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Christie M. Plinski  
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Does AVID Higher Education (AVID HE) Increase Student Term-to-Term Progression,  
Persistence Toward Credited Classes and Social Capital for First-Generation College  
Students Placing Into Developmental Education: A Mixed Methods Study

by

Christie M. Plinski

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership: Administration

Dissertation Committee:

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Portland State University  
2018

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## Abstract

Often considered the gateway to the middle class in the United States, community colleges are struggling to find ways to support all students in career planning and preparation. Unfortunately, increasing numbers of first generation students who enter community colleges through the door of open access, place into developmental education (remedial) courses and must satisfactorily complete this often-rigid sequence before beginning college level classes. For many first-generation, under-prepared, under-resourced students, this is a frustrating and often insurmountable barrier, causing many students to abort their postsecondary training.

Creating intentional conditions and instructional strategies that support student learning is essential in increasing the number of first-generation, under-prepared and under-resourced students who enter and complete postsecondary training and degrees. Advancement via Individual Determination Higher Education (AVID HE) is one identified holistic support strategy showing positive trends in supporting this student population on one community college campus.

This study used a mixed methods approach which included both a statistical analysis of a treatment group in a combined reading/writing course called WR91 Mt Hood Community College AVID HE Learning Communities and two stand-alone reading/writing courses called RD90/WR90 courses, along with a case study qualitative methodology to investigate how AVID HE supports pre-college developmental education



students to develop sufficient social capital to transition from non-credit (pre-college) to credited courses and programs.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Access without support is not opportunity”  
Engstrom and Tinto (2008)

Community colleges are often considered the bridge to the middle class for many. It is the possibility of open access that provides opportunity for all students to enter postsecondary. Yet, nearly one-half of students who enter community college through the door of open access fail to persist to the next term let alone complete their career or educational goals (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Many of these students are first in their family to attend college. Many live in poverty. Many are first-generation, minority or underrepresented students. Many are older, returning to school after years of absence and carrying the challenges of life. And many must start their journey into postsecondary education through a lengthy sequence of remedial education classes. One common trait among most of these students is that they are under-prepared (academically or behaviorally) for the rigors of college and few find the support they need to succeed (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008).

Community colleges provide an affordable education to almost half of undergraduate students in the United States and often provide the impetus and access to create a lifetime of economic stability and educational attainment (American Association of Community Colleges [AACCC], 2014). Yet, for many in the United States, college completion remains an elusive goal. And completion is particularly elusive for adults



aged 25- to 34-year-old, many of whom enter through the doorway of developmental education (AACC, 2014). Poverty is becoming increasingly prevalent in the United States—more than at any other time in U.S. history (AACC, 2014). The middle class is shrinking and income inequality increasing. By 2018, nearly two thirds of all jobs in the United States will require some level of postsecondary education and training (AACC, 2014; Lumina Foundation, 2013). Research reveals that 28% of students at 2-year institutions had family income at \$28,000, which is well below the poverty level (Lumina Foundation, 2013). Yet, for many of these individuals, family, life challenges, under-preparedness and lack of college readiness or adequate social capital provide nearly insurmountable barriers to goal, certificate or degree completion. However, for those individuals who complete college—or attain even some level of postsecondary training—there is potential for greater lifetime income earning potential than those who do not, leveling the income and social strata inequality (Lumina Foundation, 2013).

Many efforts have been made to discover workable solutions; national and state policies have been written and systems restructured but with limited impact on providing sufficient supports for students who enter community colleges through the door of open access. President Obama issued a national call to ensure a world-class education for all in America in 2010, with priorities for establishing college-readiness (Blueprint for Reform, 2010). The state of Oregon followed this initiative in 2011 with a clear call for reform in the 40/40/20 Plan that calls for increased completions for all Oregonians by the year 2025. These policies and subsequent evolving theories from leading educators recommend a changed learning environment that ensures access for students and

adequate support to bridge the gaps for those who enter college under-prepared (Tinto, 2012). Yet, despite these efforts to build institutional bridges of support for diverse, under-represented, under-resourced and under-prepared students, they continue to face barriers (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Perna & Jones, 2013). The need for effective, evidence-based institutional supports for underprepared, first-generation students in community colleges has never been greater. The purpose of this study is to examine one institutional, holistic strategy called Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) Higher Education (HE) on improving retention and persistence for students placing into remedial education and increasing social capital associated with college persistence and success.

### **Key Terms and Concepts**

Academic preparation: the academic rigor (advanced level courses) of student's high school curriculum that prepares them for college credit-bearing classes; often related to students' college persistence and success (Choy, 2001; Reid & Moore, 2008; Wharburton, Bugarin, & Nunes, 2001).

AVID: AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) is a global nonprofit organization that operates with one guiding principle: Hold students accountable to the highest standards, provide academic and social support, and they will rise to the challenge. AVID's kindergarten through higher education system brings research-based curriculum and strategies to students each day that develop critical thinking, literacy, and math skills across all content areas. Established more than 35 years ago with one teacher

in one classroom, AVID today impacts more than 1.2 million students in 44 states and 16 other countries/territories (<https://www.avid.org>).

AVID HE: AHE is designed specifically to meet the needs of students attending a college or university. AHE resources systemically address the goals of increased learning, persistence, completion, and success in and beyond college. AVID assists higher education professionals in analyzing existing student support initiatives and data, identifying barriers and needs, and establishing and assessing student learning outcomes (<https://www.avid.org>).

AVID strategies and activities: (a) Teaches skills and behaviors for academic success, (b) Provides intensive support with tutorials and strong student/teacher relationships, (c) Creates a positive peer group for students, (d) Develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination (<https://www.avid.org>).

College readiness: College and career readiness refers to the content knowledge and skills students must possess in literacy and mathematics—including, but not limited to reading, writing, communications, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving—to be successful (without remediation) for any and all future endeavors (Van Dijk, Helsmoortel, Vandeweyer, & Kooy, 2016). OR: the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institute. College readiness includes a set of components including: (a) key cognitive strategies, academic knowledge and skills; (b) academic behaviors, and (c) contextual skills and awareness (college knowledge; Conley, 2007).

