Title
Distributed leadership practice and the AVID site team as a leadership practice community to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society: a multiple case study

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Distributed leadership practice and the AVID site team as a leadership practice community to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society: A multiple case study.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership by Mary E. Laughlin

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2011
The Dissertation of Mary E. Laughlin is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

University of California, San Diego
California State University, San Marcos
2011
DEDICATION

The sum total of this work is dedicated in honor of my mother, Mary Rigney Winkler, who always insisted that I finish everything I start! There were many times over the course of this program that I wanted to quit but didn’t because I could hear her words of encouragement in my mind!

I was compelled to pursue this course of study while in my 50’s because of the example she set when she returned to college in her 50’s to complete the Bachelor’s degree she started in her youth. We both graduated with our BA on the same day in 1976. I miss her and wish she was here to celebrate with me again!

My mother’s unwavering stand and resounding belief in the power of education was a driving force in her life and is her legacy to her seven children.

It is this same passion for education that I bequeath to my two grandchildren, David Gregory Laughlin and Seraphina Mariluna Laughlin-Leroy, as they begin their life-long journey as learners.

They have been blessed with their great-grandmother’s keen intellect and natural curiosity about life that I hope will sustain them on their path always!
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Throughout the entire program, I could always count on my baby sister Teresa Winkler to keep me focused and productive and she has always been there for me! I’m grateful for my friends, especially those in the Landmark Education community who stood for my greatness and demanded excellence from me. They supported me during the breakdowns and celebrated my breakthroughs!

I acknowledge the generosity and candor of the site team members who were so gracious and welcomed me as a witness to their practice. I’m obliged to the individuals who participated in the research study interviews. All of the schools in the study are fortunate to have such dedicated and thoughtful practitioners involved with their students.

Finally, I acknowledge and appreciate the love, support and encouragement given to me over the course of this doctoral program by my family, friends and co-workers who are too numerous to name. Since I don’t want to risk missing anyone –a big thank you to all of you! I hope that I have expressed to each of you how much you mean to me and how grateful I am to have you in my life.
VITA

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2007-2008 Program Manager: Smaller Learning Communities Grant/High School Literacy/AVID support/San Diego Unified School District Office; Principal: Mt. Everest Academy, SDUSD

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Distributed leadership practice and the AVID site team as a leadership practice community to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society:
A multiple case study.

by

Mary E. Laughlin

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2011
California State University, San Marcos, 2011

Professor Janet Chrispeels, Chair

The primary purpose of this descriptive, multiple case study was to examine the leadership practices of the Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID site team at three secondary school sites as it performed the work of fulfilling the mission of AVID to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society. Three highly distinguished AVID schools were selected to participate in the study. Qualitative
data were gathered via one-on-one interviews with four key site team members from each site, several site team meeting observations at each school and a review of various documents collected from the individual AVID school sites. The research questions were addressed and a rich description of the distributed leadership practices of the AVID site team was developed and analyzed with the support of HyperRESEARCH tools.

Findings indicate leadership practice is distributed, yet even when a strong site team and an excellent program that achieves good results for AVID students is in place, it does not guarantee the demonstration sites will be impacting overall school achievement. The study concluded that in order for the AVID site team to be successful in implementing the 11 Essentials to an institutionalized level, it will most likely require a well-developed community of practice. Attention may also need to be given to how best to distribute the leadership practices needed to achieve full implementation.

Recommendations for practice and future research based on the findings are offered.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In today’s highly competitive global “knowledge economy,” all students need new skills for college, careers, and citizenship. The failure to give all students these new skills leaves today’s youth—and our country—at an alarming competitive disadvantage. Schools haven’t changed; the world has. —Wagner (2008, p. xxi)

The educational debate regarding what is wrong with American schools and what is needed to improve them has been raging for years. Marzano (2003) describes the history of public education and the criticisms of reform efforts that affect students and educators today. The first of these criticisms was in response to the launching of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957, when people began to question the “rigor and viability” of American schools. The debate of what is wrong has continued unabated ever since Sputnik, yet as Wagner (2008) points out in The Global Achievement Gap schools, especially high schools, still have not changed. Even our best schools with high college going rates and high test scores often fail to help students develop the skills needed for the 21st century.

The situation is even more dire for students from low-income and non-English speaking families. Large numbers of high school students across the nation are dropping out of school prior to graduation. According to the 2008 California Department of Education figures, 21.5% of high school students in the state of California leave high school without a diploma. In contrast the high school graduation rate in countries such as Denmark, Poland and Japan are well over 90%. The number of dropouts is higher for students of color such as Latino and African-American youth. According to Wagner (2008) of those who do graduate only about a third are ready for college, with over 40%
of college entrants needing some form of remediation. Scores on standardized tests at all grade levels are abysmal in spite of continuous reform. Furthermore, the heavy focus on testing keeps the curriculum, teachers and students focused on low-level recall skills rather than critical thinking, problem solving and application of knowledge. Incidents of violence still plague many suburban and urban high school campuses since tragedies such as the 1999 Columbine High School massacre in Colorado and the 2001 school shootings at Granite Hills and Santana High School in the Grossmont Union High School District in San Diego County California. The need for change in the American high school is not in question—it is imperative.

The goal of the comprehensive high school is to support students academically, socially and emotionally as students learn in an environment that prepares them for the future (Shannon, 2003). Yet, present day students need more than the traditional secondary school experience seems to offer. In order to thrive in the 21st century, students will certainly need to be proficient in the academic skills of reading, science and mathematics as well as be able to critically think their way through abstract problems, ask good questions, work in teams, distinguish good information from bad, and speak an additional language along with speaking and writing in English (Wagner 2008). Students need to be prepared for careers that do not yet exist. World citizens must live together peacefully, accepting one another as equals and celebrating one another’s uniqueness. In order to be best prepared for these “jobs of the future” it is essential that students complete the course of study leading to the high school diploma. Most importantly, it is essential that this course of study prepare students with the skills needed for a variety of career options as well as further education.
Statement of the Problem and Rationale for the Study

The need for change in U.S. schools is undeniable. The growing number of charter schools and the interest in home schooling and virtual high schools are also indicators that change is desperately needed and is occurring. Unfortunately, these new options are often not available to those who have been least served by the traditional high school — students of color and whose home language is not English. The problem and rationale for this study were founded on the need for school reform that supports equity and access for all students, from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. School reform that incorporates new practices of leadership from the distributed leadership perspective as school sites’ expansion of leadership extends beyond the formal role of the school principal to form a leadership practice community is a key focus of this study.

Fortunately, there is a system currently in place that addresses many of the issues plaguing schools and discussed thus far in this paper. Advancement Via Individual Determination, or better known as AVID, is a college readiness system that provides structure and support to middle and high schools as they prepare students for college and success in global society. The original AVID program started in one classroom on one high school campus in 1980 and has expanded to thousands of campuses across 47 states and 16 countries/territories over the past thirty years. The 30th anniversary of AVID, celebrated in 2010, resulted in a newly articulated declaration that AVID’s mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society (www.avid.org).
AVID’s systemic approach is designed to support students and educators as they increase the level of learning and the academic performance for all students school-wide and district-wide (AVIDonline.org, 2009). Preparing students for enrollment into college is a challenge that the AVID program has embraced since it started. How the leadership practices of the AVID site team inculcate the strategies and methodologies so essential to the program across the entire school community is the subject of this research study.

In a review of the research literature, AVID shows great promise for students enrolled in the AVID elective class (Mehan, et al. 1992; Swanson, Mehan & Hubbard, 1993; Mehan, Hubbard, Lintz & Villanueva, 1994; Guthrie & Guthrie, 1999; Watt, Huerta & Lozano, 2007). However, research findings have not yet made a connection between the possible relationship between the leadership practices of the AVID site team and the mission of “preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society”. There is no empirical evidence to support the possible relationship between the leadership practices of the AVID site team and this phenomenon called forth in the AVID mission. This study set out to examine the AVID site team leadership practices from a distributed leadership perspective and to explore the AVID site team as a leadership practice community as it works to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the work of the AVID site team and observe the leadership practices as the possible source for operationalizing the second part of the AVID mission statement to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society. How does the AVID site team leadership practice occur at
the school level in order to meet this mission? The study examined the tasks, tools, routines, actors, actions and interactions of the AVID site team as it went about its work creating structures and practices that support the goal of preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. The study specifically explored the relationship between the leadership practices of the AVID site team and the preparation of all students for college readiness and success in a global society at three secondary schools in Southern California: One middle level school and two high schools. Through the use of individual (one-to-one) interviews, observations of Site Team meetings plus the analysis of site-based documents related to the growth and development of AVID on the campus, this study was driven by specific research questions (RQ) and their associated propositions (P):

1. RQ: In what ways is the work of the AVID site team based on shared knowledge of the 11 program Essentials and how do these Essentials guide their work? P: The more connected the AVID site team is to the 11 Essentials, the more likely they are working to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

2. RQ: How does the work of the AVID Site Team reflect the values and habits of a Leadership Practice Community and how do these practices impact the whole school? P: The more the practices of the AVID site team reflect a Leadership Practice Community, the more likely the team would affect school-wide practices in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.
3. RQ: In what ways does a distributed leadership perspective provide insights into the work of preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society? P: The more varied the distribution of leadership in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society, the greater the possibility for a school-wide impact.

Delving deeper into how the AVID site team functions as a *Community of Practice* (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002), or in a new paradigm proposed by Wagner, et al. (2008), known as a *Leadership Practice Community* and observing it firsthand was my primary challenge. The secondary purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which the AVID site team operated from the perspective of Distributed Leadership as described by Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001). By taking leadership practice in a school as the unit of analysis instead of examining an individual leader, the distributed leadership theory focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among leaders identified by formal leadership roles and informal leaders. Additionally, this distributed perspective of leadership is grounded in the activities in which the team engages rather than in the position or role of the leader.

*Overview of the Methods*

The design of this study was based on a multiple case study approach. The case study design was determined to be the best method for this study because, according to Yin (2003), “case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” and “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). Additionally the study
used a design, which complements a case study approach that requires the triangulation of multiple data sources.

The research questions were addressed using the results from qualitative data gathered via interviews, site team meeting observations, and a review of documents collected from the individual sites chosen to participate in this study. These three data collection methods were used to triangulate the data and increase validity of the study (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). All three sites are located within the same county boundary and within an AVID Region in Southern California.

Significance of the Study

Empirical studies examining how the AVID college readiness system prepares all students for college readiness and success in a global society have not focused on the work of the AVID site team. Conducting this study of AVID, especially of the leadership practices of the AVID site team, provided important empirical knowledge of the leadership practices that are a foundation for a school-wide impact in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. This information on leadership practice could prove to be useful to schools whether they have adopted the AVID college readiness system or not.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study. For the purposes of consistency and clarity, they are defined as follows:

The AVID Essentials. There are 11 AVID Essentials that are standard across all AVID programs and serve to define attributes and actions that define the program. Each Essential has multiple Indicators that describe important aspects and practices for
implementation of that essential. Each Indicator has a description that represents implementation at one of four levels: Not AVID, Meets Certification Standards, Routine Use and Institutionalization.

*AVID site team.* As called for in AVID Essential 11, this body is an active, interdisciplinary group of school representatives that meets regularly to collaborate on issues of student access in rigorous college preparatory courses. Ideally, the AVID site team includes teachers from the core content areas of math, science, English/language arts and social sciences as well as a site administrator, counselor, AVID elective teachers and the site AVID coordinator. Parents, as well as tutors and students, are welcome representatives at site team meetings as long as individual student or teacher performance is not discussed (AVID Certification Report and Self-Study Continuum, 2009).

*Community of Practice.* A group of people “who share a concern, set of problems or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4).

*Leadership Practice Community.* Leaders committed to helping one another solve problems of practice related to teaching and learning to create system wide improvement (Wagner, et. al, 2006).

*Distributed Leadership Perspective.* An alternative way of thinking about the leadership in schools that focuses on the tasks, routines, actors, actions and interactions of school leadership as they unfold in the context of daily life within a school setting (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001).
Organization of the Study

Chapter one provided an introduction to the study, rationale for the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, a brief overview of AVID, overview of the methods, research questions, significance of the study, definition of key terms and an overview of the organization of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature that begins with an overview of the AVID program from its inception to the present day. An educational reform movement that was a catalyst for the development of the AVID program 30 years ago is discussed and the impact of this reform reviewed. This synopsis offers an historical perspective and discusses the evolution of the “AVID program” to the present day “AVID college readiness system” over the past three decades. Strategies, methodologies and curriculum unique to AVID are addressed. The review continues with an examination and overview of studies related to the benefits delivered to schools and individual students as a result of participation in an array of college preparatory programs, comparing and contrasting them to AVID. Theoretical assertions related to the success of the students within the program offered rationale for the continuation of the program. Multiple studies demonstrate AVID program effectiveness and student success, and these are discussed to highlight areas of effectiveness that include academic as well as social-emotional growth for students.

The final section of the literature review chapter explores the theoretical frameworks of Organizational Learning (Senge, 1990 & 2006), Communities of Practice (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002), a new paradigm proposed by Wagner, et al. (2008), known as a Leadership Practice Community as well as an overview of Distributed
Leadership (Spillane, 2006). These theoretical frameworks provide a lens to focus the review and analysis of the data.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the research and procedures used in this study. The procedures included the selection of individuals to interview, scheduling and conducting interviews and several observations of the AVID site team meetings at the three selected sites and the review of a variety of documents from each site.

Chapter 4 presents an overview and background of the schools involved in the study. I present the data and an analysis of the findings in relation to the three research questions.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the study that includes a statement of the problem, a review of the methodology, and a summary of the data presented in Chapter 4 with a discussion of the results. Final sections discuss conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future practice and future research.
CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature begins with an overview of the AVID program from its inception to the present day. This synopsis not only offers an historical perspective but also discusses the evolution over the past three decades addressing strategies, methodologies and curriculum unique to AVID. The data collection process for schools offering AVID is addressed in detail. AVID presents “11 Essentials” stipulated as the foundation of AVID and each school site must self-assess and participate in a Certification process to report its’ own progress in meeting the targeted indicators designated for each Essential.

The literature review also examines and outlines studies related to the benefits delivered to schools and individual students as a result of participating in an array of college preparatory programs, comparing and contrasting them to AVID. Multiple studies demonstrated AVID program effectiveness and success and many of these studies highlight areas of effectiveness that include academic as well as social-emotional growth for students. Revisiting the political climate in California at specific points in time over the years provides the context for the changes in the language of the defined target population for the AVID elective and sets the stage for the examination of theoretical assertions related to the success of the students within the program as well as offer reasons for the continuation of the program itself. A discussion of studies that draw on the concepts of social and cultural capital and Critical Race Theory, as they relate to the success of programs such as AVID, is also offered in this chapter.
Finally, a consideration of theories including organizational learning, communities of practice, leadership practice community and distributed leadership provides the framework to guide the analysis of the data from the proposed study of this dissertation.

The review of the literature led to further questions related to how the leadership practices of the site team impacts the whole school and promotes college preparedness and college readiness for all students. This examination of the work of the AVID site team has yet to be discussed in the research literature. An inquiry into the question, “How does the AVID site team work together in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society?” stems from the early writings of AVID founder Mary Catherine Swanson about the unique qualities and value of a viable site team.

AVID

The birthplace of AVID was San Diego, California at Clairemont High School in the San Diego Unified School District. In 1980, the school was beginning to experience effects of a federal court-ordered mandate for desegregation. This desegregation effort resulted in the voluntary enrollment of 500 low-income, academically underprepared Latino and African American students into the middle-class neighborhood school that created shock waves across the predominantly white community (Freedman, 2000).

Other public schools in America at this time had adopted the strategy known as compensatory education to deal with educational inequality. Compensatory education was designed to help underachieving and disadvantaged linguistic and ethnic minority youth overcome social, economic and educational deficits through remedial programs. Students who had been unsuccessful in school were placed in compensatory educational
programs or tracks that reduced the curriculum in scope, content and pace. The targeted students would receive a modified curriculum, delivered in a more simplistic manner and at a slower pace. Many proponents of compensatory education believed that underachieving students would develop needed skills in this environment and be prepared to exit their special ability group to re-enter regular education levels or even college bound programs (Gordon & Wilkerson, 1966). In contrast to that belief, much research conducted during the decades of the 1970s through the 1990s suggested that ability grouping and tracking led to further inequality and provided evidence that students who were placed on remedial tracks seldom caught up to their peers (Cicourel & Mehan, 1983; Mehan, 1992; Oakes, 1985; Rosenbaum, 1978).

*avidus (Latin): Eager for knowledge*

The AVID program in San Diego was conceived as an alternative to tracking students. Mary Catherine Swanson, the chairperson of the English department at Clairemont High School in 1980, was concerned about segregating the court-ordered minority students into a separate, compensatory curriculum and was unwilling to let that occur. She and other teachers on the faculty placed the bussed students into regular, college-preparatory classes and supported them in being successful. Over the summer of 1980, she recruited, interviewed and selected 30 ethnically and culturally diverse students (who were academically functioning in the D+ to C+ grade range) to participate in a novel academic experience that would require them to set college as their goal. Students would agree to enroll in rigorous college-prep classes and demonstrate their determination to be successful by doing their part such as completing homework assignments regularly. In exchange, they would be registered into an elective class that
would provide academic and instructional support to them (Swanson, Mehan & Hubbard, 1993, Freedman, 2000). Thus, the AVID program was born! Instead of simplifying instruction or reducing the curriculum for the underachieving students, the primary expressed AVID program goal in 1980 was “to motivate and prepare underachieving students from linguistic and ethnic minority groups and low income students of any ethnicity to perform well in high school and seek a college education” (Mehan, Hubbard, Lintz & Villanueva, 1994) and secondly, to provide a systemic approach to support students and educators as they increased school-wide learning and performance. By 1984, which was the year of the first AVID graduates, the school-wide scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills at Clairemont high school had improved dramatically. In 1986, Mary Catherine Swanson was invited to work for the San Diego County Office of Education to disseminate the AVID program to other schools and districts within the county and beyond.

*AVID’s 11 Essentials*

AVID eventually became a “franchise option” (Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 1998) that districts and schools could elect to adopt and implement. Expanding the AVID program to other schools required that additional elements be put in place. Schools that decided to adopt the program were admonished that certain facets of the program are considered vital and should not be changed. To alter the program essentials meant the school would run the risk of undermining the philosophy, principles and experiences upon which the program was founded. Implementation of the “11 Essentials” became a condition for the use of the AVID trade name, trademark and logo (Contreras, Cota, Furgerson, Gira & Swanson, 2009).
Selection of a lead AVID teacher to coordinate the program necessitated locating and training an interested teacher who would be willing to work in a variety of roles beyond that of a skilled instructional leader. The expected roles ranged from serving as an academic coach to student advocate and motivator to field trip organizer as well as a parent facilitator, team builder and fundraiser. It was important that all AVID program participants, both students and staff, must choose to participate (Essential 2). The act of choice is linked to understanding that education is a free decision; without this students cannot become independent learners, which is AVID’s ultimate goal. Selection of students with academic potential who would benefit from AVID support to improve their academic record and begin to prepare for college by enrolling in a rigorous course of study has always been a cornerstone of the program (Essentials 1 and 4).

W-I-C-R

The AVID elective class was incorporated into the school’s master schedule as a regular class period (Essential 3) to meet every day. Since the early years, there has been a distinctive approach to curriculum and instruction that involves writing, inquiry and collaboration (the 5th, 6th, and 7th Essentials). The early acronym for this approach was WIC and by 2002, the additional element of critical academic reading was explicitly added to complete what is now known as the WICR approach. Specific strategies and methodologies within these curricular areas are promoted as a school–wide emphasis to improve teaching and learning for all by their incorporation into the core academic classes on site. Each element has academic value, regardless of the content discipline:

Writing was seen as the first tool of learning and is valued a core skill used in every step of the learning process. A specific form of note taking, known as the Cornell
style, was incorporated into the daily expectations for the AVID elective students to utilize in their academic classes. The Cornell note taking system was developed in 1949 by education professor Walter Pauk in response to a concern with students’ low-test scores. The Cornell notes are structured for detailed note taking in a wide margin along the right side of the paper with a narrow, left hand column designed and used for questions or headings related to the notes. This strategy is taught as a school-wide learning tool by content area teachers and is not limited to exclusive use by students in the AVID elective class. The notes are useful for test preparation or formulating questions to be brought to the AVID elective class for use during the tutorial sessions twice per week. AVID students are expected to keep interactive notebooks, or “learning logs” that detail thoughts or reactions to their learning, as well as practice “quick writes” to generate ideas about some piece of text that was used in class. These are written quickly, without editing and are designed to expand the students’ written self-expression (Mehan, Hubbard, Lintz, & Villanueva, 1994).

*Inquiry* refers to the method of interaction between the students and the tutors who are hired from local colleges to work in the AVID elective classroom. Essential 8 calls for a sufficient number of tutors to facilitate student access to rigorous curriculum at a ration of 7 to 1. Tutors, ideally former AVID students, who are now in college and can serve as role models, are trained to lead study groups in which they have academic expertise. They are trained to use the Socratic method of inquiry to lead the students in discovering the answers for themselves. They are trained to not give answers, but to reframe the students’ question into yet another question. Students bring questions generated from their class notes that identify their point of confusion when attempting to
complete the work on their own. With the help of the tutors and their peers, they clarify their own thoughts based on the questions. The Socratic Seminar is a tool of inquiry used by the AVID elective teachers and core academic teachers to examine the ideas, issues and values inherent in a piece of text (www.avid.org). Students learn valuable skills of listening, articulating ideas and critical thinking as they consider multiple viewpoints during the seminar experience.

*Collaboration* is the instructional strategy of having students work together to meet instructional goals. Collaborative groups or study teams expand the students’ academic skills as they learn to rely on each other. Collaboration is an essential component of the tutorial session when students share resources and supply each other with feedback as they grapple with questions related to their learning.

*Reading* is the most recent addition to the strategy menu of AVID, being formally adopted in 2002. Critical, academic reading methods are taught to students to support them in developing comprehension skills as they read to learn. Critical thinking skills of accessing prior knowledge, understanding text structure and the author’s intent are also addressed as students read with the higher end of Bloom’s taxonomy and Costa’s levels of questioning in mind (Bloom, 1956; Costa, 1985).

**The AVID Site Team**

The WICR curricular methodologies became the hallmark of the AVID elective class and were implemented by other teachers who actively participated on the *AVID site team*. The site team, called for in the 11th Essential, was designed as a unique structure that supported collaboration between teachers, counselors, administrators, parents and students. The original site team at Clairemont High came together monthly to address the
issues of access and equity and to infuse the methodologies that were used in the AVID elective into all classes’ school-wide. Stories relayed by founder Mary Catherine Swanson (1995) about the power of the original site team that met monthly to engage in conversations with teachers about what worked for students and what made learning difficult for them were inspirational. Teaching practices rather than personalities were addressed at the site team meetings and students requested learning supports in such a way as to maintain the anonymity of any specific teacher being discussed. Twenty-five of the eighty faculty members attended the original site’s regular meetings with the understanding that they were there to problem solve instead of gripe and honored the agreement that students would not be blamed for situations. Another aspect that was deemed as a positive was the unwavering support of the site principal. This participation was seen as a key to the success of the process as the presence of the principal conveyed the message that the meetings were important and that the group was empowered to make substantive changes in curriculum, pedagogy and school policy.

