 2001, p. 129). For instance, in sheltered instruction you modify your language: you make your instructional talk more understandable by speaking clearly, repeating key points, defining essential vocabulary in context, and pairing your talk with nonverbal communication cues such as pictures, graphs, objects, and gestures (Peregory & Boyle, 2004). In order for SDAIE methodologies to be effective teachers need to be prepared to provide instruction in English without oversimplifying the academic content (Calderón, 2001).

Ultimately, bilingual education strategies like ELD courses and SDAIE are designed to support the academic needs of second language learners. As Gándara shares, “bilingual education is described as a strategy for empowering Latino students by providing them linguistic legitimacy” (2004, p. 27). Unfortunately, bilingual education strategies are not always implemented in schools that have a high percentage of second language learners, depriving students the opportunity of a more adequate academic education.
Summary

This literature review provides evidence of Latino academic failure and success. The educational system continues to limit the educational opportunities extended to many Latino students. Some schools are taking the initiative to provide additional support to underachieving Latino students. Parent involvement is crucial in the education of Latino students but their lack of information about the US education system impedes them from directly assisting their children. Schools need to provide the necessary assistance to guide parents in the education of their children. In order to increase Latino academic success students not only need parental support but also academic support from their schools. There are various programs that work in conjunction with parents to enhance the education of Latino students. Programs like EAOP, Puente, and AVID provide academic support to underachieving students who have the academic potential to enter a four-year university. Evidence demonstrates that these programs have been essential in the education of those students that have participated in the program.

For this study I am interested in analyzing the educational experiences of Latino English Learner Students who are part of the AVID program versus those English Learners that are not part of the program. Specifically, I would like to examine: (a) why students are succeeding despite the obstacles that they confront, and (b) the effect of an educational support program on the academic success of high school English Learners. The results of this research will contribute to the limited data that we have of the academic success of Latino English Learners that participate in a support program like AVID.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the problem

In this study I will look at the academic achievement of high school English Learners students that have participated in the AVID program and English Learners who have not participated in AVID. The purpose is to understand the factors that support Latino students to succeed academically in school. Particularly, I am interested in answering the following questions:

1. What is the effect of an educational support program on the academic success of high school English Learners?
2. What is the effect of non-participation in an educational support program on the academic success of English Learners?

This chapter centers on the methodology designed to provide information on the specific factors that help Latino EL students succeed academically and will be analyzed through guided individual parent and student interviews and a compilation of archival data. In addition, this methodology will also further our understanding of parent involvement and students’ educational experiences and their impact on students’ academic achievement whether they are part of AVID or not.

Many Latino students face obstacles that prevent them from succeeding in school. However, Gándara (2004) explains, some Latino students fare exceptionally well, in spite of coming from backgrounds that would predict academic failure. In addition, research on support programs that assist Latinos demonstrate academic success on students. As
Gándara states, Latino high achievement can result from intervention in the lives of individual students with very specific and targeted instruction and guidance.

\textit{Context}

Westlake\textsuperscript{1} is a city located approximately twenty five miles north of Sacramento with a population of about 50,000. It is predominately an agricultural community that has experienced a significant growth in its Latino population. Furthermore, Westlake Joint Unified School District is responsible for the education of 10,600 students, in which 3251 students are identified as second language learners and 487 students out of the entire student population are part of the AVID program. The ethnic background of students is approximately 58\% Latino, 30\% white and other ethnic groups make up the difference. This district is composed of ten K-6 schools, two middle schools, two high schools, and one continuation school.

Westlake High currently has 1548 students with a predominantly Latino population that as of today makes up 51 \% of the total school student enrollment. The remainder of the school population is represented by 35\% white, 8\% East Indian, and 6\% of other ethnic background. Furthermore, from the 51\% Latino students, a third of the population are classified second language learners. In addition, 163 of Westlake students are part of the AVID program of which 108 students are Latino. Additionally, there is an underrepresentation of a culturally diverse staff, thus out of 67 teachers only 4 teachers identified as Latino.

Even though the school has a larger number of second language learners some of the few services they receive are: a) English as a second a language course (ELD), b)

\footnote{1 The name of the city/school, and all the students names are pseudonyms.}
Interventions, c) TutorialCenter and d) AVID program. However, from the 269 Latino second language learners only 19 take advantage of the AVID program. In the past, the school provided SDAIE (Specially Designed Academically Instruction in English) courses for college preparatory classes in Biology, History, and Math designed for English learners but now EL students are mainstreamed into core classes. Furthermore, English learners can take advantage of the tutorial center that provides individual or small group assistance in all college preparatory classes. However, the tutorial center is an optional program and students are not mandated to participate. In addition, the school has implemented after school intervention classes for English, math, science and history where students have an opportunity to improve their overall grade.

This study presents an analysis of a specific population, Latino second language learners from Westlake High School. The design of the study is case study based on qualitative research using multiple data collection procedures. Data was collected through individual parent and student interviews and review of student school records as well as school and district demographic information. The interview data was coded according to grades, test scores, AVID and non-AVID students. Students were asked to respond to questions that aimed to determine their academic motivation, dedication, and knowledge of useful school resources that support their educational experiences through extra-curricular activities.

Support Programs

AVID is an important academic support program for middle and high school students that provides educational guidance to underrepresented students wanting to
(AVID) as a program designed to help underachieving students with academic potential
prepare for entrance into college and universities” (p. i). In order for AVID to be a
supportive program, there are guidelines that have been put in place, for example, (a)
criteria for student selection, (b) curricular focus, (c) staff involvement, and (d) course
enrollment (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell & Siegle, 2008).

Student selection

To be part of AVID, students may be recommended by any school staff member
as well as through self-referral. However, criteria selection is based upon students’ (a)
GPA of 2.0-3.5, (b) who are of ethnic, linguistic, or economic background that are
underrepresented in 4-year colleges, (c) who face obstacles to college enrollment, or (d)
who would be the first in their families to attend college, (e) willingness and
determination to succeed in advanced courses, and (f) parent commitment to support
students (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell & Siegle, 2008). If students have been
recommended and meet these guidelines, then they are required to apply to the program
and go through an interview process that determines their acceptance into the program
(Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002).

Curriculum focus

Once students are admitted into the program, they participate in an AVID elective
class on a daily basis (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell & Siegle, 2008). Students are
expected to enroll in AVID class every year and remain in the program until high school
graduation (Oswald, 2002). The AVID curriculum generally focuses on, “explicit
instruction in the skills needed for success in advanced classes such as note taking,
assignment tracking, and college level writing” (Oswald 2002, p. i). The AVID curriculum strongly emphasizes writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell & Siegle, 2008). These skills not only enhance students’ opportunity in advanced courses but also prepare students to be successful in college courses. In addition, the program provides tutorial support to help students fill any gaps in their educational backgrounds (Oswald, 2002). Tutorials occur twice a week in their classroom where AVID students are trained to peer tutor. AVID students tutor each other in their areas of strength, helping fellow AVID students that may be having difficulty.

**Staff involvement**

AVID is composed of a large number of personnel that support the program guidelines to maintain effectiveness. Districts have an AVID specialist teacher that provides training throughout the year to AVID site teachers to ensure the AVID curriculum is correctly provided to students (Oswald, 2002). Primarily, AVID teachers serve as student advocates, providing support to students as needed when dealing with other teachers, administrators, and college admissions personnel (Black et al., 2008). However, AVID teachers are also in charge of monitoring students’ grades to meet the terms of the program. Students have to get grade checks on a bi-weekly basis to make sure that they are complying with the required GPA to remain in the program. In some cases when students fall below the required GPA, they are placed on probation until their grades improve.

**Course enrollment**

To enhance educational opportunities for AVID students, the program has course requirements. AVID students are enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will enable
them to meet requirements for university and/or enrollment into a 4-year college (Oswald, 2002). Additionally, AVID’s approach to college preparation involves placing students in an advanced curriculum to ensure that students graduate with the requirements for entrance (Watt, Powell, Mendiola & Cossio 2006). At the same time, advanced courses prepare AVID students to take college level courses. In addition to taking AP courses, students need to take the AVID elective course while part of the program. Thus, students enrolled in AVID on a continuous basis demonstrated a greater propensity toward attempting and completing college-level courses (Watt, Powell, Mendiola & Cossio 2006).

Interventions

Westlake High School currently provides after school intervention classes for biology and history. Students can attend intervention classes to complete unfinished work in order to improve their grade. Each class has a different system that gives students a second chance to succeed academically. For instance, for biology, students have to complete and pass a certain number of essential assignments composed of tests and labs. Interventions in biology provide the flexibility and opportunity to make up any essential assignments. On the other hand, interventions for history are structured slightly differently. In history, students can improve their grade by completing work packets during intervention class. The number of hours and work packets that students need to complete depend on the student’s grade and what they need in order to increase it. Both intervention classes are optional, but offer an opportunity for students to improve their grade.
Westlake High provides a learning tutorial center that opened its doors to students in spring of 2006. The learning center is open five days a week, eight hours a day. The learning center provides university tutors that come in throughout the week to support students in their academics. Many of the university tutors are placed in academic courses based on tutor subject strength and class need for a tutor. Tutors can assist in English, all math levels, social science, life science, physical science, and some elective courses. Tutors receive training to maximize the assistance they offer to high school students. Often time, students are tutored individually or in a small group setting depending on the subject. Teachers can send students to received additional support in their class work or students can walk in during lunch or after school.

Sample

Participants in the study, students and parents, are of Latino descent currently residing in a small agricultural city in Northern California. At the time of the study, students were identified as English Learners (EL), either enrolled in the AVID program or non-AVID. Additionally, Latino parents who participated in the voluntary study were the parents of the students in the study. Furthermore, students were selected by the researcher with the assistance of their English teacher based on the following criterion: a) freshman in high school, b) classified as second language learner, c) Latino background, d) students currently taking AVID, and e) students that have never taken AVID. In addition, the parents of students interviewed were asked to voluntarily participate in the
study with the ultimate purpose of providing information of the factors that contribute to the academic success of Latino second language learners.

The participants of this study include three AVID/EL students, Brenda, Adrian and Gustavo; and three non-AVID/EL students, Maria, Pablo and Eduardo. Of the six students, five out of the six parent’s (mom, dad or both) participated in the study. To better understand the educational experiences of each interviewed student, a brief description of each has been included. Data in Table 1.2 represents overall GPA, CST’s score, and ELD proficient level of AVID/EL student that were participants of the study. GPA is based on a 4.0 scale where 2.0 represents a “C” average. CST’s score are measured on a 600 point scale where a score of 350 denotes proficient level on a specific subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>08-09 Overall G.P.A</th>
<th>2009 CST (English)</th>
<th>2009 CST (Math)</th>
<th>2009 CST (Science)</th>
<th>ELD proficiency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>FEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>FEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustavo</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>LEP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adrian

Adrian was born in Mexico City where he resided until his family migrated to U.S seeking a better future. Consequently, it was Adrian’s first experience in a land that did not speak his language, still he managed to successfully finish elementary school. Adrian is a motivated student that always strives to have and maintain good grades. His eagerness in going on to a University is his best motivator and as a result, Adrian has been part of AVID for the last three years. Adrian’s older sister recommended that he enroll in the AVID program so that he could benefit from the support it offers. Now he
understands that the AVID program is providing him the tools and guidance to be accepted into a University.