Completions: reaching degree or certificate attainment from a postsecondary program.

Cultural capital: the value students gain from their parents that support and assist them as they navigate the college experience and seek a higher social status and greater social mobility (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

Developmental education (remedial)—non-credit bearing prerequisite courses in math, reading and writing in college.

Dialectical: relating to a specific dialect.

Epistemology: the nature of knowledge (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

First-generation students (FGS): a student for whom neither parent attained a baccalaureate degree (Bourdieu, 1973; Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012).

First year Experience (seminar): Often combined with student/college success courses, focusing on teaching and reinforcing non-cognitive skills including study skills, time management, note taking and other skills designed to improve student academic performance. Some First Year Experience (FYE) seminars may also include extended orientation, involvement in campus life, and social activities designed to improve student engagement (Tinto, 2012).

Hermeneutical: a method of investigation that is interpretive; reading a text with the intention and meaning behind appearances fully understood. It is the interrelationship between science, art, and history (Moustakas, 1994).

Institutional agents: Institutional agents are defined as individuals who have the ability to transmit or negotiate the transmission of opportunities and resources available

at the institution (e.g., mentoring, counseling, tutoring; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

Learning communities (LCs): an intentionally developed community of learners that exists to promote and maximize the individual and shared learning of its members. It is the specific interaction and interplay among the members of the LC that bind them into a true community (Lenning, Hill, Saunders, Solan, & Stokes, 2013).

Ontology: what one believes about the nature of reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Paradigm: “a set of beliefs that guides action, whether the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry” (Guba, 1990, p. 17).

Persistence: Students staying in school, moving successfully from course to course and term-to-term toward a degree, certificate or credential.

Remedial students: students who must take non-credit courses in college as pre-requisites for college-level (credited classes).

Retention: the likelihood of postsecondary students to persist in credited college courses to complete a degree or certificate.

Social and educational barriers to educational success: cultural adaptation to a new environment (college) that includes reading, writing and oral communication proficiency, social, ethnic and emotional marginalization, unfamiliar with social mores of institution, poverty, financial burdens (Housel & Harvey, 2009).

Social capital: Social capital is the value of a relationship that provides support and assistance in a given social situation (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). It is often considered connected to socioeconomic status, including parental education and income level (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). The

aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, i.e., membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of a collectivity-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit. (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 166)

Social capital is a relationship immanent capital that provides useful support when it is needed.

Social capital theory: According to social capital theory, networks of relationships can aid students in managing an otherwise unfamiliar environment (Attinasi, 1989) by providing students with valuable information, guidance and emotional support (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

Theoretical framework: The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (Swanson & Charmak, 2013).

Key transitional tasks into college: academic and social integration into college is important for student success. Adapting to campus culture, establishing new personal identity, coping with new time demands, balancing freedom and responsibility, develop academic skills, master new social settings (Ward et al. (2012).

Underrepresented: Inadequately represented student demographics; i.e., lower enrollment and representation of certain demographic groups in postsecondary institutions.

Underprepared: lacking sufficient cognitive skills and academic preparation (reading, writing, computation) and non-cognitive skills including time management, organizational skills to enter college credited courses and be successful without remediation.

Under-resourced: lacking sufficient economic resources and stability to manage financial responsibilities or plan for future.

### **Background**

Developmental education is one of the most difficult issues confronting 2-year colleges today. Given the mission of the community college to teach students college-level material and train students for jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this has become a daunting task. Why is this problem so vexing and so urgent?

Once a world leader in education, the United States has fallen to 16<sup>th</sup> worldwide in postsecondary attainment (Lumina Foundation, 2013). With more than two thirds of American jobs requiring some postsecondary education, the urgency is evident in attainment data revealed by the Lumina Foundation. Since the recession of 2007, America's economic picture has become more divided among college-educated and non-college-educated workers (Carnevale, 2016). The American economy has added roughly 11.6 million jobs since the recession in 2007, but 11.5% (99%) of these jobs have gone to

workers with at least some college education. This has left many workers with limited education still struggling. In fact, Carnevale (2016) asserted that

workers with a high school diploma or less hear about the economic recovery and wonder what people are talking about. Of the 7.2 million jobs lost in the recession, 5.6 million were jobs for workers with a high school diploma or less. These workers have recovered only 1% of those job losses over the past six years. (p. 1)

To positively impact the numbers of college-educated workforce in America, the Lumina Foundation (2013) launched their Goal 2025 in 2009. Lumina revealed national data identifying the rate of degree completion by age group and year. The percentage of Americans with a 2- or 4-year degree in 2008 (between the ages of 25 and 64) was a mere 37.9%. By 2012, the percentage of 25- to 64-year-old Americans with a postsecondary degree had reached 39.4 (Lumina Foundation, 2013). While an encouraging trend, this percentage of Americans with a postsecondary degree will not be sufficient to meet the economic demands of our country that will require 65% of U.S. workers (nearly two thirds) to have some postsecondary education by 2020 (Lumina Foundation, 2013). Being globally competitive in job creation and educational attainment is essential to our country's vitality.

While the completion rates at community colleges remain low, the challenges encountered by underprepared, under-resourced and underrepresented students are often overwhelming. In a recent national Institute for Educational Sciences study, Hodara (2015) found that nearly 75% of recent high school graduates who enrolled in an Oregon community college took at least one developmental education course. Further, the Community College Research Center (Klempin, 2014) suggested that only 28% of those students at a 2-year college, who take developmental education (pre-college) courses,



earn a degree within 8 years. However, many students whose skills are pre-college, requiring some form of remediation, drop out before completing the required sequence to enroll in college-level courses. The developmental education sequence is daunting with many barriers to success (Klempin, 2014). However, it is important to note that the rates of completion often depend on student demographic and level of academic preparation or lack thereof. The Institute for Educational Sciences study asserted that research on developmental education focus on the broad community college population which includes a diverse demographic group including those who delayed entering postsecondary after high school graduation (Hodara, 2015). Studies conducted by the Community College Research Center revealed that there are differences in how student populations were impacted by placement into remedial courses, increasing the achievement and college completion gap. Individuals who make a smooth transition into college immediately after high school are substantially more likely to complete a credential or degree during college (Adelman, 2006; Bozick & DeLuca, 2005). Yet, increasing numbers are delaying college entrance for a variety of social and economic reasons that continue to be barriers to completion. An additional factor that often impacts college completion for students who first place into at least one developmental education course is that it is costly. Students spend over \$6 billion per year on non-credited (developmental education) courses (Scott-Clayton, Crosta, & Belfield, 2012).