One of the early tasks still performed by the site team is the development and monitoring of an annual AVID Site Plan, whereby student performance data is collected and analyzed to ensure academic success. AVID program implementation and student progress are monitored and reported through the AVID Center’s online Data System (Essential 9). Members of the site team also agree to attend the annual AVID Summer Institute and participate in a variety of professional development strands that address program implementation and resources to support them as they “face the challenges of restructuring schools in order to provide equal access and improve student achievement” (Implementing and Managing the AVID Program for High Schools, p.5). Commitment
from the school and/or district to identify financial resources to cover program costs and
to participate in AVID staff development and the certification process (Essential 10)
completes the list of 11 AVID program essentials.

Does AVID Make a Difference?

Given the detailed and rigid program requirements for certification and all of the
pressures put on educators from so many entities today, why would a school site agree to
adopt and implement the “intellectual property” of AVID with fidelity? Research studies
on several aspects of AVID indicate positive value in making the commitment to offering
the AVID elective and adopting this college readiness system.

The Results of Untracking

Evaluation studies conducted over the past two decades have demonstrated
various successes associated with AVID. When addressing AVID as an untracking
program that placed previously low-achieving students from ethnic and linguistic
backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in U.S. colleges and universities in college
preparatory classes, positive findings indicated that AVID graduates enrolled in college
in greater numbers than the local or national averages for these groups (Mehan, et. al
1992; Mehan, Hubbard, Lintz & Villanueva, 1994; Swanson, Mehan & Hubbard, 1993).

Middle School Success

In the late 1980s, AVID began to be offered as a middle school program designed to
instill a college-going mentality in students and prepare them early for the transition to
high school. AVID was found to provide a contribution to positive school outcomes at
the middle school grades as well. A longitudinal investigation conducted by Guthrie and
Guthrie in 1999 reported that students who enrolled in the AVID middle school program
and received two years of AVID plus completed algebra by the eighth grade were found to be more likely to complete college preparatory requirements in high school than similar students who did not enroll in AVID.

Preparation for College

A comparison study of AVID and the federally funded Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program investigated if there was a difference in college preparation of students who participated in college preparatory programs and those who did not. Findings indicated that only the AVID group was significantly better in academic preparation than the control group and the other two groups that had participated in college preparation programs examined in the study. AVID students were also found to be more involved in advanced course enrollment than students in the other groups (Watt, Huerta & Lozano, 2007).

Swail and Perna (2002) discussed pre-college outreach programs as they described a national survey conducted in 1999-2000 by the College Board in association with The Education Resources Institute (TERI) and the Council for Opportunities in Education that was administered to identify and collect information from all types of early intervention programs. A series of focus groups were held with program directors and administrators to supplement the survey data. The survey yielded responses from 1,100 programs across the nation in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Federal programs were created to increase college readiness and the TRIO programs of Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/ Science and Talent Search contributed one third of the survey responses and GEAR UP constituted 9%. The responding programs named common goals such as to promote college attendance,
awareness and exposure as well as to provide role models, build self-esteem and improve academic skills of students served. The national survey of outreach was not evaluative, only descriptive. Through the participation in the focus groups, the directors and administrators identified ten essential elements of successful outreach endeavors. The list of essential elements is included below and parallels those essential elements highly valued and adopted by the AVID program:

1. A clear mission and vision
2. Start early in the students’ career—middle school if possible
3. Motivate students with incentives and sound advice of a trusted mentor
4. Involve parents
5. Collaborate with district/school/business/education/
6. Sustain funding-show progress toward specific goals to funding agencies
7. Practice professionalism and PD
8. Use proven practices; adapt
9. Rely on standardized processes, i.e.: curricula based on student needs
10. Incorporate technology

The results of the survey suggest that the programs are expensive yet the reality is they are needed. Schools are not meeting the needs of all students and these programs provide a lifeline to students who have potential but are not being served as serious college contenders. The discussion ended with a recommendation that college preparatory programs should serve within the construct of school reform as a partner and not as an accessory.

*Increased Standardized Test Scores and Attendance Rates*
Additional areas of success demonstrated through research conducted in Texas discussed findings that AVID students consistently outperformed their local and state level peers in the areas of standardized testing and attendance. AVID students attended school at a rate of nearly 5 percentage points higher than their non-AVID classmates in 1999-2000 and 3 percentage points higher in the following two academic years. Students not enrolled in AVID but who were enrolled in schools with an AVID program increased their attendance rates as well. These findings suggest that the school-wide effect or the institutionalization of AVID was functioning in these schools (Watt, Powell & Mendiola, 2004). These research findings also suggest that AVID provides the structure and skills students need to be successful whether the students are in college or in the workplace. The students honor their commitment to work hard and as a result, they experience success and realize the fulfillment of their goals. AVID students form a band of peers who support and encourage each other while they are on the journey together. Many reports of the AVID program experience liken it to a family that provides strong social support to the members of the AVID elective (Nelson, 2007; Swanson, Mehan & Hubbard, 1993; Watt, Powell & Mendiola, 2004.)

Theoretical Frameworks to Analyze the Success of AVID

Cultural and Social Capital

Research studies have suggested the theoretical framework of Cultural and Social Capital offer a rationale for the success of students in the AVID program (Mehan, et al., 1992: Mehan, Hubbard, Lintz & Villanueva, 1994). The economic concept of capitalism has been interpreted as an educational theory by Pierre Bourdieu, who discusses different forms of capital in an English translation of his original work (1977) found in chapter
four of The Sociology of Economic Life (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001). According to Bourdieu (1977), capital can present itself in three fundamental forms: economic capital, which is immediately convertible into money and is aligned with property rights; cultural capital, which can be converted into economic capital and may take the form of educational qualifications and of social capital, which is generated in social obligations or connections and ultimately may be converted into economic capital. The notion of cultural capital was discussed in relation to uneven scholastic achievement results that are seen in children born into different social classes. He suggested that children from lower social classes could obtain “specific profits” through the distribution of cultural capital between classes. He further asserts that academic “ability and talent in students is the product of an investment of time and cultural capital” (p. 98). Mehan, et al., (1992) described the treatment that linguistic and ethnic minority students, who had been placed in academically rigorous college prep classes, received as a result of their enrollment in AVID. These students were provided with explicit cues that unlocked the secrets of an implicit “culture of the classroom” that many of the parents of these students had been unfamiliar with and unable to teach them. Explicit instruction was provided in the AVID elective class on how to read a book by focusing not only on the decoding process of linking letters with sounds but by focusing on the comprehension skills necessary to interpret and analyze the text. Students in the AVID elective class learned the critical reading skills of finding the main idea and the supporting evidence as well as the skills of summarizing and synthesizing information.

AVID was credited with giving low-income students the cultural capital at school that was compared to the cultural capital that more economically advantaged parents give
to their children at home implicitly. AVID also recognizes and supports the stance presented by Bolivar and Chrispeels (2011) that active parent involvement is crucial to students’ academic success, especially low income or limited English proficient families. Bolivar and Chrispeels (2011) contend that the negative impact of poverty can be partially alleviated by schools and parents engaging in learning activities. These interactions help build social and intellectual capital that enables parents to engage in actions that they previously were unable to perform that would be of benefit to their child’s education.

*Critical Race Theory*

Yosso (2005) challenges the traditional interpretations of Cultural and Social Capital theory and proposes the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT), as a framework introduced by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) to discuss issues of race and racism in education. Yosso’s use of CRT shifts the research lens away from a deficit-based point of view of Communities of Color, which are often discussed as places of cultural poverty and disadvantage. CRT focuses on and learns from a wide range of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities, which are often not recognized nor acknowledged. It also places emphasis and values the social contacts and other forms of capital possessed by marginalized groups. Looking through the CRT lens, a different focus on students, especially students of color who participate in a program such as AVID is available. These students are viewed as whole and complete when they come to the classroom, with unique strengths gained by life experiences in their neighborhoods and families. They demonstrate forms of capital that have been nurtured in an environment viewed as full of cultural wealth that is often not acknowledged as a strength. These forms of capital
include aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital. Yosso (2005) asserts that the other theories of Cultural Capital and Social Capital do not acknowledge the wealth that students from different cultures bring with them when they join a program like AVID. Roithmayr (1999) discusses CRT in the book *Race Isn’t as* an exciting, revolutionary intellectual movement that puts race at the center of critical analysis. No set of doctrines or methodologies define CRT but scholars who write within the parameters of this intellectual movement share two broad commitments: One to critical intervention in traditional civil rights scholarship, and the second to generating an effort to transform the bond that exists between the law and levels of social power to advance the commitment of racial emancipation.

Certain aspects of the AVID program suggest that students who enroll in the elective class have deficits and the program is designed to meet the needs of the students and compensate for their deficits. The recruitment of students into the AVID elective as described in the first AVID Essential targets underachieving “students in the academic middle” who have the desire and potential to succeed in rigorous courses. The rationale to place these targeted students into rigorous courses alongside high-achieving students and provide them with support from the AVID elective class to enable them to make significant gains in their academic achievement could be viewed from the CRT as a deficit based point of view. The additional selection criteria established in the “Recruitment of Students” materials after the impact of California’s Proposition 209 identifies low income students of any ethnicity, who will be the first in their family to attend college, who face special circumstances that may be obstacles to achievement or who are of an ethnicity traditionally underserved in four-year colleges. No mention of the
value of “street smarts” that the students may be bringing with them or of the familial or social capital the students can build upon once they are enrolled in the AVID elective class is made.

The contributions of theories such as Cultural, Social and Intellectual Capital as well as Critical Race Theory are important to understanding how AVID may benefit individual students. However, since AVID’s mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society by impacting the whole school, it is essential to explore the organizational literature.

Organizational Learning

A focus of this research study is on the work of the AVID site team and the leadership practices that impact the whole school. Therefore, an additional theoretical lens to consider in this study is the concept of organizational learning.

Peter Senge (1990) reintroduced the term “learning organization” in his seminal work, *The Fifth Discipline*:

> At the heart of a learning organization is a shift of mind, from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something ‘out there’ to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience. A learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality. And how they can change it (Senge, 1990, p.12).

In the revised edition of *The Fifth Discipline* (2006), Senge describes real learning that gets to the heart of what it is to be human as it applies to both individuals and organization. This drive to learn is as strong as the drive for survival. However, for a ‘learning organization it is not enough to survive. “Survival learning” is also known as “adaptive learning” and is important as well as necessary. But for a learning organization,
“adaptive learning” must be joined by “generative learning” which is described as that which enhances the capacity to create (Senge 2006:14).

The dimension that distinguishes this generative learning from the learning of more traditional organizations is the mastery of certain basic disciplines or five “component technologies”. These five components of organizational learning are:

Systems thinking: the conceptual cornerstone (‘The Fifth Discipline’) of Senge’s approach. This fifth discipline is the one that integrates the others, bringing them together in a balance of theory and practice. Systems thinking is the ability to comprehend and address the whole, and to examine the inter-relationship between the parts and provides both the drive and the rationale to integrate the other four disciplines.

Personal mastery: ‘Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it, no organizational learning occurs’ (Senge 2006: 139).

Mental models: These are ‘deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures and images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action’ (Senge 2006: 8).

Building shared vision: The practice of shared vision involves the skills of distinguishing shared ‘pictures of the future’ that foster genuine commitment as compared to mere compliance. In mastering this discipline, leaders learn the counter-productiveness of trying to dictate a vision, no matter how heartfelt (Senge 2006: 9).

Team learning: is viewed as ‘the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire’ (Senge 2006: 236). It builds on
personal mastery and shared vision and utilizes dialogue as a tool for people to become observers of their own thinking.

_The cycle of continuous improvement_ introduced by Deming (1986) requires regular and systematic use of data to inform practice in an organization. American educational leader and author, Carl Glickman (1993), argued for making the connection between the collection, examination and interpretation of data and school improvement: “It is irresponsible for a school to mobilize, initiate and act without any conscious way of determining whether such expenditure of time and energy is having a desirable effect” (p. 54). He admonished schools to be aware of what he called an American tendency to grab for the latest innovation and offered advice that schools need to adopt the habit of critical self-study as part of their school culture. He asserts that once a school combines self-study via looking at existing data and taking actions as a result of self-examination, the end result of school improvement is possible.

The AVID Center has embraced this idea and has established structures, policies and practices for the site team that are designed to solidify the habit of critical self-study in all AVID schools. Critical to this study will be exploring these leadership practices as well as the actions and interactions of the site team.

__Communities of Practice and Leadership Practice Communities__

Closely related to the concept of learning organization is the concept of communities of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) brought this terminology to the forefront in their pioneering work _Communities of Practice_. They defined a community of practice as self-organizing, evolving, entities that have their own emergent organizational structure and norms of behavior (Lave & Wenger, 1991). More recently
Wenger and Snyder (1999) refer to a community of practice as a group of people “bound together by shared expertise and a passion for the joint enterprise” (p.139). They identified naturally occurring clusters of people within and across organizations that are bound together by their common knowledge and often role. The community of practice actually defines itself through a joint enterprise that is continually negotiated by its members. The community of practice also involves the relationships within the group, what they do together in mutual engagement, and the shared repertoire of practices such as routines, artifacts, and vocabulary that the group has developed over time. They exist to help drive strategy, begin new topics of inquiry, solve problems, transfer best practices, develop professional skills and recruit new talent. Similar to the AVID site team, membership in a community of practice is self-selected but in contrast the AVID site team is not voluntary since it is a requirement if the site is to attain a Certified status. Both entities set their own agendas and establish their own leadership. Communities of practice navigate through various stages of development that are characterized by different levels of interaction among the members and by the different kinds of activities in which members participate. Wenger (1998) is the principal author of the theory of a Community of Practice. He discussed learning as a social system and asserted that people are an organization’s most important resource in terms of the communities through which individuals develop and share the capacity to create and use knowledge (p.1). This study uses the concept of communities of practice to explore how the AVID site teams work and note the similarities and differences in leadership practices across the three AVID sites.
The Change Leadership Group (CLG) at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education has advanced many of the same ideas as Wenger (1998). This CLG is an interdisciplinary team co-directed by Tony Wagner and Robert Kegan. This group is concerned with the way leadership teams operate to create new individual and organizational capacities and has made several recommendations for leadership teams to consider as they do their work. They recommend that groups maintain the features of communities of practice except for the elements of being voluntary and focused on their own learning as an end unto itself. Wagner, et al. (2006) call for leadership practice communities to exist in order to transform the larger system, whether a school or a district. These new kinds of leadership groups are designed to combine the ongoing work of leadership practice and learning with respect to systems and organizational change.

Learning as a social system is an idea discussed by Brandt (2003) while articulating “10 ways to tell” if a school is a learning organization. He asserted that individuals learn best when the content is meaningful and opportunities for social interaction in an environment that supports learning are provided. This idea applies to organizations as well. A school community that invites deep and sustained professional learning is more likely to have a powerful impact on student achievement. This is the intent of the AVID site team as it operates on a school site. Given this role of not only building the AVID elective but also spreading AVID strategies and methodologies throughout the school, it is important to explore the concept and impact of leadership.

School Leadership

As school leaders are confronted with a larger and more complex range of demands and challenges, school leadership development has taken on a global emphasis.
Huber (2004) discusses a comparison of data from an international study of school leadership development in Canada, the Netherlands, New South Wales and the United States as an instructive tool for examining the school as a learning organization. The study proposed that educators consider a new conception of school and a more broadly defined understanding of leadership. He calls for the training and development of school leaders to be based first on a clear understanding of the aims of education in general and of the teaching and learning processes in particular. School leaders need to be able to develop relationships and lead to shape the school as a supportive environment for teachers to be effective in supporting students to achieve the learning outcomes.

Leadership is viewed as empowering others as viable partners in leadership.

According to Leithwood & Riehl (2003), a large and continually growing body of educational scholarship that describes the nature and effects of leadership exists. Hallinger & Heck (1998) synthesized 15 years of research on how principals impact their schools. They report that these school leaders “exercise a measureable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement” (p186). They go on to report this effect is small but statistically significant and they found it meaningful. They found increasingly sophisticated research designs to detect these effects were implemented during the time period of the review and expressed confidence in the reliability and validity of the overall findings.

Datnow, Hubbard and Mehan (2002) studied leadership in AVID schools and illustrate the difference between strong or active principal support and weak or passive principal support. Active principals worked with the Site team to achieve comprehensive school reform by ensuring professional development for teachers. They were involved in
the processes of student recruitment and retention and generally supported the AVID coordinator and teachers. In contrast, passive principals offered ideological or financial support to the AVID program but not both.

The common emphasis in all of the above studies was a focus on the role of the principal. However, considering the work of the site team, it is not enough to simply rely on what the formal leaders do, because leadership practice occurs in the interactions involving formal leaders, informal leaders and followers, as well as their situation (Spillane, 2006). Understudied in the leadership research is leadership practice, especially the leadership practice of the AVID site team. This gap in empirical evidence is what this study set out to address. Examining the phenomena of multiple leaders and the leadership practice of a team of leaders warrants a review of the emerging literature on distributed leadership.

*Distributed Leadership*

The AVID site team is established as a requirement of Essential 11. For school to be certified as an AVID site, there must be an active site team. There are indicators that call for a distribution of leadership as the AVID site team members are called upon to train others in the school improvement process and are expected to be school leaders participating on key site and district committees (AVID CSS Essential 11 indicators). Understanding how leadership actually gets done in schools is imperative if research is to generate usable knowledge for school leaders. Describing what occurs is important but not sufficient to capture leadership practice. Studying the “how” as well as the “what” of leadership practice is essential to the understanding of it as practice (Spillane, 2006).
According to Harris (2008), the most contemporary interpretation of the Distributed Leadership theory has been forwarded by Spillane (2006). She traced the development Spillane’s theory and suggested that it was informed by the psychological theories of Distributed Cognition (Hutchins, 1995) and Activity Theory, which has its roots in the work of Vygotsky (1896-1934). A succinct review of these two theories is offered here to trace the foundation of the development of Distributed Leadership.

Distributed Cognition emphasizes the complex social aspect of cognition as a learning system and provides a framework that involves coordination between individuals, artifacts and the environment. It is a theory that suggests knowledge lies not only within the individual, but implies that learning takes place through interactions within and across teams (Harris, 2008).

Activity Theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Leont’ev, 1981) sees human activity as complex and socially situated. It recognizes that when humans engage and interact with their environment, they develop common understandings and the production of tools is a result. Tools, including language and the development of a common vocabulary, are described as externalized forms of mental processes and as such, these mental processes are more accessible and communicable and therefore more useful for social interaction.

The distributed leadership perspective is proposed as a framework for thinking about and analyzing leadership practice (Harris, 2008; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004, Spillane, 2006; Gronn, 2002). Spillane (2006) suggests that a distributed perspective on leadership is an alternative way of looking at and thinking about leadership in schools. It is not intended to be a blueprint for doing leadership. It is a tool for thinking about leadership in new and unfamiliar ways as researchers decide what to
look at when they investigate leadership practice. It can be used as a diagnostic instrument in determining what influences teachers’ motivation, knowledge, practices and behaviors that result in improvement of student outcomes. These aspects of teacher performance are in service of the organization’s core work: emphasis on what makes a difference for the students. The teacher is a critical component of leadership practice, especially as a member of the AVID site team.

Spillane (2006) describes two distinct aspects of a distributed perspective on leadership: the leader-plus aspect and the leadership practice aspect. A distributed view of leadership recognizes that leading schools requires many leaders beyond the traditional formal role of the principal; and yet the term leader-plus is not synonymous with delegated leadership. The distributed leadership perspective is described as a way to acknowledge and incorporate the work of all of the individuals on a site who have participated in leadership practices.

The distributed leadership practice aspect focuses attention not only on the roles and functions that are held by leaders in formal positions but also on how leadership is distributed between leaders, followers and the situation in which they find themselves. Spillane (2006) states, “Leadership practice takes shape in the interaction of leaders, followers, and their situation” (p.14). With this, Spillane defines critical elements for distributed leadership: time, interactions of leaders and followers, and the situation. Leadership practice was described as being stretched over multiple individuals who take responsibility for leadership routines. Tools and routines are considered essential in the leadership practice aspect and are identified as the main elements of the situation. In this research study, Spillane’s concepts of actors, actions, situations, routines, and tools will
serve as significant concepts and codes for guiding data collection and analysis as the leadership work of the AVID site team is observed and analyzed for this study.

Summary

This chapter began with an historic overview of the AVID program including an expanded discussion of the 11 program Essentials, curricular strategies and methodologies and details of the data collection and review process required for the site certification. A review of research literature revealed benefits delivered to schools and individual students as a result of their participation in the AVID program.

Discussion related to studies that draw on cultural, social and intellectual capital as well as Critical Race Theory was included and found to be important to understanding how the AVID program may benefit individual students. However, since one of the main goals of the AVID program is to impact the school as a whole, it became essential to explore the literature on organizational learning and the closely related concepts of communities of practice and leadership practice communities and the distributed leadership perspective. The research study integrated and used ideas from all of these theories to gain understanding and insights into the work of the AVID Site team.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods of the study. The multiple case-study research design investigated the AVID site team leadership practices’ impact on the preparation of all students for college readiness and success in a global society on an AVID campus. Investigation into the leadership practices of the AVID site team at three secondary schools in one southern California County AVID Region was conducted to reveal important information related to the functioning of this group as a community of practice and as leadership practice community. Also, in this research study, Spillane’s distributed
leadership perspective was employed to examine actors, actions, interactions, routines, tools and artifacts to serve as significant concepts and codes for guiding data collection and analysis as the leadership work of the AVID site team was observed and studied.
CHAPTER 3

Methods

The previous chapter reviewed the research literature related to various aspects of AVID and presented considerable evidence and support that AVID is effective and of value to the students, especially those for whom the program was designed.

This chapter presents the methodology for this multiple case study analysis. Seven components of the methods are discussed: a.) Research Design, b.) Context of the study, c.) Purpose of the Study with the research questions and associated propositions that guided the study, d.) Researcher’s role and considerations, e.) Data collection methods, f.) Data management and g.) Data analysis. The final section includes a description of the limitations of the study. The Interview Protocol and participant consent form are located in the appendixes (Appendix A and B).

Research Design

The research study featured a multiple case study design to investigate the leadership practices of the AVID site team and their work in three schools. Each school has a Certified AVID program. AVID’s mission is to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society. Understanding the leadership practices of the AVID site team that impact the fulfillment of the mission was the driving force of this study. A multiple case study design was used to explore the commonalities and differences in the leadership practices of the AVID site team in “preparing all students” between school sites with Certified AVID programs in hopes to understand how the leadership practices influence this focus on all students at these schools. A case study is an appropriate research method as case studies contribute to our knowledge of individual,
group, and organizational phenomena that occur within a real-life context and the
distinctive call for this case study arises out of the desire to “examine contemporary
events but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated” (Yin, p. 11). Studying the
work of the AVID Site team as it operates in a real-life context of the school site was the
research strategy of this study.

