

10-21-2016

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James Gauer

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Recommended Citation

Gauer, James (2016) "Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Public School Students Striving for Occupational Mobility through Voluntary College Preparation Program," *Mānoa Horizons*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://kahualike.manoa.hawaii.edu/horizons/vol1/iss1/18>

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As a third-year student studying Health and Physical Education in Hawaii, I undertook this

course in my determination to understand and respect the process that families undertake to settle in Hawaii. The pathway I chose was to tutor middle school youth in a college-preparatory program. I now understand and appreciate my own immigration history, which supplements a foundation of awareness and respect for the families and their children that I will one day teach. It was challenging to critically analyze ethnic issues by integrating anecdotal journals, American legal and education history, all within a Hawaii context.

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Public School Students Striving for Occupational Mobility through Voluntary College Preparation Program

JAMES GAUER

Ethnic Studies 360 (Immigration to Hawai'i and US)

Mentor: Dr. Lisa Uperesa

It is clear to many families that education and career success in life go hand-in-hand, like cause and effect, and one college preparatory program may play a critical role in this relationship. This work identifies and explores intermediate school participants' responses and reactions towards a college-preparatory program, named Advancement via Individual Determination, on their campus. The program presents all students opportunities to excel academically and plan how they want to "climb up" their careers in a complex world. Readers will explore subjective observations, promotional materials, and peer testimonies of my experience as a weekly tutor for the program at Washington Middle School, located in Honolulu, Hawai'i from October to December of 2015. These findings can be further utilized to evaluate the program's effectiveness. Characteristics of student population represent ethnic minorities and socioeconomically underserved, a product of recent migrations to Hawaii from surrounding Pacific countries. The significance of people moving raises questions as who they are, what are they doing, and where are they going, which is partly answered by state-funded public institutions assigned to guide children and their families in becoming responsible American citizens, and fulfilling the general learner outcomes. Outreach and communication between the parties is essential to overcoming gender, cultural, and socioeconomic barriers to education.

The primary purpose of this research is to observe and evaluate one college-preparatory program at Washington Middle School that supports schools in this endeavor. There have been no formative assessments of the program conducted thus far, and it is intended that the public be aware of some insights gained through this research. The mission of a tested and proven college-readiness program called Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID), founded in California in 1980 (2015), is to increase occupational representation and academic achievement of underprivileged students. It is an elective course, active in many American public schools, of which over 100 institutions are nationally recognized as "Demonstration Schools" by an accrediting team. These schools excel in demonstrating the AVID commitment to bridge the achievement gap across the school by targeting average, gifted-talented, and students with disabilities to increase college readiness and graduation rates (Johnston 2013; 2015). In Hawai'i, two schools have achieved this prestigious distinction partly in credit to the committed AVID team, diverse funding, and student engagement. The schools are Campbell High School and Washington Middle (WHS). The 10-member

AVID team at WMS was awarded Hawai'i DOE Team of the Year (2014), setting them apart as a qualified group of committed and caring professionals. The students under this team are learning to be professional, open, caring and constructive. Supported by tutors from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa or Kapi'olani Community College, these tutors represent ethnic minorities who have attained higher education, which motivates the students to strive for excellence like they have. This particular classroom provided snacks and drinks for tutors. AVID program reflects the history of changing education and immigration reforms.

Historical Background of Education Reform

The catalyst for millions of families to migrate to the US was an immigration law reform (Hart-Celler Act of 1965) that preferred reuniting family members and bringing in skilled workers via work-visas (Ngai 2004:194-194; Volpp 2001:257, 260-261). Prior to its implementation, another federal act titled the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) provided free and compulsory primary and secondary education for children. The act was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 under President George W. Bush (2014; 2015) and more recently, as Every Child Succeeds Act of 2015 under President Barack Obama (Fabian 2015). This education is partly paid for by citizens' tax dollars. Access to higher education for the millions of transnational families would have been difficult without these reforms.