Clearly, this is an increasing dilemma for community colleges and for reaching college completion goals. Many community colleges across the nation are working to address this issue and it is often a major shift in approach for many. Mullin (2010) stated

that this shift for community colleges in helping students overcome the overwhelming array of barriers to completion, may require a modification of traditional ways of fulfilling the mission for which they originated—that of open access—to one that supports student success for *all* students. Mullin suggested that this may require a rebalancing of the community college mission to one that “emphasizes less the curriculum that is offered (academic transfer, workforce development, developmental education, etc.) and more the objectives students seek to complete (course enrollment, course completion and certificate and degree completion” (p. 4).

In an effort to provide clarity and understanding about the barriers facing first-generation, underprepared and under-resourced students who enter college through the door of open access only to find themselves placed into remedial (developmental education) courses, this study provides contextual information for both social and educational barriers that students inevitably encounter. Additional information is provided about developmental education (remediation) and the pathways students must navigate to move from noncredit to credit, college-level courses. I provide some brief descriptions of college-readiness to add understanding and context to the reader. Finally, I describe one student support strategy (AVID), a holistic system of student support and strategies that has had notable and documented success at the K12 level and has now made its way into the postsecondary world. The assumptions that I make in this study include: (a) AVID—the holistic support system documented in bridging the gap for high school students to be college-ready will create a similar bridge for underprepared students at the community college level; (b) that while AVID secondary targets FGS “in the

academic middle,” the strategies that create strong systemic supports for students in the academic middle, will show similar results in non-college ready, FGS who must first successfully navigate developmental education before entering college courses at the community college. This study investigates the impact of the AVID HE model of student support on completion rates of community college FGS placing into pre-college (developmental education) courses. Further, this study adds significant value to understanding of whether and in what way a college-based support system (like AVID HE) improves college completion.

### **Significance of the Problem and Social Context**

Demographics of entering postsecondary students are different from their counterparts of three and four decades ago. The majority of students attend part-time (Aud et al., 2013), work full- or part-time (Aud et al., 2013), are female and are 25 or older (Aud et al., 2013; Mellow, Woolis, Klages-Bombich, & Restler, 2015). With an increased focus on completion, many studies have focused on these demographic and social characteristics in an effort to better understand barriers to completion. Many of these entering students (referred to as FGS) are the first in their family to attend college. Several studies have surfaced recently to understand the effects and barriers FGS encounter when they enter postsecondary institutions. Unfortunately, many FGS fail to succeed in postsecondary. They are less likely to persist from term to term and less likely to graduate or complete a degree or credential (Pike & Kuh, 2005). Some studies have revealed as much as a 15% gap between persistence rates of first- and second-generation students (Wharburton et al., 2001). In fact, FGS status has been found to be the strongest

predictor of students leaving college before their second year (Chen & Carroll, 2005).

Additionally, students who are both low-income and first-generation face additional social and academic barriers based on this status (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015b).

The AACC (2015) *Completion Toolkit* sets a formidable goal of improving college completion to 50% (or five million students) by the year 2020. It is becoming more essential and more difficult for individuals to find family-wage jobs without some postsecondary education and family-wage earning capacity increases the chance of entering the middle class and economic stability. Entering and completing college is a vital national, state and educational goal.

With these challenging completion goals, understanding why students leave college is essential. Given that FGS are making up a larger percentage of those entering college and not persisting or completing, identifying the characteristics of FGS is a first step in understanding the barriers they face in persisting and completing. FGS generally fall into the following categories and characteristics (Davis, 2010):

- FGS earn 2- and 4-year degrees at rates significantly lower than those of their non-first-generation counterparts (p. 23).
- They are often unfamiliar with the culture of college and, to a degree, to one another
- They are often academically underprepared for college-level curriculum
  - Then often become disheartened, bewildered
  - May not know how to read critically
- They often lack study skills and engagement
- FGS are not necessarily the same as low-income students. In fact, Engle and Tinto (2008, p. 35) found that FGS were nearly four times as likely (26% as compared to 7%) as non-first-generation, non-low-income counterparts to drop out after one year of study.

Other studies identified less measurable but just as critical, characteristics that impact success rates for FGS, including (Choy, 2001; McMurray & Sorrells, 2009):

- Lack of self-efficacy
- Low grades
- Student self-perceptions
- Identity
- Aspirations

Davis' (2010) study also identified FGS common behaviors that also impact college persistence and completion:

- They are often more likely to arrive at college with weak academic skills in math, reading and writing;
- If they recognize their unpreparedness, they start college knowing they must catch up;
- Most college faculty expect their students to know how to study effectively and consider the lack of these skills sub-academic;
- FGS do better when they feel aligned with the general purposes and goals of the institution;

In fact, there are often three identified key barriers that impact FGS acclimation and success in postsecondary. Those key barriers include: (a) lack of academic preparation, (b) social barriers, and (c) lack of social capital. A general discussion of each of these key barriers facing FGS follows below, sets the framework for this study and provides the context for the impact of a holistic support strategy like AVID HE for supporting FGS placing into developmental education to persist and complete college.

### **Academic Preparation**

Several studies have identified characteristics of low-income, FGS who often place into remedial (developmental education) and the issues with which they struggle as they interact with college and university social learning environments (Rendón, Garcia,

& Person, 2004; Rendón, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000; Terenzini et al., 1994). Many FGS are low-income students who grow up in poverty and may have attended resource-poor schools. Expectations are low, and they are often tracked into less high-demanding curricula. They are often unprepared academically for the rigors of college, particularly in writing, reading and mathematics. Often this under-preparedness lands FGS in remedial (pre-college or developmental education) courses.