The descriptive multiple case study approach is particularly suited to my research
questions as I sought to understand “how” the site team leadership practice influenced the
phenomenon of the preparation of all students for college readiness and success in a
global society in the selected schools. The rationale for this research included adding to
the theoretical knowledge base concerned with leadership practice and linking leadership
practice to whole school impact based on elements of the Communities of Practice and
Leadership Practice Community research. The Distributed Leadership perspective was
the lens used to focus the examination and analysis of site team leadership practice as it
occurred in selected schools. Therefore, a multiple case study was an appropriate
methodological design.

**Context of the Study**

The AVID 11 Essentials provide the foundation for program implementation and
certification. The sequence in which they are organized and presented by AVID Center
provides an outline relative to their function that is displayed in table 3.1.
Table 3.1 Sequence and Function of the 11 AVID Essentials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Essentials 1-4  
1. Student selection  
2. Voluntary participation  
3. Full implementation  
4. Rigorous courses | Setting up the AVID elective |
| Essentials 5-8  
5. Writing  
6. Inquiry  
7. Collaboration  
8. Tutorial | Implementing AVID curricular strategies – WICR  
Tutorial support occurs in a small group w/ inquiry that is based on rigorous content area questions |
| Essentials 9-11  
9. Monitoring progress  
10. Allocate resources  
11. Site team participation | Sustaining AVID |

Table 3.1 displays AVID’s 11 Essentials in the sequence they are presented by AVID Center. The second column describes the function of the Essentials in relation to AVID implementation. Essentials 1 through 4 provide specifications for setting up the AVID elective class for implementation with tasks ranging from recruitment to articulation. Essentials 5 through 8 describe the AVID strategies designed to support students in rigorous classes. The final Essentials 9 through 11 are related to sustaining the AVID college readiness system at the site. These three Essentials address the need and expectation for school-wide professional development, the use of data collection and analysis to ensure equity and access to the most rigorous and challenging curriculum for
the AVID students and the formation and maintenance of a site team. There is also an expectation that the site team engage in crafting and managing an action plan referred to as the annual AVID Site Plan. By the end of the third year of implementation, the school would be eligible to become a Certified AVID site, having at least one fully enrolled section of the AVID elective class offered during the regular school day. As the program grows beyond the third year, AVID should serve as a school-wide program and as a core support to the schools’ efforts to meet the needs of all students (AVID School-wide College Readiness Summary Report, 2009).

A site coordinator leads the school’s formal AVID program leadership body, known as the AVID site team. In collaboration with the school AVID site team, the AVID site coordinator is responsible for accurately reporting the status of the AVID program implementation based on input from the site team members. Twice each year, the school site team self-assesses its’ progress in implementing the 11 Essentials. Each of the 11 Essentials and corresponding Indicators for each Essential receives a score. These scores fall along a continuum: Level 0-Not AVID, Level 1- Meets Certification Standards, Level 2- At Routine Use and Level 3-Is Institutionalized or in practice school-wide.

The AVID site team is the unit of analysis in this study. Multiple data sources including field notes and transcriptions of individual interviews, site team meeting observations, and site-based documents were collected reviewed, analyzed, interpreted and reported.

*Purpose of Study and Research Questions*
The purpose of this study was to examine the work of the AVID site team and observe the leadership practice as the possible source for fulfilling on the second part of the AVID mission statement *to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society*. The study examines how the AVID site teams at three secondary schools function as a *Community of Practice* (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002), or in a new paradigm proposed by Wagner (2008), known as a *Leadership Practice Community*. Through the use of individual (one-to-one) interviews, observations of AVID site team meetings plus the analysis of site-based documents related to the growth and development of AVID on the campus, this study was driven by specific research questions (RQ) and their associated propositions (P):

1. **RQ:** In what ways is the work of the AVID site team based on shared knowledge of the 11 program Essentials and how do these Essentials guide their work? **P:** The more connected the Site team is to the 11 Essentials, the more likely they are working to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

2. **RQ:** How does the work of the AVID Site team reflect the values and habits of a Leadership Practice Community and how do these practices impact the whole school? **P:** The more the practices of the AVID Site team reflect a Leadership Practice Community, the more likely the team would affect school-wide practices in preparing all students for college and success in a global society.

3. **RQ:** In what ways does a Distributed Leadership perspective provide insights into the work of the AVID site team in preparing all students for college
readiness and success in a global society? P: The more varied the distribution of leadership practice of the AVID site team in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society, the greater the possibility for a school-wide impact.

*Researcher’s role and considerations*

Merriam (1998) presents limitations related to the political nature of case study evaluations that were discussed in MacDonald and Walker (1977). These authors observed, “educational case studies are usually financed by people who have, directly or indirectly, power over those studied or portrayed” (p. 187). Additionally, they claim “at all levels of the system what people think they’re doing, what they *say* they are doing, may *appear* to others to be doing, and what in fact they *are* doing, may be sources of considerable discrepancy…Any research which threatens to reveal those discrepancies threatens to create dissonance, both personal and political” (p. 186, emphasis in original).

Both of these limitations to the case study approach were of concern to me as the principal investigator of this study. The first concern became evident when I invited sites to participate in the study. As the Regional Coordinator assigned to support schools within a large district located in the county in which I work, I purposely did not invite participation from any of the schools over which I had any evaluative power on the sites’ certification status.

In my professional role as an AVID Regional Coordinator for this large district, I maintain the responsibility of recommending the certification level for 40 school sites. Since I am in a position of authority and have influence over the sites’ final designated level of AVID Certification, it could have been construed as a conflict of interest if I
were to do the research in the schools I serve. In addition, a source of possible bias may occur in the responses from site team members during site team meetings or individual interviews if I were to conduct the research in these schools. People might have said things to impress me or might have been less than authentic in their self-assessment. Therefore, I chose to conduct the research in other districts with AVID in place and with sites that I do not have a direct relationship to the certification status.

The second concern surfaced as part of the reason I was compelled to conduct the study. I was curious to see if the school-wide impact of AVID would be evident since many of the scores listed on the CSS claim they have “institutionalized”, or caused AVID strategies and methodologies to be in practice school-wide. The impact of institutionalized implementation became a point of inquiry for me.

*Data Collection Methods*

Data collection occurred using a variety of methods including individual interviews, site team meeting observations, and document analysis. For this study, three secondary schools’ AVID site teams were invited to participate. My original idea for selection criteria focused on school sites that had been identified at least as Certified AVID schools, which would mean site implementation of the Essentials would reflect at least meeting the “certification standard” or even be at the “routine use” level. Ultimately I decided to invite three schools that were designated as AVID National Demonstration sites or were being considered for the distinction. This designation would ensure a “routine use” or “institutionalized” school-wide level of implementation of the Essentials, as that is a requirement for such a distinction and is verified by a visiting team from AVID Center prior to the site being selected as a “demonstration” site. Each school’s
participation in the study was voluntary. The interview participants in this study were members of each school’s AVID site team. I selected candidates who demonstrated a deep commitment to the success of AVID on the campus: an administrator (either a site principal or assistant principal or Regional Coordinator), the AVID site coordinator and at least two additional members of the AVID site team who stood out during the site team meeting observations as passionate and invested members.

Three southern California AVID program sites located in neighboring cities, geographically oriented to the County office of Education campus, were the venues where the research study occurred. The three study sites were secondary schools, one middle school and two high schools. Two of the schools were designated as AVID National Demonstration sties. The remaining school is a Certified AVID site being considered for this distinction.

Three data sources were collected to inform this study and answer the research questions. These sources include site team meeting observations at each school, four interviews and site AVID-related documents. A pilot study was begun during the previous Spring 2010 and the data were included as a foundation to the formal research study. The three sources of data are identified in table 3.2. These sources provide a forum to triangulate the data and increase validity of the study.
Table 3.2 presents the three types of data collected. Dates are provided to document both pilot study and research study site team observations. A list that details
the interview participants is provided in column two and a separate list of the various site
documents that were reviewed is located in column three. Demographic data and
professional experience of selected interview participants from the three research sites are
summarized in Table 3.3. A wide discrepancy in the number of years of experience in
AVID exists between the sites.

Table 3.3 Summary of Research Study Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Years in AVID</th>
<th>Years at site</th>
<th>Total years teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Site Coordinator</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Literacy Resource</td>
<td>1 (3 yrs. as a tutor in past)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regional Coordinator</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>AVID elective tchr</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Site Coordinator</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>AVID elective tchr</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ELD Resource</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Site Coordinator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>AVID elective tchr</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>AVID elective tchr</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data sources collected to inform this study and answer the research questions are
described in the following section:
• Observation: Observations of the AVID site team in the natural context of their regular meeting on the campus of each school site was one opportunity to gather evidence and consider as the unit of study. Formal observations of AVID site team meetings were conducted and extensive field notes were used to document the work of the site teams. Observations of the site team in action provided data related to the leadership routines, tools, actions and interactions of the team members as well as an opportunity to unpack the various types of distribution of leadership from a Distributed Leadership perspective (Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond 2001). At least four regularly scheduled site team meetings were observed at each school over the course of the pilot study and the research study. Field notes were recorded at each meeting. A transcription of the field notes included the meeting agenda and was expanded with anecdotes and analytical memos about the process being observed.

• Interviews: Face to face interviews with four members of each school’s AVID site team were conducted. The AVID Site Coordinator, an administrator accountable for the AVID program (principal, vice-principal or Regional Coordinator) and two key Site Team members who work at or with each school were interviewed and digitally recorded using a Sony digital tape recorder. These people were selected to share their experience and I transcribed the content of these recordings by listening multiple times to the playback of the tapes to increase my familiarity with the contents and because the use of the speech recognition software did not produce comprehensible results.

• Document analysis: The most important use of documents is to corroborate and
augment evidence from other sources (Yin, p. 103). Each AVID site is required to
document and monitor their own level of program implementation annually and
submit both an Initial Self-Study (ISS) in the fall of the school year and a final
Certification Self Study (CSS) report in the spring that assesses their progress
toward institutionalization of the established “11 Essentials” of the program. The
CSS report from 2009-10 was analyzed along with each school’s annual AVID
Site Plan and AVID data report. The site team is responsible for creating an
annual Site Plan that focuses their work for the year. This site plan is based on the
selection of one indicator for each of two essentials. Site team minutes from
previous meetings also provided a valuable source of information to review.
These sources of data were examined for evidence of fidelity to program
implementation and for evidence of leadership practices and interactions.

Data Management

To protect the identity of individuals and school sites and maintain anonymity, the
schools were given the following pseudonyms:

1. “MiraLuna High School” is located in the southern part of the region and has had
a Certified AVID program on site for five years. This school applied for the
distinction of AVID National Demonstration status and has 2400 students in
grades 9-12, with 91% identified as Latino.

2. “Round Robin Middle School” opened in 2006 and is located in the northern
part of the region and was designated as an AVID National Demonstration middle
school site in 2008. The school is due for revalidation in spring 2011. There are
850 students in grades 6 through 8. The demographic make up of the school is ethnically and culturally diverse with a 75% Latino population.

3. “Singing Hills High School” is located in the geographic center of the region and was designated as an AVID National Demonstration High School in 2006 and re-validated for an additional three-year term in November 2009. There are 2200 multi-culturally diverse students in grades 9-12 at this site.

As recommended by Yin (2003) to ensure high-quality, accessible data, I kept a separate notebook for each school site to organize and readily retrieve documents for data analysis. Each school notebook was a two-inch, three-ring binder that contained a copy of the AVID Certification process documents (the Initial Self-Study and the Certification Self-Study available through the avid.org website) as well as the school Site Plan and a variety of other school based materials for review.

To assure accuracy and protect confidentiality, all field notes taken during the site team meeting observations were transcribed immediately afterward and saved as a coded electronic file identified only by site number and date. All contact summaries, memos, emails from subjects and all document review summaries plus all interview transcriptions (that were identified only by site number and the corresponding letter assigned to each subject) were saved as electronic files. These files were retained in a password-protected folder, housed on my personal computer and only accessible to me.

Data Analysis

All interviews were digitally recorded as audiotape files using Sony digital audio-recorder. The transcription of the interviews was not supported by the use of speech recognition software so each interview was played back multiple times and transcribed
verbatim. All site team meeting observation field notes were word-processed using an electronic copy of the agenda and enhanced with notes taken during the meetings.

All transcriptions were read through thoroughly using the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to determine themes that emerged. The themes were coded using the computer-assisted tool HyperRESEARCH to support the coding and categorizing of the narrative text that was collected. Best practice recommendations according to Yin (2003) and Miles and Huberman (1994) were followed in the data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion phases of analysis. There were 37 codes originally identified during the first read of the transcripts and these are displayed in Appendix C. The seven top codes and their frequency of occurrence are as follows: Leadership (92), Shared Responsibility (69), School-wide Impact (49), AVID Strategies (46), Commitment (43), Coordinator Tasks (39) and Supportive Environment (39).

A second reading of the data was an examination of the evidence and codes related to the qualities and characteristics of a Leadership Practice Community described by Wagner, et al. (2008). The use of the computer-assisted tool of HyperRESEARCH software was employed to support a finer grained analysis of the relationship of the leadership practices of the AVID site team to the preparation of all students for college readiness and success in a global society. Themes from these two theoretical frameworks—Communities of Practice and Leadership Practice Community—were cross-referenced to explore similarities and differences. The insights provided by each were examined to better understand their interrelationship and contribution to preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

A third reading of the data was conducted to focus examination through the lens of
the three types of distribution of practice outlined by Spillane (2006) and demonstrated by the AVID site team at each school. I also employed the computer-assisted tool HyperRESEARCH to support me with the analysis of the site data through the examination of the content within the codes.

Once the data from each site were examined through these lenses, a cross-case analysis report was prepared comparing and contrasting the findings across the sites. This multiple case report explored the work of each AVID site team to create a whole school perspective as well as the level of implementation of the AVID elective. Then a cross-case analysis was conducted to highlight similarities and differences between the schools and the leadership practice of the AVID site teams. Since these schools have all been certified, I anticipated more similarities than differences and the sites designated as AVID National Demonstration would probably be further along the implementation continuum for developing an institutionalized school-wide AVID approach.

Limitations of the Study

I experienced several limitations to this study. This research was intended to provide a glimpse into the leadership practices of three AVID site teams as they engaged in the site team work and therefore cannot be generalized to other populations. Other factors that limit the scope and generalizability of this study include the small sample size and researcher positionality. Although the sample size was small, since the purpose of the study was to document the impact of the leadership practices at certified and demonstration AVID sites on the whole school; therefore, the sample was adequate for this purpose. The use of theoretical lenses to explore the work of the AVID site team
allowed theoretical generalization, which helped to inform the limited empirical studies that have been conducted on AVID site teams.

*Sample size* The data collected came from a small sample. Twelve interviews were conducted, 13 site team-meeting observations occurred and 45 total site team members were observed during AVID site team meetings. Not every site team member was present at each of the observed meetings and some site team meetings were conducted with a small number of participants in attendance. However, the focus of the study was on the work of the team as a collective, rather than on individual team member roles.

*Researcher positionality.* As stated previously, researcher positionality was a factor of limitation as well. Given the fact that I serve as a Regional Coordinator for the AVID program, my role may have served as a source of bias in the responses from site team members or during individual interviews. People could have said things to impress me or could have been less than authentic in their self-assessment even though I have no authority or voice in recommending their certification status. This limitation was addressed in two ways. First, I only extended an invitation to participate in the study to AVID schools with which I have no formal relationship and no supervisory or advising role. Second, as part of establishing rapport as an interviewer, I reassured interviewees that I have no supervisory or evaluative role, and that all responses would be treated with strictest confidentiality. I included an explicit agreement that no information about the school would be shared with AVID colleagues. Because of my positionality, as Herr and Anderson (2005) have pointed out, I possessed a research advantage by being an “insider” and understanding much of the jargon and operations of the AVID program. I
also experienced a danger of being too familiar with the program and may have failed to notice and document practices that might have been important to the study. Using the 11 AVID Essentials as a protocol and the AVID rubric to guide observations as well as being alert to other dimensions of the program were the strategies I used to help make “the familiar strange”. Because I was not familiar with the sites in the study, I also had an opportunity to approach them as an outsider. Given my relationship with my colleagues who work in the same role as Regional Coordinator to support schools, I had to be wary of projecting a positive bias towards one school over another. My potential positive bias was monitored and reported honestly as the study unfolded. Throughout the study, I made a conscious effort to resist any situation that might lead to my engaging in discussion of findings with my AVID colleagues as a way to mitigate potential biases.

A final limitation of the study arose from the nature of qualitative research, which can present significant problems in terms of validity and reliability because it depends heavily on the interviewing and interpretive skills of the researcher. As a graduate student and inexperienced researcher, I am developing sophistication in the use of these skills.

Chapter 3 has presented the design for the study and established the context and purpose for the study. A discussion of the researcher’s role and considerations was presented along with details related to the data collection methods, data management and the data analysis process.

Chapter 4 presents the background and context of the study. The chapter also presents a collection of the data and a detailed analysis of the data. Prior to the analysis of the data, a discussion on the process to attain the distinction of being named an AVID
National Demonstration school is explained and the context of the study is established in a discussion of the background and unique characteristics of each school.
CHAPTER 4

Analysis

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership practice of the AVID site team as it works to fulfill the second half of the goal stated in the AVID Mission Statement, “to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society”. The first part of the goal of the AVID Mission Statement is one that references’ “closing the achievement gap” and is not a focus of this study.

In this chapter, I present the data gathered from interviews with AVID site team members, observations of AVID site team meetings, and the review of site documents at three selected schools and an analysis of that data. Prior to this presentation, I discuss the process to attain the distinction of being named an AVID National Demonstration school and I establish the context of the study by introducing each school according to the unique background and various characteristics of each school site in the study.

AVID National Demonstration Schools.

The three schools were selected because they have worked to distinguish themselves as exemplary AVID sites, as measured by self-reported scores on the AVID Certification Self-Study process documents and verified by an external team from the national AVID Center. Two of the schools have been formally designated as AVID National Demonstration school sites and one high school was being considered for the distinction during the time of the study.

According to AVID Center (www.avid.org), 124 identified AVID National Demonstrations sites have been distinguished out of the more than 4500 schools in 47 states as well as the District of Columbia and 16 countries and territories. These
sites are considered exemplary models of the program and demonstrate the very best AVID methodologies and strategies. The process to be identified as an AVID National Demonstration site is rigorous and begins with the formal procedure of data collection and reporting based upon the 11 Essentials (detailed in chapter 3), which is completed by the Site team at two points in time per year. The data are reviewed and validated by either the Divisional Director or the Regional Coordinator assigned to provide support to the school. The site is invited to apply for National Demonstration status and a team from the AVID Center conducts a Validation visit at the school site along with individual representatives from the supporting County office and districts who are invited to attend. The Validation visits generally take a full day with observations scheduled in the AVID elective classes as well as non-AVID core academic classes.

To be considered for National Demonstration School certification, the site must have all Essentials rated at the Routine Use (Level 2) or higher with no Indicator from any Essential reported as “Not AVID” (Level 0).

The Three Schools Participating in This Research Study

For purposes of this study, each school was issued a pseudonym and prior to the presentation of the data and an analysis, this section will provide a context and background for the three school sites included in this study. What follows is a description of each school setting, followed by the demographics of the student and staff population, school’s overall achievement data and finally, details describing the unique AVID site team composition and characteristics as well as the overall site team focus observed during the study.
The Background and Characteristics of AVID School Site 1

The first school site location is the beautiful, new campus of MiraLuna High School. It sits atop a mesa with a dramatic view of the surrounding region. The “best view in [the county]” offers a broad view of the sun setting over the ocean, painting the sky with vivid oranges and reds. The energy of this high school campus, serving 2400 students in grades 9-12, feels similar to that of a college campus. Various groups of students participate in a variety of activities from one end of the school to the other. The school graduated its first senior class in June 2006.

The campus is an open plan setting with several areas designated for students to congregate. The library is clean, well organized and brightly lit and provides tables for students to work collaboratively and also has space for meetings. A monolithic cement marker announces the Senior Quad area and the center of campus is covered by sail-like tarps designed to shelter students from the elements as they meet to eat and socialize. Students play music in a garage-band style and the campus still buzzes with a variety of club activities and drill team rehearsals that continue more than an hour after dismissal. Students are required to wear school uniforms and present themselves in a calm and respectful manner. The tall, white gates that surround the campus provide a sense of protective security that is so essential given the level of chaos and violence that has occurred on nearly a daily basis in the nearby community.

Student and staff demographics. The campus facilities are well landscaped and the new buildings house classrooms for the 2400 students enrolled. The demographics of this population include 91% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 2% Black and 2% White. There are 48% of the students designated as English Language learners and 85% of the students are eligible
for the Federal free or reduced price lunch program. According to the annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC) data for School Year 2009-10, certificated staff or those with credentials represent 104 teachers, eight counselors, three administrators and one each of “other support staff” assigned to work at the school in the role of librarian, nurse, speech/language/hearing specialist and psychologist. Ethnic and racial data on the staff was not reported on the SARC but was available on the California Department of Education DataQuest website (http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest). One hundred twenty-four certificated staff members reported by ethnicity include 68 Hispanic, 42 White, 9 Asian and 4 African American.

School’s overall academic achievement. The school did not make the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goal. As displayed on Table 4.1, the 95% participation rate on the mandated state tests for both mathematics and English Language Arts was met but the percent proficient in English/Language Arts and the graduation rate did not meet expectations. The state Academic Performance Index (API) base score was 665, well below the state’s target score of 800. The school met its 2010 school-wide growth target. The achievement data were displayed on charts in several places around the campus, as required by district policy.
Table 4.1 MiraLuna AYP Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AYP 2009-10</th>
<th>Did not meet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95% Participation Rate-ELA</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Participation Rate-Mathematics</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.6 %Proficient ELA</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.8 %Proficient Mathematics</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate Goal: 90%</td>
<td>Did not meet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dropout rate for the school in 2008-09 was reported as 4.5% and the site graduation rate was 80.4%. The whole school completion rate of the UC-CSU “a-g” requirements was reported as 34.5 % and yet for AVID graduates, the “a-g” completion rate was reported at 95% with 100% AVID students graduating as indicated in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Comparison Schoolwide/AVID MiraLuna Graduation and “a-g” Completion Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grad Rate 08-09</th>
<th>AVID Grad Rate</th>
<th>“a-g” Completion Rate –school</th>
<th>“a-g” Completion Rate- AVID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVID Site Team composition. The extraordinarily large AVID Site Team has a unique composition with over 20 members representing the AVID site coordinator, AVID elective class teachers and content area teachers, AVID students, AVID tutors, AVID site coordinators from both feeder middle schools, the district liaison, one school counselor and an administrator as well as the AVID Regional Coordinator, who were in attendance at most of the monthly site team meetings. The principal made an appearance
at some point during each observed meeting but did not participate in any of the focus
group conversations or address the group at any point. Currently 15 sections of the AVID
elective are taught by 8 AVID elective teachers, all of whom have attended the Summer
Institute and/or AVID path trainings in the last two years. Most of the teachers at this site
are relatively new to the profession and a “veteran” teacher is one who might only have
10 years of classroom teaching experience.