Adrian is the youngest of two and like his sister, who currently attends a UC university; he is expected to attend a university as well. Even though Adrian’s parents do not have an advanced degree, they understand the value of higher education and support him with moral advice by always reminding him that he needs to do well in school. Adrian’s parents have contributed to his independence expecting him to work hard in his academic classes. Ever since he was little, his parents placed a great amount of academic responsibility on Adrian, holding high expectations for his success. Now in high school, it is normal for Adrian to employ good study habits. Adrian’s parents do not have to remind him to do his homework because he knows it is an expectation that he needs to comply with.

Brenda

Brenda was born in the U.S but at an early age was taken to Mexico where she successfully completed early grades of elementary schooling. Then, her family immigrated to the U.S seeking a better future for their children. It was Brenda’s first experience learning English but this obstacle did not stop her motivation and dedication to maintain good grades. In fact, Brenda challenged herself to be a 4.0 student. Her motivation drives Brenda to seek assistance whenever she needs academic support or information about educational programs. As a result, she is well-informed of school resources, and in addition, she is participant of UC Davis Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP), a program that assists students in the process of entering a University. Brenda’s willingness to attend a University has encouraged her to be part of AVID in the
last two years. She knows that AVID will assist her with the process of obtaining scholarships and attending a University since she will be the first one in her family to apply. She understands that she will need additional support that can guide her through the process.

Brenda is the oldest child of two. She has the support of her parents to continue her education. Even though her parents did not continue their own education, they understand the value of an academic education and support Brenda in any possible way. They often remind her that the key to success is pursuing a career of her choice. Brenda’s parents attend some monthly English Learners’ Advisory Committee meetings (ELAC) that provide information about the U.S educational system that can guide them in order to better support Brenda in her education. Thus, Brenda’s only duty to her family is to work hard in school to graduate from high school and to be able to pursue a career of her choice.

Gustavo

Gustavo was born in Mexico but his parents brought him to the U.S at an early age and consequently, he has only attended U.S schools. Even though Gustavo’s first language is Spanish, he never received proper schooling in his native language and currently as an English Learner that struggles with both Spanish and English. Gustavo is a well-behaved student but often struggles with some of his classes and as a consequence he has failed a few academic courses. Gustavo understands that in order to attend a University he needs to maintain a good G.P.A. Consequently, he uses the learning center to get additional support in some of his classes like English and Science. Additionally, his older brother suggested that Gustavo join the AVID program for academic assistance.
and college guidance support. Now, Gustavo values the support that AVID is providing him, such as building important academic skills that he needs to succeed in high school and to eventually attend a university.

Gustavo is the youngest of three children. Like his older brother currently attending Sacramento State, Gustavo is expected to enter a university of his choice. Gustavo’s parents did not have the opportunity to attend a university but they know the value of obtaining a degree so that he will have more career options. His parents do not want him to struggle the way they have and consequently, they often remind him that he needs to do well in school. However, Gustavo’s parents rely on the older brother to support him academically since he already attends a four-year college and is more able to help him. Gustavo does see his brother as a role model and great resource that can provide him instrumental assistance in his educational experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>08-09 Overall G.P.A</th>
<th>2009 CST (English)</th>
<th>2009 CST (Math)</th>
<th>2009 CST (Science)</th>
<th>ELD proficiency</th>
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<tr>
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<td>338</td>
<td>FEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
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<td>355</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eduardo</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>FEP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 2.2 represents overall GPA, CST score, and ELD proficient level of Non-AVID/EL student that were participants of the study. GPA is based on a 4.0 scale were 2.0 represents a “C” average. CST’s score are measure on a 600 point scale were a score of 350 denotes proficient level on a specific subject.
Pablo

Pablo was born in Mexico where he lived the first few years of his life. Pablo’s parents decided to immigrate to the U.S. before he started kindergarten so that he would learn English at an early age. Even though Pablo started school as a kindergarten student, learning English has been a challenge for him. Pablo is a determined student but can be easily distracted with topics of his interest. He is involved with the school’s soccer team and at times gets carried away with sports, forgetting about academics. As a consequence, Pablo struggles in some of his academic classes causing him to seek additional assistance in order to maintain average grades. Pablo is knowledgeable about school resources that can assist him in academics and takes advantage of them. However, Pablo understands that academics are an important part of his future. His goal is to graduate from high school and attend a university. On the other hand, he is not well-informed about the college-going process because he does not speak to his counselor and does not think it is necessary. Unfortunately, as a freshmen in high school he was not recommended to the AVID program where he could now be benefitting from the program’s assistance.

Pablo is an only child and is expected to attend a university, since his parents did not have the chance to pursue a college degree. Pablo’s parents want for him to be focused on school and his only duty is to work on academics and sports. Even though his parents cannot help him in his academics, they support Pablo’s attendance in the learning center. His parents occasionally attend ELAC school meetings to understand more about the U.S educational system to assist Pablo as much as possible.
**Maria**

Maria was born in Mexico where she lived until her family immigrated to the U.S when she was 9 years old. She was able to complete elementary school in the U.S where she successfully learned English. Maria is a very bright and curious individual that is always asking intellectual questions, however she resists requesting academic support. She is also a talented student that finds her motivation in sports and playing the drums. She is part of her church’s choir where she performs every weekend, in addition to being part of a community and school soccer team. Maria is an active individual that at times does not know how to balance her time between academics and extracurricular activities. Consequently, Maria’s grades suffer causing her much stress. Due to her grades she was dropped from the AVID program as freshmen in high school and now struggles to be back into the program. She tries to raise her grades by attending interventions while still participating in her extracurricular activities.

Maria is the second oldest of six siblings that is expected to pursue a college degree. Maria’s parents did not have the opportunity to attend a university and currently her mother finds herself working multiple jobs to support six children. Maria’s mother has a busy schedule leaving her with no additional time to participate in any school related activities. Even though Maria is of age to work and help her parents, they would rather she focus on her academics and extracurricular activities that are preparing her to go to a college.

**Eduardo**

Eduardo was born in Mexico where he resided until his family also immigrated to the U.S. He was able to finish his elementary schooling in the U.S even though he had
the challenge of learning English. Consequently, he is an observant, responsible, and
motivated individual that is always seeking more information about concepts and themes
taught in class. His curiosity motivates him to do research on his own to have a deeper
and more profound understanding of topics of his interest. Academically, Eduardo has
managed to maintain a 3.6 GPA with the support of the learning center and his older
sister. Even though Eduardo has good grades he was not recommended to apply to AVID
program.

Eduardo is the youngest in his family and he would be the first one of his siblings
to attend a university. Even though Eduardo’s older siblings have not attended a
university, his parents hope for him to obtain a university degree so that he does not have
to work as much as they do. Eduardo’s parents did not finish high school and currently
work long hours in agriculture. His parents do not understand much about the U.S
educational system because they are unable to attend school meetings due to long hours
of work. Unfortunately, Eduardo’s parents are not able to assist him academically but
they trust that he will successfully complete high school.

Design of the Study

This study was conducted through semi-structured interviews that include
qualitative and quantitative data administered to a focus group of high school students,
and one or both student’s parents. Interviews were conducted in the language preferred
by the participant, either Spanish or English, to give them the opportunity to express
themselves explicitly with the researcher.
Three different questionnaires were created for this study to find the relationship between parent involvement, support programs and other factors that contribute to the academic success of students EL Latino students. Questionnaires were divided for: a) EL students in AVID; b) EL student not in AVID; and c) parents. In this study, the two primary variables were AVID and non-AVID students. The questionnaire given to EL students not in AVID included twenty-four questions. On the other hand, the questionnaire for EL students in AVID incorporated the twenty-four questions asked to non-AVID student with an additional ten questions that focused on students personal experience in the AVID program, a total of thirty-four questions. Furthermore, the parent questionnaire included twenty-three questions, basically the same questions asked to non-AVID students but modified for parent’s perspective.

The questions from the three protocols were divided into the following categories: (a) demographics, (b) academic progress, (c) knowledge of resources, (d) support, (e) motivation and (f) influence of family. All three questionnaires had the same demographic questions that include number 1, 2, 3 and 4. A copy of each questionnaire, in English and Spanish appears in the Appendix.

Data Collection

In this study, data will be triangulated to compare sources of student’s academic success. Triangulation of data is a mix method used in order to determine reliability of sources. As Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, and Siegle (2008) indicate, “in mixed-methods studies, data are triangulated as a means of corroborating results…data from multiple sources are compared for consistency to strengthen study’s conclusions” (2008,
Data will be triangulated by: a) students’ interviews, b) parents’ interviews, and c) end of the year G.P.A.

Instrumentation

In this study, students and parents were interviewed separately. Students were individually interviewed in school and their oral responses were audio recorded to allow for explicit and detailed responses. Additionally, interviews lasted about thirty minutes per participant. Students were asked their place of birth, ethnicity, and years lived in the U.S, whether they were planning to graduate from high school, whether they would be the first one in their family to attend college, and whether they were thinking of attending college. The remainder of the questions specifically asked to explain obstacles, if any, to succeed academically in school; factors that have contributed to their success in education. On the other hand, home visits took place for each parent or parents participating in the interview. If both parents were present at the time of interview, they both had the opportunity to respond to each question while responses were recorded. Parents were asked their place of birth, ethnicity, and years lived in the U.S; whether they foresee their child graduating from high school, whether their child would be the first one in their family to attend college, and if they wanted their child to attend college and why. The remainder of the questions specifically asked to explain obstacles their child has faced, if any, to succeed academically in school; factors that have contributed to the academic success of their child. For most of the questions all participants had the opportunity to explain their answers thoroughly.
Data Analysis Procedures

Data gathered in the interviews were organized by common themes seen in student’s and parent responses. Participant responses were coded and divided into two categories, intrinsic and extrinsic factors, to help identify what internal and external features most contributed to these students’ academic achievement. Also GPA and CST scores were analyzed and compared to help understand academic achievement among this group of Latino EL students. This data provided a picture of the role that parents, students and support programs like AVID can play in historically underachieving students’ efforts to break the trend and succeed academically.
Chapter 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this chapter, data will be presented and analyzed to provide answers to the following research questions previously presented:

1. What is the effect of an educational support program on the academic success of high school English Learners?

2. What is the effect of non-participation in an educational support program on the academic success of English Learners?

Ethnographic Student Interviews

Data from Table 1 and Table 2 were derived from the themes that emerged from the participant’s interviews responses. However, data will be analyzed using the Youth Resiliency Framework model (Hammond, 2001) that focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic factors contributing to student academic achievement. I believe the components included in this framework are critical factors related to academic achievement. Therefore, I will use this model to examine probable factors of Latino EL student academic success for students participating in an educational support program at Westlake High School and for those who are not. The framework components found for intrinsic strengths mainly center on: self-concept and empowerment. For extrinsic strengths, I will concentrate on the components of family, peers, and learning at school. Table 1 focuses on EL students that are part of the AVID program while Table 2 shows EL students not in AVID.
Additionally, I will compare results from Figure 1 and Figure 2 to explore possible explanation for any differences in academic success among both groups.