### **Social Barriers**

Access, progress and completion into college is particularly challenging for students who are minority, underrepresented or under-resourced. In fact, this is the subject of a growing body of literature that reveals that if minority students enroll in college, they are likely the first in their family to do so (first-generation; Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Goldrick-Rab (2007a) asserted that “of the three primary demographic characteristics shaping the college transition (race, gender and class) a student’s socioeconomic status—or social class—produces the largest differences in his or her outcomes” (p. 6). Social stratification is not comprised of sufficient income alone but includes parental level of education and occupation. FGS face additional potential barriers—that of knowledge of how to navigate a postsecondary institution (Choy, 2001; Conley, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; McMurray & Sorrells, 2009; Pascarella et al., 2004).

### **Social Capital**

The growing population of community colleges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century include more under-resourced students (that is, students without sufficient and available resources,

including financial, personal and support systems necessary to well-being) than ever before (Becker, Krodel, & Tucker, 2009).

Many of these students have low literacy levels in both mathematics and reading along with poor writing skills. Access to postsecondary education is vital to this student population and to our economy in order to bring more people out of the grip of generational poverty and to provide more opportunity to enter the middle class in America. Furthermore, first-generation, under-resourced students are most often enrolled in community colleges (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015a; Pascarella, Wolniak, Pierson, & Terenzini, 2003).

Most under-resourced students enter community college through the door of open access but find that simply entering community college creates a host of new challenges for which they are not prepared. Many under-resourced students and their families have not had positive educational experiences in the past and do not know how to access the resources and supports that they need to reach educational or career goals. In fact, many under-resourced, FGS do not know what resources they need or how to ask for them. This growing demographic in community college is challenging not only for the under-resourced students entering but also for the institutional faculty, most of whom are well established, middle class educators for whom education was expected. This change creates a cultural shift in community colleges for which many faculty are unprepared to teach in ways that better engage and support under-resourced students. Citing Tinto's (1993) theory of retention, many studies cite socio-cultural conditions that impact students' psychological needs and motivation to change their behaviors. Guiffrida (2006)

asserted that advancing Tinto's theory began by "recognizing the need for minority college students to remain connected to supportive members of their home communities" (p. 457). The underlying concept behind Guiffida (and Tinto) is that social systems need to be readily available to support all students—and particularly—first-generation, underrepresented students once they arrive at college (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Guiffida, 2006). Kuh and Love (2000) proposed a theory of integration with connection which suggests that students must become socialized into the dominant culture of the institution while abandoning their former cultures, which is a very difficult shift. Kuh and Love reframed this concept, asserting that "connection" recognizes that students can assimilate successfully into the culture of college while not letting go of their former community. Tinto asserted that social and cultural connections to a college environment occur within small communities of students with similar backgrounds and facing similar social barriers.

### **FGS**

Community colleges are uniquely situated within the educational pipeline to provide access and support for those under-resourced, FGS aspirants who want to better their lives, both economically and socially. Yet, institutions of higher education—including community colleges—struggle with shifting the culture to meet the needs of growing enrollment of under-resourced, under-prepared, FGS. In fact, the literature reveals that FGS status is the strongest predictor of students leaving college before their second-year. FGS often must take repeated cycles of remedial education before they can move toward degree completion or educational goals. They lack the resources to navigate



the institution, do not have adequate support systems, and often face social and family barriers and challenges that erode determination (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015a).

First-generation, under-resourced and underprepared college students need social capital to make these demographic shifts and often the very social capital they need is embedded in a culture of higher education that expects knowledge of middle class standards (the hidden rules of social class) expectations for self-efficacy and determination (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015a; Pike & Kuh, 2005).

Impacting student success for FGS may mean changing teaching practices and instructional pedagogy. The value of changed pedagogy in the classroom is found in a growing body of literature that recommend practices to better support FGS placing into remedial or developmental education due to lack of or inadequate academic preparation. Having an inclusive, multicultural curriculum and using pedagogical strategies such as LCs, active learning and connecting content to students' lives or "real work" experiences have been found to make a difference for low-income, FGS (Mellow et al., 2015; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Rendón et al., 2000). Several studies in fact, recommend changing specific institutional practices that provide solid evidence of improving the success rates for FGS who place into remedial education to improve their academic skills (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, 2008; Mellow et al., 2015; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

### **College Readiness**

Martinez and Klopott (2005) conducted a study designed to explore and identify college readiness behaviors that predict college access, success and retention. Their study

was conducted through the lens of high school reform and identified key predictors of college-going behaviors. Among the predictors they identified were access and support in academically rigorous courses, strong social and academic support, a supportive climate in personalized learning environments and alignment between levels (i.e., secondary to postsecondary). The study concluded that reform efforts with the greatest efficacy addressed access and success for underserved minority students and those students who are identified as low-income. Programs that specifically identified and targeted reform strategies around the key indicators for students in these subgroups showed the greatest effect on college access and success.

The key indicators identified in the Martinez and Klopott (2005) study are the subject of a growing body of literature. Multiple studies identify academic preparation as the single most significant predictor of college success, followed by key cognitive and non-cognitive strategies, including attitudes or behaviors (Adelman, 1999; Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Conley, 2003, 2005; Kuh, 2008; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009). These studies focus on a working definition of college readiness that best prepare students for college access and success. Conley (2007), in fact, developed an operational definition of college readiness as “the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program” (p. 1). Conley (2007) further defined “success” in postsecondary as “completing entry-level courses with a level of understanding and proficiency that makes

it possible for the student to be eligible to take the next course in the sequence or the next level course in the subject area” (p. 1).

### **Developmental Education**

Developmental education is designed to provide students with the academic skills necessary to be successful in college-level work. Often these (pre-college) developmental education courses have a rigid sequence of courses. Sequence is defined as a process that begins with assessment and initial placement into developmental education and ends with the highest level that prepares a student for entry into college-level coursework (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

Rates of remediation at community colleges are soaring. More than half of all students who enter community colleges enroll in at least one developmental education course. Longitudinal data reveal even higher levels of enrollment. Attewell, Lavin, Domina, and Levey (2006) found that in the NELS sample, 58% of community college students took at least one remedial course, 44% took between one and three remedial courses, and 14% took more than three such courses. And unfortunately, nearly three out of four students who enroll in remedial courses fail to complete the sequence, allowing them to proceed to credit level courses. Recent data by the National Education Research Center (Hodara, 2015) as referenced earlier in this study, revealed that nearly 75% of recent high school graduates who enrolled in a community college in Oregon and those graduates who delayed entry into college, took at least one developmental education class.