*Overall AVID Site team focus.* The AVID Site Team at MiraLuna High School
spent most of the observed meeting time working on creating a vertical alignment of
skills they believe all students should master across the grade levels, beginning in middle
school. They discussed issues related to Advanced Placement, instruction, college
and university preparation/acceptance, rigor, and student achievement for all
students. This year, they began to prepare for a Certification visit from a validation team
from AVID Center that was empowered to bestow the distinction of AVID National
Demonstration site to this school. This visit was scheduled to occur during the spring
semester, 2011. The goals for their site plan this year are based on Essentials 4.1 and 11.3
with the specific indicator identified to focus their work. Indicator 4.1 calls for 100% of
AVID students schedules to reflect that they are enrolled in the most rigorous academic
courses, appropriate to the student, which are offered in their school and fulfill the
sequence of university entrance requirements. Indicator 11.3 directs the AVID site team
to meet at least monthly and collaborate on planning, logistical, and student access issues.
To be considered as Level 3, the AVID site team must influence school policy
concerning access to rigorous curriculum and advanced courses.
The Background and Characteristics of AVID School Site 2

The second site, Round Robin Middle School, is located in the northernmost region of the county and is nestled among avocado orchards and rolling hillsides flecked with boulders of granite out-cropping. The modern middle-school campus is arranged with several new buildings designed for classrooms, office spaces and library-media center resources all arranged in a semi-circle configuration behind the bars of a tall gate. The campus is clean and orderly and the students socialize in small groups before the gates open to invite them into class. The new facilities opened the doors in 2006 to support the approximately 850 ethnically and culturally diverse students in grades 6 through 8 who attend this school.

Student and staff demographics. According to the annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC) data for School Year 2009-10, the reported student demographics of 76% Latino, 16% white, 3% African-American and 3% Asian are represented in the school population. There were 83% of students eligible for the Federal free or reduced price lunch program and 44.8% of the students were designated as English Language learners. Fifty certificated staff members represent 36 teachers, one counselor, two administrators and “other support staff” were assigned to work at the school in the role of librarian, nurse and psychologist. Ethnic and racial data on the staff were not reported on the SARC but information at the California Department of Education DataQuest website (http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest) revealed 31 White, 9 Hispanic or Latino and 3 Asian teachers.

School’s overall academic achievement. The school did not make the federal AYP goal because the Language Arts did not meet the Annual Measurable Outcome (AMO)
targets. They did meet the criteria for mathematics because of the alternative method called Safe Harbor, which is based on the prior year’s score and based on a growth formula. The state Academic Performance Index (API) base score of 729 was reported and the school met its 2010 school-wide growth target. Round Robin Middle School is currently in Program Improvement, year 5. Table 4.3 displays site data related to the Adequate Yearly Progress goal for Round Robin.

Table 4.3 Round Robin AYP Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequate Yearly Progress 2009-10</th>
<th>Did Not Meet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95% Participation Rate-ELA</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Participation Rate-Mathematics</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.8% Proficient ELA</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.0% Proficient Mathematics</td>
<td>YES/ Safe Harbor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Round Robin was designated as an AVID National Demonstration middle school site in 2008 and is scheduled for a re-certification visit by a team from the AVID Center during the spring 2011.

Composition of AVID Site team. This school’s AVID site team is a unique grouping of regularly attending members. Three AVID elective teachers and three AVID core teachers (who teach a content class and purposefully integrate AVID strategies in the curriculum of the class) plus one of the school’s English language resource teachers who works with the Encuentros program are the core group that regularly attends the Site Team meetings, but participation by all of the school’s staff membership is welcomed and invited. These teacher representatives attend most every site team meeting or
communicate with someone on the team if they are unable to attend. The principal and administration team as well as the dedicated AVID counselor are invited to every site team meeting but their attendance is not as regular as the core group’s participation. The principal was in attendance for the major part of two observed site team meetings and due to a schedule conflict, was unable to attend in October and present only for the final minutes of the fourth meeting to get a wrap up of the conversation (Field notes, 3/22/10, 5/10/10 and 11/10/10). The counselor was not in attendance at any of the four meetings that I observed.

One factor that makes this team unique is the variation in levels of experience represented. Two site team members have been involved with AVID for more than 20 years and have participated in and conducted AVID Staff Development sessions for many years both at the Summer Institutes and at the school site level. The majority of the other members of the site team, including the newly appointed AVID site coordinator, who does not teach the AVID elective class but does teach an AVID core class, are new to the school as well as some of them are new to AVID.

*Overall AVID Team focus.* The AVID site team at Round Robin Middle School spent the majority of the observed time engaged in activities designed to ensure the site was in compliance with the AVID program expectations. During pilot study observations of two Site Team meetings, agenda time was allotted for the team to engage in conversations relating to self-assessing their progress on the Indicators and Essentials in the self-study process documents. At these two meetings, concerns related to tutors use of textbooks and other classroom resources, coaching conversations and planning needs for grade level field trips. During the research study, site team meeting time was dedicated to
discussions about the new Blended Learning Tutorial training materials and requirements. Also time was spent in dialogue related to scheduled site visits from a variety of AVID program representatives.

The conversations were lively and passionate and it occurred to me that the meeting time during the fall semester was used to vent frustrations and to socialize as a group. Plans and agreements to engage in future work tasks, such as doing the online tutorial assignments, were promised. Team members gave commitments to accomplish the tasks outside of the group meeting time.

The goals for their site plan this year are based on Essentials 4.2 and 8.2 with the specific indicator identified to focus their work. Indicator 4.2 calls for at least 85% of AVID students to receive grades of “C” or better on the previous formal grading period report card in each of their core academic courses. Indicator 8.2 calls for trained site personnel to provide on-going coaching and debriefing to support tutors in the AVID tutorial process. To be considered accomplished at Level 3 requires regional or district staff to certify that the site has established the infrastructure to support tutorial training in all 5 units of the 2008 AVID Tutorial materials and fully implement the site’s Tutor Training Plan.

*The Background and Characteristics of AVID School Site 3*

The third site participating in this study was Singing Hills High School. It is located in the geographic center of the county and serves over 2200 ethnically and culturally diverse students in grades 9-12. In contrast to the brand-new, modern buildings found at the other two sites studied, this campus was constructed in 1955 and is located in a part of town that has been hit hard by the economic downturn. These older buildings
are organized around a small central lawn area and the large classrooms have high ceilings, hardwood floors and old-fashioned chalkboards that are still in use. The large gymnasium is the venue for school-wide assemblies such as the culminating event of the annual multi-cultural week.

Two separate opportunities to see this show are scheduled during the school day so that every member of the school community can be in the audience to witness this event at least once. The multi-cultural celebration features groups of students who perform in a well-rehearsed program of music and dance numbers that reflect modern American influences combined with the cultural traditions of the various groups that perform in front of a full house for each show. The grand finale is an emotionally charged parade of students marching around the periphery of the gym displaying the flags from their native countries of origin as the school band plays the American National Anthem at the end of the show.

*Student and staff demographics.* According to the annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC) data for School Year 2009-10, this multi-cultural mix is represented by 42% Latino, 42% white, 10% African-American, 4% Asian and 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native students in this school population. The majority of the white students are recent immigrants from the Middle East, mostly Chaldean Christian students from Iraq. In 2009, there were 68% of students eligible for the free or reduced price lunch program and 31.2% designated as English Language learners.

The school currently employs a certificated staff of 145, including teachers and a counseling staff of six. The administration consists of a principal and four assistant principals. In addition there is a classified staff of over 50 who work to support the 2200
students. The California Department of Education DataQuest website (http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest) reported the certificated staff by ethnicity as follows: 15 Hispanic, 7 Asian, 3 African American and 117 White.

School’s overall academic achievement. The school did not make the AYP goal in 2010 based on performance in both math and English Language Arts sections of the assessment. The percent proficient did not meet the Annual Measurable Outcome (AMO) target in any of the significant student groups (those with 100 or more students). The Academic Performance Index base score was 654 and the school did not meet its 2010 school-wide growth target.

This school has been recognized as a leader in the AVID world and was redesignated for a three-year term as an AVID National Demonstration High School in November 2009. Table 4.4 displays data related to the school’s performance on the Adequate Yearly Progress goal, which was not met.

Table 4.4 Singing Hills AYP Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequate Yearly Progress 2009-2010</th>
<th>Did not meet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95% Participation Rate-ELA</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Participation Rate-Mathematics</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.6% Proficient ELA</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.8% Proficient Mathematics</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate Goal: 90%</td>
<td>Did not meet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a significant difference between the overall school performance and AVID student performance in the areas of graduation and “a-g” completion rates. Table 4.5 displays the comparison between the 2008-09 graduation rate and the UC/CSU “a-g” course completion rate for the whole school and AVID students and indicates a large discrepancy. The school graduation rate was 75.5% compared to 100% of AVID seniors and 98% of the AVID seniors completed the UC/CSU “a-g” college admission requirements compared to only 52% school-wide.

*Table 4.5 Comparison Schoolwide/AVID Singing Hills Graduation and “a-g” Completion Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grad Rate 08-09</th>
<th>AVID grad rate</th>
<th>“a-g” completion rate - school</th>
<th>“a-g” completion rate - AVID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated by the data displayed in Table 4.5, it is evident that the students enrolled in AVID are out-performing their peers in both graduation and “a-g” course completion rates.

*AVID Site Team Composition.* This school’s AVID Site Team consists of a core group represented by the AVID site coordinator and AVID elective teachers; one dedicated AVID counselor and one vice-principal, all of whom consistently attend the monthly AVID Site Team meetings. A separate “All Staff site team” meeting for non-AVID teachers and AVID elective teachers is held at least once per year to share AVID strategies for implementation across the curriculum, discuss issues related to the recruitment of new AVID Students and request support for various fundraising activities that support all students.
The nine AVID elective teachers provide instruction in 16 sections of the AVID elective offered in grades 9-12 and each teacher has voluntarily assumed responsibility for some aspect of the program as a support of the work of the site team. Two of the AVID elective teachers are renowned Staff Developers throughout the county and work as consultants for the AVID Center. They both teach the AVID Trainer of Trainers sessions on various AVID Curriculum and teach at multiple Summer Institutes across the nation, offering a variety of AVID curriculum strands. They lead the on-site professional development sessions for the whole school focusing on Critical Reading and other literacy strategies.

The AVID Site Coordinator has created and installed a “Wiki” (internet based learning tool) devoted to storing and sharing the electronic documents and resources used by this site team and the school at large. The collective level of expertise of the team is extensive and all site team members except two have served as the AVID site coordinator at some point during their tenure at the school. The current AVID coordinator is working to secure successor and turn the baton over to another AVID elective or core teacher. The multiple duties and responsibilities of serving as the Site Coordinator represent a demanding job and the current coordinator is feeling the toll.

Another unique feature lies in the longevity of this group with tenure at the school ranging from 5 to 19 years. Two members of the administrative team, both the principal and the vice principal currently assigned to support AVID, have experienced AVID in various roles ranging from having been a college student AVID tutor or having been an AVID elective teacher all the way up to being the administrator who supports AVID on the campus. This past summer, the school used grant funds to send a group of 50 staff
members to the 5-day AVID Summer Institute held in San Diego. The teachers attended various workshop strands of professional development training and spent time together during the afternoon Site Team sessions to discuss how their learning will be implemented with students in the classrooms at school once the new school year began.

**Overall AVID Team focus.** The AVID Site Team at Singing Hills High School has been working together during the observed time, devoting time to planning and creating, facilitating and coordinating as well as reflecting on and debriefing events that have been conducted for students and parents. They have also been discussing the duties and responsibilities that the current site coordinator fulfills and the level of leadership that has been provided and engendered over the past four years. This topic has been addressed extensively at every Site Team meeting since September 2010.

The goals for their site plan this year are based on Essentials 9.7 and 11.6 with the specific indicator identified to focus their work. Indicator 9.7 at Level 3 requires documentation to verify that 100% of AVID seniors applied and were accepted into one or more 4-year colleges and/or universities and have compiled a portfolio of their college applications. Indicator 11.6 provides direction for their work to increase parent involvement. The Level 3 indicator states that in addition to attendance at site team meetings, parents, guardians and/or family members provide leadership to promote increased involvement by all AVID parents.

A summary of the student demographic data for the three research sites is presented in Table 4.6. As evident in the table, all three schools serve significant portions of English learners, with MiraLuna serving the largest percentage and Singing Hills the least. All three schools are struggling to make Adequate Yearly Progress goals and
Round Robin is in the fifth year of program improvement. However, all three schools demonstrated success with their AVID students.

**Table 4.6 Summary of Student Demographic Data for Three AVID Research Sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Site</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>% Eligible for F/R lunch</th>
<th>% EL</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>% Black</th>
<th>% Asian</th>
<th>% Amer-Indian-Alaskan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MiraLuna HS</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Robin MS</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing Hills HS</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 displays a summary of the staff demographic data for the three research sites. MiraLuna staff has the largest number of staff members who reflect the student population served.

**Table 4.7 Summary of Staff Demographic Data for Three AVID Research Sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Site</th>
<th># Certificated Staff</th>
<th># Hispanic</th>
<th># White</th>
<th># Black</th>
<th># Asian</th>
<th># American Indian/Alaskan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MiraLuna HS</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Robin MS</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing Hills HS</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Presentation of Findings and Analysis*
In this section, I present the findings of this dissertation study pertaining to the research questions posed in Chapter 1- Introduction. My “first cycle” or initial review of the interview and observation transcripts resulted in the identification of codes. This method of coding as described by Saldana (2009) enabled me to “organize and group similarly coded data into categories or “families” because they share some characteristic – the beginning of a pattern.” Each research question is addressed independently with analysis discussion of the findings across each case will be presented.

**Research Question One**

To answer my first research question: **“In what ways is the work of the AVID site team based on shared knowledge of the 11 program Essentials and how do these Essentials guide their work?”** I began with the proposition that **the more connected the site team is to the 11 Essentials, the more likely they are working to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society.** Each of the 11 AVID Essentials has multiple Indicators, depending on the Essential, and each Indicator focuses on a practice for implementation within the topic of the Essential.

I analyzed the transcripts of 12 interviews and 13 observations of site team meetings and I reviewed the Certification Self Study and annual AVID Site Plan and school data report documents from the three schools to determine how they related to the research question. The code for “knowledge of the 11 Essentials” was marked evenly across the sites, which suggests that all three teams are knowledgeable of the 11 Essentials.

*CSS rating scale.* The rating from the 2009-2010 Certification Self Study (CSS) that each site reported for each Essential is also presented in the table. This score falls
within a range from 0 to 3. The instructions for completing the CSS include a section that details the meaning associated with each of the scores within the range:

- Level 0 is considered “Not AVID” since the certification requirements for Level 1 have not been met. This means that more than 1 Indicator within the Essential is rated below Level 1. It could also mean that there was no plan to address this Essential or the plan from the previous year was not implemented effectively.

- Level 1 Meets Certification Standards with no more than one Indicator within the Essential rated below Level 1. Also, there must be a plan in place and implemented to bring that Indicator to Level 1 or higher for the following school year.

- Level 2 is considered Routine Use and there is no more than one Indicator rated below Level 2 and no Indicator may be at level 0. The highest

- Level 3 indicates that practice of this Essential is at the level of Institutionalization. This means there is no more than one Indicator within the Essential rated below Level 3 (i.e. 3 out of 4, or 4 out of 5, or 5 out of 6 etc. Indicators must be checked at Level 3) and no Indicator may be rated at level 0, or “Not AVID”.

The empirical highlights of how the Essentials guide their work are presented in Table 4.8. I address some of findings related to site team knowledge of the 11 Essentials and their impact on the site team’s work in this section. Table 4.8 is presented with each of the 11 Essentials detailed in the first column and data related to each school site is
presented in the subsequent columns of the table in the order of MiraLuna, followed by Round Robin and concluding with Singing Hills.

**Table 4.8 Summary of Work Undertaken at Each Site to Address AVID Essentials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVID Essential</th>
<th>MiraLuna HS</th>
<th>Round Robin MS</th>
<th>Singing Hills HS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Selection focus is on students in the middle (2.0-3.5)</td>
<td>Site Coordinator collaborates with team members and middle school coordinators and others to establish recruitment process and conducts interviews.</td>
<td>Student application updated periodically based on site team input. Coordinator interviews. Some frustration with student placement in AVID by site leadership, based on unique criteria.</td>
<td>AVID site team members play an active role in selection process by soliciting input from a prospective student’s teachers, interviewing students, etc. Team members created a unique recruitment process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Voluntary participation by students and staff</td>
<td>Selected as site plan goal for this year 2.2 – AVID elective teachers chose to participate AVID ELD designed to support students</td>
<td>Staff members are committed to participation in AVID; Some students have been placed in the AVID elective without requesting it</td>
<td>Long term staff commitment to teach AVID; Survey is given to school staff to identify teachers who might want to be involved. All AVID elective teachers accept responsibility for program duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Essential</td>
<td>MiraLuna HS</td>
<td>Round Robin MS</td>
<td>Singing Hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) School commitment to full implementation - with year long elective class offered during the school day</td>
<td>13 sections 8 AVID elective teachers CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>9 sections 3 AVID elective teachers 3 AVID core teachers CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>15 sections 9 AVID elective teachers CSS Level: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) AVID student enrollment in a rigorous course of study - to enable meeting requirements for university enrollment</td>
<td>Site plan goal for this year 4.1 Site Team work focused on defining rigor and creating a rubric of skills students need to be successful in rigorous content area classes; School recognized for increasing access to AP classes among traditionally underserved students. CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>This was selected as one area of focus on the Site Plan (4.2) because 74% of AVID 8th grader completed Algebra with a grade of “C” or better. Plans to support algebra students were put in place. Honors classes are offered in English and Social Studies at all grade levels. 100% of 8th graders take the ACT Explore test CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>AP course enrollment was a focus area on the agenda at all site team meetings (Essential 4.3); Articulation tool was created to insure appropriate AP class placement; an increase in the number of AP classes was offered-AVID student enrollment in AP increased CSS Level: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Essential</td>
<td>MiraLuna HS</td>
<td>Round Robin MS</td>
<td>Singing Hills HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) Strong, relevant reading/writing curriculum as a basis of instruction in AVID classroom</td>
<td>Site plan goal for this year 5.2 Several staff members participated in the SI strand and CW for Critical Reading; rhetorical writing is the district focus for this year.</td>
<td>Site team members attended the CW on CR offered by County office; site instructional focus in all core classes includes Cornell Notes utilizing Costa’s higher level questions</td>
<td>Team members are active in Critical Reading curriculum development and training; site team members attended SI Critical Reading strand and CW offered by County office; Critical Reading is the focus of site PD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) Inquiry is used as a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom to promote critical thinking</td>
<td>English department use of Socratic Seminars, Philosophical chairs and academic discussions.</td>
<td>Selected as site plan goal for this year 6.3 to create additional opportunities for students to interact with Costa’s Levels of Inquiry… Tutorial activities and Socratic Seminar used in classes school-wide</td>
<td>Site team has revised the tutorial request form to align with school goal and promote inquiry as a basis for tutorial discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Essential</td>
<td>MiraLuna HS</td>
<td>Round Robin MS</td>
<td>Singing Hills HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) Collaboration is used as a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom.</td>
<td>AVID students use collaboration in and out of the elective class. Students form study groups to work on projects and study for tests.</td>
<td>AVID students collaborate on projects in the classroom; AVID elective students participate in buddy activities with Special Education students on campus.</td>
<td>Students work collaboratively in all AVID classes, during tutorial and during WICR activities. Collaboration is one of the school’s Instructional Focus goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) A sufficient number of trained tutors must be available in the AVID class(es) to facilitate student access to rigorous curriculum.</td>
<td>Tutors are active members of the Site Team; All AVID Elective teachers and tutors have completed the required 16 hours of Tutorology training. The recommended ratio of 7:1 for students: tutors has been met.</td>
<td>Site plan goal for this year 8. 2 Tutors and Tutorials were frequently discussed at Site Team meetings; All AVID Elective teachers and tutors have completed the required 16 hours of Tutorology training. The recommended ratio of 7:1 for students: tutors has been met.</td>
<td>One site team member manages the scheduling of tutors; All AVID Elective teachers and tutors have completed the required 16 hours of Tutorology training. The recommended ratio of 7:1 for students: tutors has been met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Essential</td>
<td>MiraLuna HS</td>
<td>Round Robin MS</td>
<td>Singing Hills HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) AVID program implementation and student progress must be monitored and results analyzed- Data collection and analysis</td>
<td>All data submitted to AVID.org on time. Data analysis is seen as a strength- large number of seniors accepted to prestigious schools.</td>
<td>All data submitted to AVID.org on time. Data are used to provide more sections of algebra, honors Language Arts and honors History.</td>
<td>All data submitted to AVID.org on time. Site plan goal 9.7. - 100% of AVID seniors applied to one or more 4-year college/university and 75% accepted into at least one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) School or district resources committed for program costs and ongoing participation in AVID staff development. Agreement to implement all Essentials and participate in Certification.</td>
<td>District focus is on rhetorical writing; Site support available for staff to attend CR workshops/curriculum, 5 teachers attended SI last summer. District liaison is assigned and district funding is available for tutors.</td>
<td>Site support for teachers to attend SI. District support provided to pay for classroom tutors, there is an identified district liaison who works with the school and attends the CW and certification meetings.</td>
<td>Site support for team to attend SI; District support provided to pay for classroom tutors; there is an identified district liaison who works with the school and attends the certification meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
<td>CSS Level: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.) An active, interdisciplinary AVID Site Team collaborates on issues of student access to and success in rigorous college prep courses.</td>
<td>Site Plan goal for this year: 11. 3: to impact school policy regarding access to rigorous classes. Site team composition meets level 2 for 11.1; Team meets monthly. Parents regularly attend site events.</td>
<td>Site team meets monthly; level of participation in meetings varies. Teachers have team taught with AVID coaches to implement AVID Strategies school-wide.</td>
<td>Site Plan goal for this year- 11.6: Parental involvement Site team includes 9 teachers from 3 content areas, counselor, VP; team meets monthly as whole group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
<td>CSS Level: 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 4.8 for MiraLuna, they reported only three Essentials at the highest level of implementation (level 3). Only Essentials 1, 3 and 6, focusing on student selection, school commitment to having the elective class in the master schedule and the use of inquiry as the basis for instruction, were reported as Institutionalized. The first two Essentials (1 and 3) are aligned with setting up the AVID elective. The score on Essential 6 indicates the practice of “using Inquiry as the basis for instruction” goes beyond the AVID elective class and is evident in practice across the school. The other Essentials that deal with instructional strategies (5-Writing/Reading, 7-Collaboration, and 8-Tutorial) were rated (Level 2) indicating Routine Use in the AVID elective at this site.