**AVID English Learner Students**

*Table 1: AVID/EL Intrinsic Strength Student Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Brenda</th>
<th>Adrian</th>
<th>Gustavo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future plans</strong></td>
<td>▪ Attending a four-year university</td>
<td>▪ Attending a four-year university Help parents</td>
<td>▪ Attending a four-year college</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Academic assistance** | ▪ Algebra 2  
▪ Organization skills | ▪ Geometry                                 | ▪ English  
▪ Organization skills  
▪ Class work                |
| **School resources used** | ▪ Uses all possible resources              | ▪ Uses all possible resources              | ▪ Uses multiple school resources           |

**Intrinsic Strengths**

Intrinsic factors refer to an individual’s internal drive and motivation to obtain a goal. In this case I will primarily focus on: self-concept and empowerment. Figure 1 contains student responses from the interviews that include: specific factors that contribute to student’s motivation, current academic challenges, and students’ future plans.
Self-concept: Motivation, Self-efficacy, Planning and Decision Making

Motivation

Motivation is an important factor that can contribute to academic student achievement. There is a vast body of research that focuses on the relationship between motivation and academic achievement among students that helps to explain specific factors that contribute to academic success (Gándara, 2004). In this study, motivation plays the role of an intrinsic and extrinsic condition that facilitates high achievement among Latino students. In this section, the main focus will be motivation triggered by intrinsic factors associated with high potential and achievement (Barber & Torney-Purta, 2008).

Motivation can drive students’ possible selves and reflect an individual’s hopes for the future (Vick & Packard, 2008). Possible self refers to the inner reflection individuals carry that will help determine future actions. Possible selves provide motivation for individuals to engage in energized, organized activity, which in turn influences effective performance (Vick & Packard, 2008). For example, students vision to help their family, desire to obtain a good job or the dream of attending a university are all examples of possible self. Thus, the possible self can be described as ones’ self-relevant images which reflect what an individual hopes to become or in some cases fears becoming in the future (Vick & Packard, 2008). In this study, the possible self emerges in such statements like the following, from Adrian who states “el sueño de ir colegio me motiva a sacar buenas notas para poder ayudar a mis padres con un buen trabajo” (the dream of going to college motivates me to obtain good grades so that I can help my parents with a good job). In this case, Adrian’s possible self is the image of going to
college which in turn drives his motivation to earn good grades. Adrian understands the relationship between earning good grades in order to gain entrance to a college education that will in turn provide him access to a job. However, to earn good grades he knows that he will need to work hard in his academics and at times AVID will be the support program that brings additional academic assistance. Furthermore, once in college, Adrian imagines he will be able to prepare for a career that will allow him to support his family. Adrian shares, “Me veo en un colegio como UC Davis para terminar una carrera y poder ayudar a mis padres con un buen trabajo” (I see myself attending a college like UC Davis to finish a career and be able to financially support my parents with a good job). Many Latino students like Adrian, are able to envision their possible selves pursuing a college degree and eventually finding a well paid job in order to help their family. One study suggests, “for urban Hispanic teens to believe in their abilities to achieve in academics, they may also need to believe that achieving in academics will lead to future success” (Vick & Packard, 2008, p. 476). In most cases, students want to financially contribute back to parents for all the hard work parents have undertaken to make sure their children have a better job and future than they had. Although each student’s motivation is driven from a different force, all of the students from this study are working towards the goal of academic achievement.

Another component of students’ possible self can be manifested on students’ own aspirations for the future that in turn drives their motivation. Aspirations can be short-term, like the desire to obtain good grades or long-term aspirations, such as attending a university. “Aspirations are the manifestation of one’s need to achieve or achievement motive. They are goals that individuals set for themselves” (Gándara, 2004, p. 22). Some
Latino students do form high educational goals, (Gándara, 2004) as Gustavo shares, “my dream to go to college is my motivation that helps me to good grades”. Gustavo’s short-term aspiration is to earn good grades that will help to fulfill his long-term aspiration of going to a university. Even though he has aspirations that maintain him motivated to succeed, he understands that AVID can provide additional support to help him realize his success. Gustavo shares, “AVID helps me to keep up with my grades”. Gustavo’s aspirations drive his desire to use outside sources to help him in the process. Research suggests, minority high school youth in a college preparation programs support each other’s aspirations for high achievement (Gándara, 2004) which in turn can serve as motivation for students. AVID is an instrumental support program that guides students to be peer tutors where students create a supportive environment helping each other in academics.

Self-efficacy

“Self-efficacy…refers to the belief in one’s competence to exercise control over one’s actions and to achieve at a given task or event” (Vick & Packard, 2008, p. 465). Self-efficacy can be demonstrated by self driven students that plan and make decisions to achieve a goal. For instance, Brenda shares “estoy tomando AVID para queme ayuden a ir a la universidad… quiero llegar a la universidad, se que sola no voy a poder porque en mi familia nadie ha ido” (I am taking AVID so that they can help me go to a university…I want to go to university, I know that I will not be able to do it by myself because none of my family has gone). Brenda’s comment illustrates her desire to go to a university but she understands she will need additional support to achieve her goal. Additionally, she explains how challenging it will be to go to a university, given that no
one in her family has first-hand experience that can serve as guidance and advice. Consequently, she will need AVID to provide her with the necessary tools for entering college. Brenda’s self-efficacy demonstrates a clear understanding of the path and steps needed to attend a university and she has created a process to help her attain her goal. For instance, she is well aware that she can apply for scholarships and that this means free money that will help pay for her education. Brenda shares, “AVID me ayuda a encontrar scholarships” (AVID helps me find scholarships). In this case, participating in AVID will guide her throughout high school. Vick & Packard (2008) suggest “in order to have high self-efficacy beliefs about his or her abilities to achieve in school, a student must not only picture himself or herself achieving in school, a student must also have schema of becoming a college student that is important to the student” (p. 476). In addition of having an image of self-success, self-efficacy in individuals is manifested in the desire to succeed in the future and clear vision of how to do so.

Planning & Decision Making

Individuals’ motivation and self-efficacy are important elements that guide students in academic planning and decision making. For instance, Adrian shares “me veo en un colegio como UC Davis, yo sé por mi hermana y por la clase de AVID por los proyectos que hemos hecho” (I see myself in a university like UC Davis, I know through my sister and through the AVID projects we have done). Adrian has a clear idea that he wants to attend UC Davis and the fact that he was able to name a university reveals that he has done his own research. He acknowledges that his sister and AVID have been important outside sources that have influenced his decision regarding the university he dreams of attending in the future. Like Adrian, many Latino students decide to enroll in
AVID in order to attend motivational fieldtrips to colleges and presentations by guest speakers (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell & Siegle, 2008). All play a part in making college a real possibility for students who generally will be the first in their families to attend (Oswald, 2002). Fieldtrips and guest speakers provided through AVID are valuable sources of information that guide students to make clear future decisions.

The role of older siblings that already attend a university can be another outside motivational factor that contributes to students planning and decision making. For instance, Gustavo shares, “my brother tells me to stay in AVID so that they can help me go to a university”. Many times older siblings that already attend a university can be a positive influence and set the standards of success for younger siblings (Walker, MacGillivray & Aguilar, 2001). Gustavo made the decision to remain in AVID because his brother suggested that AVID is a great resource to prepare high school students for the process of entering a university. In addition, Gustavo’s brother has shared with him that AVID would look good on his transcripts because it is a well recognized program. Gustavo follows his brother’s advice due to the fact that he is already attending a four year university and knows more about the process of entering a university. Gustavo’s older brother is the first in his family to apply, attend, and eventually obtain a college degree from a four year university. Gustavo not only sees his brother as a great resource that is helping him make future plans but also as a role model that has made a difference in his life.

Empowerment

Empowerment is an important factor in the academic success of Latino students. As Gutierrez (1990) explains, “empowerment involves the process of increasing personal,
interpersonal, or political powers so that individuals, families, and community can take action to improve their situation” (p. 2). One’s motivation and self-efficacy are important elements that help students take action in their academic education. Therefore, “the tie between efficacy and empowerment is clear: individuals and groups which believe in their ability to affect change are more likely than others to make efforts to increase their power” (Gutierrez, 1990, p. 3). However, empowerment can be influenced throughout by a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic forces and ultimately, individuals can only empower themselves. For instance, teachers create the conditions that impart skills-literacy, numeracy, and other tools under which people can empower themselves (Ruiz, 1997). Evidence for this can be seen in Brenda’s responses related to her desire to attend college. “Yo quiero ir a la universidad y creo que si lo puedo lograr aunque empiece en un community college” (I want to attend university and I think I can accomplish it even if I start at a community college). Even though Brenda empowered herself, there were other sources like AVID that helped her with the process of taking action. Now Brenda can take action to prepare herself, using the provided tools like scholarship and university awareness, note taking, and organizational skills to help her attain her goals. Studies such as Delgado-Gaitan’s, (1994) found that people become aware of their strengths that can help them make choices and in turn set goals that will guide future planning and decision making. This is a community study that focuses on the Latino community empowerment to work together with schools to access necessary resources in order to support the academic success of Latino students. Ultimately, empowerment means feeling efficacy about one’s self which helps individuals confidently make important life decisions.
Extrinsic Strengths

Support Programs, Family, Peers and Achievement

Table 1.1 AVID/EL Extrinsic Strength Student Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Brenda</th>
<th>Adrian</th>
<th>Gustavo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of resources</td>
<td>▪ AVID</td>
<td>▪ AVID</td>
<td>▪ AVID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ EAOP</td>
<td>▪ EAOP</td>
<td>▪ Counselors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Learning center</td>
<td>▪ Learning center</td>
<td>▪ Learning center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Counselors</td>
<td>▪ Counselors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>▪ AVID</td>
<td>▪ AVID</td>
<td>▪ Learning center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Teachers</td>
<td>▪ Older sister</td>
<td>▪ Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Older brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>▪ Moral support: parents want her to go to college.</td>
<td>▪ Moral support: parents want her to go to college.</td>
<td>▪ Moral support: parents want him to go to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
<td>▪ Tennis</td>
<td>▪ EAOP</td>
<td>▪ Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ EAOP</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Key Club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extrinsic factors refer to outside sources that drive one’s determination to obtain a goal. In this section, data for AVID/EL students will be analyzed focusing on the extrinsic factors of: Support Programs, Family, Peers, and Achievement. Table 1.1 represents self-reported knowledge gleaned from the interviews about extrinsic factors that have contributed to their academic success.