Family expectations have long been thought to be a significant indicator of student academic achievement. Some theories suggest that a student's own educational aspirations can be raised by increasing the expectations held by those that matter to him or her (Goldrick-Rab, 2007a). And while more students state that their educational aspiration is to graduate from college, many (often FGS) do not have the academic preparation or social capital to make this aspiration a reality. Unfortunately, many FGS who enter college are academically under-prepared and often place into remedial education (developmental education).

Success in postsecondary is also impacted by the age at which a student enters college. Many students delay entry until they are older. Many have entered the workforce to find their qualifications, training and preparation are inadequate. Many have delayed entry to college because of life circumstances—family, work, economic demands—only to find that they cannot adequately support themselves or their family without additional training and postsecondary education (Goldrick-Rab, 2007b).

Unfortunately, rates of remediation are more likely attributable to these socioeconomically disadvantaged students. At least 90% of community college students spend a year or less in remediation, and they are most often enrolled in remedial math courses. Additionally, students who initially place into developmental education classes are less likely to complete any type of degree or credential at a community college (Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005).

### **Oregon's Developmental Education Redesign**

Like many other states across the nation, Oregon is concerned about developmental education at community colleges. Firmly believing that the current paradigm of developmental education (enroll entering students with weak skills in a sequence of pre-college level courses is designed to build their knowledge and increase skill sufficiently to enter college-level courses and proceed to a degree) just does not work, often because of the long (sometimes quite rigid) sequence of courses. The data surrounding Oregon developmental education follow the pattern of the nation. Between 60-75% of all entering students in Oregon community colleges must take at least one developmental education class (Developmental Education, 2014). Data reveal that the “vast majority of students who initially place into developmental education are far less likely to earn a college degree or credential” (Developmental Education, 2014, p. 6). Of those students who place into “English, 59.19 percent do not finish. For math, it is 74 percent. For students taking both developmental education in math and English, the number jumps to 84.5 percent who do not complete” (Developmental Education, 2014, p. 6). These completion rates are abysmal and mirror the national trend. The question must be asked: why do students placing into developmental education courses not complete? Students tire of remedial education, the frustration of taking (and paying) for courses that are not getting them closer to a certificate or degree. In frustration, many of these remedial education students leave the remedial education before completing the requisite sequence. The majority of developmental education students do not complete the sequence of courses and enter a credit (college-level) course within the first two

academic years. For reading or writing, the number of students that do not move into credited classes within two years is 59.19%; for students taking developmental education courses in math and English, the number jumps to 84% (Developmental Education, 2014). Data reported in the recent Institute for Educational Sciences report suggest that partial completers are significantly at risk of no degree attainment (Hodara, 2015).

Because of these daunting numbers, Oregon convened representatives from all 17 community colleges in the fall of 2013 to examine the process of developmental education in Oregon's community colleges. Convened by the Oregon Community College and Workforce Development agency, the group was charged with four goals: (a) identify practices that can decrease time to completion; (b) identify practices that can decrease student attrition from point of placement to completion; (c) identify strategies to decrease attrition and time to completion for subgroups of students (Adult Basic Skills [ABS], English as Second Language [ESL], and General Education Development [GED]); (d) identify state or community college policies that can promote student completion and decrease attrition (Developmental Education, 2014). The group collaboratively identified several recommendations designed to improve persistence, shorten the sequence and leakage, and develop statewide supports for students placing into developmental education. One of the student support strategies identified as promising by the Oregon Community College Workforce Development report was a support system implemented at Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) that appeared to implement best practices identified in the literature, provide holistic supports and showed promising outcomes. That system is AVID HE.

While many reform efforts are comprehensive in nature and design, one strategy that incorporates the elements identified as predictors of college readiness, including academic rigor, key cognitive and non-cognitive strategies and college knowledge and that is the focus of this study, is AVID. The focus of this study then is to investigate the effectiveness of the holistic AVID HE support program in increasing persistence, progression, academic preparedness, reducing social barriers and increasing social capital for FGS placing into Developmental Education.

### **AVID**

The success of AVID at the middle and secondary levels is well-documented. From modest beginnings in the mid-1980s in San Diego, California, AVID has grown nationally and internationally as an intentional and systematic program of combining rigorous academic expectations with training around self-management. AVID has grown to more than 400,000 students nationally in more than 4,800 schools (<https://www.avid.org>).

In its infancy in the 1980s, in one English teacher's San Diego high school classroom, an academic and social support system called AVID was unofficially started as a way to serve underrepresented students in a newly desegregated suburban high school. To support these students in successfully navigating rigorous coursework, this English teacher (Mary Catherine Swanson) created a social and academic support elective class (called AVID) with the foundational belief that all students can succeed in the most rigorous coursework with additional support. From the initial group of 30