Underperforming schools in combination with low-income families were designated "Title" school under the ESEA of 1965. These schools were eligible for federal funding to improve aspects of educational performance (2014). Title I is concerned with improving academic performance and behaviors of students of low-income backgrounds, of which Washington Middle School is considered (2015). More than half of WMS students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch according to Public School Review's data (2012). Ethnic representation composes of 75% Asian, 20% White, and 5% Pacific Islander or other (ProPublica 2015). One federal grant that provides for high-performing yet low-income

schools is Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, also known as GEAR UP, which WMS successfully applied for (2015). Six years' worth of funding was allocated by the US Department of Education to implement the AVID program at WMS. AVID seeks to bridge the socioeconomic gap between the privileged students and the underserved multiethnic population within the school district.

Hawai'i's Ethnic Divisions

Higher education gives ethnic minorities power to move their socioeconomic positions and rebalance the representation of groups in the occupational realm in spite of historical advantages favoring a White, Japanese, and Chinese-dominant workforce in Hawai'i. Equal representation in managerial, professional, and other high-influence occupations associated with high salaries, opportunity for advancement, and safe working conditions are concerns voiced by parents of children in schools. It is safe to agree that people in power make important business, political, and social choices that transform the demographics of the land. The significance of this challenge is that by diversifying ethnic representation in upper-class positions through higher education, transnational families will be able to look up to and emulate role models who have escaped poverty, violence, negative stereotypes and unjust gender expectations (Mayeda, Pasko, Chesney-Lind 2006:16-18). Following the geopolitical transfer of Hawai'i to the United States of America in 1898, White, English-speaking Americans had already seized privileged governmental, entrepreneurial, and social positions of influence. The entrepreneurs within this group imported male and female workers predominantly from China, Japan, and the Philippines to labor on various plantations during late 1800s and early 1900s, which became the economic foundation at the time (Glenn 2002:193). The descendants of these ethnic groups eventually became the socioeconomic, political, and educational beneficiaries of their ancestor's grit and determination to pursue a better quality of life, which put them on similar power levels with the White Americans (Glenn 2002:190-195,225-230; Bill 1997: 31-38; Okamura 1994:163-169). For example, supply increased in regards to

their demands to access to quality educational programs, infrastructure, and technical skills, which resulted in their greater ethnic representation in managerial, professional, and technical occupations to this day (Okamura 1994:163). Compared to contemporary Native Hawai'i ans, Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and other minority groups' access to such power, an institutional inequality exists between the privileged and underrepresented groups according to University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Ethnic Studies Professor Jonathan Okamura (2008:45).

Many descendants access socioeconomic mobility because of their ancestral roots, which is not shared amongst the waves of ethnically diverse families traveling to Hawai'i or even local native Hawai'i ans who have resided in the islands for long frames of time. A 2006-2010 American Community Survey of Honolulu found 15% of the Native Hawai'ian and Pacific Islander populations aged 25 years or older held bachelor's degrees, lower than all other ethnic groups (2014). Meanwhile, ethnic minorities were overrepresented in blue-collar jobs: construction labor, janitorial, transportation, and service industries. Such occupations are attributed with lower salaries, no opportunities for career advancement, and hazardous working environments (Okamura 2008:45). Accurate census representation of multiethnic communities began when 2000 census data allowed households to check more than one ethnicity (Okamura 2008:44) which makes sifting out inequalities between the groups more visible.

Hawai'i's Educational Challenges

In Hawai'i, families wrangle with various challenges, to name a few: woeful costs of rent, food, taxes; English language acquisition and competency; public versus private school selection; and an overreliance on tourism success for economic prosperity. Most ethnic minority families cannot afford private institutions and must send children to public or charter schools that rely on emergency teachers and substitutes hired from the continental US (Okamura 2008:66). These teachers may be culturally incompetent of Hawai'i youth culture, which results in communicative disconnect and confusion with their students because a majority of emergency teachers are White while the majority student population are non-

White (Okamura 2008:66). The demand for qualified educational professionals who can engage and motivate students to achieve is vital, considering how role models of similar ethnicity in high socioeconomic positions can be unseen and out of mind (Okamura 2008:81). The risk is great for cycling back into poverty, remaining on the same income level and quality of living for these underprivileged families in Hawai'i due to costs of living, health emergencies, natural disasters, and an overemphasis on tourism revenues (Okamura 2008:58).