Support Programs

Knowledge of School Resources

Student engagement at school can be demonstrated by knowing and using the school resources and participating in school extracurricular activities. In many cases,
students become familiar with school resources through school personnel or friends that share information about school resources. Some students take advantage of school resources to guide and support them in their academic education. For instance, Gustavo shares, “I know about the graduation requirements because I talk to my counselor about grades and classes”. Gustavo expresses the value of speaking to a counselor that will maintain him informed of all the graduation requirements. In addition, Gustavo uses the counseling resources to provide him with additional guidance in entering a four-year college. He understands that he will not be able to do it alone and takes advantage of what is offered to him in high school. Many Latino students like Gustavo seek counseling guidance support that will assist them with high school graduation requirements as well as with college admissions. A study by Gándara & Contreras (2009), mentions that adult figures like counselors may take Latino students under their wing to provide them with access to the information necessary for preparing for applying to college.

AVID

Another school resource that some students can participate in is the AVID class that offers academic support to students in various forms. AVID is a program designed to help underachieving students with academic potential prepare for entrance into colleges and universities (Oswald, 2002). Support programs like AVID are a great outside influence for students that require academic assistance. Often time Latino students lack knowledge of resources, consequently, they turn to support programs for academic guidance. As Adrian shares “AVID ha sido fundamental en algunas cosas, en mis clases difíciles me han ayudado” (AVID has been fundamental in some things, in my difficult
classes it has helped me). Adrian is taking advantage of the opportunity that AVID provides through their tutoring program. Even though Adrian maintains excellent grades, he occasionally needs academic help and he knows that AVID is the venue that will provide him academic assistance. The AVID program provides tutorial support to help students fill any gaps in their educational background (Oswald, 2002). Many AVID classes have in-class tutors twice a week that can assist in various academic courses. As a result, many Latino students at Westlake high who participate in AVID take advantage of having in class tutorials for academic support.

As part of the AVID curriculum students learn writing organizational skills. In addition to tutoring support, AVID also provides instruction in writing to facilitate learning in the form of note-taking and learning logs (Turnbaugh, 2001) with the primary purpose of teaching writing organizational skills. For instance Brenda says, “AVID me ayuda con mi organización de escritura, no soy tan mala, pero no soy tan perfecta como quieren que sea” (AVID helps me with my writing organization skills, I am not bad, but I am not as perfect as they would like me to be). Brenda understands that organizational skills are important to learn in order to succeed in every class. For instance, as part of the AVID curriculum, Brenda learned how to take Cornell notes, an organizational tool that helps her organize her notes for all her classes. Brenda appreciates that AVID helps students with organizational skills and even though, she is not perfect, she is learning one important skill that is helping her with all her classes and most importantly, to achieve her goal of college entrance. Brenda has been one of many students that has benefited from AVID. As research shows, the “AVID program does appear to affect students’ achievement in language arts and writing” (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell & Siegle,
Eventually, the support students receive from AVID brings student achievement that transcends to all academic courses.

Gustavo is also part of the AVID program which is providing him the necessary skills to succeed in high school and prepare him for college. In his interview, Gustavo mentions, “AVID teaches you about the difference of a 4 year university and a two year”. Now Gustavo has gained some knowledge about the process of entering a university and is aware of the difference between a two year college and a four year university. Gustavo also understands that he needs and will need the assistance of AVID when he is ready to start the process of applying for a university. Gándara and Contreras (2009) assert that, “one of the most impressive outcomes of AVID’s success is the increase in the rate of program participants’ attending four-year colleges” (p.286). Additionally, Gustavo knows that he needs the support of AVID in order to help him with his education. Gustavo often has trouble in some of his academic courses and AVID provides him with the assistance in order to pass all his courses. He understands that AVID is helping him earn decent grades in order to attend a four-year college. AVID helps to improve student academic achievement so that college entrance is viable (Turnbaugh, 2001). Therefore, many students enrolled in AVID know that it is a great program that will guide them in their middle and high school education in various forms.

**EAOP**

EAOP (Educational Academic Outreach Program) is another support program that assists middle and high school students with academic skills development, administrative and programmatic linkages between schools and the university, dissemination of information, motivational development, and participant identification.
and referral (Fashola & Slavin, 2001). EAOP is a support system for many Latino students who enrolled in this program in middle or high school. Brenda has been part of the EAOP program since middle school and shares “EAOP me dan información de becas y como encontrar universidades y los veo una vez al mes” (EAOP provides me with scholarship information and how to find universities and I see them once a month). Brenda has taken advantage of the information that EAOP has provided her and already as a sophomore, knows how to find out about scholarships and universities. Brenda has an understanding that to continue on the path of attending a university she will need money that she can earn by applying for scholarships. Consequently, Brenda like many other Latino students uses all possible resources to find a clear path for academic success by attending a university. As Fashola and Slavin (2001) explain “interventions are needed in secondary schools to increase the chances that students will stay in school, complete their high school degrees, and make a successful transition to postsecondary studies or the workforce” (p.69).

Family: Family Support, High Expectations and Role Models

*Family Support*

In many instances, students’ family involvement in their education is an important extrinsic factor that can determine student academic success.

“Meaningful parent involvement results in improved student achievement, attendance, motivation, self-esteem, and behaviors. Parent involvement also is a major contributor to children’s positive attitude toward school…”

(Philipsen,1996, p. 2).
Parental involvement can manifest in various forms, like attending school meetings, meeting counselors and teachers, and providing positive feedback to students. For example, Brenda’s parents attend ELAC (English Learners’ Advisory Committee) meetings conducted in Spanish. They wish they could attend the monthly ELAC informational meetings but they lack the language proficiency. In addition, Brenda’s parents are involved in her academic schooling; they speak with her counselor to be familiar with graduation requirements. Her parents know that in order to help Brenda, they need to have a better understanding of the U.S. education system and that this is gained by being involved in school as much as possible. In contrast, the U.S. education system differs from that in Mexico; in Mexico, parents are not expected to play the same role in their child’s education as they are in the U.S.. Therefore, few Latino parents become involved in the academic education of their children. Research indicates that a lack of proficiency with the English language and little familiarity with American educational systems may hinder Latino parents’ ability to provide specific instrumental assistance with course work and from displaying a keen interest in their children’s academic progress. (Ceballo, 2004)

Another form of parent involvement is providing education moral support. Many Latino parents use moral support as a means of encouraging students to succeed academically in school. Moral support can be manifested by consejos, often the main vehicle through which less educated older immigrants support education (Auerbach, 2006). Consejos are cultural narratives “forms of indirect teaching and nurturing advice that adults use to guide and strengthen young people” (Auerbach, 2006, p. 278). For
example, Brenda shares, “mis papas quieren que vaya a la universidad porque ellos están batallando mucho por lo económico y ellos quieren que yo esté mejor” (my parents want me to go to a university because they are struggling financially and they want the best for me). Even though her parents cannot help her academically, they still provide Brenda with moral support. As Brenda shares, “me dicen que si agarro buenos grados mientras trabaje duro es suficiente, que no todo el tiempo es perfecto” (they tell me that if I earn good grades while I work hard that is enough, that doesn’t always have to be perfect). Brenda’s parents associate good grades with entering a university that will eventually lead to finding a better job. Although, her parents did not attend a university they understand that a career will benefit Brenda in the future; therefore, they always remind her to do well in school. Many Latino parents use verbal exhortation to encourage their children not only to get a college education but to pursue the careers they wish to order to be successful (Reyes, 2008). Thus, parental involvement of any kind is essential in the academic education of Latino students. Research suggests, “most of the [Latino] parents [do] not know about specific educational goals or requirements; nonetheless, they [support] any attempts made by their children in educational settings” (Ceballo, 2004, p. 177).

Even though some Latino parents are not directly involved in the education of their children, they trust in their ability to succeed academically. In a study about parenting roles in Latino families, Ceballo (2004) explains that Latino parents, regarding all academic matters, conveyed enormous trust in their children, expecting them to work in their classes. Examples from this study corroborate his finding. For instance, Adrian’s mother shares “yo confío en que mi hijo hace sus tareas cuando llega de la escuela” (I
trust that my son does his homework when he arrives from school). Adrian’s mother
believes that he will finish all his work without supervision. Adrian is an independent
individual that does not need to be reminded about school and his mother shares that she
taught him to be independent at an early age and now she sees the results. Adrian’s
mother takes a hands-off approach, relying on Adrian to do well in school and find out
what is needed to do to get to university (Auerbach, 2006). Consequently, Adrian’s
mother fully believes that his son will take the necessary steps to go on to college.
Ceballo’s study also reveals that many Latino students managed every aspect of their
academic careers on their own—with little, if any, specific parental input.

Parent’s High Expectations

Despite this finding, many Latino parents have high academic expectations for
their children and support their children to the best of their ability so that their children
meet those expectations. High expectations differ from parent to parent but ultimately,
parents want their children to succeed academically. For instance, Adrian shares,
“Moralmente, mi mama siempre me dice que “tu puedes” y espera que vaya a la
universidad” (through verbal exhortation, my mom always tells me “you can” and
expects me to go to a university). Additionally, Adrian’s mother shared that her
expectations are for him to obtain above average grades in high school so that he can go
on to college to finish a career of his choice. Adrian’s mother understands that grades are
a vehicle to go on to college but she is not familiar with the entire process and
consequently, the support she can offer is indirect. Generally, Latino parents want for
their children to accomplish more than they had and see getting a college education as the
sure path towards landing a stable, dignified, well-paid job (Reyes, 2008).
Role Models

Adult mentors are often mentioned as key, instrumental figures in the students’ lives (Ceballo, 2004). Adult mentors for students can vary from teachers, counselors, family relatives or siblings. Often times students look up to mentors because they typically express interest in the student’s personal life as well as his or her academic work (Ceballo, 2008). For many students this could be their only connection with an adult that can guide them academically. As for Gustavo, he shares “my brother is my role model and he also helps me with homework”. He describes his brother as a hardworking individual that is always willing to support him in any possible way. In addition, Gustavo is inspired by his brother who is currently attending a four-year university. As a result, Gustavo has the desire to follow in his brother’s steps and go on to college. Some Latino students like Gustavo look up to an adult that can guide them academically. Previous research indicates that relationships with a caring adult or mentor can buffer children from many adverse life circumstances (Ceballo, 2004).

Even though Adrian is motivated to fulfill his dream, his motivation was initially driven from outside sources like his parents that have been indirect role models. According to Gándara (2004), the achievement motivation theory “could be engendered in children through early training by setting high standards and providing sufficient independence and autonomy for the child to develop a sense of task mastery” (p. 21). Adrian’s mother shared that she has always set high standards while advising him to work hard. Additionally, she shared that Adrian has become an independent child that does not need to be reminded of his tasks. As Gándara explains, “some Latinos from low socio-economic backgrounds…do form high educational goals, and self-reports of the
sources of their motivation include prominently the influence of mothers…” (p. 23). Parental support is an important outside resource that attributes to students’ motivation allowing for the development of long term goals. As a result, Latino students are influenced from outside sources, like parents, driving their motivation to academically succeed. Furthermore, motivation is an intrinsic factor that is driven from one’s inner force. Still many times motivation can be influenced by extrinsic forces that stimulate individual minds. Consequently, motivation can be propelled by the relationship between of intrinsic and extrinsic elements that will be further explored below.

