

Teaching AVID: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of a College Readiness Program
in an Urban Middle School

Name

School

Chapter Three: Methodology

Design of the Study

There is a disconnect between perception and reality. Often, what one believes to be true is more important than what can be proven as fact. The importance of perception is that it will motivate persons to action. Therefore, it is significant to assess the perceptions surrounding AVID to ascertain if it is considered effective at its intended purpose. Since parents hold considerable sway over the educational decision-making of students, it is important to assess the perception that parents of AVID students have concerning the program. This will be ascertained through comparing parental perceptions of college readiness between AVID and non-AVID parents.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures

This study is going to be conducted among parents of middle school students in an urban school. The population is all parents of students attending the school who will receive a questionnaire. The sample will consist of parents (or guardians) questioned who return the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be sent to all parents, some of whom currently have children enrolled in AVID and the remainder who do not. Questionnaires will be sent home through their children's English classes. This will result in 100% coverage of school parents, since all students are required to take English, although not all parents are expected to return the questionnaire. Variables, as defined below, will impact the study. Variables involve the occurrence or (in this case, perception) to be measured through the study.

Independent Variable. Independent variables are those parts of the study or research that do not change. In this case, the independent variable is exposure to AVID through enrollment of a child or children in the program. Parents of students will either have students enrolled in AVID or not; hence that is outside of the control of the researcher and is independent.

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable derives from responses to the questions, and is a measure of the change of perception regarding college readiness, based on the independent variable (exposure to AVID).

Control Group. The control group is that group of parents who return the questionnaire but whose children have not participated in AVID. Hence the independent variable (exposure to AVID) has not operated on them.

Instrumentation

A three-section packet/questionnaire will be sent home with each student from their English class, thereby ensuring that all students will receive the questionnaire, since they all must take English. A cover letter (below) explains to the parent that this is a voluntary, confidential survey for the purpose of understanding perceptions they may have regarding college readiness of their child. The following two segments are quantitative questions regarding the ways students spend time and their interests and abilities. These questions have been created specifically in light of the WICOR standards to assess college readiness indirectly through correlation with related activities.

Structure of the questionnaire: The questionnaire has been designed to facilitate ease of response and analysis in that it is composed of questions that can be answered without narration

and in quantifiable terms. Each question can be answered on a scale of 1 – 5, and tabulation will be accomplished through adding the scores for each question. To facilitate analysis, all questions have been posed such that a higher score indicates a positive answer. For example, if a student spends more time per day reading books than less time, that is considered beneficial under the WICOR standard of reading to learn, thus a higher score (more time spent) would be a more positive outcome relative to college readiness.

Section 1: Explanatory Letter to Parents

<p style="text-align: center;">DATE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PARENT SURVEY PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGE READINESS</p> <p>Dear Parent or Guardian:</p> <p>Members of our school are seeking information that will assist us in offering and promoting programs that will enhance student learning and success in school.</p> <p>We would appreciate if one parent (guardian, etc.) will take time to answer the following questions relating to your child's time commitments and interests. You will receive one questionnaire per student enrolled in our school. This is a voluntary, confidential questionnaire that is not part of your student's required schoolwork and has no impact or influence on grades, promotion, placement, and so on.</p> <p>We sincerely appreciate your taking the time to answer these questions to the best of your ability and ask that your student return the completed questionnaire to his or her English teacher within the next three school days.</p> <p>Thank you very much in advance for your participation!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sincerely,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Researcher</p>
--

Figure 16. Parent Letter

Section 2: Questions Relating to Student Time Usage

SELECT THE RESPONSE THAT MOST ACCURATELY REFLECTS HOW MUCH TIME PER WEEK (IN HOURS) YOUR CHILD SPENDS DOING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:					
	None	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	6 or more
[01] Reading books:	1	2	3	4	5
[02] Reading magazines/comics:	1	2	3	4	5
[03] Reading articles on the internet:	1	2	3	4	5
[04] Writing letters:	1	2	3	4	5
[05] Writing poetry:	1	2	3	4	5
[06] Writing essays or stories:	1	2	3	4	5
[07] Drawing:	1	2	3	4	5
[08] Journaling:	1	2	3	4	5
[09] Doing homework alone:	1	2	3	4	5
[10] Doing homework with someone else:	1	2	3	4	5
[11] Watching television:	1	2	3	4	5
[12] Being alone:	1	2	3	4	5
[13] Discussing or observing current events:	1	2	3	4	5
[14] Spending time with family members:	1	2	3	4	5
[15] Eating with family:	1	2	3	4	5
[16] Watching videos, YouTube, music on computer:	1	2	3	4	5
[17] Engaging in athletic activities:	1	2	3	4	5
[18] Engaging in a hobby:	1	2	3	4	5
[19] Participating in a club or organization:	1	2	3	4	5
[20] Engaging in charitable work:	1	2	3	4	5
[21] Engaging in career-oriented work:	1	2	3	4	5
[22] At religious activities:	1	2	3	4	5
[23] Engaging in part-time job (paper route, babysitting, etc.):	1	2	3	4	5
[24] Exercising:	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 17. Questionnaire, Part 1.