Primary, secondary, and University of Hawai'i education is mainly funded by the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE), in contrast to the continental US where separate districts have control over their own funding (Okamura 2008:65). A common reaction to unmet budget goals by the Hawai'i legislature is to underfund the DOE. Discrimination occurs indirectly towards ethnic minorities who are populating the schools, Okamura observes. The demand for funding is greater than the state budget; moreover, the priorities of the education officials and the government officials are disparate as observed in 2005, when nine out of 60 education projects were funded. This translated to only \$36 million out of a requested \$545 million budget (Okamura 2008:74). Characteristics of underfunding and undervaluing education include emergency hires from the continental US, lower teacher salaries compared to the national average, crumbling infrastructure (Okamura 2008: 61), and a growing demand for capital to meet changing environment conditions such air conditioners in the summer. Despite these characteristics, AVID is helping potential students whom have an internal drive to rise above circumstances.

The Tutor's Observations of AVID at WMS

The effectiveness of AVID at WMS was observed through interactions between tutors, students, teachers, the materials provided, teacher agency and professional development, school-wide engagement, time management and routines. Teachers constantly encouraged certain academic behaviors to align with AVID's objectives such as planning for

college selection and financing, occupational contemplation, maintaining and organizational system, developing relationships with teachers, enrolling in honors classes, talking to parents about their schooling, and asking critical questions to solve problems without being given all the components. Students are equipped with: Cornell Notes which helps students organize their question, notes, and summary of a topic; a Tutorial Request Form that breaks down difficult academic problems presented in core courses including mathematics, language arts, sciences, and social studies; and an organizational binder with subject tabs and a weekly planner (Johnston 2015). Students use the entire 50 minutes or 1 hour and 10 minutes of class time to advance in their studies.

To illustrate student engagement with AVID goals, I draw from one tutorial session with a group of 7th graders: Tongan male, Tongan female, Korean male, Caucasian male, and Samoan female. Each student completed a tutorial request form and presented their point of confusion to the group, after which they collaborated to solve the problem using a whiteboard. A majority of student confusions were in Algebra I or II. I believe students had trouble with Algebra I and II because they did not see the value of its usefulness outside the classroom. This unfavorable view towards math is concerning because mathematics is highly valued in engineering and finance sectors of work. AVID helps to expose student attitudes towards subjects that are being poorly presented to the student. Another reason for dissatisfaction towards math is the gross amount of formulas to know for tests and when to apply them in certain word problems. I reminded several students to be resourceful if the formulas were not readily provided by using the textbooks in class or asking another class member, to keep students moving and not stagnant at a dead end which results in failure. I understand that students grumble and complain of how long it takes to solve a problem because they are aware of how quickly they could find an answer on Google search, which is the conventional approach outside class. Still, the search requires the researcher to be literate.

Another group that I tutored is an example of cultural expression. The group consisted of two Tongan students, male and female, who addressed each other as “uncle” and “sister” respectively. They

called this relationship the “Tongan way.” While non-Tongan students were excluded from such labeling, I addressed the male and female student by these identities which encouraged them, and they were ready to refocus on the assignment.

A third group that I tutored displayed accommodation, respect, and collaboration. The presenter was a Japanese male student with a speech impediment. He presented his tutorial request form orally and the listeners showed mutual respect and understanding with no indications of bullying. Inquiry and collaboration are necessary qualities in advanced courses and college.

In a new tutorial period, the role of a tutor is critical and characteristic of AVID. I had a one-on-one interaction with a Japanese male student whose binder was severely damaged with papers stuffed inside. This habit of storing documents nonchalantly without making the effort to organize by subject accumulated to the point where the student was stuck on what to do next, until I helped him organize it. Reactions were well-received. The teacher thought it was a miracle! His classmates couldn't believe it! The ability to view problems from a different point of view helped the student progress.