**Peers: Positive Relationship and Influence**

Positive peer support among students can result in a valuable outcome academically. Studies reveal that the positive role of peers can provide emotional support, academic guidance, and companionship (Azmitia & Cooper, 2001). Gustavo shares “my friends and I help each other with homework and we also play sports together”. Gustavo and his friends work as a team to support each other when needed in academics. Gustavo explains that when he needs assistance in his homework he asks some of his friends that are willing to support him. In addition to studying with his friends, Gustavo also plays sports with them. Peers can play a pivotal role in both majority and minority students’ schoolpathways through their joint participation in school activities as well as in decisions to stay in school and in developing college and career identities (Azmitia & Cooper, 2001). Interaction with peers can have a positive impact on making future decisions that will help in their academic success. Gándara and Contreras (2009) explain, “peers can be critically important for linking students to
information networks that help them understand the role that college might play in their lives, and for providing support for the decision to go to college” (p. 232).

Achievement

High achievement among Latino students can be manifested in various forms. Often, student academic achievement indicators are reflected on academic grade point average (GPA) trends (Contreras, 2005) and performance on California Standardized Tests (CST’s).

Adrian

For instance, Adrian shares “nunca he sacado malos grados siempre trabajo duro” (I have never had bad grades). Even though Adrian was designated an English learner until 2006, he has been able to maintain a 3.7 G.P.A with the support of external sources like AVID, his older sister and parents. This is important because “while GPA reflects past and current school performance, it is also a predictor of future accomplishments-and opportunities” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 213). In addition to external influences, his motivation, self-efficacy and empowerment have been internal influences that also attribute to his academic achievement. Adrian’s determination to go on to college is reflected in his academic GPA because he understands that good grades increase the possibility of college admission. Adrian’s desire to succeed academically is also evidenced in his CST’s above average or proficient results. Adrian’s academic achievement is demonstrated in his above average GPA and proficient CST’s scores.

Brenda

Likewise, Brenda’s dedication to her education is reflected in her 4.0 G.P.A and above average CST results. Brenda has worked profoundly in her academics to earn
straight “A’s” and as a result, she does not believe in earning anything below an “A” grade. Brenda’s determination in her schooling, with the help of AVID, has prepared her to undertake the challenge of taking advanced courses for her grade level. As a freshman, Brenda took Algebra 2, a course that is more commonly taken in the sophomore year of high school. Even though Algebra 2 was a difficult class and it demanded long hours of studying, she managed to earn an “A”. The Gándara & Contreras (2009) study suggests, “AVID is an example of one support program that attempts to increase college-going by opening up a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum to students who would not otherwise be selected to take such courses” (p. 285). Brenda concurs, “Algebra 2 es difícil porque es muy avanzada para mi…pero yo pido ayuda a el maestro o mi amiga” (Algebra 2 is a difficult class because it is advanced for me…but I ask my teacher and friend for help). Brenda recognizes that although Algebra 2 is a difficult class, she can and does look for resources that can assist her to succeed in the class. This is an example of Brenda’s determination and hard work in maintaining good grades that also manifests in her CST results that are above average or proficient level. Brenda believes that she must give her best to her education; these efforts show in her CST’s, GPA, and most importantly, her attitude towards future success. If students believe in their abilities to achieve academically, they also need to believe that their academics will guide them to future success (Vick & Packard, 2008).

**Gustavo**

“Some of the disparities in grades by ethnicity may be due to differences in motivation or informal learning, but some are almost certainly due to variations in the quality of prior educational differences” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 213). Gustavo
still remains an English learner with a CELDT score of 3 which means Intermediate level. “Students at this level of English language performance begin to tailor the English language to meet communication and learning demands with increasing accuracy” (CELDT 2008–09 Edition Test Interpretation Guide). A study by Cummins (1987) explains, “minority students frequently develop fluent surface or conversational skills in the school language but their academic skills continue to lag behind grade norms” (p. 14). In Gustavo’s case, his fluency in the English language may help to explain his current 2.7 average GPA and his below average skills on CST results in the areas of English, Mathematics, and Science. Interestingly enough, Gustavo shares that “English is hard for me because all is hard”. Thus, it makes sense that for Gustavo, English is a difficult class considering that he is taking a regular English class when he is still an English learner. On the other hand, even though Gustavo is an English learner, he has managed to maintain a decent GPA. Gustavo considers himself a good student but lazy when it comes to class work. Gustavo understands that school is not easy for him and that at times he needs extra support to earn average grades in order to fulfill his goal of going on to college.
Table 2: Non-AVID/EL Intrinsic Strength Student Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future plans</th>
<th>Pablo</th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Eduardo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Help his parents</td>
<td>▪ Help her parents</td>
<td>▪ Help his parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Attend college</td>
<td>▪ Attend college</td>
<td>▪ Attend college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>▪ Needs help in English</td>
<td>▪ Needs help in English</td>
<td>▪ Needs help with science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Final exams</td>
<td>▪ Doing homework</td>
<td>▪ Maintaining good grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of resources</td>
<td>▪ Limited use of Learning Center</td>
<td>▪ Limited use of Learning Center</td>
<td>▪ Limited use of Learning Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intrinsic strengths: Self-concept and Empowerment

Table 2 demonstrates student data that support intrinsic strengths that contribute to students’ academic achievement such as future plans, academic challenges, and use of resources that will be further explained under the self-concept and empowerment categories.

Self-concept: Motivation, Self-efficacy, Planning and Decision Making

Motivation

Motivation among students is manifested in various forms depending on the initial factors that influence their motivation. As Montero-Sieburth & Batt (2001) explain, motivation “refers to the variety of beliefs that children hold about their learning and includes their degree of confidence in their abilities to learn, their expectations and opportunities for experiencing success, their own assessments of themselves, how much and to what degree they are invested in academic tasks” (p. 334).
For example, Eduardo states, “mi motivación es tener un buen futuro, trabajo y sacar a
mis papas adelante” (my motivation is to have a good future, work and help my parents).
Eduardo’s goals are very general; he does not specify what he will need to do in order to
have a good future, work and help his parents. Eduardo’s goals are broad; he does not
explain the fact that he needs to earn good grades in order to graduate from high school.
Also evident in his interview data is that Eduardo does not mention college as a road to
future success. Eduardo has not been part of any support program that could guide him
in the process of entering college. Consequently, he does not have a specific plan for the
future and even more importantly, he is not familiar with the process of entering a
university. Even though Eduardo is not well-informed of the process of college entrance
his motivation still remains, but without specific knowledge about how to achieve his
goals.

**Self-efficacy**

Studies suggest “student’s self-efficacy can be understood partly as the salient
desire to become a college student” (Vick & Packard, 2008, p. 476). Students can have
the desire to go to a university but it does not mean they are familiar with the process. As
Maria shares, “quiero volver a tomar la clase de AVID para que me ayude con el proceso
de la Universidad porque yo no sé mucho de eso” (I want to go back to AVID so that
they can help me with the application process for a university because I do not know
much about it). Maria has a clear desire to attend a university, however, she realizes that
she is not familiar with the process and AVID can support her dream of entering a
university. Maria understands that AVID will facilitate the process of applying to
university. “Self-efficacy refers to beliefs that one is capable of affecting desired changes
in one’s life” (Gutierrez, 1990, p. 3). María’s determination to succeed academically motivates her to want to improve her grades to re-join AVID, which she understands is the road that will guide her through the process of graduating from high school and entering a university.

Planning & Decision Making

Many Latino English learners do not have a clear understanding of how to reach their future goals. As a consequence, planning and decision making can become a challenge. For instance, María shares, “mi plan es obtener más información sobre universidades, porque lo único que sé es que vas 4 años y solo porque he escuchado” (my plan is to get more information about universities, because I only know that you go for four year and I only know that through what I have heard). Before María starts thinking about college, she needs to have more information, since she is only familiar with what friends have shared with her. María plans to attend a university but does not have the necessary information about the process nor the class requirements needed to be admitted into a university. However, María acknowledges that she needs to ask for guidance about college but has not been proactive in asking and seeking assistance because she does not like to ask for help. As a consequence, María does not have a clear plan for her future and an understanding of how to get there, but has made the decision that next school year she needs to enroll in a support program that will guide her academics. As Gándara (2009) explains, “programs that simply attempt to increase student achievement can have a powerful, albeit indirect, effect on the chances that students will enroll in postsecondary education” (p. 285). Enrolling in a support program can benefit María in helping her plan for her future and make it more likely she will realize her goal of attending a university.
Empowerment

“Empowerment means the restoration to individuals of a sense of their own value and strength and their own capacity to handle life's situations” (Dugan, 2003, p. 1). Empowerment comes from within an individual’s power and determination to succeed academically. For instance, Pablo shares “yo solo me motivo porque cuando sea grande quiero ayudar a mis papas” (I motivate myself because when I get older I would like to help my parents). Pablo’s inner strengths to have a good future motivate him to succeed academically. However, Pablo does not specify how he plans to help his parents or the process that he will need to follow in order to have a better future than his parents. At this point, Pablo only understands that to have a successful future he must earn good grades throughout high school. Pablo is focusing on short-term success and whenever he needs assistance with his academics he attends the learning tutorial center. Pablo explains “los tutores del learning center me ayudan en las tareas de inglés y ciencias” (tutors from the learning center help me with my English and science homework). To some extent, Pablo is using school resources that eventually can help him with long-term academic success. As Delgado-Gaitan (1994) shares “how one utilizes power determines the extent to which individuals access valued resources” (p. 2). Many students like Pablo use inner power to search for valued resources that can be extremely helpful for one’s academic success.
Extrinsic Strengths

Support Programs, Family, Peers and Achievement

Table 2.1: Non-AVID/EL Extrinsic Strength Student Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pablo</th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Eduardo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of school resources</td>
<td>Learning Center, Counselors</td>
<td>Learning Center, AVID</td>
<td>Learning Center, Interventions, AVID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>Learning Center</td>
<td>Learning Center</td>
<td>Older sister, Teachers, Learning Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>Moral support: parents want him to go to college</td>
<td>Moral support: parents want her to go to college</td>
<td>Academic support: Sister, Moral support: parents want him to go to college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, data for Non-AVID/EL students will be analyzed focusing on the extrinsic factors of: Support Programs, Family, Peers, and Achievement. Table 2.1 represents participants’ data from the interviews about extrinsic factors that have contributed to their academic success. These data will be compared with that of the AVID/EL students’.

Support Programs

Knowledge of Resources: Engagement in School

Engagement in school for non-AVID/EL students is manifested in various ways. At times these students are well informed of school resources while other times, they are
not familiar with school resources and as a consequence, they are not educated about the high school graduation requirements. There can be various reasons that support why students are not familiar with school resources. For example, schools do not advertise school resources to incoming freshmen or students do not feel the connection with school staff that might encourage them to seek out help. For instance, Eduardo shares, “no hablo con mi consejero porque no siento la necesidad” (I do not speak with my counselor because I do not feel the need to). This may well be the case but in reality, Eduardos’ counselor has also not reached out to him; consequently, he does not speak to his counselor because he does not know him. As a result, Eduardo does not understand the value of speaking to a counselor or that it can be a great educational resource.