This self-assessment is consistent with the data to be presented in Table 4.9 that reflects the low percentage of staff members who have attended the AVID Summer Institute or other training opportunities.

Table 4.8 shows Singing Hills reported institutionalized level of implementation on approximately half of the Essentials. Six Essentials (1,2,3,7, 8 and 10) representing student selection, voluntary participation, school commitment, collaboration as a basis for instruction, tutor support and district/site support, were scored at level 3 or Institutionalized. The first three Essentials relate to setting up the AVID elective (1,2,3), Essentials 7 and 8 support the implementation of curricular strategies and Essential 10 relates to sustaining AVID at the site. The other five Essentials (4,5,6, 9 and 11) were rated Level 2 indicating Routine Use in the AVID elective. Again, three of these Essentials deal with implementing instructional strategies in use in the classrooms. This
site was re-certified as an AVID National Demonstration site for a full three-year term in 2009.

Table 4.8 demonstrates that Round Robin self-assessed with the highest number of Essentials reported at Level 3. They reported eight of the 11 Essentials as institutionalized. However, they scored the Essentials that reflect setting up and sustaining the AVID elective (1,2,3,4 and 9,10) at the highest level. There were only two Essentials (6 and 8) that related to the implementation of AVID curricular strategies that would go beyond the AVID elective.

Table 4.8 overall indicates that the schools’ self assess in the areas of AVID implementation (Essentials 1, 2, 3) at the highest level. Essential 5, the connection to Reading and Writing has been rated at level 2 across all three schools, which indicates that the focus is occurring in the AVID elective class and has not reached the school-wide implementation. Singing Hills has the greatest potential for school-wide AVID instructional practices. As will be discussed more fully later, fifty faculty members attended Summer Institute in 2010 and many attended the Critical Reading strand. Also, several site team members attended the coordinators workshop in Critical Reading offered by county office during the 2010-11 school year and Critical Reading is the focus of their site professional development. In addition, two of the team members are leaders in Critical Reading curriculum development and training for AVID Center and the county office and thus have the potential to continue the professional development at the school site.
The following comments will explore in more detail the work of the site team with comments specifically related to Essentials 1, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 11, which emerged most frequently during the interview and observation data analysis.

**Essential 1:** AVID student selection must focus on students in the middle, with academic potential, who would benefit from AVID support to improve their academic record and begin college preparation. All three sites had practices in place to insure that the students who are in the program meet the AVID profile and the site’s level of implementation reflects a rating consistent with being institutionalized (level 3). The data indicate that all team members were involved in some aspects of recruitment and are knowledgeable of the process. The process involved work with teachers within the school and with the feeder schools to identify students who met the AVID criteria as well as interviews to ensure fit with programs goals and objectives and assess initial student commitment to the program. Nevertheless, the sites varied in the recruitment process used.

The AVID Site Coordinator from MiraLuna is the main recruitment contact. Recruitment presentations are delivered to the students at the feeder middle schools. Interviews with students are scheduled in collaboration with each middle school’s site coordinator. The high school coordinator and other Site Team representatives participate in the actual interview. The following quote from one of the interviews illustrates the commitment:

“…the Site Coordinator from this school does quite a bit of recruitment at both of the feeder schools…and that is on her own. When we do student interviews, it is not just the coordinator and myself but members of the staff also come to sit in on these interviews at the middle school (Interview, 12/07/10).
Round Robin middle school also has a process for recruitment of AVID students. The Site Team collaborates to create and revise products such as the AVID application that is given to prospective students. According to the coordinator,

We, well most of the stuff we do has already been created…like, we usually go over stuff that has already been done, like the student application. I was just working on that Essential actually, we usually revisit and update and make changes as needed (Interview, November 10, 2010).

The site coordinator is the contact person who takes responsibility for interviewing prospective AVID students and speaks of this practice as a peak experience:

I love interviewing the kids…we had a lot of students re-classify out of ELD after this school year started and we had a lot of kids apply to be in AVID…so that was really special to be able to interview them and see how far they have come and they’re really excited! A lot of them are 6th graders so they are extra energized about AVID…so that’s been really fun! (Interview, November 10, 2010)

However, a practice exists that causes frustration to team members and impacts this Essential as well as the Second Essential (Voluntary program participation by both students and staff). It was reported that sometimes counselors override the recruitment process and students are placed in the AVID elective to meet master schedule needs or as an attempt to provide extra support to some students. This experience is captured in the following quote:

…they want to push students in that have no business being in …or have no desire to be in AVID, they don’t want to be in AVID…we’ve had kids sitting in classes saying “I don’t want to be here, I didn’t choose this!” (Interview November 10, 2010)

The impact of this practice, however, is not reflected in the Certification Self Study ratings as there is no indicator that describes it beyond Indicator 2.1 (there is evidence
that 100% of students enrolled in the AVID elective class have contracts signed by all parties) since students do sign a contract after meeting with the site coordinator and agreeing to stay in the class.

The AVID Site Team members at Singing Hills play an active role in selection process by soliciting input from prospective students’ teachers and interviewing students. They have created a unique recruitment process. Incoming 8th grade students were addressed during an AVID recruitment event at their school. Each interested 8th grader was assigned a date and time to come to the high school for a face-to-face interview. This process occurred in the spring and included tutors in the screening of potential AVID students. All Site Team members and tutors were involved. They signed up for a specific date to interview incoming 8th grade students considered for acceptance into the AVID elective class the following year. The tutors were paid to do a reminder call, and send a reminder postcard to the home of the student to insure the event would be well attended. Three teachers (site team members) and one tutor showed up and stayed after school at least one afternoon over the three-day period to interview prospective AVID students (Pilot Study Observation- April 27, 2010).

Essential 4: AVID students must be enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will enable them to meet requirements for university enrollment. This Essential has specific indicators with criteria designed for high school and other indicators with criteria designed specifically for the middle school. Interview and documentary evidence showed all three Site Teams’ work focused on meeting this Essential.

The site team at MiraLuna worked together to define rigor and create a rubric of habits and skills students need to be successful in rigorous content area classes. During
each of the site team meeting observations, it was noted that the site team was divided into three groups, organized by subject area (Social Science, English, Math/Science). There were various representatives in each group (teachers, tutors, students, counselor, administrator, vertical team members from neighboring middle schools, Regional and central office staff) and they were charged with a task to create a “living document” of habits and skills representing the various subjects and grade levels, keeping in mind the end result would be a list detailed as to what students need to be successful in college. Time was granted at each site team meeting for the groups to review the previously completed lists and respond to the question: Is there anything that needs to be added to the list that was created at the previous site team meeting? The group’s process over the three months they worked to create this product was structured during their one-hour site team meeting:

- What does the research say? (Provided by the site coordinator) (5 min)
- Is there anything to add? (10 min)
- 3 skills/habits per grade level or course level –content area group dialogue (30 min)
- How can AVID help supplement the learning of these skills and habits? (5-10 min)
- Raffle/Announcements (To build the motivation to return for the next meeting!)

Teams were expected to produce a list that would be submitted to the site coordinator at the end of the meeting each month, and which would be distributed back to the site team members by email prior to the next meeting date. The group’s task was to agree upon at least 3 essential academic habits and skills for students each time they met. The high school and the feeder middle schools’ reps carefully reviewed the lists to ensure the skills would build on one another from year to year. This collaborative vertical teaming experience and the product of their efforts was unique to this site.
As a school community, MiraLuna has worked to increase the number of rigorous courses offered. The number of students and the access to Advanced Placement classes was recognized in 5th annual College Board “Report to the Nation”. This school was honored as 1 of 16 high schools for increasing access to AP classes among traditionally underserved students. It was also recognized as the public high school with the largest number of Latino students (48 out of 59) with score of 3 or higher on AP Spanish Literature Exam (class of 2008). The desire to influence school policy concerning access to rigorous curriculum and advanced courses (Essential 11.3) was one motivating force for this site team as it went about selecting its goals for this year.

According to the school’s Certification Self Study report for 2009-10, Round Robin posted data to represent 74% of the 8th grade class completed Algebra with a grade of “C” or better during the school year 2009-10, which was the rationale for selecting this Essential as a focus for their 2010-2011 annual Site Plan. “We want to offer support systems for our algebra students in order to increase their understanding and improve the percentage of students receiving a grade of ”C” or better” (2010-2011 Site Plan Outcome statement). Some of the proposed actions to meet this goal were to research with the principal the possibility of funding a “zero period” (before school) algebra tutorial class that would be staffed by a credentialed math teacher who is familiar with the AVID tutorial process. Also suggested was a plan to work as a school community and assign any student with below “C” grades to attend a weekly remediation session with the math coach. A community service opportunity was offered to any available veteran 8th grade AVID student who would be willing to provide support for tutorials.
Their commitment to academic rigor is evidenced by the fact that this is the only middle school in the district that offers honors level classes and they offer honors English and Social Studies at all grade levels. An indicator of the site’s commitment to prepare students for meeting requirements for university enrollment is the practice of providing access to students for practice on college entrance exams. According to the CSS Essential 4.8, 100% of 8th graders at Round Robin take the ACT Explore test.

Singing Hills addressed the goal of AP course enrollment as a Focus Area listed on the agenda at each site team meeting (Focus Area 1: Essential 4.3- We want 100% of AVID seniors to complete at least one AP course and take the corresponding exam by the end of June 2011). The issue of some AVID students enrolling in too many AP classes than they could successfully manage, resulting in lowered academic performance was addressed at the site team meeting held in March 2010 prior to articulation for the following school year. The team discussed tools and processes they could put in place to provide clarity and certainty that appropriate recommendations were provided to students before they were placed in any AP class. (Pilot study observation, March 23, 2010). Site team minutes from the March 23, 2010 meeting report, “We want to make sure there is no miscommunication between what the AVID elective teacher recommends and what the student discusses with the counselor when they go to register for their classes in April.” The team agreed to use a common tool to inform the counselors of student AP recommendation status. Certification Self Study data indicated more AP classes were offered during school year 2009-10 resulting in 59% of AVID students were enrolled in a variety of AP classes.
Essential 5: A strong, relevant writing and reading curriculum provide a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom. Critical Reading, the skill of knowing how to approach, navigate and comprehend non-fiction text, is important for students’ success in content areas and as well as on state and college tests. Critical Reading has been chosen as the focus for AVID professional development at the county office over the past two years. Representatives from all three sites attended the Critical Reading strand at the Summer Institute and/or the AVID coordinator/teacher workshops offered at the County office during the school year. Mira Luna’s Language Arts Resource teacher states,

I’ve brought the strategies from the Critical Reading text to the entire department so now this is a department wide thing where we all are doing the reading and writing strategies from the AVID PD text on Critical Reading. (Interview, December 6, 2010)

At Round Robin, “some of us have been trained in Critical Reading and we’re getting more and more interested in it-- you noticed that I brought the Critical Reading binder out and it was already snatched away! (Pilot Study Interview, May 10, 2010). Members of the site team had attended the Coordinator Workshops on Critical Reading, held at the County office. According to the site coordinator,

We have AVID presentations at each staff meeting…so the Site team will pick a strategy that we use that we want to share…beyond the usual Cornell Notes and daily agendas… I used the strategy that we were presented and learned at the Coordinator’s meeting--when the teacher presented the vocabulary words and then people created the paragraphs…we did that! And so one of the teachers used it in her science classroom. And she’s not an AVID elective teacher but still used the Critical Reading strategy…So, that’s been really cool! (Interview, November 10, 2010).

Having two of the Site Team members recognized as renowned leaders in Critical Reading is a source of pride one of the high school sites. As reported during the pilot study at Singing Hills:
Well, Our Literacy Coordinator happens to be an AVID elective teacher.... and s/he also works for AVID Center...and another AVID elective class teacher, who has taught strands at Summer Institute in Critical Reading and Writing and is considered the expert at this school, has definitely led Professional Development with teachers here on that specific type of reading and writing expository text (Pilot Study Interview, June 28, 2010).

Essential 8: A sufficient number of tutors must be available in AVID elective class(es) to facilitate student access to rigorous curriculum. Tutors should be students from colleges and universities and they must be trained to implement the methodologies used in AVID. All three sites have hired tutors to meet the recommended 7:1 ratio of students to tutor. They have insured that AVID Elective teachers and tutors have completed the required 16 hours of AVID “Tutorology” training, which is offered at Summer Institutes, through County office workshops, and at AVID Path Trainings. A new mode of training is offered as a Blended Learning experience with 8 hours on-line activities and 8 hours face-to-face training. Many of the teachers and tutors from all three sites took advantage of this option this year. Since the AVID tutorial is connected to other Essentials (4- support for students in rigorous classes, 5- strong relevant reading and writing curriculum, 6-Inquiry, and 7-Collaboration) this Essential is the foundational key to the success of students in AVID. Conversations related to aspects of Essential 8 occurred frequently across all three sites.

Essential 10: The school or district has identified resources for program costs, has agreed to implement all AVID Implementation Essentials and to participate in AVID Certification. There is a commitment to ongoing participation in AVID staff development. All of the schools have received both site and district support to implement AVID with fidelity. All schools experienced site financial support made available for
several staff members to attend the County office Critical Reading workshops and purchase the curriculum books and for teachers to attend the AVID Summer Institute last summer. One site, Singing Hills, was especially fortunate:

We have 50 staff members going to attend Summer Institute this year….they got some $ from somewhere…I don’t know because our school is a Title I school and we get money from different places, well, I guess they had this money that they needed to spend for PD and they had to spend it by the end of this year. Well, our new the Title I coordinator suggested sending the teachers to SI … and we’ve always sent teachers to SI---but this year we will have 50 of our staff going…”(Pilot Study Interview, June 28, 2010).

A district liaison has been designated for each of the schools. The liaison supports the sites in various ways ranging from being a participating member of the school’s AVID site team to being a regular presence at countywide coordinator workshops and student recognition events as well as attending the site certification meetings. The district liaison for each of the three schools has been instrumental in securing district funds that have been used to pay salaries and training costs for the AVID tutors on site. At one site team meeting in the fall 2010, the coordinator at Round Robin began with an announcement and information on the situation with the tutors:

We will have more tutors after all—and all 5 of the current tutors went to the face-to-face part of the Tutorial training yesterday…one more tutor has been hired and will be coming in soon and the district is giving us a lot of money for these tutors! Our DL has gone to bat for us! Whoo-hoo!

(Observation, October 20, 2010).

*Essential 11: An active interdisciplinary AVID site team collaborates on issues of student access to and success in rigorous college preparatory courses.* Similar to the recruitment process, all three schools had active site teams, but they differed somewhat in composition as well as work that each team undertook to support its program.
MiraLuna’s large site team has a unique composition with membership representing the AVID site coordinator, AVID elective class teachers and content area teachers, AVID students, AVID tutors, AVID site coordinators from both feeder middle schools, the district liaison, one school counselor and an administrator as well as the AVID Regional Coordinator from the County office who confirmed the following information, “… both of the feeder middle school AVID Coordinators and the district liaison from the other district will attend Site team meetings at the high school…(Interview, December 7, 2010).

The site team has identified Essential 11.3 as one area of focus on the annual AVID Site Plan 2010-11. The goal is to reach the institutionalized level 3 as an AVID site team that “meets monthly and collaborates on planning, logistical and student access issues. The AVID site team influences school policy concerning access to rigorous curriculum and advanced courses”. The proposed actions included having each AVID elective teacher lead a site team meeting on an area of need or interest, and having the team create and implement a plan for increasing the understanding of AVID as a school-wide strategy for improving student achievement and preparation for higher education.

Round Robin’s site team is a passionate, vocal group that meets monthly and also works through the site coordinator to provide professional development on AVID strategies to the staff during their late start Monday morning time. The site team members all participate in evening workshops such as presentations on the “a-g” requirements or in planning conferences with parents on a regular basis. During the final site team meeting observation for this study at Round Robin, one teacher acknowledged that the group was not as peppy as usual and explained the lack of energy in the room: “Teachers are tired
today because we were here at parent meetings the past two nights and then up early to teach all day” (Observation, November 10, 2010).

Singing Hills has a dedicated site team of nine teachers representing three content areas, a counselor, and a vice principal who all meet monthly. The group identified Essential11.6 as one area of focus on the annual Site Plan 2010-11. The stated goal for the year was “to increase parent/ guardian/family inclusion efforts, including workshops, meetings and/or activities for AVID families”. Planning efforts included a “Back to School” night to be held early in the school year with break-out sessions on specific topics offered for parent involvement, an AVID program fundraiser event called “Hungry for AVID“ to be hosted at a local Mexican food restaurant in the spring, and finally, an end-of-the-year AVID "Hall of Champions" award ceremony. Parents of award recipients will be invited to attend and celebrate the success of their student. The teachers will have an opportunity to establish rapport and build relationships with the parents to insure future involvement at the school.

Summary of Research Question One

The data indicate that all three site teams and individual site team members across the teams were involved in various aspects of program implementation as called for in the Essentials. Based on the interviews and observations of meetings, I conclude that site team members are knowledgeable of the Essentials and that these Essentials drive their work to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society. The actions they collectively take are called for in the Indicators for each Essential. Each school has worked diligently and has demonstrated being humble, thoughtful and
conservative in their self-assessment on the CSS document. For each site, one Essential stands out to me as their signature Essential.

MiraLuna’s strength lies in the work they have done across the Indicators of Essential 11—the expanded site team membership represents all stakeholders and their relentless pursuit of clarity as they worked together to create a common understanding of rigor and the habits and skills students need to be successful in rigorous classes was a true collaborative effort.

Round Robin stands out for the work they are doing to improve their implementation of Essential 4 and for their commitment to support all of their students to be successful. Their demand for excellence was demonstrated by the creation of supports beyond the school day. Even in these challenging economic times, they made powerful requests of their administration to provide credentialed teacher support service and would not allow students to fall through the cracks.

The unique work that has been done across Essential 8 is a trademark of the site team at Singing Hills. They have demonstrated strength across all of the Indicators of Essential 8 from honoring their commitment to insure the student/college tutor ratio is appropriate and that each elective teacher and tutor is trained in the tutorial process. They have taken ownership of the tutor recruitment and retention and have created a shared leadership model with one team member, not the site coordinator, taking responsibility for the management and scheduling of the 17 college tutors across the whole team. The tutors guide the tutorial process using inquiry to support students in academic coursework and meet frequently with site team members for coaching on ways to improve their practice with the students.
Research Question Two

As I began to seek answers to the second research question, how does the work of the AVID site team reflect the values and habits of a Leadership Practice Community and how do these practices impact the whole school? I held the proposition that the more the practices of the AVID site team reflect a Leadership Practice Community, the more likely the team would affect school-wide practices in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. This section will present the background and context of the leadership practice community and discuss the actual practices of the AVID site team that reflect the design of a leadership practice community.

What is a leadership practice community? The AVID site team fits the description of a community of practice as defined by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002). They make reference to a group of people “who share a concern, set of problems or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (p. 4). The community of practice is a naturally occurring cluster of people within and across organizations who are bound together by shared expertise and a passion for the success of the joint enterprise (Wenger & Snyder, 1998). The community of practice actually defines itself through a joint enterprise that is continually negotiated by its members. The community of practice also involves the relationships within the group, what they do together in mutual engagement, and the shared repertoire of communal resources such as routines, artifacts, vocabulary, and practices that the group has developed over time. This repertoire of resources is important to the group as they help drive strategy, begin new topics of inquiry, solve problems, build and exchange knowledge, transfer best practices, develop members’ capacities and professional skills
and recruit new talent. Similar to the AVID Site Team, membership in a community of practice is self-selected but in contrast, the existence of the AVID site team is not optional or voluntary, in that it is a certification requirement called for in Essential 11. In communities of practice and in AVID, both entities set their own agendas and establish their own leadership. Communities of practice navigate through various stages of development that are characterized by different levels of interaction among the members and by the different kinds of activities in which members participate. Wenger (1998) is the principal author of the theory of Community of Practice. He discussed learning as a social system and asserted that people are an organization’s most important resource in terms of the communities through which individuals develop and share the capacity to create and use knowledge (p.1).

This study conducted at three AVID school sites was informed by the concept of communities of practice as I explored the practices of the AVID site teams and observed similarities and differences in the leadership practices across the schools. Another facet of this community of practice idea proposed by Wenger (1998) that aligns with the work of the AVID site team is the leadership practice community proposed by Wagner et al. (2006). The leadership practice community even more closely resembles the purpose and practices of the AVID site team as a leadership body working to transform the system within their own schools. The idea of the leadership practice community came out of the Change Leadership Group (CLG) at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. The CLG is concerned with the way leadership teams operate to create new individual and organizational capacities and has made several recommendations for leadership teams to consider as they do their work. They advocate for groups to retain the
features of communities of practice but differentiate by not being voluntary, or optional, nor are they focused on their own learning as an end unto itself. They do call for individual learning and change and it is always connected to their charge—to make something valuable happen. Wagner, et al. (2006) propose that leadership practice communities exist in order to transform the larger system, whether a school or a district.

The charge of the AVID site team as a leadership practice community is to fulfill the mission of AVID to “prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society”. The leadership practice community is designed to combine the ongoing work of leadership practice and learning with respect to systems and organizational change so it is a natural fit with the AVID site team.

*The Work of the AVID Site Team.*

Taking this notion forward and slightly adapting leadership practice community model, the work of the AVID site team occurs in the same arenas as those discussed by Wenger (1998) as well as by Wagner, et al., (2006). The practices in which the site team engages are the same as those of the community of practice and many of those in a leadership practice community. These practices, and the repertoire of resources such as the routines, artifacts, vocabulary that the group has developed over time, are designed to develop members’ leadership capacities, build and exchange knowledge, transfer best practices and solve problems of practice. The interview and observational data collected at the three school sites were examined and analyzed through the lens of each of these four arenas of practice and will be presented and discussed consecutively in this section.

1.) *Develop Members’ Leadership Capacity.*

All of the AVID site team members, regardless of their role, are called upon to
demonstrate leadership in a variety of ways. Across all sites, the code for leadership emerged 92 times in the interview data analysis using the HyperRESEARCH report tool. Leadership issues were reduced to six categories that were represented by data and addressed multiple times. The following codes were mined for data that supported the claims within the discussion on developing members leadership capacity: *the site coordinator leadership, the administration, site team members’ leadership, content area teachers’ leadership, district leadership and various opinions on leadership.*

Evidence selected from the two most common sub-codes for *site coordinator leadership* and *site team members’ leadership* is presented in the following section.

*Site coordinator leadership.*

In my role as the AVID coordinator, I work a lot with the counseling department and with the VP…but anytime anyone at this school might have a question about AVID or something comes up that is college related, people always come to me…. yes, I would definitely say that the AVID coordinator, whether its me or whoever else, is a leader at this school...any member of the site team is a leader (Pilot study Interview, June 28, 2010).

Many leadership roles are specifically fulfilled by the site coordinator. Segments of interview and observational data collected are presented to illuminate various leadership functions demonstrated by the site coordinator at each site.