In a later session, I noticed AVID focused on sustainable practices and long-term investment in the school. I watched a video of an alumni of WMS and AVID presenting AVID to incoming 6th graders. Other methods of outreach include presentations to school boards, clubs, businesses, conferences, word of mouth, clothing marketing, parent-teacher nights, and university partnerships. These practices produce a generation of high-achieving students. An “AVID Effectiveness Study” compiled by Lisa Pitch, Gwen Marchand, Bobby H. Hoffman, and Arlene Lewis in 2006 found that 93% of AVID alumni participate in college in addition to higher enrollment in honors courses compared to non-AVID students in Clark County of Las Vegas, Nevada.

What are student perceptions of AVID? One 7th grade Marshallese female student from Central Middle School's AVID program decided to opt-out of the program due to its writing intensive tutorial request forms, which several WMS students also expressed exasperation over. Two mixed European male students who were frustrated with their academic workload felt unnecessary pressure to complete the tutorial request form, which can take an

entire class session to complete if they are not focused. A Tongan female student offered to help them, but they rejected it. They expressed that the tutorials are useless if they have no difficulties in their core courses or a lack of graded material to revise. I explained this to the instructor, who recommended that they focus on the science fair project, which they were eager to work on.

Evaluation and Outcomes of AVID

AVID seeks to debunk false hopes and misleading alternatives to higher education and realistically evaluate other unique paths of success such as those experienced by Steve Jobs, celebrities and movie actors, winning the lottery, and professional athletics. Popular media can be a dangerous source of misinformation and misinterpretation for students. It is reasonable to deduce that children left to themselves without an authoritative education will fall into many unnecessary traps. One of the primary reasons for American education is to produce capable voting citizens in a democratic society. Without education, students would find it difficult to comprehend, understand, analyze, and evaluate public and private information presented through news corporations, employers, and other means of which people can be exploited due to ignorance and lack of discipline.

One projected outcome of AVID is reducing negative aspects of cultural capitalism, or commonly-held assumptions that one ethnic group is better suited for a certain occupation than another because of traits they possess. These traits can be capitalized by marketing certain roles towards targeted ethnic groups (Mayeda, Pasko, Chesney-Lind 2006:8-10). One example of a stereotype is that Samoan, Hawai'ian, or Tongan males are best qualified for security work or professional football due to their size, toughness, and strength. This is not entirely true and children do not need to be forced to join a certain work. For example, a film produced by a Tongan, titled *in Football We Trust*, by Tony Vainuku and Erika Cohn, stated that many Pacific Islander males participate in upper-level sports, yet few attain professional status as a means of providing for their families (2015). In reality, many Southeast Asians, Native Hawai'ians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos in

Hawai'i are placed at the lowest-median household income and the lowest in academic-level attainment, in addition to being overrepresented in service industries including transportation, tourism, retail, and restaurants (Okamura 2008:54).

Would I recommend this program to be adopted by Hawai'i public schools? Yes, to tackle ethnic inequality and access to quality education, I advocate the increased participation of public schools adopting AVID as their own. WMS is one of many multiethnic and low-income public schools in Hawai'i. This population is expected to increase over time considering the continuing Compact of Free Association's unfettered access to the US for emergency care, education, housing, rising oceans threatening island-homes; Tongans and Samoans who leverage the Mormon Church's religious mission in addition to kinship provisions; and Guamanians who are granted US citizenship through the 1950 Organic Act of Guam (Keany 2011; Lee 2008:11-12; Mayeda, Pasko, Chesney-Lind 2006:3, 8-10; ProPublica 2015). As fast-food diets spread to vulnerable and underdeveloped countries, diseases linked to an unhealthy diet and sedentary lifestyle will plague ethnic minorities who are not prepared to care for such cases, and forced to come to America, as was the case of Josefa Munez who brought her father from Chuuk to Hawai'i for dialysis (Keany 2011; Hoover and Nakaso 2007).