Data has shown that academic support in the form of extracurricular encouragement by school staff members can serve as a key protective factor promoting school success for Latino youths (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004). An example of this is supported by Maria who shares “ahora me motiva el deporte, me motiva a sacar buenas notas y también el querer ir a la universidad” (now sports motivate me, they motivate me to obtain good grades and also support my desire to attend a university). Maria is motivated to work hard in her academics in order to play sports in school. She recognizes that to play sports she must comply with the academic school policy, otherwise she will not qualify. However, Maria does not have a sense of what it takes to enter a university. In addition, she does not see a connection between earning grades to play sports and the desire to go to a university but indirectly acknowledges that it may help her to have the grades needed to enter a university. Thus, extra-curricular activities often time motivate students to work in their academics. As Gándara (2004) explains
“participation in sports and clubs is correlated positively with higher grades, higher aspirations, higher levels of self-esteem, and improved race relations” (p. 11). Therefore, Latino English learner students that are part of a sport or club tend to be motivated to earn good grades in their classes but without the other support and college access knowledge, this may not be enough.

Support Programs

*Learning Tutoring Center*

At times, few Latino second language learner students look for additional academic support when they are having difficulty in academic courses. This is especially true when resources are limited based on what every school has to offer. However, this particular high school offers the learning center as a support program that assists students by providing university tutors on a daily basis. Many students, including Latino second language learners, take advantage of this program. As Pablo shares, “Inglés es mi clase difícil, no le entiendo mucho por la maestra como ensena, los tutores del learning center me ayudan con inglés” (English is my difficult class, I don’t understand much because of the way my teachers teach; tutors from the learning center help me with English). Pablo knows that the learning center is a support program that will assist him in his English class and he takes the initiative to seek their help. Most of the Latino English learners need additional support in all of their classes due to the fact that English is their second language. Therefore, many Latino English learners attend the learning center in order to received assistance in their academics. As Calderón (2001) explains, “one-to-one tutoring closely aligned with classroom instruction has been found to be effective” (p. 294).
However, the learning center provides short-term assistance in the sense that students receive help from tutors to pass their academic courses. In addition to academic assistance, students may need guidance and a rigorous curriculum that can provide long-term assistance like the AVID program. Students that are not part of AVID have fewer resources and less opportunity to gain access to the assistance that AVID provides to students. Maria is an example of a student wanting to apply to AVID to receive the support she knows she needs in order to have access to the long-term resources.

AVID

On the other hand, some Latino second language learners know about the assistance the AVID program gives to few students and they wish they could be part of the program as well. For instance, Eduardo shares “la escuela me ayudaría si tomara AVID para ayudarme y prepararme con el proceso de la universidad porque yo no entiendo el proceso” (school would help me if I took AVID to help me and prepare me with the process of entering a university because I don’t understand the process).

Eduardo is familiar with the AVID program because some of his friends are part of the class and he has heard that the class provides extra support. In addition, Eduardo knows that the program plays a critical role that provides academic guidance throughout high school and he realizes that he needs this assistance in order to accomplish his future goals. As a result, many Latino second language learners, like Eduardo, want to join the AVID program. As Contreras (2005) explains in her study, “students relied on some form of opportunity including: (a) the opportunity to prepare themselves for college by participating in a college preparatory curriculum and (b) the information and resources that would make college a realizable goal” (p. 204). However, acceptance to the AVID
support program is limited to students due to explicit requirements, application and screening process. As a result, many EL students who might benefit from these services do not have access.

Family: Family Support, High Expectations and Role Models

*Family Support*

Often times, parental involvement within the Latino community is indirect in and often invisible for schools yet extremely important for the student. It is important to note that silent parental involvement is manifest at home; parents make sure that students do their school work (Philipsen, 1996). In other words, silent parental involvement lacks the participation in school activities and instead focuses on home verbal exhortation. One form of silent parental support is the notion of verbal exhortation or telling a story. “A strategy of telling stories of family exploits or status in prior times is often used to inspire and instill hopefulness in young Latinos who do not see models of high achievement in their immediate environment” (Gándara, 2004, p.23). Parents and families of EL’s may value home educational involvement more than involvement at school (Arias & Morillo-Cambell, 2008). For instance, Eduardo shares “mis papas me dicen que siga estudiando para que tenga un buen trabajo y quieren que vaya a la universidad” (my parents tell me to keep studying so that I can have a good job and they want me to go to a university). Eduardo appreciates the moral support he receives from his parents because it serves as a reminder to be focused in his academics. Even though, Eduardo and his parents are not familiar with the high school graduation requirements and the process to enter a university, they understand that the key to success is higher education. According to Valdés (1996), many parents are confused about the American school programs,
requirements, and grading system. “In sum, limited knowledge about specific school curriculum and educational paths [does] not prevent these parents from displaying a keen interest in their children’s academic progress” (Ceballo, 2004, p. 178).

Latino parents can be discouraged in attending school meetings due to the barrier of language. As Ceballo (2004) explains, “lack of parental assistance was due, in part, to language barriers and parents’ own limited schooling” (p. 178). Parents’ limited schooling can be an obstacle in understanding the education system, preventing them from attending schools meetings. Pablo shares “no creo que puedan (padres) hacer nada más para ayudarme porque no saben inglés” (I don’t think they (parents) could do more to help me because they don’t speak English). Even though Pablo’s parents would like to be much more involved in school by attending meetings and other school events, they tend to be discouraged to do so due to limited English skills. Consequently, Pablo understands that his parents do their best to be involved in his education but their limited English skills prevents them from getting involved in other school activities. Pablo knows that his parents are still supporting him in his education and they trust that Pablo will continue to succeed academically. Pablo shares “siempre me recuerdan y repiten que le tengo que echar ganas para llegar a mi meta y tener un mejor futuro” (they always remind me that I have to do my best to meet my goal and have a better future). For Pablo, his parents’ reminders to work hard are motivation to earn good grades and work tenaciously to have a better future. Parents’ verbal exhortation can be influential in the education of students and Ceballo (2004) explains “students were highly influenced by their parents’ verbal declarations about the trust parents conveyed in them” (p. 183).
Parent’s High Expectations

Many Latino parents have high expectations for their children that are manifested in various forms. For example, one type of parent expectation is for their children to have a good future. As Maria shares “mis padres me dicen que continúe estudiando para que tenga un buen futuro para que no trabaje como ellos y esperan que vaya a la universidad” (my parents tell me to continue studying so that I don’t have to work like them and they expect for me to go to a university). As Gándara (2004) explains “while Latino parents may have high aspirations for their children’s education attainment, research also shows that their aspirations are moderated by more realistic expectations of what their children are likely to achieve” (p. 11). Maria’s parents understand the relationship between attending a university and of the likelihood of a better future. However, Maria’s parents do not understand the process of entering a university. Even though Maria’s parents want her to do well in school, they also expect for her to help raise her four younger siblings. At times Maria does not know how to balance her time to play sports, do homework, and help her younger siblings.

Role Models

“Research consistently finds the relationship between teachers and students to be one of the most important factors in student success” (Woolley, Kol & Bowen, 2009, p. 49.). At times students see teachers as role models that to an extent, students one day wish to be like. As Maria explains “mi maestra de español es la persona que yo admiro y me inspira a seguir adelante” (my Spanish teacher is the person I admire and she inspires me to continue forward in my academics). Maria has a close relationship with her Spanish teacher and often times Maria seeks her advice emotionally and academically.
This suggests that “low-income Latino young people may recognize adults outside their families as resources more often than parents” (Shetgiri et al., 2009, p. 223).

Additionally, Maria has a closer connection with her Spanish teacher because she is the only Latina teacher that she has had in her high school years and that she has been able to find a connection with. Woolley, Kol & Bowen indicates “some studies have shown that supportive teachers are a key relationship with respect to school outcome for ethnic- and racial-minority students” (2009, p. 49).

**Peers: Influence**

Data from students’ interviews revealed that peer support is evident in some students but not for all. In the case of Eduardo, he shares “mis amigos nunca me ayudan con mi tarea pero tampoco ellos se motivan a hacerla” (my friends never help me with my homework but neither are they motivated to do it). A study suggests “that not all students have friends who support school, so links between peer experiences and academic indicators may occur only among those students who do have such relationships” (Azmitia & Cooper, 2001, p. 48). As Maria’s example explains “no me gusta pedir ayuda, ni a mis amigas, siento que yo lo puedo hacer por mi cuenta por mas dificil que parezca” (I don’t like to ask for help, not even my friends, I feel I can do it on my own). Some Latino students do not think it can be beneficial to support each other in academics. Woolley, Kol & Bowen (2009) explain, studies of Latino students suggest that friend support was not often associated with academic outcomes. Many times students view peers as social friends not necessarily supporting each other academically.
Achievement

Pablo

“School achievement cannot be identified simply through one factor but needs to include the integration of development process and family systems” (Montero-Sieburth & Batt, 2001, p. 354). Academic achievement can be measured through multiple indicators like grades, standardized test results, school intervention and family support. Pablo’s academic achievement can be attributed to supplemental school support and family support. For instance Pablo shares “Mis papas siempre me recuerdan y repiten que le tengo que echar ganas para llegar a mi meta y tener un mejor futuro” (my parents always remind me that I have to do my best to accomplish my goal and to have a better future). Pablo’s parents’ verbal exhortation serves as indirect motivation to help him maintain an average GPA of 2.8 by constantly reminding him to earn good grades. Additionally, Pablo seeks academic assistance in the learning center so that he can maintain average grades. Pablo explains “los tutores del learning center me ayudan con las clases de inglés y ciencias” (tutors from the learning center help me with my English and science classes). Even though, Pablo is not part of a support program like AVID, he has learned to use other school resources that can offer him short term academic assistance. In the long run, it is also teaching Pablo how to seek out resources that can be beneficial to his academic education.

Maria

Maria’s academic achievement can been seen in her willingness to maintain a 2.5 GPA that allows her to play sports. Maria’s motivation comes from her desire to play for the schools’ soccer team and she understands that in order to be on the team she must
earn average grades. Maria’s CST results demonstrate that her math score of 285 is below basic, her English result of 355 is proficient, and science result of 320 is basic. In Maria’s case it might be that the language barrier could have impacted her math ability such that she earned a “B” grade in Algebra 1 throughout the school year. Research reveals that “GPA is a better predictor of college performance than test scores…there is a heavier reliance on GPA and perhaps even an eschewing of test scores for Latino students whose first language in not English” (Gándara, 2009, p. 212).