Section 3: Questions Related to Student Interests and Abilities

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
[25] My child is responsible with money:	1	2	3	4	5
[26] My child saves money regularly:	1	2	3	4	5
[27] My child makes plans for the future:	1	2	3	4	5
[28] My child organizes actions ("to do" lists, etc):	1	2	3	4	5
[29] My child organizes possessions (cleans room, etc):	1	2	3	4	5
[30] My child has good hygiene habits:	1	2	3	4	5
[31] My child can do laundry without assistance:	1	2	3	4	5
[32] My child can prepare meals without assistance:	1	2	3	4	5
[33] My child is able to provide care to others (babysit siblings, etc.):	1	2	3	4	5
[34] My child can communicate effectively with others (order pizza by phone, etc):	1	2	3	4	5
[35] My child would know who to contact in an emergency:	1	2	3	4	5
[36] My child can remember and follow simple instructions with 90% accuracy:	1	2	3	4	5
[37] My child can name 5 colleges:	1	2	3	4	5
[38] My child has expressed a career goal:	1	2	3	4	5
[39] My child can read a map or follow directions:	1	2	3	4	5
[40] My child can give clear directions or simple instructions:	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 18. Questionnaire, Part 2.

The following is a question-per-question analysis of the aspect of WICOR and college readiness evaluated by the specific question, which gives an indication of reliability of that question as an indicator.

Question 1: This question asks how much time the student spends reading books. This relates to the WICOR standard of Reading to Learn, with ability to read and comprehend being invaluable to success in college.

Question 2: This question asks how much time the student spends reading magazines/comics. Although magazines and comics may not be considered as substantial reading material as books, they still offer the opportunity for the student to engage in activities supported by the WICOR standard Reading to Learn.

Question 3: This question asks how much time the student spends reading on the internet. Given the wide array of information and formats available online, valuable reading experiences may occur through internet-based reading, in accordance with the WICOR standard Reading to Learn.

Question 4: This question asks how much time the student spends in communicative writing such as writing letters. This comports with the WICOR standard Writing to Learn, as the ability to communicate in writing is essential for college-bound students.

Question 5: This question asks how much time the student spends in creative writing, specifically poetry, in support of the WICOR standard Writing to Learn.

Question 6: This question asks how much time the student spends writing essays or stories, another form of creative writing subsumed under the WICOR standard of Writing to Learn.

Question 7: This question asks how much time the student spends drawing, which is an artistic form of expression akin to the WICOR standard Writing to Learn.

Question 8: This question asks how much time the student spends journaling, which involves reflective writing, and falls under the WICOR category Writing to Learn.

Question 9: This question asks how much time the student spends on homework alone, more indicative of the implied standard of commitment and reflective of the WICOR standard of Organization.

Question 10: This question asks how much time the student spends on homework with others, which reflects the implied standard of commitment and the WICOR standards of Organization and Collaboration.

Question 11: This question asks how much time the student spends watching television, which relates to the WICOR standard of Inquiry.

Question 12: This question asks how much time the student spends being alone, which relates to the WICOR standard of organization, as alone time is often a time spent for organizing thoughts and materials and establishing plans for future endeavors.

Question 13: This question asks how much time the student spends on current events and is directly related to WICOR standards of Collaboration and Inquiry (and may include Reading to Learn depending on the media employed).

Question 14: This question asks how much time the student spends with family, which relates to the WICOR standard of Collaboration.

Question 15: This question asks how much time the student spends eating with family, which is a subset of the previous question dealing with the WICOR standard of Collaboration.

Question 16: This question asks how much time the students spends watching videos, etc., with directly relates to the WICOR standard of Inquiry.

