AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

Program Description

AVID is a college-readiness program whose primary goal is to prepare middle and high school students for enrollment in four-year colleges through increased access to and support in advanced courses. The program, which focuses on underserved, middle-achieving students (defined as students earning B, C, and even D grades), places students in college preparatory classes (e.g., honors and Advancement Placement classes) while providing academic support through a daily elective period and ongoing tutorials.

Research

One study of AVID that falls within the scope of the Adolescent Literacy review protocol meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards with reservations. The study included 96 high school–age youth attending four schools in one school district in Colorado. Based on one study, the WWC considers the extent of evidence for AVID on adolescent learners to be small for comprehension. The one study that meets WWC evidence standards with reservations did not examine the effectiveness of AVID on adolescent learners in the alphabets, reading fluency, or general literacy achievement domains.

Effectiveness

AVID was found to have no discernible effects on comprehension for adolescent learners.

1. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from publicly available sources: the program’s website (http://www.avid.org, downloaded January 2010) and Black, Little, McCoach, Prucell, and Siegle (2008). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review. The literature search reflects documents publicly available by August 2009.
2. AVID derives its name from Advancement Via Individual Determination. Since this program is most commonly known and described by its developers using its acronym, the WWC uses this acronym throughout this review.
3. The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 2.0 (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Chapter III), as described in protocol Version 2.0.
4. The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.
Effectiveness (continued)

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<th>Alphabets</th>
<th>Reading fluency</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
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<td>na</td>
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Rating of effectiveness
Improvement index

Developer and contact
Mary Catherine Swanson, chair of the English department at Clairemont High School in California, started the AVID program in 1980. She also opened the first AVID Center in 1992 to support the program: AVID Center HQ, 9246 Lightwave Avenue Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92123. Telephone: (858) 380-4800. Fax: (858) 268-2265. Web: http://www.avid.org. Email: avidinfo@avidcenter.org.

Scope of use
According to the developer, AVID has been adopted by nearly 4,500 schools in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and 16 countries/territories, and it serves approximately 400,000 students in grades 4–12. AVID has been used by urban, rural, and suburban schools. A large percentage of AVID students are the first in their families to attend college.

Teaching
At the high school and middle school levels, AVID students are enrolled in a school's rigorous classes, such as Advanced Placement, honors, or dual enrollment (the student attends both high school and college courses), and they receive support in a daily academic elective class (called AVID) that is taught by a trained AVID teacher. In the AVID elective class (which participating students take instead of another elective class), students receive support through a curriculum and ongoing, structured tutorials. The elective class is designed to (1) promote student collaboration and inquiry; (2) provide motivation through field trips to colleges and presentations by guest speakers; and (3) develop academic skills in note taking and test taking and improve study skills, tracking of school assignments, and reading and writing to learn. The AVID curriculum emphasizes writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading.

AVID teachers provide instruction in academic skills and help students develop long-range academic and personal plans. The teacher also serves as an advocate for participating students, providing support to students as needed when dealing with other teachers, administrators, and college admissions personnel. Trained tutors (including college students) facilitate inquiry-based groups of students in the AVID elective class.

The following AVID programs also fall within the scope of the Adolescent Literacy review:
• AVID Elementary (a program that is available to all grade 4–6 students in elementary schools that feed into middle schools with AVID) focuses on students’ spoken and written communication skills, organizational skills, study habits, and writing and reading skills, to prepare them for middle and high school.
• The Student Success Path (a college preparatory curriculum and teaching materials designed for content-area teachers in upper elementary, middle, and high schools implementing AVID) focuses on reading, writing, study skills, test-taking skills, organization, critical thinking, goal setting, choosing a college, and preparing for college entrance exams.

5. Improvement index is not available, as Rorie (2007) did not provide sufficient information to calculate an effect size and improvement index using standard WWC methods.
• The Write Path (which includes teacher’s guides and student materials appropriate for regular and advanced content-area classes) focuses on modeling literacy skills appropriate in the content areas of mathematics, science, English, and history/social science.

Cost
The AVID Center provides training and professional development opportunities for AVID schools and districts, including a summer institute ($670 to $845 per person), AVID district leadership events, national events (including a three-day annual conference), data analysis trainings ($500 per person), two-day “Leadership for College Readiness” trainings for administrators ($500 per person), and two-day “Path” training for content-area teachers ($385 per person).

Detailed information on the costs of professional development, teaching materials, and implementation of AVID practices is available online: http://www.avid.org.

Research
Sixty-six studies reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of AVID on adolescent learners. One study (Rorie, 2007) is a quasi-experimental design that meets WWC evidence standards with reservations. The remaining 65 studies do not meet either WWC evidence standards or eligibility screens.