The MiraLuna coordinator has a reputation as a powerhouse on campus, as expressed by team members. One colleague stated, “I think there is a perception that if a task needs to be done, our site coordinator will be the one to complete it! You need to know what a dynamo we have!” (Interview December 7, 2011). Other colleagues spoke with pride when relaying the following information:

This coordinator has been asked to share at some of the County office
trainings—to show some of the work they’ve been doing as a site team in analyzing data, as well as to share some of the reflective pieces that teachers are asked to do and the surveys of both teachers and students that are conducted (Interview, December 17, 2011).

The coordinator has collected data of AP participation and pass rates of the AVID students for the last year… it was shared at the certification meeting last year (Interview, December 6, 2011).

The site coordinator at Round Robin has accepted the responsibility to lead professional development presentations to the staff at the site.

We have AVID presentations at each staff meeting… so the site team will pick a strategy that we use and we want to share (beyond the usual strategies like Cornell notes) and then usually myself… sometimes I can convince someone to present with me but usually it’s just me, presenting a strategy at a staff meeting … once a month and then we share out (Interview, November 10, 2010).

This coordinator was also selected to represent the school at a school board meeting and used the opportunity to share data on the impact that AVID is having on the students’ progress at this school. The quote establishes that this type of presentation at the school board was a first-time event for this coordinator as well as gives a glimpse into a political reality that challenges all site coordinators’ leadership

… the school was invited to address the School Board, and the administration could have selected anyone to represent the school, but they let AVID talk, so that was great! I got to do that! … They (the site administration) do empower us and I think they do want a good program… I think part of the problem is that the district as a whole sees AVID as a way to increase test scores, especially for reclassified students… so I think our leadership is under a lot of pressure from the district leadership and I think that’s why sometime there are conflicts… (Interview, November 10, 2010).

Similar data emerged from the interviews regarding the site coordinator at Singing Hills, who people have come to depend upon for many things. From an interview with a member of the site team, talking about a visit from an AVID Center
...it was a lot of long, hard hours and our coordinator, in particular...I recall was even ill when they came-- and still pushed through and went all the way, from collecting data for everybody and making sure it was compiled together in a presentable way, and taking care of the actual certification team when they were here (Pilot study interview, June 21, 2010).

Also speaking to the coordinator’s commitment and willingness to take a leadership role on behalf of the site team, the school site has a Wiki (internet based document sharing tool) that was created by as well as updated and maintained by this coordinator. The Wiki posts all of the AVID site team meeting agendas and minutes, teachers schedules and contact information, tutor resources and schedules and a plethora of materials that document the path that AVID has taken over the past 3-4 years at Singing Hills.

All three of the site coordinators are very capable leaders who inspire others. They are knowledgeable about AVID beyond the strategies and methodologies. They are all responsible in fulfilling the many duties they are asked to perform and very dedicated to their students and colleagues.

Given the multitude of tasks that site coordinators are expected to complete, they sometimes get frustrated and even on a good day, the job takes its toll.

I just think that the job is getting harder and harder …because AVID center keeps coming down with more and more paperwork and more online stuff that we really don't have time to do… And when I first came into AVID it was such a joy but now sometimes it’s like dealing with the federal government…(Pilot study Interview, May 10, 2010).

The Singing Hills site team spent the final 15-20 minutes of each observed team meeting this fall in a “future planning” conversation that was designed to secure a replacement for the current site coordinator with a volunteer from the site team. The
topics of conversations ranged from details on the duties and responsibilities the site coordinator is accountable for to brainstorming ways to possibly reinvent the position as a duo. The current site coordinator has held the position for 4 years and would like to step down from the role next year.

*Site team members’ leadership.* Site team members, at all three schools, take an active role in a variety of leadership functions and have many opportunities to develop their leadership capacity. A quote from the resource teacher at MiraLuna provides an example of this:

…people come to me for resources and with questions, seeking me as someone who could lead them to something or know that I could help them with something…I strive to be a leader amongst teachers…I’m a “like” person…I’m one of them…I’m not an above teacher leader, I don’t want to do anything evaluative…I don’t want to have any hand in that…I want to be completely collegial and supportive of all of us together as teachers and working for common goals… (Interview, December 6, 2010)

Singing Hills is the school that exemplifies this practice most. The level at which the site team demonstrates leadership as well as the number of duties that are assumed by team members is what sets them apart. At this school, site team members represent stakeholders of teachers, counselors, administrators, tutors and occasionally, students. Each site team member has accepted an accountability of leadership and manages all of the elements of that accountability for the team. Evidence of this aspect was captured in observations of four site team meetings and is expressed in the following comments recorded during an extended interview with the site coordinator:

…we all have an investment in it, in some way or another we all help out…members of the AVID team run the PD at the site, one person runs the school-wide college fundraiser, another teacher is in charge of the tutors, which is a big responsibility, so although in name I am the AVID coordinator, she helps me with a big part of it, which is the tutors...
…everyone does their part in something… the VP in charge of the master schedule and in charge of AVID definitely puts our AVID students first—for example, in terms of programming... when making the master schedule, s/he takes into consideration like, tutorial, and makes sure to spread out the AVID classes so they are not all bunched up and so our tutors are spread throughout the day...so the administration is very supportive! And if I say we need more sections, they support this and allow us to have more sections...

I know our program would not be as successful if we did not have the support of the administration...and the admin is at all of our site team meetings and they know all about our program...

…the counselor always programs the AVID students first before any other students in the school...definitely; I couldn’t have been so successful if everyone else isn’t willing to step up...(Pilot study interview, June 28, 2010).

Empirical data from the CSS section on the strengths of AVID Essential 11 at the site also documents the leadership capacity of this team: “Each teacher goes above and beyond to make our program successful and raise student achievement. Each AVID elective teacher supports the coordinator to make running the program a team effort.”

However, this level of shared leadership involvement is not consistent across the schools. One site team member expressed a desire to do more and be more involved and saw the opportunity for this to occur as a missing element at one of the schools:

I wish that [our coordinator] would not…. you know when you have hording...hording all of the responsibility and all of the ….it seems to me that our coordinator doesn’t want to have anybody else to do things…and has actually said it, “I prefer to do it myself so I know it is right”...like a control freak...and I think that if s/he would give responsibilities to others and clearly define them, like in a document, ok, Ms A, you are going to be in charge of x ...and its in a document and Mr. B, you are going to do this and this and this...sign here and we are going to check that you’ve done it in this way cuz they start a lot of things....we are always off the hook in a way because they never check on us...no accountability (Interview, December 7, 2010).

And from the other school, a telling comment from the site coordinator:

Our site team is very…all the elective teachers are really good—they are
really strong and they will offer—if they realize that I’m stressed they will offer to help but for the most part I do most of the …the roles and responsibilities aren’t really split, I do most of the work! (Interview, November 10, 2010)

2.) Build and Exchange Knowledge.

A variety of ways have been documented to demonstrate site team members participate in this practice. All of the schools have been insistent on sending representatives to the annual AVID Summer Institute to participate in various strands to support their work. They have also all sent teams (AVID teachers and non-AVID teachers) to participate in the coordinator/teacher workshops offered at the County office that focus on one curricular topic presented in three sessions over the course of the school year. The AVID Path trainings are two-day workshops hosted by the County office that provide professional development on specialized AVID strategies to address and deepen understanding as well as aid in the implementation of the skills of WICR such as the Socratic Seminar or Philosophical Chairs, Critical Reading, Tutorology or Focused Notetaking. The schools also participated in professional development based on district-wide initiatives during the days that the district has designated. The following chart is a summary of site team member participation in opportunities to build and exchange knowledge and is based on data reported by the schools on the CSS and presented in the SARC. As we can see from the table, far more of the faculty members at Round Robin and Singing Hills have participated in at least one Summer Institute in the past five years, compared to MiraLuna.

MiraLuna has historically sent more teachers to the AVID Path trainings due to a district-wide schedule conflict. Their academic school year begins early and they are
already in session with students during the days when the AVID Summer Institute workshops are offered. AVID Path trainings were designed to offer the same curricular strands taught by trained AVID staff developers, but in much a smaller venue and shorter time frame.

Table 4.9 Summary of Site Participation in Opportunities to Build and Exchange Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>MiraLuna</th>
<th>Round Robin</th>
<th>Singing Hills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Institute 2010</td>
<td>5 AVID teachers-1 administrator</td>
<td>4 AVID teachers-1 administrator</td>
<td>9 AVID teachers 40 content area teachers 1 administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at SI at least once in the past 5 years</td>
<td>25% of the faculty</td>
<td>90% of the faculty</td>
<td>90% of the faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Path trainings-'10</td>
<td>11 teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator/Teacher Workshops- COE</td>
<td>Coordinator 9 teachers-English dept.</td>
<td>Coordinator/ 2 teachers</td>
<td>Coordinator/ 1 teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District PD—non-instructional time devoted to staff learning</td>
<td>4 days- Site PLC structure-- Focus on Rhetorical writing across the content areas</td>
<td>2 days- Focus on literacy and alignment with CA content standards/ grade level PLC groups meet</td>
<td>15 days—Site “PLC” groups-- Smart Goal Request Form is required for teachers to participate in options (workshop/conference)- wide variety of topics --paid from QEIA funds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.) Transfer Best Practices

Site teams have demonstrated the transfer of best practices over a variety of topics. The empirical evidence presented to verify the transfer of best practices was captured under four different codes. These codes were identified as school-wide impact,
staff development on site, shared responsibility, and preparing students for success. The quotes are offered to verify and confirm the transfer of best practices occurs evenly across all three schools.

*Critical Reading and other AVID strategies.* The current focus on the AVID *Critical Reading strategies* over the past two years has created an opening for sharing this best practice via staff development and school-wide emphasis on implementation across the curriculum

…as the Language Arts Resource person, I’ve brought the strategies from the *Critical Reading* text to the entire department, so now this is a department wide thing where we all are doing the reading and writing strategies from the AVID PD text on *Critical Reading* (Interview MiraLuna, December 6, 2010).

Additionally,

The impact of the AVID program school-wide is connected to the expectation that all students, including the students enrolled in the Special Education classes with IEPs, use AVID strategies (such as *Critical Reading* and Cornell Notes) across all content areas (Interview Singing Hills, October 27, 2010).

There were other comments related to the transfer of best practices in Critical Reading strategies taken from interviews during the pilot study and represent the experience that was common to all sites. The following quotes are offered as evidence of this transfer:

We’ve tried to really identify as an AVID site team what is it that every single teacher can use regardless of what they teach. For example, the R in WICR, the reading—we have a couple of experts on the campus who know how to teach *Critical Reading*…one of them is our literacy coordinator so that has really moved the PD on our campus! (Pilot study interview, Singing Hills, June 21, 2010)

as well as
…we just had this conversation this summer—how can we bring AVID even more into what we are doing? Looking at next year and what our goals are, how can we bring AVID even more into the Critical Reading piece across the school and the Tutorology piece …with what we are doing in classes, how can we bring AVID into what we are doing school-wide? And how can our literacy and math coaches go out and look at AVID and use those AVID strategies? (Pilot study interview, Round Robin, June 28, 2010).

The transfer of other AVID strategies to support learning is also practiced as a school-wide agreement. The following comment from one school was echoed over all three sites

…our whole school, we all take Cornell Notes—there are certain things that we all do because we’ve agreed as a whole staff that these things apply to everyone and are important to everyone (Pilot study interview, June 21, 2010).

Round Robin is one of the AVID National Demonstration sites and is also a school that is in Program Improvement. The school-wide sharing of AVID strategies is discussed as a part of the School Improvement process:

…most teachers at this school support the idea of preparing all students for college and through our PLCs, we brought a lot of AVID strategies forward. Last year we said, OK, this is what we are doing…and we had a focus to get out to students after every PLC…this year changed a little bit because of the Program Improvement schools that we are in, the DAIT team comes in and gave us certain instructions that we have to do…but again, because we have a, what we call a Walk-through lessons that we have to do, we are embedding AVID into those lessons… (Pilot study Interview, May 10, 2010).

Other topics of focus in the transfer of Best Practices. In addition to curricular strategies, ideas from the realm of data driven decision-making, were highlighted.

At MiraLuna

…part of the data collection that they do that goes on beyond the AVID Center data—it has been shared at faculty meetings and during PLC time to look at AVID data as well as school-wide data…looking at where their
seniors - again school-wide, not just AVID - are going to college and attempting to determine if they are staying at the 4 year universities past one year (Interview, December 17, 2010).

A teacher at the other high school, Singing Hills, has created template to track the college choices of the seniors on their campus. The Excel spreadsheet lists the names of the colleges the seniors apply to as well as those that accepted them and the one school the student chooses to attend. (Interview, October 27, 2010)

Structures within the schools have been created to facilitate the sharing of best practices. These groupings identified within the schools ranged from grade level teams to the professional learning community or PLC groups that include AVID site team members, as evident in the following comment from one team member:

Teachers here work together to establish school-wide expectations for student learning via the PLC (Professional Learning Community) group format. Team members work to ensure that all students, not just students in the AVID elective class, are expected to learn at high levels and prepare for college. This is our work—I’m in the PLC of the 11th grade teaching team. We all use the same agenda in all of our classes and teach common units dealing with “college knowledge”…. At this school, we have 16 sections of the AVID elective offered to about 20% of the school population (500 students) and also have 10 sections of a separate Tutorial Class that is modeled after the AVID tutorial for students who are struggling in academic classes. This Tutorial class is available to anyone and supports all students in the school (Interview Singing Hills, October 27, 2010).

Modeling interactive classroom strategies was another method that has been used by the site team members to transfer best practices. This occurred at one site as a way to educate the staff about AVID

…and during a whole staff development meeting for PD, we did ‘a fishbowl’ with staff members and we also brought AVID students so they could (most of the teachers are ignorant about really what AVID is) so they could ask questions and the students answered the questions. (Interview MiraLuna, December 7, 2010).
Another example of modeling occurred during a demonstration lesson conducted for classroom visitors and was described in the following quote:

I was using the *double entry or dialectical journals* and then we also had a *four-corner debate* going on. Some of those things I know are just good teaching strategies but they are particularly “AVID-y” (Interview MiraLuna, December 6, 2010).

Site team members’ willingness to model goes beyond sharing strategies as evidenced in the following comment from a team member at Round Robin, “The AVID team is always willing to support the teachers…in the delivery of lessons if they need to go beyond the AVID strategies, they are willing also to go out and demonstrate the lessons.” (Pilot study interview, May 10, 2010).

The transfer of best practices was not limited to staff professional development as site team members also created events designed to “transfer best practices” to students at their sites, regardless of the students’ AVID enrollment status:

…wherever people feel confident and in whatever we need to get done, our team is very flexible…so if I’m running, you know maybe an after school program, like this year, I ran the program with another site team member. It was a college readiness program -we took kids that were not in AVID and brought ‘em in—in order to share with them about the steps they need to do to apply to college, get financial aide, order their transcripts, and all... (Interview, October 27, 2010).

A final comment to demonstrate how the site team members transfer best practices to all students across the school population:

…as an AVID site, we really focus on preparing the all of the kids the best that we can. So I think preparing them for the high school exit exam...our whole thing was trying to come up with ways to make kids feel more comfortable, more confident and give them the skills they need to pass the test. So, the day the scores came back was a happy day for us because a lot of the kids that didn’t think they were gonna pass- passed and it was just...it was fun to see everything pay off at the end! (Pilot study interview,
April 11, 2010).

4.) Solve Problems of Practice

Problems occur as opportunities across the three AVID schools in this study. Since these schools function at a high level of implementation, the team fulfills the expectation to provide enrichment opportunities to students, such as guest speakers and college field trips. The schools also work to increase the level of parent involvement as a support to student learning. This is an important activity since engaging with parents has been shown to have a relatively large effect size on student achievement. Particularly important is providing information about college and university requirements and financial aid as well as raising parent’s expectations for students to attend college (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

College field trips Each school’s site team is involved in the planning and implementation of college field trips for AVID students and they all have created separate opportunities for the different grade levels. The high schools have had to go through all of the proper channels, such as securing school board approval, managing fundraising efforts and obtaining parent permission, to secure multi-day, out of area field trips that incorporate several campus visits on the same itinerary. The middle school offers at least one trip per grade level to a local college or university every year. Each site had a college field trip as an agenda item to address at least once during the research study observations and much time was devoted to hammering out the details involved in this practice. Observations and interview data validate that teams worked together to ensure these events were well organized and successful. A quote from one of the high school interviews:
…the site team makes a point to have a week to a week and a half long visit to universities outside the county - so they’ve been making trips to Northern CA schools --and you see that in the number of kids who do go to San Francisco, Merced, Berkeley, etc…because they’ve had a chance to see the campus of the schools, which makes a big difference! And then also the communication with the parents, via parent events at the school, as well as direct communication such as phone calls or visits to the household to ensure the parents that it is all going to be ok…(Interview, December 17, 2010).

Parent involvement. A commitment to improve communication with parents as a means of increasing the level of parent involvement has resulted in a variety of events offered to parents. One morning in December, I was on the campus at MiraLuna to conduct an interview and I witnessed a meeting in the library that was co-conducted in Spanish and English. There were about 35 parents of seniors being addressed by members of the counseling staff. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information to these parents as a support to them as they worked to make sure their seniors were successful. Specific information was presented related to the expectations the school holds for the senior class and the pitfalls of being a senior at this time of year were being discussed with and by the parents. This type of meeting is a regular occurrence at this site. According to one of the MiraLuna site team members,

We have parent presentations, by grade level-- in Spanish and in English, so they set aside 4 different evenings where the teachers…the AVID coordinator is there at each one of the parent events but then teachers from the site team who also teach the elective class are also there for their respective grades. So you might have a 9th/10th grade parent night with all of the 9th and 10th grade teachers there. One of the sessions is done in Spanish and another is done in English. And the turnout is …they fill up a good chunk of the gym! (Interview, December 17, 2010).

All three of the school’s AVID site teams have focused on this problem of practice and have supported one another as they have done so. One comment from one of the Round
Robin site team members reflects the commitment to increasing parent involvement and
to providing support for each other

[Another team member] and I spoke to a parent group last month at night
about AVID and one of the AVID core teachers just showed up…I asked
her if she was scheduled to speak and she said,” No, I just came to listen to
you” and we didn’t even know she was coming! She said, “I just wanted
to be here”! (Pilot study interview, May 10, 2010).

Summary of Research Question Two

The presentation of data and discussion of the findings illustrate that the work of
the AVID site team does reflect the values and habits of a leadership practice community.
These leadership practices, and the repertoire of resources such as the routines, artifacts,
vocabulary that the group has developed over time, provide structures and support to
develop the site team members’ leadership capacities, build and exchange knowledge,
transfer best practices and solve problems of practice. A common vocabulary is in usage
and understood across all three sites. The terms represent their AVID focus and practice.
A chart of a few of the common vocabulary and the meaning they convey is presented in
Table. 4.10.
### Table 4.1 Common AVID Vocabulary In Use at the Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common AVID Site Team Vocabulary</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cornell notes or “C-notes”</strong></td>
<td>Double sided style of notes taken by AVID students to summarize and reflect on their learning; used as a study tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rigor</strong></td>
<td>Refers to the level of complexity—is used to describe content classes and assignments -- focuses on the higher order thinking skills of Bloom’s Taxonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tutorial</strong></td>
<td>Small group learning facilitated by a trained college tutor; students bring questions based on confusion in the content area and engage in an inquiry with their peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Reading:</strong></td>
<td>Newest AVID Center curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marking the Text-</strong></td>
<td>Number the paragraphs, underline author’s claim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charting the Text-</strong></td>
<td>Making a T chart (graphic organizer) to show what is the author saying /what is the author doing in the text being read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“a-g”</strong></td>
<td>Abbreviated reference to the required courses for UC/CSU college entrance eligibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the three schools in this study has a capable, knowledgeable and dedicated person invested in the position of site coordinator. Through the site teams’ leadership practice of developing their own capacity by participating in the AVID Center or county office professional development and then sharing what they learn with their colleagues, the site team at each school seems to be impacting the whole school, through preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

*Distributed Leadership Perspective*
This section will present the background and context of the Distributed Leadership perspective prior to presenting the analysis of data that relates to the final research question, which focused on this perspective.

According to Harris (2008), the most contemporary interpretation of the Distributed Leadership theory has been forwarded by Spillane (2006). She traced the development Spillane’s theory and suggested that it was informed by the psychological theories of Distributed Cognition (Hutchins, 1995) and Activity Theory, which has its roots in the work of Vygotsky (1896-1934). Distributed cognition emphasizes the complex social aspect of cognition as a learning system and provides a framework that involves coordination between individuals, artifacts and the environment. It is a theory that suggests knowledge lies not only within the individual, but implies that learning takes place through interactions within and across teams (Harris, 2008).

Spillane (2006) suggests that a distributed perspective on leadership is an alternative way of looking at and thinking about leadership in schools. The problem and rationale for this study was founded on a need for school reform that supports equity and access for all students, especially those from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds whose achievement still lags behind that of White and Asian students (Wagner, et al., 2006). To ensure students have the best possible education leading to the best opportunities for the future, schools must find ways to strengthen and in many cases change instructional practices. Leadership in schools is a powerful force for change (Hallinger, 2003, Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). One of the seven strong claims about school leadership made by Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) was that school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed.
Describing what school leadership does is important but not sufficient to capture the full picture of leadership practice. Spillane (2006) asserts that studying the “how” as well as the “what” of leadership is essential to the distributed leadership perspective (p. 7). He describes the distributed leadership perspective as

- a framework for thinking about and analyzing leadership
- a tool for thinking about leadership in new and unfamiliar ways
- a frame to assist researchers as they decide what to look at when they investigate leadership as understanding how leadership gets done in schools is imperative if research is to generate usable knowledge for school leaders
- a diagnostic instrument
- a way to acknowledge and celebrate many kinds of unglamorous and un-heroic leadership that often goes unnoticed in schools (p. 10).

_Aspects of Distributed Perspective on Leadership_

There are two aspects of the distributed perspective on leadership (Spillane, 2006). The first, known as the _leader-plus aspect_, recognizes that leading schools requires multiple leaders represented across formal and informal roles to take responsibility for leadership activity—the formal leader plus others. However, distributed leadership is not just delegated leadership. It is about recognizing and examining who has a hand in contributing to the overall school improvement by participating in leadership practice This _leader-plus aspect_ is important, and yet it is only a part of what it means to take a distributed perspective on leadership.

The second aspect of the distributed leadership perspective is known as the _practice aspect_. Examining leadership practice that takes shape in the interaction of
leaders, followers and their situation is the key to understanding this aspect. These three elements (leaders, followers and their situation) are interdependent and each one element affects and is affected by the other two. This implies a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and multiple tasks are accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders and followers with the role of leader and follower often shifting depending on the task.

This perspective of distributed leadership practice challenges the mainstream thinking that “leaders lead and followers follow” and that’s the way it is. Each role is considered as a separate and distinct entity that has a single function and the design of leadership is “top down”. The distributed practice perspective sees the relationship between leaders and followers in a new light. Distributed practice recognizes leaders influencing their followers, as well as being influenced by them. This elevates the perceived position of the followers and provides them with an equal role in the relationship. The “top down” design of leadership practice is shifted to a horizontal relationship. The role of the follower is acknowledged as one of mutually constituting leadership practice.