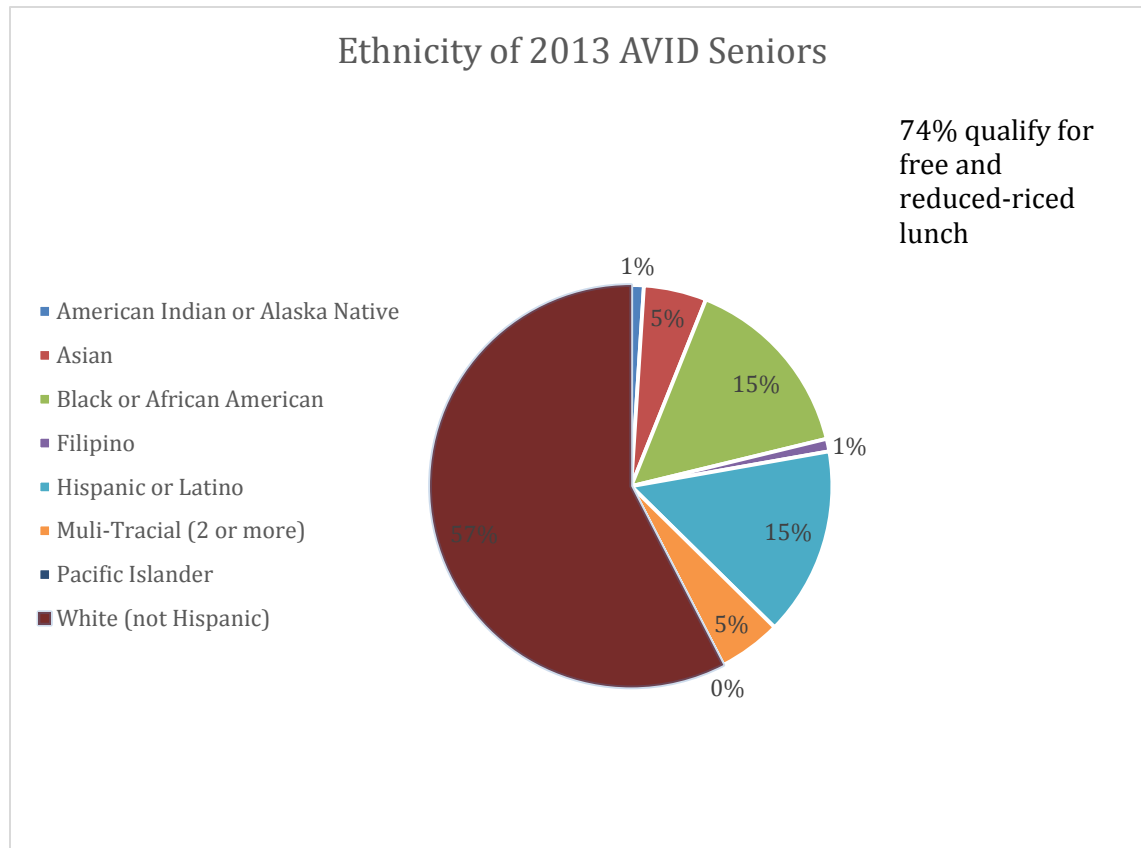
students in this 1980s classroom, 28 went on to college (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996).

From this modest beginning, AVID and its subsequent success has grown nationally and internationally, while retaining the same underlying principles. It has become a notably successful college preparation and readiness program. Simply put, AVID is a holistic college-readiness system designed to increase the number of students who enroll in 4-year colleges. Although it serves all students, AVID focuses on the least served students in the academic middle. The formula is simple: raise expectations of students and, with the AVID support system in place, they will rise to the challenge.

Demographically, more than 76% of AVID high school graduates are FGS and 74% of those are under-resourced or on free/reduced lunch at the secondary level. Of these graduates, 93% completed 4-year college entrance requirements, 23% completed Dual Credit courses, and 77% took at least one course of rigor (Advanced Placement) while at the high school level. Over 99% of AVID secondary students graduated high school on time (<https://www.avid.org>).

Figure 1.1 reveals that while AVID serves minority and underrepresented students, the majority of the students served are low-income (qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch). The significance of this demographic of students served in the AVID secondary program provides the foundational assumption for a new AVID support system: AVID HE or AHE.





*Figure 1.1.* Ethnicity of 2013 AVID seniors. Source: <https://www.avid.org>

### **Ethnic Breakdown of AVID Senior Population**

Providing a strong support system coupled with tutoring and specific core elements, AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness (<https://www.avid.org>). AVID's unique approach to college preparation for secondary students involves a combination of placing students in rigorous coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement) that will ensure that students graduate with the requirements for entrance into a 4-year university. Further, AVID provides students with a structured academic environment, in the form of an elective class, similar to the environment of a college classroom but with more intentional focus on key cognitive strategies.

Additionally, and perhaps equally important, is AVID's structured tutorial support and specific focus on study skills, organization, time management, critical reading skills and standardized college entrance examination preparation (Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, 2008; Watt, Johnston, Huerta, Mendiola, & Alkan, 2008).

### **AVID HE**

In 2008, AVID expanded to higher education (AVID HE) as a Student Success Initiative. Designed to support students who enter college without the academic and college-readiness skills to be successful, the intent of AVID HE is to provide support and bridge the academic and preparedness gap for student success and retention at postsecondary.

AVID HE was developed as a pilot program in 2009 in six institutions across the United States (California, Minnesota, Texas and Washington) including both 2- and 4-year institutions. The primary mission of AVID HE remained clear: close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. The recommendations from the pilot work in 2009 revealed common effective strategies, including:

- Development of a first-year experience, using AVID seminar
- Use of AVID structure and strategies to focus experiences on academic success, academic self-confidence, and engagement through graduation,
- Focus AVID seminar on readiness dimensions identified by Conley (2010b)
  - Key cognitive strategies
  - Key content knowledge
  - Academic behaviors
  - Contextual skills and awareness

- Offer AVID seminar as part of a LC
- Provide faculty development in AVID strategies

Additional studies have corroborated the use of teaching cognitive and non-cognitive strategies, used by AVID, to students. McGuire and McGuire (2015) referred to this as “metacognition” which provides students the ability to:

- Think about their own thinking
- Be consciously aware of themselves as a problem-solver
- Monitor, plan and control mental processing (e.g., “Am I understanding this material, or just *memorizing* it?”)
- Accurately judge the level of learning;
- Know what you know and do not know (Flavell, 1976).

### **AVID HE at MHCC**

#### **MHCC AVID Program Elements**

When AVID HE was first implemented at MHCC in 2011, it was anticipated that it would be a vehicle for ongoing support for AVID graduates from local high schools. This was the original concept of AVID HE and MHCC believed that this was a way to build stronger relationships with district high schools. The college soon discovered, however, that AVID secondary graduates who chose to attend MHCC had learned effective cognitive and non-cognitive strategies in their high school AVID work and were not necessarily interested in continuing their AVID supports and in fact, had gained the confidence and social/cultural capital to enter the college with sufficient skills to be successful.