Meets evidence standards with reservations
Rorie (2007) used retrospective data to construct a quasi-experimental comparison of high school graduates who had participated in AVID electives from 9th through 12th grades and had the majority of their classes taught by AVID-trained teachers versus high school graduates who attended the same four schools but did not participate in AVID electives (but may or may not have been enrolled in classes taught by AVID-trained teachers). The study matched students based upon their ethnicity, gender, age, and 8th-grade reading achievement scores. The WWC based its effectiveness ratings on findings from comparisons of 96 high school graduates (48 of whom had participated in AVID through high school and 48 comparison group students who had not). The study reported 9th- and 10th-grade student reading test score outcomes, thus measuring program effects after one to two years of participation in the intervention.

Extent of evidence
The WWC categorizes the extent of evidence in each domain as small or medium to large (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix G). The extent of evidence takes into account the number of studies and the total sample size across the studies that meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations. The WWC considers the extent of evidence for AVID to be small for comprehension for adolescent learners. The one study that meets WWC evidence standards with reservations did not examine the effectiveness of AVID on adolescent learners in the alphabetics, reading fluency, or general literacy achievement domains.

Effectiveness
Findings
The WWC review of interventions for Adolescent Literacy addresses student outcomes in four domains: alphabetics, reading fluency, comprehension, and general literacy achievement. The study included in this report covers one domain: comprehension. The findings below present the authors’ estimates of the effectiveness of AVID.

6. Since the AVID program seeks to promote whole school improvement through professional development of school and district personnel, the comparison group in this study may have been exposed to elements of the AVID program even if they did not participate in AVID electives (for example, if they were enrolled in a class taught by an AVID-trained teacher).

7. The extent of evidence categorization was developed to tell readers how much evidence was used to determine the intervention rating, focusing on the number and size of studies. Additional factors associated with a related concept—external validity, such as the students’ demographics and the types of settings in which studies took place—are not taken into account for the categorization. Information about how the extent of evidence rating was determined for AVID is in Appendix A5.
and WWC-calculated estimates of the size and the statistical significance of the effects of AVID on adolescent learners.  

**Comprehension.** Rorie (2007) reported no statistically significant effect of AVID on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) Reading subtest. The study did not report enough information to calculate effect size estimates using WWC methods; however, data presented in the original study confirm that the effects of AVID on the CSAP Reading subtests were neither statistically significant nor substantively important (i.e., effect size of at least 0.25).  

Thus, for the comprehension domain, one study showed indeterminate effects.

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**Rating of effectiveness**

The WWC rates the effects of an intervention in a given outcome domain as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings, the size of the difference between participants in the intervention and the comparison conditions, and the consistency in findings across studies (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix E).

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**Improvement index**

The WWC computes an improvement index for each individual finding. In addition, within each outcome domain, the WWC computes an average improvement index for each study and an average improvement index across studies (see WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix F). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition and the percentile rank of the average student in the comparison condition. Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is entirely based on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or the analysis. The improvement index can take on values between –50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting favorable results for the intervention group.

The WWC was unable to calculate an improvement index for comprehension.

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**Summary**

The WWC reviewed 66 studies on AVID for adolescent learners. One of these studies meets WWC evidence standards with reservations; the remaining 65 studies do not meet either WWC evidence standards or eligibility screens. Based on one study, the WWC found no discernible effects on comprehension for adolescent learners. The conclusions presented in this report may change as new research emerges.

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8. The level of statistical significance was reported by the study authors or, when necessary, calculated by the WWC to correct for clustering within classrooms or schools and for multiple comparisons. For the formulas the WWC used to calculate the statistical significance, see WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix C for clustering and WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix D for multiple comparisons. In the case of Rorie (2007), no corrections for clustering or multiple comparisons were needed.

9. Rorie (2007) reported results from a doubly repeated measures analysis of variance for Colorado Student Assessment Program Reading subtest, which included two dependent variables (9th-grade and 10th-grade Colorado Student Assessment Program scores) and three independent variables (participation in AVID intervention, grade level, and the AVID*grade level interaction). The author reported no significant effect for AVID (partial eta-squared = <.001) or the AVID*grade level interaction (partial eta-squared = .01). Based on the partial eta-squared effect size and non-significant p-values reported in the original study, the WWC deems these results to be neither statistically significant nor substantively important. For a discussion of the relationship between partial eta-squared effect sizes and standardized mean differences, see Barnette, J. J. (2006). *Effect size and measures of association.* 2006 Summer Evaluation Institute sponsored by the American Evaluation Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 14, 2006.
References