Eduardo

Achievement for Latino English learners has also been measured by using their academic G.P.A and performance on the CST’s. To facilitate academic achievement, some Latino English learners’ students participate in an intervention program. As Gándara (2004) explains, “Latino high achievement can result from intervention in the lives of individual students with very specific and targeted instruction and guidance” (p. 29). Eduardo shares, “los tutores del learning center me ayudan con mis materias” (tutors from the learning center help me with my subjects). Eduardo understands that in order to maintain his 3.6 G.P.A, he needs to seek additional academic assistance. However, the learning center only provides Eduardo short-term support that helps him attain academic achievement. Additionally, Eduardo shares “me considero un estudiante aplicado porque trabajo duro y saco buenas calificaciones” (I consider myself a good student because I work hard and earn good grades). Eduardo considers himself a good student and it is shown in his above average academic GPA.
Conclusion

Research data from these AVID/EL and non-AVID/EL participants reveal similarities and differences about the factors that contribute to their academic achievement in high school. For intrinsic factors among both groups, AVID/EL students were evidently informed about school resources that have guided them and in most cases, their parents through the US school system and the process of applying to university. In contrast, non-AVID/EL students and parents were not as knowledgeable about many of the school resources that can enhance their academics. Therefore, students and parents are often not familiar with the high school graduation requirements or with the process of applying and entering university. For extrinsic factors, the main difference among both groups was that AVID/EL students heavily relied on the AVID program for supporting participants’ short and long-term academic needs. On the other hand, non-AVID/EL students somewhat relied on the Learning Center that provides participants with short-term academic support only. Both groups of participants revealed that they need external support from school to guide them in their dream of attending university. Thus, intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence each other affecting positively or negatively the academic education of students.
Chapter 5

OVERVIEW, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this comparative study of AVID/EL and Non-AVID/EL students is to determine specific factors that contribute to the academic success among both groups. The goal was to better understand the relationship between Latino EL student academic achievement while participating in support programs like AVID and those not participating in AVID.

In this chapter I will present major findings in relation to the research question. Secondly, implications of research finding will be discussed and lastly, recommendations for future research on academic achievement of AVID/EL students will be suggested.

Conclusions

The analyses of data found that AVID/EL and Non-AVID/EL students have similarities and differences in their academic experiences. Both groups of students want to succeed academically but the factors impacting the chances for success for each group differs significantly. The general factors that will be compared are: (a) motivation, (b) participation in support programs, (c) family support, (d) role models, and (e) peer influence.

Motivation

Motivation in AVID/EL and Non-AVID/EL is reflected among both groups in their desire to achieve academically and their willingness to pursue higher education. However, a significant difference among the two groups was that EL students
participating in AVID had a clear vision of the path needed to undertake, beginning in high school, in order to eventually gain entrance into a university. AVID/EL students are familiar with the high school graduation requirements, understand main differences between two-year and four-year colleges, and know about scholarships. In some cases, AVID/EL students already have an idea of which higher education institution they would like to attend. AVID has provided detailed information on the process students need to follow in high school so as to be prepared to gain admission to an institution of higher learning. As a result, AVID students had a more concrete plan that included completing their high school requirements that will in turn help them to be prepared to be admitted into a college or university. In contrast, Non-AVID/EL students did not know their high school requirements nor did they have an idea of the process to apply to a university. Non-AVID students had a broad goal that consists of graduating from high school and going to a university to obtain a career in order to help their parents, but without the necessary knowledge to effectively pursue this track.

Support Programs

Support programs can be a key factor that contributes to the positive academic experiences among Latino students. AVID and the learning center have been fundamental support programs in the short-term and long-term education of these AVID/EL and Non-AVID/EL students. AVID has provided students with essential organizational skills, peer support, teamwork skills, and college entrance guidance. These skills will help AVID students to attain their long term goal of attending a university. Peer support can also serve to assist in short-term goals by way of helping one another in their academics. These AVID students heavily relied on peer tutoring; helping each other, depending on
their strength areas. However, when their peer support failed, AVID/EL students occasionally relied upon the learning center to get help from college tutors. In the same manner, some Non-AVID/EL students regularly attended the Learning Center as the only means to receive additional academic assistance outside of their regular classroom teachers. The learning center provides college tutors that can assist high school EL students with their homework. However, the learning center only supports Non-AVID/EL students with their short-term goals of obtaining good grades. Non-AVID/EL students lack access to resources for long-term goals (i.e. preparation and guidance for attending a university), partly because they are not part of any support program that can assist in this field. However, Non-AVID/EL students recognize and value the support AVID brings to students and some of these students would like to be part of the program to take advantage of the provided services. Even though AVID/EL and Non-AVID/EL students have participated in different support programs, they both manage to academically achieve by earning average or above average GPA’s. Support programs like AVID and the learning center have contributed in the achievement of these Latino/EL students.

**Parent Support**

Latino parent involvement can be an imperative factor in the education of Latino EL students. The examined data demonstrates that Latino EL parents support the academic experiences of their children in various ways. Common among both groups of parents was that they provided moral support in terms of verbal exhortation to their children. Through verbal exhortation, these Latino EL parents instill the value of pursuing a college degree so that their children will have a better future than they could
hope for themselves. However, major differences were found among parent-school involvement between AVID parents and Non-AVID parents. AVID parents’ school involvement was shown through their familiarity with graduation requirements, attendance of ELAC meetings, and meetings with counselors about their children’s education. The AVID program has been an important support system that has also educated Latino EL parents in the ways in which they can better support their children’s educational aspirations. In contrast, data gathered from the Non-AVID parents in this study indicate that they are unfamiliar with graduation requirements, do not attend school meetings, and do not know the counselors. These parents are disconnected from the school because there is no support system that has encouraged them to feel part of the school or to attend informational meetings.

*Roles Models*

Results from the data examination suggest that role models are important in the education of both groups of Latino EL students. Although both groups, AVID/EL and Non-AVID/EL students considered having a role model important, major differences occur for both groups. For AVID/EL students their role model was sometimes an older sibling who already attends or has attended a university. This group of students concur that their older siblings have a great influence in their own schooling and that they look up to them to follow in their footsteps. Research has revealed that having an older sibling that already attends university can be a motivation factor and a role-model for younger siblings to follow. In contrast, the Non-AVID/EL students in this study were more likely to look up to non-family member, such as a teacher or counselor. This group of students do not have an older sibling that attends a university and instead look up to someone that
can motivate and help them succeed academically. In one case, the Non-AVID/EL student developed a connection with her Spanish teacher and looked up to her because she is the only Latina teacher she has in school and as a result, looks to her for guidance and support in her academics.

Peer Support

Peer support among students can be an important factor in their educational experiences. In this study, peer support in AVID/EL and Non-AVID/EL demonstrated significant disparities that may influence these students’ academic achievement. Results show that these AVID/EL students rely on their peers to provide academic assistance in activities like working on homework. In addition to working together as a group in academics, they also participate in extracurricular activities that teach them how to work effectively as a group. AVID has been an important asset that has provided AVID/EL students’ effective teamwork skills by teaching them how to peer support each other in academics. Ultimately, teamwork skills transcend to other areas: AVID students work together as a team in sports, class projects, and/or school clubs. Teamwork takes great effort from students and it is an ability that most students do not develop naturally; like any other skill, critical teamwork skills are learned through the kind of explicit experiences and instruction that are part of the AVID curriculum. In the case of Non-AVID/EL students, this study illustrates that there is a disconnection between the social and academic arena among these students. These Non-AVID/EL students do not support each other in academics. In contrast, these students view their friends only as a social connection and as a consequence they do not speak to each other about their academics, they limit their conversations to daily social events.
Implications

AVID has been a beneficial support program that has helped many first generation students with their academics but most importantly, with the knowledge and guidance about the process of entering a university. However, only a relatively small number of Latino EL students can benefit from the AVID program since there is criterion for admittance into AVID. Only a limited number are accepted each year. This leaves out a significant number of EL students who otherwise might experience much different academic outcomes. One finding from this study is that Westlake High needs to have a better student recruitment system so that more students are aware of the program and can have the opportunity to benefit from it. Research suggests that AVID is a great support program but it does not provide for all students nor does it offer all the necessary support that AVID students need. AVID serves as the long term support program that helps students envision and accomplish future goals. Still, it is but one component of an effective educational program for Latino ELs.

Many schools have the option of providing additional support to EL students and research reiterates that EL students need as much academic support that can be made available. Disgracefully, some schools choose not to provide the necessary support system that can enhance the academic achievement of Latino EL students. They choose instead to prioritize other issues and invest their resources accordingly. Like many other schools in this part of the state, Westlake High does not provide SDAIE core classes to EL students and instead chooses to place ELs (regardless of English proficiency level) in mainstream courses with minimal support. Even though teachers at Westlake have received some training in the use of SDAIE strategies, many of them do not apply them,
nor is there a system for supporting mainstream teachers in honing these pedagogical skills. These institutional decisions can do much harm to the education of many EL students who, despite these challenges, strive to do their best. Ultimately, denying the necessary services to students only diminishes the opportunity for academic success.

Recommendations

While this study was limited to the experiences of a few Latino EL high school students in AVID and those not in AVID, a study of a larger numbers of EL students may reveal other trends of academic achievement among this group of students that were not reflected in this small sample. However for the purpose of this study, there are some specific recommendations that could benefit and enhance the academic experience of Latino EL and Latino EL/AVID students at Westlake High School:

1. More academic guidance for Latino EL students, particularly those not participating in AVID.

2. Incorporate SDAIE and primary language core courses to support the academic needs of the large enrollment of EL students, so that these students continue to develop critical English language and literacy skills.

3. Improve student AVID recruitment so that a greater number of eligible EL students would benefit from the support program. AVID coordinator and EL specialist can work together to recommend eligible EL students.
4. Increase counselor outreach to all students for academic guidance. EL students especially, that are not part of any support program and need academic guidance, need support in order to fulfill their long-term educational goals.

5. Increase school outreach to Spanish-speaking parents in order to encourage more school/parent involvement.

6. Recruit more Spanish-speaking parents to the ELAC meetings so that more Spanish-speaking parents become familiar with the education process for their children.