Question 17: This question asks how much time the student spends on athletics, which involves the WICOR standard of Collaboration.

Question 18: This question asks how much time the student spends on a hobby, which may involve all of the WICOR standards, depending on what the hobby is.

Question 19: This question asks how much time a student spends in an organization or club, which directly relates to the WICOR Collaboration standard, and may involve others as well.

Question 20: This question asks how much time a student spends in charity work, which involves dedication and commitment as well as the WICOR standard for collaboration.

Question 21: This questions asks about career-oriented time, which correlates to commitment, dedication, planning for the future, and the WICOR standard of Inquiry.

Question 22: This question asks how much time a student spends in religious activities, which is a subset of question 19, related to the WICOR standards of Collaboration and possibly Inquiry as well.

Question 23: This question asks about the amount of time a student spends in a part-time job (given the limitations of most middle school aged students and labor laws such jobs would be limited to things like mowing grass, shoveling snow, babysitting and paper routes in most cases). These have a direct relationship to desired qualities of commitment, reliability, future planning, and the WICOR standard of Organization.

Question 24: This question asks how much time the student spends exercising, which is reflective of the WICOR value of Organization, as well as concern for the future and self-awareness and self-concern.

Question 25: This question asks if the parent believes that the child is responsible with money, which relates to principles of reliability, commitment and the WICOR standard of Organization.

Question 26: This question asks if the parent believes the child saves money regularly, which also speaks to the WICOR principle of Organization, as well as the others mentioned for question 25.

Question 27: This question asks if the parent believes the child makes plans for the future, related to the WICOR standard of Inquiry and possibly Collaboration.

Question 28: This question asks if the parent believes the child organizes actions, pursuant to the WICOR standard of Organization.

Question 29: This question asks if the parent believes the child organizes possessions, again pursuant to the WICOR standard of Organization.

Question 30: This question asks if the parent believes the child has good hygiene habits, which involve both the WICOR standards of Organization and Collaboration.

Question 31: This question asks if the parent believes the child can do laundry, and indicator of self-reliance and related to the WICOR standard of Organization.

Question 32: This question asks if the parent believes the child can prepare meals, similar in nature to question 31 regarding self-reliance and related to the WICOR standard of Organization.

Question 33: This question asks if the parent believes the child can care for others, which involves the WICOR standard of collaboration, as well as Organization and dependability, reliability and responsibility characteristics indicative of college readiness.

Question 34: This question asks if the parent believes the child can communicate effectively, relating to self-reliance and the WICOR standard of Collaboration.

Question 35: This question asks if the parent believes the child would know who to contact in an emergency, indicating that the child is involved with the WICOR standard of Inquiry.

Question 36: This question asks if the parent believes the child can remember and follow simple instructions, which reflects a combination of skills deriving from the WICOR standards of Reading to Learn, Inquiry, Organization, and Collaboration.

Question 37: This question asks if the parent believes the child can name five colleges, which involves the WICOR standards of Reading to Learn, Inquiry, as well as interest in the future and preparedness.

Question 38: This question asks if the parent believes that the child has expressed a career goal, which reflects similarly as question 37 regarding WICOR standards of Reading to Learn and Inquiry and future concern and preparedness.

Question 39: This question asks if the parent believes the child can follow a map, which clearly relates to the WICOR standard of Reading to Learn.

Question 40: This question asks if the parent believes the child can give clear directions or instructions, which are oral communicative skills involving WICOR standards of Collaboration as well as clarity of expression which is enhanced through the WICOR standard of Write to Learn.

Tabulation and Comparison Table

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE:			
Questions	Avid Parents Total Score	Non-Avid Parent Total Score	Difference
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			
31			
32			
33			
34			
35			
36			
37			
38			
39			
40			
Score Total			
Respondant			
Average			

Figure 19. Tabulation and Comparison Table.

Data Collection and Procedures

Once the questionnaires have been distributed, the parents will complete them and return them via their student to English class within three school days. It is expected that parents of students enrolled in AVID will have 100% timely response. This is primarily based on the premise that these students and parents are predisposed to be interested in and participate in education matters by virtue of enrolling in the AVID program. Parents of non-AVID students are projected to have a 65% percent response rate, due to factors previously explained (questionnaire may never reach the parent, parent may not take time to fill it out, questionnaire may not be returned). Once returned, the questionnaires will be tabulated and results entered by category for each question and in sum. The results will be scaled depending on the number of responders per category.