The third element essential to distributed leadership practice, the situation, is described as the routines and tools that get established during leadership practice interactions. These routines and tools impact practice. Sometimes they enable and enhance the work of the team and sometimes they constrain it. The routines and tools are seen as dynamic. They are also impacted and affected by the leaders and the followers interacting with them. Routines and tools are the third entity that Spillane (2006)
identifies in the triad that constitutes this multidimensional network of interactions called distributed leadership practice.

Research Question Three

The lens of the distributed leadership perspective enabled me to focus on the third research question: In what ways does a distributed leadership perspective provide insights into the work of the AVID site team in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society? I held the proposition that the more varied the distribution of leadership practice of the AVID site team in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society, the greater the potential for a school-wide impact.

The Types of Distribution of Leadership Practices.

As a result of analyzing interactions among leaders in the co-performance of leadership practice, Spillane, Diamond and Jita (2000, 2003) and Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) identified three types of distribution in leadership practice. These three types of distribution provided the framework for the analysis of the data collected for this study and a way of highlighting the “how” of the leadership practices as I explored the work of the AVID site team. I observed similarities and differences in the leadership practices across the schools. These leadership practices will be discussed using the same three types of distribution: collaborated, collective, and coordinated distribution.

Collaborated distribution. This distribution is described as “leadership practice that is stretched over the work of two or more leaders who work together at the same time and in the same space to execute the same leadership routine” (Spillane, 2006 p. 60). A practice that was common across all three schools was the leadership routine in which
site team members congregated monthly in a formal site team meeting. In each school, there was one identified leader, the AVID site coordinator, who facilitated the AVID site team meeting. Site team members, in formal and informal leadership roles co-performed as leaders, interacting with one another as they worked together across the situation (routine) of the team meeting. Various items from the interview and observational data demonstrate this practice across all three sites:

“The Assistant Principal is at all site team meetings. In her previous role at the site, she was the categorical coordinator so she was able to provide funds for some of the different activities that AVID wanted to participate in. She was financially supportive as well as helped with the Master Schedule to try to align courses so that it would meet the needs of the tutors” (MiraLuna Interview, December 17, 2010).

[As the administrator accountable for AVID], I go to the monthly site team meetings…and I’m there to answer questions as they are trying to problem solve, as they are trying to create programs, if there are any classes in the master schedule that would be beneficial…or anything like that, I’m right there and they could tell me all about it… I’m not there to run the meetings (Singing Hills Pilot study interview, June 21, 2010).

I see my role is one of supporting…It really is –to support the AVID program and do everything I can to continue to move AVID forward…with the help of obviously with our AVID team…” (Round Robin Pilot study interview with the Principal, June 28, 2010)

Collaborated distribution of leadership practice occurred through various tasks that were performed at the same time and in the same place. At MiraLuna, the site coordinator set the agenda and worked within one of the smaller groups during the site team meeting as recorded in observation field notes:

Three teams of 7 were organized with various representatives in each group (Teachers, tutors, students, vertical team members) The task: Create a living document of skills and habits of various subjects and grade levels…Research from Dr. Johns at SDSU/issues…Participants were given 5 minutes to skim and scan…is there anything that needs to be
added to the list created at the previous site team meeting? (Field notes from MiraLuna Observation, October 25, 2010)

Another leadership routine practiced evenly across all sites was the examination of student achievement data, whether it was the student scores on Advanced Placement tests, the results of school, district or state mandated assessments or data on college-related phenomena. Comments from individuals across all three sites demonstrate that a data examination routine is practiced at each site.

MiraLuna “The coordinator has collected data of Advanced Placement testing participation and pass rates of the AVID students for the last year…it was shared at the certification meeting last year” (Interview, December 17, 2010)

Singing Hills also has a practice of data review that especially targets the AVID students:

…looking at the kids grades and seeing students with D/F grades is a school-wide conversation…. We get printouts from the office --of the kids’ grades and it is set up on a graph… so they not only have their grade but it would show on a graph how it is and allow the students a spot to put a goal for themselves like so they can bump it up for the next one…That’s part of the reflective piece that AVID uses… We want the students to go back and look at their grades…(Interview, October 27, 2010).

The site coordinator at MiraLuna presented the following data via PowerPoint during the first site team meeting of the school year at MiraLuna. The slide addressed the rationale for the existence of the site team and displayed data related to the college going rates of the students from the prior year. The site team members participated in a discussion during the meeting related to what this data means to them and the students. Table 4.11 displays the data presented and discussed.
Table 4.11  Rationale for Site Team Existence at MiraLuna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total # of Seniors-May 2010</th>
<th>Total # of Seniors who took survey</th>
<th>% of Seniors who took survey</th>
<th>% of Seniors who applied to 4-year University</th>
<th>% of Seniors who were accepted to University</th>
<th>% of Seniors who plan to attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>408</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Seniors</td>
<td></td>
<td>% AVID Seniors who applied to a 4 year University</td>
<td>% AVID Seniors who were accepted to University</td>
<td>% AVID Seniors who plan to attend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 displays the data presented during MiraLuna site team observation, August 31, 2010.

Collective distribution. A second type of distribution of leadership practice occurs when two or more leaders are working separately but inter-dependently as they co-perform a leadership routine. The leaders could be in formally identified leadership roles, such as the Site Coordinator, Vice Principal or Principal or they could represent leaders who fit into the category of informal leaders such as teacher leaders or members of the AVID site team.

At Round Robin, the principal initiates the practice of examination of student performance data and supports teachers by providing them with the rosters and grade reports. The teachers then work separately yet interdependently to address the concerns.

Every time a quarterly grade comes out, we track AVID students to see how they are doing in their classes. I do that— that’s another way I support—I’ll come in and get a list of GPAs and see who received D’s and F’s in the classes. I will see if they are in AVID and look across all of their
classes... and then I look at the GPA and I’ll go to their teacher (the AVID elective teacher) and say, hey, this student is not being successful, what can we do? (Pilot study interview, June 28, 2010).

Collective distribution was also evident at Singing Hills. One member of the team stepped up to take leadership and manage the schedules and training of the site tutors. The site coordinator was still involved with some aspects of managing tutors, for example, the hiring of the tutors. However, each of them worked separately on this leadership routine.

“[Another teacher] who also teaches AVID—she’s in charge of the Tutors, which is a big responsibility, so --she used to be the coordinator, years ago...so although in name I am the AVID coordinator, she helps me with a really big part of it, which is the tutors... “(Pilot study interview, June 28, 2010).

Site team members take an active part of sharing AVID beyond the school day. This collective distribution of leadership practice shows up with team members working separately but interdependently to share AVID related practices. This type of distribution occurs across all three schools, whether it is to plan field trips or fundraisers, to provide professional development or address parents. The following quotes represent collective distribution of leadership at both of the high schools:

I’m on the AVID site team so whatever activities we have going on outside of school I participate in –whether that be field trips, organizing field trips, fund raisers, helping with extra-curricular activities getting the kids involved and basically being a proponent for it throughout the school—which means that sometimes I’ll train different teachers on the use of different AVID strategies through different professional development days that we have (Interview, SH, June 28, 2010).

I’ve been taking the Critical Reading strategies book and using it department wide, separating it up and having little “lunch bunch” meetings to discuss how these particular things are working in the classroom in line with the Rhetorical approach that the district has gone to...teachers are very grateful for having that text and are dialoguing a lot
more about how they are chunking text with students and how they are looking at macro and micro structures of text and how they are having kids write (Interview ML, December 6, 2010).

One thing I value about our team is that everyone is willing to share and everyone is willing to work! There is never a time when we don’t have enough people to go on a field trip or promote a certain activity, whether it’s an extra-curricular function … everyone works together toward a common goal and it’s a fun group to be around! I really value that! (Interview, SH, October 27, 2010).

Collective distribution occurs at the middle school with team members taking the lead with addressing parent groups at evening meetings as illustrated in this quote from a teacher on the site team: [Another AVID teacher] and I spoke to a parent group last month at night about AVID…(Pilot study interview, May 10, 2010).

**Coordinated distribution.** This third type of practice is a distribution of leadership activities that involve leaders co-performing a leadership routine. The formal and/or informal leaders can work separately or together but what they work on needs to be sequentially ordered tasks. The sequence is necessary for the performance of the routine as the tasks build upon each other and need to be done in a specific order.

This coordinated distribution was apparent at both of the high schools. There were tasks related to the recruitment and retention AVID students that had been designed by the teams. Both schools had designed a variety of recruitment tasks that were accomplished by multiple individuals and occurred over the course of the academic year. A sampling of the tasks includes:

- Creating or revising tools (application forms) early in the year
- Preparation of team members to go to feeder pattern sites
- Conducting presentations to potential AVID students.
Team members worked together and interacted with other tools. They created schedules for interviews, conducted interviews and used rubrics that had been created by team members to support them with the selection of students after the interviews were complete. They decided upon a protocol for notifying students and parents of the outcome and had a timeline for induction and articulation of new students. Each of these tasks was conducted sequentially and multiple team members worked to coordinate this process.

The coordinated type of distribution was also apparent when the site team members worked to support students in their quest for scholarships. Both high schools’ team members supported students in applying for multiple scholarships. Students at both schools were successful and received multiple scholarship awards.

...it goes back to the work that’s been done by the coordinator and site team members in preparing their seniors for interviews...they come prepared with how to act, interact in an interview scenario as well as with their portfolio they are polished...you can tell they have been coached...They have great results—and it’s a variety of scholarships, not just AVID scholarships...(Interview, December 17, 2010).

Each of these routines of recruitment and providing students with scholarship support required more than one person to take leadership actions and interactions with the tools they created. The tasks were performed in a logical sequence over an extended period of time.

Summary of Research Question Three

The presentation of data and discussion of the findings illustrates that a wide distribution of leadership practice among the AVID site team does exist across the three sites in this study. The distributed leadership practice that occurs goes beyond the leader-
plus aspect. The distributed leadership is not synonymous with or to be confused with the term “delegated” leadership since the people who act in the role of leader have voluntarily assumed the role and are excited to do so—they have not been assigned to perform a duty or pressured to participate in the leadership role. Distributed leadership at these sites has not been misunderstood to mean that everyone is the “leader”. Designated site coordinators and administrators are identified as leaders and the participation of all of the team members’ together result in a mutual experience of learning and results in an environment that exhibits distributed leadership practice.

The site team members work together across a variety of routines and produce a variety of tools that support their work. Multiple individuals interact in routines such as participation in site team meetings, the examination of data and the recruitment of students. They participate in an active process of recruitment and manage multiple aspects of the AVID program expectations such as college tutors and supporting AVID students beyond the school day. These routines seem to be contributing to and enhancing the college going potential and actual college going rates of AVID students. Some of these AVID routines have spread beyond the AVID elective such as teaching critical reading, Cornell note-taking or assisting non-AVID students to prepare for college. Thus, several of these AVID routines, enacted by the site team, are supporting all students in the schools.

This distributed leadership perspective was a valuable focus for me as I examined leadership practice. Distributed leadership practice occurs across the three types of leadership distribution: collaborated, collective, and coordinated distribution in each of the schools. The interactions between the leaders, the followers and the situation at these
schools are in alignment with distributed leadership perspective, even if the leaders do not recognize it themselves. By using this framework, however, it was possible for me as researcher to see that collective distribution is greater at Singing Hills than at the other two sites. This has leadership implications that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter presented an overview of the background and context of the study. Data analysis was provided in response to the research questions. The data for Research Question 1 was displayed in table format to highlight the site team’s knowledge of the 11 Essentials. Research Question 2 was addressed through data presented in narrative form that addressed the practices of the AVID site team functioning as a Leadership Practice Community. These practices were identified as developing members’ leadership capacities, build and exchange knowledge, transfer best practices and solve problems of practice. The final section of Chapter 4 defined the Distributed Leadership perspective and addressed the third research question. Findings from interviews and site team meeting observations were presented to demonstrate the presence of the distributed leadership practice aspect across three types of distributed leadership: collaborated, collective and coordinated.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the research study, and a discussion of the results based on the data presented in this chapter. The final sections of the chapter propose conclusions, implications for practice and recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 5
Discussion

This chapter presents an overview of the study that includes a statement of the problem, a review of the methodology, and a summary of the data presented in Chapter 4 with a discussion of the results. Final sections discuss conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for practice and future research.

Statement of the Problem

As stated in Chapter 1, there has been a rigorous educational debate raging for decades about what is wrong with American schools and what is needed to improve them, yet the need for change has never been as urgent as it is today. The current secondary school experience is not preparing students with the skills and knowledge that they need to be successful in the 21st century, especially students of color and those students from low-income and non-English speaking families. The problem and rationale for this study were founded on the need for school reform that supports equity and access for all students, from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. School reform that incorporates new practices of leadership from the distributed leadership perspective as school sites’ expansion of leadership extends beyond the formal role of the school principal to form a leadership practice community is the key focus of this study.

In order for students to live in the global “knowledge economy”, all students in American schools need to be prepared for the future with new skills for college, career and citizenship (Wagner, 2008). In order to thrive in the 21st century, students need to be proficient in core academic skills of reading, science and mathematics as well as be able to think critically, ask good questions, work in teams, distinguish good information from
bad, and speak an additional language along with speaking and writing in English (Wagner, 2008). All students need to be prepared for careers, some of which do not even yet exist and must live together peacefully, accepting one another as equals and celebrating each other’s uniqueness.

A college readiness system known as Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, addresses all of these needs is currently available to schools. Since its beginning in 1980 with 32 students in one classroom, AVID now serves over 400,000 students and is found in 4500 middle schools and high schools in 47 states as well as the District of Columbia and 16 countries/territories (www.avidcenter.org).

AVID’s mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

The foundation of AVID is represented in the AVID 11 Essentials, which prescribe the setting up of the AVID elective classes for eligible students, implementing AVID curricular strategies school-wide and sustaining AVID. The Essentials provide a guide for the work of the AVID site team, which is intended to serve as a leadership body and is called for in the 11th Essential. This leadership body is designed ideally to be an active, interdisciplinary group of school representatives, including students and parents as appropriate, which meets regularly to collaborate on issues of student access in rigorous college preparatory courses.

There is no empirical evidence to support the possible relationship between the leadership practices of the AVID site team and the leadership practice called forth to meet the AVID mission. This study set out to fill this gap in the research literature by examining the AVID site team leadership practice from a distributed leadership
perspective and to explore the AVID site team as a leadership practice community as it works to prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

**Review of Methodology**

The purpose of this research study was to examine the leadership practice of the AVID site team as it performs the work of fulfilling the mission of AVID. To meet this purpose a descriptive, multiple case study of three highly rated and distinguished AVID schools took place in one AVID region in Southern California. The research questions were addressed using the results of qualitative data gathered via interviews with key site team members at each site, several site team meeting observations at each school site and a review of documents collected from the individual school sites that were chosen to participate. These three collection methods were used to triangulate the data and increase validity of the study (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). A rich description of the leadership practices of the AVID site team was developed and analyzed with the support of HyperRESEARCH tools.

**Summary of Results**

The results of this study are summarized by the research questions.

*Research Question 1: In what ways is the work of the AVID site team based on shared knowledge of the 11 program Essentials and how do these Essentials guide their work?*

Based upon interviews, site team meeting observations and the review of pertinent documents, the findings suggest that all three of the schools demonstrate a strong grasp of the 11 AVID Essentials and the Essentials provide direction and guide their work. Each school has self-assessed their level of implementation for every Essential at the Routine Use in the AVID elective (level 2) or higher. This level of mastery of the Essentials is
one of the first requirements that a school must demonstrate in order to be considered for the Demonstration Site visit. Another factor is the number of years that the site has been Certified (at least 5) and for high schools, there is a requirement that the school may have any configuration of grades 9-12 serving AVID students for at least 3 consecutive years and must have at least one graduating class of at least 20 seniors before the school can be recommended for Demonstration school preparation (www.avid.org).

Each school exhibited unique areas of mastery of specific Essentials. Upon further examination of the self-reported scores, it became clear that the shared knowledge of the 11 Essentials is evident and their implementation has resulted in the establishment of strong AVID programs. The schools are all working towards the goal of the institutionalization of these 11 Essentials, which takes the level of practice above and beyond that which occurs in the AVID elective class and offers the potential for school-wide impact. However, the observations revealed that site team meetings focused primarily on the nuts and bolts of running the AVID program and rarely focused on issues of school-wide implementation of instructional practices needed to ensure success of all learners.

For example, at all three schools, Essential 5 (a strong reading and writing curriculum as a basis for instruction) was rated at level 2 (Routine Use in the AVID elective). A common phenomenon across the three schools was the majority of the Essentials that deal with instructional or academic strategies (Essentials 5-Writing/Reading, 6-Inquiry, 7-Collaboration, and 8- Tutorial) were all rated at Level 2, indicating Routine Use in the AVID elective but not institutionalized or implemented as school-wide practice.
Research Question 2: How does the work of the AVID Site Team reflect the values and habits of a Leadership Practice Community and how do these practices impact the whole school? The values and habits of a leadership practice community provided the framework for the analysis and presentation of the data for this question in Chapter 4. There were four arenas of practice identified and these included a repertoire of resources such as routines, artifacts and vocabulary that the group develops over time. The leadership practices are designed to: develop members’ leadership capacity, build and exchange knowledge, transfer best practices and solve problems of practice. While there were data that suggested all four arenas of practice were in place across all of the research sites, two practices emerged as having the greatest potential for impacting the whole school and preparing “all students” for college readiness and success in a global society. The proposition connected to this research question (the more the practices of the AVID site team reflect a Leadership Practice Community, the more likely the team would affect school-wide practices in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society) was supported by the data. The three arenas of practice that seemed to offer the greatest potential for school-wide impact for all students were developing members’ leadership capacity, transferring best practices and solving problems of practice.

Data representing the leadership arena of developing members’ leadership capacity were divided between comments that referred to the site coordinator as leader and the site team members’ leadership practice. Both the site coordinator and the site team members are acknowledged as leaders on the campus and have reported multiple opportunities to impact other teachers and students at the schools.
Summary of site coordinators’ leadership. Although the data indicate that the AVID team reflects many elements of a community of leadership practice, the site coordinator still plays a critical leadership role. The site coordinators all carry heavy loads and take responsibility for many tasks, ranging from leading the team, being the site contact for all AVID Certification process, to working closely with the administration and counselors on student schedules, to providing professional development for the team and whole staff. They are all knowledgeable about AVID beyond just strategies and methodologies, and they care deeply about their students and their schools. While all of these characteristics border on the heroic, there is a downside to being identified as the site coordinator. All of the coordinators, and even a few members of the site team, speak of “burn out” when they share about the role of the AVID site coordinator. For the most part, the coordinators request support when they feel they need it and do make efforts to build the capacity of their team members. However, the job takes a toll on this leader.

Summary of site team members’ leadership. As shown in Chapter 4, the site team members at all three schools take an active role in a variety of leadership activities and are provided with many opportunities to develop themselves as leaders. For example, all team members played an active role in the recruitment and selection of new students at Singing Hills and most of the team members at the other two sites have some input in the process. All team members indicated they help other staff members by playing lead roles in department or grade level meetings, in sharing resources, in conducting professional development and modeling lessons. The resource teachers, who are also members of the site team, in particular, assumed the modeling role. The Language Arts resource teacher at MiraLuna has hosted lunchtime meetings to discuss strategy implementation and the
ESL resource teacher at Round Robin has volunteered to attend the AVID Summer Institute and works with the students to expand Cornell note-taking across the curriculum. At Singing Hills, the Literacy Resource teacher is also a renowned staff developer for the AVID Center and is responsible for designing the professional development on the school site. These site team members exercise their influence and provide support and leadership to other teachers on the site.

Although all site teams in all the schools reflected a strong sense of community of practice (passion for the goal, collaborative work, shared language) the level of a leadership community of practice varied across the sites. Singing Hills displayed more of the values and beliefs of a leadership community with roles widely dispersed across the team and work toward school-wide implementation. In contrast, at Mira Luna the coordinator had a more difficult time in empowering and trusting the other team members to take on leadership roles.

*Summary of transfer of best practices.* Site teams have demonstrated the practice of transfer of best practices among themselves and with other staff members. One way was by sharing AVID strategies and student achievement data to monitor student progress during the grade level meetings. All three schools have adopted a Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure (DuFour, Du Four, Eaker & Many, 2006) for these meetings and have designated time during the PLC to share best practices. The transfer of best practice also occurred through various site team members’ modeling of strategies in classrooms and other venues. The transfer of specific best practices that impact student learning included strategies from the Critical Reading curriculum and Cornell notes, along with dialectic journals.
Summary of solving problems of practice. The data presented for the final leadership practice, solving problems of practice, were limited to how the team addressed aspects specifically connected to the AVID program design and implementation, such as planning and facilitating college field trips and improving parent involvement. During the observations of the site team meetings at the three schools, however, there was little evidence of the teams solving problems of practice that relate to academic achievement.

Research Question 3: In what ways does a distributed leadership perspective provide insights into the work of preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society? The final research question examined the “how” as well as the “what” of leadership. The distributed leadership perspective was used as a frame in deciding what to look at when investigating leadership. Three types of distribution of leadership (collaborated, collective and coordinated) were analyzed to reveal leadership practices that support the work of the team. These three types of distribution were used as a tool to diagnose and assess leadership practice in new ways and offer some insight for schools.

It was evident in the data from interviews and observations that distributed leadership practice is occurring in the actions and interactions between the leader, the follower and the situation. The leadership practice at all three schools goes beyond the leader-plus aspect described by Spillane (2006). Distributed leadership at the schools does not occur as synonymous or confused with the term “delegated” leadership since the people who have accepted responsibilities and participate in the role of leader have voluntarily assumed their roles and are excited to do so—they have not been assigned to perform a duty or pressured to participate in the leadership role.
Similarly, distributed leadership practice at the sites has not been misunderstood to mean that everyone is the “leader”. Designated administrators accountable for AVID and site coordinators identified and accepted as leaders by the team members are in the formal roles. Leadership is stretched across the team as members periodically assume leadership roles as the situation warrants. The participation of all of the team members’ together resulted in a mutual experience of learning and an environment that exhibited distributed leadership practice. Several site team members across all three schools have assumed leadership roles in various arenas, and some of them would like to be even more involved.

The three types of leadership distribution that were used as a framework for identifying the distributed leadership practice at the schools. All three patterns of leadership were found across the three schools, with collaborated distribution being the strongest and the “leadership practice is stretched over the work of two or more leaders who work together at the same time and in the same space to execute the same leadership routine” (Spillane, 2006 p. 60). Collective leadership seemed to be the most underutilized and will be discussed more fully in the next section.

Discussion

Several points that have emerged from the study will be discussed in reference to the research literature. The topics of effective teams, organizational learning, producing breakthrough results, distributed leadership patterns as well as the value of external support and recognition will be discussed in this section.
Effective Teams

It is clear that the AVID National Demonstration sites in this study have strong site teams. They demonstrate aspects of implementation that are established in the indicators of Essential 11. For example, at each site, a broad group of site representatives meets regularly to collaborate on planning and logistical issues as well as engage in problem solving on issues of access and student success in rigorous courses. They have worked very hard to be distinguished as National Demonstration sites.