Many EL Latino students continue to demonstrate academic success by earning good grades, graduating from high school, and/or attending a university. Certainly, various support programs have contributed to the positive academic experience of many EL students. Schools need to focus on the factors that contribute to the success of many EL Latino students to help those students that are falling behind. Outcomes from this research reveal some trends that can help to implement practices that can enhance the schooling experience of many EL Latino students.
APPENDIX A

AVID Student’s Interview

1. Name ______________________________
2. What is your ethnicity? ______________________________
3. What is your place of birth? ______________________________
4. How many years have you attended school in this country?
   a. All my life  b. less than a year  c. 2-5 years  d. longer than 5 years
5. Have you continuously attended a school?
   a. yes  b. no
6. Do you know your counselor?
   a. yes  b. no
7. Do you speak to your counselor about your classes?
   a. yes  b. no
8. Do you plan to graduate from high school?
   a. Yes.  b. no
9. How many years have you been in AVID?
   a. 1 year  b. 2 years  c. 3 years
10. Do you want to go to college? If no, jump to question 13. If yes, answer the following.
    a. yes  b. no
11. Would you be the first one in your family to attend college?
    a. yes  b. no
12. Is your family supporting you with your dream of attending college?
    a. yes  b. no
13. Are you taking AVID next year?
    a. yes  b. no
14. Do you ask for help when you don’t understand a concept in any of your classes?
    a. Yes  b. no
15. Do you know of programs in your school that can help you with your homework?
    a. Yes  b. no
16. Are you part of any school program? Which one? __________________
    a. Yes  b. no
17. Who recommended you to take AVID? __________________
18. Why did you decide to take AVID?
19. How is AVID helping you?
20. How is AVID preparing you for college?
21. What programs have assisted you with your academics besides AVID?
22. What is your most difficult class? Why?
23. Who supports you in your most difficult class?
24. What is your favorite subject? Why?
25. What are the challenges of taking AVID?
26. What keeps you in AVID?
27. What are the advantages of taking AVID?
28. How would you describe AVID?
29. How would you describe your experience in AVID and in school?
30. How is would you describe your experience in your school?
   a. What do you like about school?
   b. What do you dislike about school?
31. What can the school do to better support you in your education?
32. How does your family support you in your education?
33. How would you like for your family to support you in your education?
34. How do you see yourself in five years from now?
Entrevista para los Estudiantes de AVID

1. Nombre ________________________________

2. ¿Cuál es tu origen étnico? ________________________________

3. ¿Cuál es tu lugar de nacimiento? ________________________________

4. ¿Cuántos años has asistido a las escuelas de este país?
   a. Toda mi vida  b. menos de un uno  c. 2-5 años  d. más de 5 años

5. ¿Has asistido continuamente la escuela?
   a. si  b. no

6. ¿Conoces a tu consejero?
   a. si  b. no

7. ¿Hablas con tu consejero sobre tus clases?
   a. si  b. no

8. ¿Tienes planes de graduarte de la preparatoria?
   a. si  b. no

9. ¿Cuántos años has estado en AVID?
   a. 1 año  b. 2 años  c. 3 años

     Si es sí, contesta la próxima pregunta.
     a. si  b. no

11. ¿Serías el primero en tu familia en asistir la Universidad?
    a. si  b. no

12. ¿Tu familia te está apoyando con tu sueño de asistir la Universidad?
    a. sí  b. no

13. ¿Vas a tomar AVID el próximo año?
    a. sí  b. no

14. ¿Pides ayuda cuando no entiendes algún concepto de alguna de tus clases?
    a. sí  b. no

15. ¿Conoces de algún programa en tu escuela que te puede asistir con tu tarea?
    a. sí  b. no

16. ¿Perteneces a algún programa de la escuela? ¿Cuál?
    a. sí  b. no

17. ¿Quién te recomendó para tomar AVID? ________________________________

18. ¿Por qué decidiste tomar AVID?

19. ¿De qué manera te está ayudando AVID?

20. ¿De qué manera te está preparando AVID para asistir la universidad?

21. ¿Qué otros programas te han ayudado con la parte académica aparte de AVID?

22. ¿Cuál es tu clase más difícil? ¿Por qué?

23. ¿Quién te apoya en tu clase más difícil?

24. ¿Cuál es tu materia favorita? ¿Por qué?
25. ¿Cuáles son los retos de tomar AVID?
26. ¿Qué te mantiene en AVID?
27. ¿Cuáles son las ventajas de tomar AVID?
28. ¿Cómo describirías AVID?
29. ¿Cómo describirías tu experiencia en AVID?
30. ¿Cómo describirías tu experiencia en la escuela?
   a. ¿Qué te gusta de la escuela?
   b. ¿Qué te disgusta de la escuela?
31. ¿Qué es lo que la escuela puede hacer para apoyarte de mejor manera en tu educación?
32. ¿De qué manera tu familia te apoya en tu educación?
33. ¿Cómo te gustaría que tu familia te apoyará en tu educación?
34. ¿Cómo te ves a ti mismo en cinco años?
APPENDIX B

Student Interview Non-AVID/EL

1. Name__________________________________
2. What is your ethnicity? _______________________________
3. What is your place of birth?______________________________
4. How many years have you attended school in this country?
   a. All my life      b. less than a year      c. 2-5 years       d. longer than 5 years
5. Have you continuously attended a school?
   a. yes      b. no
6. Do you know your counselor?
   a. yes      b. no
7. Do you speak to your counselor about your classes?
   a. yes      b. no
8. Do you plan to graduate from high school?
   a. Yes.      b. no
9. Do you want to go to college? If no, jump to question 12. If yes, answer the following.
   a. yes      b. no
10. Would you be the first one in your family to attend college?
    a. yes      b. no
11. Is your family supporting you with your dream of attending college?
    a. yes      b. no
12. Do you ask for help when you don’t understand a concept in any of your classes?
    a. Yes      b. no
13. Do you know of programs in your school that can help you with your homework?
    a. Yes      b. no
14. Are you part of any school program? Which one?___________________
    a. Yes      b. no
15. What is your most difficult class? Why?
16. Who supports you in your most difficult class?
17. What programs have assisted you with your academics?
18. What is your favorite subject? Why?
19. What are the challenges of school?
20. How would you describe your experience in school?
   a. What do you like about school?
   b. What do you dislike about school?
21. What can the school do to better support you in your education?
22. How does your family support you in your education?
23. How would you like for your family to support you in your education?
24. How do you see yourself in five years from now?
Entrevista para los estudiantes

1. Nombre__________________________________

2. ¿Cuál es tu origen étnico? _______________________________

3. ¿Cuál es tu lugar de nacimiento?_____________________________________ 

4. ¿Cuántos años has asistido a las escuelas de este país?
   a. Toda mi vida b. menos de un uno c. 2-5 años d. más de 5 años

5. ¿Has asistido continuamente a la escuela?
   a. si b. no

6. ¿Conoces a tu consejero?
   a. si b. no

7. ¿Has asistido continuamente a la escuela?
   a. si b. no

8. ¿Conoces a tu consejero sobre tus clases?
   a. si b. no

9. ¿Tienes planes de graduarte de la preparatoria?
   a. si b. no

10. ¿Deseas asistir la universidad? Si es no, contesta pregunta 12.
    Si es sí, contesta la próxima pregunta.
    a. si b. no

11. ¿Serías el primero en tu familia en asistir la Universidad?
    a. si b. no

12. ¿Tu familia te está apoyando con tu sueño de asistir la Universidad?
    a. si b. no

13. ¿Tu familia te está apoyando con tu sueño de asistir la Universidad?
    a. si b. no

14. ¿Qué programas te han ayudado con la parte académica?
    a. si b. no

15. ¿Cuál es tu clase más difícil? ¿Por qué?

16. ¿Qué programas te han ayudado con la parte académica?

17. ¿Cuál es tu materia favorita? ¿Por qué?

18. ¿Cuáles son los retos de la escuela?

19. ¿Cómo te gustaría que tu familia te apoyara en tu educación?

20. ¿Cómo describías tu experiencia en la escuela?
    a. ¿Qué te gusta de la escuela?
    b. ¿Qué te disgusta de la escuela?

21. ¿Qué es lo que la escuela puede hacer para apoyarte de mejor manera en tu 
educación?

22. ¿De qué manera tu familia te apoya en tu educación?

23. ¿Cómo te gustaría que tu familia te apoyarán en tu educación?
24. ¿Cómo te ves a ti mismo en cinco años?
APPENDIX C

Parent Interview

1. Name__________________________________
2. What is your ethnicity? _______________________________
3. What is your place of birth?_____________________________________
4. Level of education
   completed___________________________________________
5. How many years have you lived school in this country?
   a. All my life      b. less than a year   c. 2-5 years     d. longer than 5 years
6. Do you know your child’s counselor?
   a. yes  b. no
7. Do you speak to your child’s counselor about her/his classes?
   a. yes  b. no
8. Do you know what classes is your child taking?
   a. yes  b. no
9. Do you help your child with his/her homework?
   a. yes  b. no
10. Do you attend school meetings or events?
    a. Yes  b. no
11. Do you want your child to go to college?
    a. yes  b. no
12. Would your child be the first one in your family to attend college?
    a. yes  b. no

13. How are you supporting your child with her/his education?
14. How do you help your child with his/her homework?
15. What are the most difficult classes your child is taking? Why?
16. What programs in your child’s school provide help with homework?
17. What are the challenges your child has to face in school?
18. What are the challenges that you as a parent face in your child’s education?
19. What school activities do you attend in your child’s school?
20. How will you support your child to attend college?
21. Who is providing you with the information about college?
22. How can the school help you to support your child’s education?
23. How do you see your children in five years from now?
Entrevista para los padres

1. Nombre__________________________________
2. ¿Cuál es su origen étnico? _______________________________
3. ¿Cuál es su lugar de nacimiento?________________________________
4. Nivel de educación que completo___________________________________________
5. ¿Cuántos años ha vivido en este país?
   a. Toda mi vida      b. menos de un uno c. 2-5 años d. más de 5 años
6. ¿Conoce usted al consejero de su hija/o?
   a. sí b. no
7. ¿Habla usted con el consejero de su hija/o sobre sus clases?
   a. sí b. no
8. ¿Sabe usted que clases está tomando su hija/o?
   a. Sí b. no
9. ¿Ayuda usted a su hija/o con las tareas de la escuela?
   a. sí b. no
10. ¿Asiste usted a las juntas o eventos de la escuela?
    a. sí b. no
11. ¿Quiere usted que su hija/o vaya a la Universidad?
    a. sí b. no
12. ¿Su hija/o sería la/el primero en asistir la Universidad?
    a. sí b. no
13. ¿De qué manera apoya a su hija/o con su educación?
14. ¿Cómo ayuda a su hija/o con las tareas de la escuela?
15. ¿Cuáles son las clases más difíciles que su hija/o está tomando? ¿Por qué?
16. En la escuela de su hija/o. ¿qué programas proveen ayuda con las tareas de la escuela?
17. ¿Cuáles son algunos retos que su hija/hija tiene que afrontar en la escuela?
18. ¿Cuáles son algunos retos que usted como padre tiene que afrontar en la educación de su hija/o?
19. ¿A qué actividades escolares asiste usted en la escuela de su hija/o?
20. ¿De qué manera apoyará a su hija/o para que asista la Universidad?
21. ¿Quién le está proporcionando la información sobre la Universidad?
22. ¿De qué manera la escuela le puede ayudar con la educación de su hija/o?
23. ¿Cómo ve a su hija/o en cinco años?
APPENDIX D

Follow-up Student Questions

1. Why don’t you speak to your counselor?
2. What do you talk to your counselor about?
3. Do you know your graduation requirements?
4. How do you know about the resources in school?
5. How did you hear about the Learning Center?
6. Do you go to the Learning Center to ask for help?
7. Why don’t you like to ask for help?
8. How did you hear about universities?
9. Do you know the difference between community college and a four year university?
10. How do you know about AVID?
11. What does AVID do for students?
12. How has your AVID teacher helped you?
13. How tutorials helped you with your homework?
14. Who served as your role model?
15. Who are your friends?
16. What do your friends like to do?
17. What do you do with your friends?
18. Do you work on homework with your friends? Why or why not?
19. Did you attend a public or private school in Mexico?
20. How do you describe yourself as a student?
21. Where you a successful student in Mexico?
Westlake Joint Unified School District
Information Release Form

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