Decades of research into best practices to support student learning and a changed learning environment have led to many initiatives, white papers, legislative acts, and reform strategies. Yet, few have led to substantive changes—including the nationally promoted Achieving the Dream initiative. MHCC, began reviewing best practices with a passion and commitment to change the outcomes for students. In 2011, community colleges across the state of Oregon as well as around the country, began to investigate Achieving the Dream (ATD), the promises, the practices, and the supports. Many in Oregon invested considerable resources to participate in ATD. It was considered at MHCC but because of the awareness of a proven student support strategy (AVID), the college took a little closer look and found that ATD and AVID shared many features and strategies. What college leaders did not see in ATD was a focus on faculty professional development to change the institution from a teacher-centered learning environment to a student/learning-centered environment. What college leadership concluded then—and continue to believe today—is that ATD provided great strategies and supports for data tracking and evidence of student learning—as did AVID—but AVID also included focused professional development in changed pedagogy.

AVID HE provides the context (non-cognitive skills, college readiness preparation), required data tracking, college-wide collaboration but also the ongoing professional development that trains faculty in changed pedagogy. Particularly at postsecondary, many faculty still use the “delivery of instruction” method in their classrooms (i.e., lecture-based). For many students—particularly first-generation, under-resourced, under-represented students—lecture-based instruction simply does not engage

them. AVID's training uses high impact instructional practices (what Kuh et al. [2005a] referred to as "high impact practices" or HIPs) that actually change the learning environment (and culture) from one that is teacher-centric to one that is student/learner centric (Kuh et al., 2005a). Few other holistic support strategies provide this crucial instructional professional development. AVID provides this added element.

The evidence of AVID is well-documented. From modest beginnings it has now grown nationally and internationally as an intentional, holistic and systematic program of combining rigorous academic expectations with training in non-cognitive strategies that:

- Teach students *how* to study
- How to manage their time
- How to organize their learning and take effective notes; and
- How to think analytically and critically

All of the above are essential elements of college-going success. An additional element of AVID HE is that it provides training and support for faculty in high engagement instructional practices, with the belief that unless you also impact what occurs in the classroom, student success is limited (<https://www.avid.org>; Cuseo, 2011).

Upon implementation and contractual membership with AVID HE, however, MHCC was entitled to use AVID national specialists in providing professional development in high engagement instructional practices. This type of professional development was different for MHCC faculty. It was initially embraced with interest and curiosity. Over 50% of faculty were trained within two years in high engagement instructional practices, tutorial practices and AVID supports (MHCC, 2014).

An AVID Coordinator was hired to develop an AVID Center, oversee the training and implementation of AVID supports for students along with ongoing professional

development for faculty and staff. AVID training included implementation of Cornell note-taking strategies, organizational strategies, time management techniques and other useful classroom strategies designed to engage students in meaningful learning.

An AVID Campus Team (comprised of administration, student success teams and faculty) at MHCC integrated AVID support strategies as identified above into a student success course (HD100C along with EL115) and worked to pair this course with other courses to create LCs. The initial efforts at system-wide training and implementation of LCs with a first-year success course was met with some hesitation from faculty. As content experts, the question of *how* faculty teach has been a difficult topic to broach. New strategies are evolving; however, and many faculty at MHCC have participated in the high engagement learning/teaching strategies offered by AVID professional development. Clearly, the start of the AVID Center at MHCC was met with challenges upon implementation and continues to generate some level of distrust from faculty.

### **Innovation Strategy at MHCC**

Despite these challenges, the AVID Center found strong interest and support from Developmental Education faculty at MHCC who faced new challenges in increased numbers of incoming students placing into pre-college sequenced courses. The sequenced courses in Academic Literacy (Reading 090 [RD90], Writing 090 [WR90]) and Adult Basic Skills courses, along with ESL and ENL (now called IECC) were often rigid and long-term with some students remaining in these long sequences for up to six terms. Increased emphasis in completions and progress in student outcomes led the college to

look at AVID as a support for developmental education—a new approach heretofore not tried at other postsecondary institutions implementing AVID.

As implementation unfolded in this new paradigm, the college discovered that many pre-college (developmental education) students fell into an increasingly common demographic: under-represented, under-resourced students who were often the first in their family to attend college. Many of the students had been released from prison and were attempting to reorder their lives; many were trying to retrain for living wage jobs and careers, many were single parents living on public assistance. The faculty teaching these developmental education courses revealed that the supports these students needed were more than the college could easily provide, including personal, social, and economic coaching, housing needs, social and cultural capital (belief in their abilities) study skills, time management and transportation, to name a few. The college knew that AVID strategies were designed for students in the “academic middle” who often fell into the demographic of under-resourced and under-represented populations but were screened for academic abilities and selected for the AVID support system.

MHCC found these screening and selection processes restrictive, given the needs of the increasing numbers of students placing into developmental education and the increasing emphasis on progress and completion for students. The college AVID Coordinator began where the need was greatest for implementation: in developmental education (pre-college) courses at MHCC. Faculty in pre-college courses were less likely to be resistant to training and supports, and many were willing to be trained in AVID support strategies and willing to implement LCs. The college knew this was a risk and a

challenge, given that this strategy had not been used at other postsecondary institutions. The college also knew that many of the other postsecondary institutions that had implemented AVID HE were universities with more resources and often with grants to support implementation. MHCC did not have grant funding to support implementation and relied instead on the promise of AVID supports and the grit and determination of the AVID staff and faculty with a huge commitment to supporting students in completing developmental education and moving successfully into credited courses and career pathways (Plinski 2011 AVID Innovation Proposal, see Appendix G).

### **The AVID Center**

A location was identified for the AVID Center at MHCC that was on the third floor of the library, and next to the Learning Success (Tutoring) Center. The AVID Center was established on a small scale initially, with one Coordinator and two learning specialists in what amounted to a converted classroom. The AVID Center was painted an inviting color; computers were installed in the room along with round tables to accommodate students. The AVID Center staff posted college and university banners on the walls along with inspirational posters. The center was inviting and small.

Within two years, the AVID Center outgrew its single converted classroom space and expanded to two classrooms. More staff were hired, more computers installed and more tables added. Additional features of the AVID Center were also added as outlined below. The AVID Center was growing; students were finding their way to the center for help and word was spreading.