Meets WWC evidence standards with reservations

Studies that fall outside the Adolescent Literacy review protocol or do not meet WWC evidence standards
American Youth Policy Forum. (2001). AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination). Unpublished manuscript. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.
Avlonitis, A. O. (2007). *How AVID has helped the Rose High freshmen class prepare for college*. Unpublished master’s thesis, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.
Bailey, W. V. (2002). *An evaluation of the efficacy of the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
Black, A. C., Little, C. A., McCoach, D. B., Purcell, J. H., & Siegle, D. (2008). *Advancement Via Individual Determination: Method selection in conclusions about program effectiveness*. *Journal of Educational Research, 102*(2), 111–124. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.
California State Postsecondary Education Commission. (1996). *Progress report on the effectiveness of collaborative student academic development programs*. Sacramento, CA: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. (2008). *BC AVID pilot project*. Vol. 1: Early implementation report. Montreal, Quebec: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
Castro, G. (2005). AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination): *Getting the academic middle students to a four-year college*. Unpublished master’s thesis, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.
Contreras, M. E. (2004). *Exploring the effectiveness of the region IX AVID leadership colloquium*. Unpublished master’s thesis, California State University, San Marcos. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.
Cratty, S. L. (2008). *AVID graduates in higher education*. Unpublished master’s thesis, California State University, San Marcos. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
Deshler, D. D., Palincsar, A. S., Biancarosa, G., & Nair, M. (2007). *Informed choices for struggling adolescent readers: A research-based guide to instructional programs and practices*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Fashola, O. S., & Slavin, R. E. (1998). Effective dropout prevention and college attendance programs for students placed at risk. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 3*(2), 159–183. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Additional source:

Foy, J. M. (2002). Effects of the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program on minority student achievement. *Masters Abstracts International, 40*(06), 55–1341. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.


Hammond, C., Linton, D., Smink, J., & Drew, S. (2007). *Dropout risk factors and exemplary programs*. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center, Communities in Schools, Inc. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Hays, L. J. (2004). AVID program graduates: Negotiating the first year of college. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 65*(05A), 296–1691. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Hooker, S., & Brand, B. (2009). *Success at every step: How 23 programs support youth on the path to college and beyond*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Hubbard, L., & Mehan, H. (1999). Scaling up an untracking program: A co-constructed process. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 4*(1), 83–100. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Huerta, J., Watt, K. M., & Alkan, E. (2008). Exploring the relationship between AVID professional development and teacher leadership. *Academic Leadership, 6*(1), 7–7. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Kawasaki-Williams, K. (2008). *Academic support programs for Latino high school students: Do they make a difference?* Unpublished master’s thesis, California State University, San Marcos. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.


Lockwood, A. T., & Secada, W. G. (1999). *Transforming education for Hispanic youth: Exemplary practices, programs, and schools* (NCBE resource collection series no. 12). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Additional source:


Martinez, M., & Klopot, S. (2005). *The link between high school reform and college access and success for low-income and minority youth.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Meyer, A. (2008). Understanding how U.S. secondary schools sort students for instructional purposes: Are all students being served equally? *American Secondary Education, 36*(2), 7–25. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Mehan, H., Villanueva, I., Hubbard, L., & Lintz, A. (1996). *Constructing school success. The consequences of untracking low-achieving students.* New York: Cambridge University Press. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

Edinburg. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Additional source:

Mims, B. L. (2007). Social capital, institutional agency, minority or low-status youth empowerment, and AVID implementation. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 68(10A), 199–4251. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Murakawa-Leopard, D. K. (2004). Bridging the achievement gap: College access in the AVID program. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 65(08A), 255–2943. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Oswald, K. J. (2002). *The AVID program in AISD, 1999–2002*. Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District Office of Program Evaluation. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Additional source:


Petzar, C. E. (2000). Latino students’ passage from high school to college: Four case studies. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(10A), 283–3861. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Richardson, M. S. (2007). Practices that increase Latino student participation in extracurricular activities. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 68(07A), 140–2888. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.


San Diego County Office of Education. (1991). AVID: Advancement Via Individual Determination: A college preparatory program for underrepresented students. San Diego, CA: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Sapp, J. (2006). *Rigor + Support = Success*. *Teaching Tolerance*, 29, 44–48. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Schiro, P. (2001). Effects of implementing an AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program at a middle school. *Masters Abstracts International*, 40(02), 74–273. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Slavin, R. E., Cheung, A., Groff, C., & Lake, C. (2008). Effective reading programs for middle and high schools: A best-evidence synthesis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(3), 290–322. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Swanson, M. C. (1989). Advancement Via Individual Determination: Project AVID. *Educational Leadership*, 46(5), 63–64. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Swanson, M. C. (1996). AVID learners. *Thrust for Educational Leadership*, 26(1), 24–27. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

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Swanson, M. C. (2000). AVID: A 20th anniversary. San Diego, CA: The AVID Center. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Swanson, M. C., Mehan, H., & Hubbard, L. (1993). The AVID classroom: A system of academic and social supports for low-achieving students. Unpublished manuscript. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group design or a single-case design.

Turnbaugh Lockwood, A. (2001). Effective elementary, middle, and high school programs for Latino youth. In R. E. Slavin & M. Calderon (Eds.), Effective programs for Latino students (pp. 101–124). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.


Walker, J. D., Jurich, S., & Estes, S. (2001). Raising minority academic achievement: A compendium of education programs and practices. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Additional source:

References (continued)


Additional source:

Whitaker, V. L. (2005). The effects of the Advancement Via Individual Determination on course taking patterns and achievement of high school students. Dissertation Abstracts International, 66(02A), 166–545. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.