The WMS volunteer coordinator is nationally board certified under Professional Teaching Standards and both AVID instructors informed their students that they are attending a leadership conference, which exhibits their commitment to growing as an AVID instructor (Watt, K.M., Huerta, J., & Mills, S.J., 2010). A substantial pool of instructors and administrators are needed to learn the methods of AVID, in addition to paying for professional development (Sparks 2011; Watt, K.M., Mills, S.J., & Huerta, J. 2010). A similar study of AVID's successful implementation and adaptation at a low-income middle school in South Carolina shares how the school staff must decide whether AVID is suitable to serve their student demographics, if the school is willing to change its culture, and if staff are willing to take the lead over the long-term (Klar, Brewer, Whitehouse).

In one study initiated by the US Department of Education, the results indicated that AVID did not increase student literacy and comprehension, and critics argue whether enrolling in the elective is more beneficial than enrolling in another core course such as language arts or mathematics (2010). AVID is not geared towards teaching the content of core courses, but focuses on how students learn effectively through collaboration, resourcefulness, and applying higher-level thinking strategies such as inference, analysis, and comparison (2015). Considering this operating framework, I suggest that school administrations decide whether their student demographics can be supported by AVID and whether they can sustainably provide the capital and labor that AVID demands over the long term when impacts are notably manifested (Sparks 2011; Watt, K.M., Huerta, J., & Alkan, E. 2012; Black A.C. et al. 2008; 2008). For example, some schools may have more Title I or II funding, state, federal, and private grants, better facilities, more staff, or computer labs than others, which offers AVID instruction and professional collaboration through free social networking sites such as Edmodo (Anbe 2013).

AVID, over the long term, will help underserved ethnic groups collectively achieve parity with other privileged groups in socioeconomic standings. Compared to private school counterparts' access to quality education, public school students do have better chance of success than without AVID. Families can avoid spending money on unnecessary college credits if their AVID students enroll in honors courses (Johnston 2015). According to WMS Principal Michael Harano, individuals in these ethnic minorities can accomplish "world-renowned feats" if the school nurtures their "passion and voice" (2014). Jonathan Okamura agrees that individual merit should determine one's socioeconomic status, not ethnicity or the historical privileged group which tends to keep the wealth "in the family" (2008:64). Ethnic minorities can learn together and develop respect for one another whereas the typically privileged private school student may not have this volume of opportunity to connect with other ethnically-different

individuals. A notable dialogue involving one Tongan female student, who transferred from Dole Middle School's AVID, and a White-male senior tutor from Punahou High School, was about stereotyping what the Punahou student ate for breakfast. The Tongan female assumed that he ate from a fancy buffet. The senior student replied that he cooked an egg-sandwich with fruits at home.

AVID's long-term objectives are increasing graduation rates, honors and college enrollment rates and decreasing dropout rates. A typical high school dropout will either enter and remain in a low-paying job, enter the military, or enter the prisons. One-third of Hawai'i inmates are lacking a high school diploma (Okamura 2008:70). Topics that AVID does not adequately address include the rising tuition rates of colleges supplemented by a profit-motive mindset by administration officials to attract out-of-state students rather than locals, and the susceptibility of the tourism economy to recession or terroristic threats. DOE funding is disproportionately threatened because a sizable portion of the state budget stems off tourism revenues.

As a former student learning in Kalihi, one of the lowest household income districts in Hawai'i where Pacific Islanders and Filipinos were the majority, the tutoring experience was rewarding by giving back to a familiar place and people, teachers and students alike, who are committed to teach despite external circumstances that take away from education.

AVID helps reorganize this stratification of society by individual merit rather than by ethnicity and dead-end stereotyping. Students have designed goal cards of what occupation they will be in the future. Hung on separate strings above the desks, I noted that many occupational choices students selected, such as doctor, engineer, and lawyer, are not available in Pacific Island countries due to underdevelopment and lack of education (Connell 1987:71-72, 76-77). In America, these aspirations can be realized through AVID, and negative self-fulfilling prophecies about their statuses in society can be refuted (2015).

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