Many studies of AVID have scrutinized the value of the AVID program (Mehan, et al. 1992; Swanson, Mehan & Hubbard, 1993; Mehan, Hubbard, Lintz & Villanueva, 1994) and the positive results that are made available to students because of their involvement in AVID (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1999; Nelson, 2007; Swanson, Mehan & Hubbard, 1993; Watt, Powell & Mendiola, 2004, Watt, Huerta & Lozano, 2007). None have identified the work or leadership practices of the AVID site team as the foundation of these positive results. Research literature on effective teams reinforces the critical role that teams play in schools in getting work accomplished and solving problems.

Larson and LaFasto (1989) conducted a three-year study of an inquiry that was posed among an extraordinarily wide range of teams. They invited response to one central question, “What are the secrets of successful teams?” and found a surprising consistency among the characteristics of effective teams. They identified eight characteristics that explain how and why effective teams develop. The eight characteristics are as follows:

- A clear and elevating goal
- Results driven structure
- Competent team members
Many of these are consistent with the characteristics demonstrated by the AVID site teams studied. Commenting from my positionality as a Regional AVID Coordinator, I have provided support to a great number of site teams and have witnessed enormous variance in site team composition and results accomplished. The three site teams in the study are among the finest examples of strong teams that I have experienced. Observation data indicate that cooperation is stronger in the two high school teams but overall, all three teams worked in collaboration to have a powerful AVID program at their schools as demonstrated by the excellent student achievement results. The characteristics identified by Larson and LaFasto (1989) are comparable with the five disciplines presented by Senge (2006) in the following discussion of organizational learning.

**Organizational learning.** Peter Senge (1990) reintroduced the term “learning organization” in his seminal work, *The Fifth Discipline*. He described a learning organization as a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality. And how they can change it (Senge, 1990, p.12). This process of change is the work of organizational learning. There are five disciplines or “component technologies” to master associated with organizational learning: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision and team learning. Site team members exhibited high levels of personal mastery of AVID, and the site teams had been in existence for a number of years so the shared vision aspect was not in question. However, based upon interview and observation, I determined there were three of the disciplines that the site
teams could expand their mastery. These are systems thinking, mental models and team learning. Systems thinking is described as the ability to comprehend and address the whole and is a way to examine the inter-relationships between the parts. It provides both the drive and rationale to integrate the other four disciplines. This is a valuable tool for site teams as they work to fulfill the AVID mission to close the achievement gap and prepare *all students* for college readiness and success in a global society, not just those in the AVID program. As shown in Chapter 4, the teams were linked to the school as a whole through attendance of administrators at their meetings and through the participation on two of the teams of teachers who teach core subjects but not AVID elective. In addition, AVID team members were providing some school-wide professional development. Nevertheless, AVID site team meetings that were observed rarely discussed or explored AVID as an instructional strategy that could help the schools move out of program improvement. The recent establishment of PLCs in these schools and the participation of AVID site team members on them could be a step forward to systems thinking.

Mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions and generalizations that influence how people understand the world and impact how we take action. Often, mental models are likened to “blind spots” in that they are below our conscious awareness and are not recognized until confronted and dismantled. This is an important aspect for site teams to be willing to examine their own assumptions about students’ abilities and aspirations. The interviews and observations showed the team members’ strong commitment to ensure success of AVID students, but some did not seem to believe such success could be achieved by other students not in AVID. Team learning is the discipline
designed to develop the capacity of a team to create the results that are important to the members. Team learning builds upon personal mastery and shared vision and uses dialogue as a tool for people to become aware of their thinking. This concept of team learning is relevant to the findings of this study in two ways. First, team members were active participants in AVID summer institutes and other learning opportunities provided by the county. Also as shown in Chapter 4, a number of the team members were highly regarded for their expertise that contributed to the teams’ learning. Second, however, observations of team meetings revealed the team focused more on nuts and bolts of running the AVID program rather than on any systematic discussion of how to improve teaching and learning school-wide, which would be needed if the team is to achieve the AVID mission. One explanation of the absence of this level of team learning may be that the time required to manage each school’s rather extensive AVID program is all that can be accomplished in monthly team meetings. A second explanation is that the idea of focusing on how to improve teaching and learning is not in the mental model of team members or in the professional development provided to the team by AVID.

Producing Breakthrough Results

Even when a strong site team and an excellent program that achieves good results for AVID students is in place, this does not guarantee the demonstration sites will be impacting overall school achievement. All three of these highly rated AVID schools were classified as program improvement for failing to meet their Adequate Yearly Progress goals for all subgroups, especially English language learners. Thus the data indicate that there is partial support the proposition that the more connected the AVID site team is to the 11 Essentials, the more likely they are working to prepare all students for college
readiness and success in a global society. Based on data such as the “a-g” completion and graduation rates at the high schools, it is clear that they were addressing the proposition in terms of the AVID students but not the whole school population. There is no question that the site teams are working diligently but there is a question if they are working on the work that will produce the desired academic outcome for all students. Central to this line of thinking, in a study commissioned by the National Governors Association, Elmore (2003) concluded that

…knowing the right thing to do is the central problem of school improvement. Holding schools accountable for their performance depends on having people in schools with the knowledge, skill and judgment to make improvements that will increase student performance. (p. 9)

Wagner, et al. (2008) envisioned a Leadership Practice Community of school leaders who are committed to solve problems of practice related to teaching and learning challenges together to create system wide improvement. The learning aspect is not only meant as a reference to the students’ learning but it is designed to explore this realm for the teachers’ learning their craft and expanding their skills as well. The AVID site team demonstrates some of the qualities of such a community with a strong focus on results for AVID students. This confirms that a focus on results, or the characteristic of a “results driven structure” as identified by Larson and LaFasto (1989) and Schmoker (2006) was important but it was not found to be a school-wide emphasis.

There was no evidence of the AVID site team coming together to create new knowledge about how to improve teaching throughout the school. There was limited evidence in team discussions or teamwork or site plans that a reflective element that focuses on issues of instruction is in existence at any of the schools. Schmoker (2006)
makes a bold claim that classroom instruction itself has the largest influence on student achievement, and he asserts that most instruction, despite good intentions, is not effective. He believes instruction could improve significantly through ordinary and accessible arrangements such as self-managing teams that have become popular among teachers and administrators. These structures are referred to as a professional learning community (PLC). These PLC groups are in place school-wide at each of the schools in the study but it was beyond the scope of this study to explore the ways in which they are functioning. There was an indication that the AVID site team realized they could integrate some of their work through this structure and AVID members reported sharing curricular strategies during the PLC grade and department level meetings. For example, in one school the English and Social Studies Departments had embraced the Critical Reading strategies learned from AVID.

Studies of PLCs (Porter, 2011; Voelker, 2011) have shown that well functioning PLCs demonstrate four of the effective team characteristics that were identified by Larson and LaFasto (1989): a results-driven structure that exists in a collaborative climate, creating competent team members who are working together to reach a clear and elevating goal. The PLC with effective team characteristics is a link in the school’s overall system and provides an opportunity for the schools to employ Senge’s (2006) systems thinking, examine mental models and engage in team learning. The results of my study suggest that the AVID site team, although only one part of the schools’ overall system, could play a lead role in bringing instructional strategies to the PLCs. However, more time may need to be devoted to team learning by the site team itself before it can fulfill a larger systemic role. As noted above, the work involved in maintaining a
successful AVID program is an extensive endeavor that leaves the site team little time to think about taking AVID strategies system wide.

_Distributed Leadership Patterns_

An important finding from this study is that all three types of leadership distribution (collaborated, collective and coordinated) were found across all sites. Evidence of _collaborated_ distribution, or “leadership practice that is stretched over the work of two or more leaders who work together at the same time and in the same space to execute the same leadership routine” (Spillane, 2006 p. 60) occurred at the regular site team meetings and during events offered for parents. The second type, or _collective_ distribution of leadership practice, occurred when two or more leaders were working separately but inter-dependently to co-perform a leadership routine. The performance of the leadership depended upon the routine such as the practices related to examination of student data and the training and scheduling tutors. The leaders did not have to be in the same place at the same time to accomplish these tasks. The third type of distribution is the _coordinated_ distribution of leadership that involved two or more leaders co-performing a leadership routine. The formal and/or informal leaders could work separately or together but the work involved sequentially ordered tasks such as recruitment practices for new AVID students or college scholarship application support for seniors. Leadership functions are stretched out over multiple leaders and leadership practice occurred in the interactions between the leaders, the followers and the situation at these schools as they went about the work of AVID. Witnessing the work of the site teams as they functioned within the distinct types of distribution of leadership affirmed their selection as AVID National Demonstration schools.
Even though all types of distribution were evident, the collective leadership type seemed to be underutilized. This type of distribution could be increased and that may alleviate the “burn out factor” that was associated with site coordinator role. Both followers and leaders on site teams reported that the coordinator was overburdened. All three site coordinators addressed this concern. Two of them were in a conversation to step down from the role and one of them voiced the desire to find a way to engage more team members and minimize the experience of overload. The site team at Singing Hills provided an extensive example of collective distribution of leadership. At that site, many tasks were spread out across each of the team members; nevertheless, they could find ways to disperse the leadership even more. Formal duties such as on-line data submission to AVID Center and site-based routines such as the fall class articulation procedures with the counseling staff could be distributed.

The site coordinator at Round Robin is new to the role and could use extra support in completing leadership routines. There was evidence of effective team characteristics identified by Larson and LaFaso (1989) such as a clear and elevating goal as the site team prepared for a validation visit to be re-certified as a Demonstration school and a collaborative climate. However, the data also indicated that it was easy for the team to allow the coordinator to take the lead and do most of the tasks. Another characteristic of effective teams identified by Larson and LaFasto (1989) is a unified commitment. This is evident in words but observations at site team meetings did not validate it. The team members say they are on board with AVID and with maintaining their designation as an AVID National Demonstration site and yet the lack of initiative and support of the Round Robin AVID coordinator to make this happen was not evident.
Impact of Internal and External Support and Recognition

Larson and LaFasto (1989) identified external support and recognition as a final characteristic of effective teams. This provides a motivation to teams as they work. The value of internal support was also evident at all of the schools. Observation and interview data confirmed the strong desire and appreciation of having administrator support present at site team meetings and various AVID events. At two of the schools, there was an administrator present at every site team meeting and at the third school, the administrator was very supportive of AVID even if not able to attend every meeting. Members of the schools’ site teams acknowledged the presence of the administrator as a support and the only complaint registered was that they wanted even more of their administrator’s time. All sites appreciated the external support provided by the district liaison. Important recognition was provided through external validation team visits to convey the distinction of AVID National Demonstration School. This distinction is a powerful motivator and provides a source of pride that extends across the whole school and out into the community.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest several important conclusions. First, significant to this study is the application of the concepts of the Leadership Practice Community and the Distributed Leadership perspective as a method for examining the current leadership practice provided by the AVID site team. The value in utilizing both of these concepts became even more apparent during the examination of the implementation of the 11 AVID Essentials. The study findings indicate that for the AVID site team to be successful in implementing the 11 Essentials to an institutionalized level most likely will require a
well-developed community of practice. Attention may also need to be given to how best to distribute the leadership practices needed to achieve full implementation.

A common phenomenon across the three schools was the majority of the Essentials that deal with instructional or academic strategies (Essentials 5-Writing/Reading, 6-Inquiry, 7-Collaboration, and 8-Tutorial) were all rated at implementation Level 2, indicating Routine Use in the AVID elective, but they were not at the institutionalized, or school-wide level of practice. I conclude that the full impact of AVID’s promise will not be realized until the implementation of these instructionally based Essentials is fully institutionalized.

Another important conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that there is an absence of leadership practice of the AVID site team in coming together to create new knowledge about how to improve teaching and solve problems of practice that are connected to the arena of classroom instruction. Aligning with current structures that are in place on the campus, such as grade level PLC meetings is a good way to establish communication that may impact school-wide results.

A final conclusion is that there is value in site teams using the distributed leadership perspective as a means to discuss the current level of distribution of leadership and to improve the work of the team. An inextricable link between the leaders, the followers and the situation and the interactions between all three of them creates an energetic impact that influences the accomplishment of the team’s work. The community of practice and distributed leadership perspective provide models that schools could use in their quest to close the achievement gap and prepare all students for college readiness and success in a global society.
Recommendations for Practice

According to Brandt (2003), a school community that invites deep and sustained professional learning is more likely to have an impact on student achievement. To expand the level of practice of AVID strategies to that of school-wide implementation would require a focus on not only the instructional strategies connected to these Essentials, but possibly also in the continuous development of the teaching skills required to help all students meet rigorous standards. That focus would require a leadership perspective that includes the site team members addressing problems of practice as called out in the Leadership Practice Community as proposed by Wagner et al., (2008). These problems of practice that occur in the instructional realm need to be examined in new ways and the members of the team must be willing to work together toward this end.

Another implication for practice is that currently, no training is offered to address this important reflective learning aspect of becoming a Leadership Practice Community by AVID Center or the County office targeting AVID site teams. The limited feedback and focus provided by the Regional Coordinators is designed to provide teachers with comments related to the presence of strategies such as those from the Critical Reading trainings in the AVID classrooms, not to provide guidance or modeling on the craft of teaching them. This practice of feedback/reflection could be expanded to include site team members making visits to each other’s classes in the form of an instructional walkthrough or some similar practice where the team members develop a kind of “critical friend”/ coaching relationship with one another.

The distributed leadership perspective was a valuable tool of focus for me as I examined leadership practice at the schools and I believe it could serve the site teams at
schools to self-assess their own leadership practice. Witnessing the work of the site teams as they functioned within the distinct types of distribution of leadership affirmed their selection as AVID National Demonstration schools. The formal leader role is not compromised or diminished in any way by spreading leadership functions over multiple leaders and the situation.

The school site team members were unfamiliar with the theoretical framework of Distributed Leadership and were not aware that the actions they were taking were representative of leadership practice as outlined by Spillane (2006). The implication for practice is for the site teams and for the AVID Center to consider providing an opportunity for training and development of site teams on the Distributed Leadership perspective. Teams could engage in dialogue around the various leadership tasks and commit to the collective type that could be done separately and interdependently to better support the students and each other as a team.

I recommend that AVID Center consider designating as Demonstration sites the schools that show exemplary leadership practice and teamwork like Singing Hills and consider instituting a second Demonstration category for schools that also meet the AVID mission of closing the achievement gap and preparing all students for success. It is valuable to recognize both types of success, at the level of site team and school-wide. Strong teams are the foundation for moving practice school-wide and it is appropriate to acknowledge both levels of achievement, because the recognition of being distinguished as an AVID National demonstration site is a powerful motivator.
Recommendations for future research

The first section of AVID’s mission is to close the achievement gap. Although this topic was not the focus of this study, this aspect of the mission does deserve study. The data in this study indicate that the AVID students, who are students in the academic middle, achieving in the C grade range when selected for AVID participation, are outperforming the other students’ school-wide achievement in graduation rate and “a-g” completion rates. Since many of these students are likely to not complete the a-g requirements for admission to California colleges and universities, AVID does seem to have “gap closing” potential. A large scale quantitative study that examines and the results of AVID schools and other non-AVID schools as well as AVID schools with high levels of institutionalization with those that do not could provide insights into how AVID is meeting its mission as well as other aspects of student achievement that may lead to interesting conclusions. The disaggregation of the various student groups across racial, ethnic and gender data would also be useful and provide information on the current status and may provide insights of ways to address the achievement gap between groups.

Another area for further research would be to compare schools that are labeled demonstration sites with those that are not. What are similarities and differences among these schools? Are there schools comparable to the ones in this study that are labeled demonstration sites and have better overall outcomes for students? In what ways are these schools’ AVID site leadership teams similar or different in their practices? It would also be important to know how teachers in general perceive the work of the AVID team?

Finally this study showed the value of exploring the role of the AVID site team and its work through the lenses of distributed leadership and community of practice. It
would be insightful to see if more explicit teaching about models of distributed leadership and characteristics of communities of practice could enhance the work of leadership teams.
APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Researcher will introduce self and make sure all consent forms are signed.

The role of the AVID Site Team in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society

Site Number__________________ Date __________

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. This project is designed to help me discover a possible bridge between the leadership practices and interactions of the AVID site team and preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

The purpose of this interview is to allow you to provide feedback on your thoughts about the work of your AVID site team and the possible relationship between the leadership practices and interactions of the site team and preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. The interview is to gain your perceptions and feedback, not to evaluate anything that you say. Your identity will be kept confidential, as will your responses. All of the responses to all of the interviews that I will be conducting will be analyzed for common themes or patterns that relate to the practices and interactions of the site team.

I will be capturing this interview by using a digital tape recording of our discussion today. The tape recording will not reveal your name and will only be reviewed by me as the researcher and possibly by my University dissertation committee members. These
people are not related to any of your employers. All of this is being done in hopes of seeking a relationship between the leadership practices of the AVID site team and preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. Again, I want to stress that there is no right or wrong response, and in fact, the depth of your answers will be most informative as I analyze the data.

I have prepared 4 major areas for discussion. I may need to seek clarification from you prior to proceeding to the next question. I may also need to go back later in the discussion to clarify something you might have said earlier.

Question 1: AVID Site team

a. How would you describe your involvement with the AVID program?

b. Are you a member of the AVID site team? (if so, how long have you been?)

c. Have you attended the Summer Institute within the past 2 years? Ever?

d. Can you describe a peak experience—a significant moment that stands out for you in which you felt most involved, most empowered or most proud of because of your experience as a member of or working with the Site team?

e. Please explain and describe how site team meetings are conducted. Options: Tell me what, if anything, is a consistent feature of all of the meetings? What team products are produced? Are the meetings structured? Do you follow an agenda? If so, what types of agenda items are typically addressed? Who creates the agenda?

f. How does your work with the Site Team support you in your professional role?

g. What is your role on the Site team? In the school?
Question 2: AVID site team impact on the school

h. How do teachers work together to establish school-wide expectations for student learning? Do most teachers at this school support the idea of preparing all students for college? Do you consider that your school prepares “all students for college readiness”?

i. How often does the site team examine data to make “data-driven” decisions? What kinds of data do you examine?

j. How often do site team members participate in Professional Development opportunities? What types of PD is offered?

k. What do you most value about the site team’s contribution to the school?

l. How would you describe the impact of your AVID program school-wide?

m. How is the progress of school-wide implementation measured?

n. Share an example of a time when your team worked together to ensure that all students, not just students in the AVID elective, are learning at high levels and preparing for college.

Question 3: Leadership

o. Who provides leadership during site team meetings? In what ways?

p. Tell me about a time when you experienced yourself as a leader at this school.

p. How do you think the members of the site team view the relationship between your site team’s actions and preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society?

q. How does the principal/administrator over AVID positively support or adversely impact the work of the AVID site team?
r. Do you experience your leadership being empowered by your administration—do you consider yourself a Leader? Can you explain?

s. What do you most value about the contributions of your leadership to the site work that is done?

Question 4: Final Word

t. If you had three wishes for making your AVID site team more effective, what would they be?

u. What is the best part of working at your school?

Do you have any final comments or anything else you want to add?
APPENDIX B

University of California, San Diego
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

The role of the AVID Site Team in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society: A multiple case study

Liz Laughlin, a graduate student and Ed.D. candidate from UCSD, (the PI) is conducting a research study to find out more about the role of the AVID Site Team in preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a member of the school’s AVID site team. There will be approximately forty participants in this multiple-case study.

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the work of the AVID site team and the preparation of all students for college readiness and success in a global society. The study will look at how the AVID Site Team at secondary schools functions, the work they do and the documents they generate as a part of their work.

If you agree to be in this study, the following will happen to you:

• You will be observed during three regularly scheduled AVID site team meetings on campus and field notes will be taken by the Principal Investigator to record the meeting topics and events.
• You may be invited to participate in a one-on-one interview that will last approximately one hour.
• Your permission to tape record the interview is requested. There will be questions addressing six major areas related to your participation on the AVID site team at your school. There are no right or wrong answers and your candid responses are appreciated.
• If selected for an interview, you may decline to answer any of the questions and you may stop the tape recording at any time.

Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include:

• A potential for the loss of confidentiality. However, research records will be kept confidential to the fullest extent allowed by law. The UCSD Institutional Review Board and the committee overseeing this research may review research records. However, all information collected in this study is confidential.
  o Responses will be anonymous and kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms for participants and anyone mentioned by a participant.
  o All audiotape recordings and transcripts of individual interviews will be entered into a computer file and both hard copies of field notes of observations, transcription copies and digital copies of will be stored
in a locked safe. This data will be maintained on a single password protected computer and an additional password will be required to open files.

- The researcher is the only individual with access to this safe, computer, and file.

- You may feel embarrassed if you are not invited to participate in an interview or even if you are invited to participate in an interview. You may bring this issue to the attention of the researcher and have your feelings addressed without any negative consequences.

Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant new findings immediately.

The alternatives to participation in this study are:

- To opt out of participating at all
- To decline to participate in a Site Team meeting while it is being observed
- To agree to be interviewed without the use of the digital recorder
- To decline to be interviewed

Although there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, your school will be presented with composite data that could provide helpful insights to move your Site team forward on their work to impact the whole school’s work. The information will be informative for the investigator to learn more about the larger educational community, contributing to empirical research on the leadership practices of the AVID Site Teams and society may benefit from this knowledge.

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from participating or refuse to answer specific questions in an interview at any time without any penalty. If you decide that you no longer wish to continue in this study, you will be excused from participating at any time with no repercussions.

The PI may remove you from the study without your consent if the PI feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue.

In compensation for your time, you will receive a $5.00 Starbucks card as a token of appreciation for participating in this research as an interview subject. There will be NO COST to you for participating in this study.

Liz Laughlin has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach her at 619-922-1588.
Questions about the study can also be addressed to her advisor, Dr. Janet Chrispeels, at 858-822-4253 or jchrispeels@ucsd.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may also contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of California, San Diego Human Research Protections Program at (858) 455-5050. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 455-5050 to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

You have received a copy of this consent document.

You agree to participate.

_______________________  ______________  ______________  ______________________
Subject's signature     Witness               Date
## APPENDIX C

Data Analysis Code frequency table:

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
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<td>AVID program expectations</td>
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<td>District expectations or support</td>
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<td>Examination of Data</td>
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APPENDIX D

Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):
   ___ School Newspaper
   ___ Site Team meeting minutes
   ___ ISS/CSS document
   ___ Site data 2009-10
   ___ Site Team plan
   ___ Report
   ___ Other

2. UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):
   ___ Newsletter/trifold
   ___ Type font
   ___ Seals
   ___ Other

3. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:

4. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:

5. Position (Title):

6. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)

   A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

   |   |   |   |
B. Why do you think this document was written?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

D. List two things the document tells you about the expectations for “All Students” of the school at the time it was written:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
REFERENCES


Swanson, M.C., Mehan, H. & Hubbard, L. (1993). The AVID classroom: A system of academic and social supports for low-achieving students. EDRS ED 368 832