## **AVID LCs and the AVID Center**

As the AVID implementation evolved, the AVID Campus Planning team identified several ways to provide supports for students at MHCC, including:

- A variety of LC options are offered each term, including coursework in reading, writing, college success/human development, and computer skills.
- All LC faculty receive AVID training and employ HIPs in their classrooms, in addition to planning together and linking assignments throughout the courses.
- Each LC is paired with an AVID Learning Specialist, who serves as an academic coach and mentor, supporting LC students throughout the term and beyond.
- LC students are also encouraged to seek support from the AVID Center, which is staffed by master's level Learning Specialists who support student skill development in areas such as critical reading, time management, emotional intelligence/soft skills, goal setting, and note-taking.
- Since opening in October 2012, the AVID Center has provided approximately 18,500 hours of support to MHCC students through nearly 19,000 student visits (MHCC, 2014).
- Data collected on the AVID LCs show increased student persistence, retention, and success, with term to term persistence from fall to winter term averaging 80%, compared to 63% for non-AVID students. (MHCC, 2014).

While this anecdotal, in-house data collection is compelling, it is not statistically valid.

## **East County Pathways**

- In fall 2015, AVID at MHCC partnered with College Now/Dual Credit to author a Regional Promise grant application through the Oregon Department of Education. The college application was one of six awarded, earning MHCC \$573,000, which was used to promote Dual Credit and other accelerated college credit options for students in East County through September 2017. In addition, the grant funds went toward establishing a college going culture in East County, college access support and financial aid awareness programming for students and families, and staff/faculty professional development and AVID training.
- AVID-specific East County Pathways Programming includes college success (HD100C) and scholarship support coursework delivered via the AVID

elective course, allowing AVID students to earn college credit for participating in the program at the secondary level.

- In addition, East County Pathways funding allowed for the expansion of Summer Bridge Programming and supported the creation of an AVID Alumni Association at MHCC.

### **Summer Bridge Programming**

In the summer of 2014, the AVID Campus Planning Team at MHCC piloted a “Summer Bridge” program, an intensive orientation for new AVID LC students. More than 20 students participated and over the course of 3 days, students developed friendships, met staff and faculty, explored campus and program/career options, bought textbooks and were provided with school supplies, learned more about the college and student culture at MHCC, including how to manage their time, emotional intelligence and stress reduction techniques, how to navigate financial aid and more. Through Summer Bridge, students also gained confidence in themselves and were well prepared for their first day and first term at MHCC. In the summer of 2015, Summer Bridge programming was expanded through grant funding and served over 150 students, including AVID Alumni from local district secondary schools. In 2016, the AVID Summer Bridge program admitted a total of 144 students into the program. Data are still being compiled and analyzed.

### **AVID Alumni**

One of the largest needs of AVID secondary schools in the area is qualified tutors to lead the twice weekly AVID tutorials, which are an integral part of the AVID elective course. To address this need, in the fall of 2015, MHCC created an AVID Alumni

Association intended to provide all AVID Alumni entering MHCC with a soft landing and smooth transition to college, support through the AVID Center and LCs, and an opportunity to make an enduring contribution to their school of origin by returning to serve as an AVID Tutor.

Throughout the spring, AVID Alumni are recruited from local area high schools and invited to participate in an AVID Graduation Celebration and Retreat to prepare for the rigors of college level coursework and begin to build familiarity with MHCC's campus, staff, and faculty. Those same students also participate in Summer Bridge as ambassadors of the AVID Program, allowing them to make connections with their peers before the school year even begins. During their first term, AVID Alumni take a course in Tutoring and Instructional Issues, including AVID Socratic Tutor Training, preparing them to return to East County high and middle schools as MHCC AVID tutors and peer mentors.

### **The AVID Center Merger**

As the AVID Center continued to expand, strategies were explored at the college for managing the expansion and sometimes duplication in the Learning Success (Tutoring) center. In 2014, the AVID and Learning Success Center were merged into one center, managed by the former AVID Center Coordinator who was transitioned into management. Since this merger, the AVID/LSC Center has further expanded services, outreach and supports. Figure 1.2 provides a visual organization of the services and supports offered through the MHCC AVID/Learning Success Center.

### **Collaborating Across Campus**

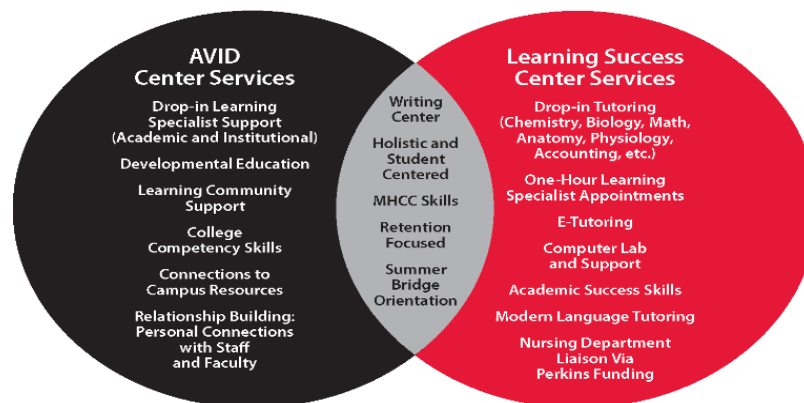
As AVID HE began its fifth year of implementation on the MHCC campus, many opportunities presented themselves along the way for expansion, largely because of the commitment to the five AVID Essentials and the insistence that the essentials, data, and student needs guide the work on the campus. What began as the mission of 10 AVID Planning Team members has now become a part of the work of leaders and stakeholders from departments across campus that have seen and experienced the value of AVID. Professional development has taken place within the advising department, the diversity resource center on campus, and the learning commons, including MHCC's main campus tutoring center, the Learning Success Center. The college has consistently involved campus staff and faculty in the AVID Summer Institute and on-campus professional development. By identifying individual champions of the program, the success of AVID is not an isolated event but a collaborative effort. Consequently, AVID has played a part on several campus committees and councils committed to implementing best practices and creating a student success plan that serves all students in an equitable and student-centered way. This role has allowed the AVID HE program to shine and encouraged those who may have been initially skeptical of the program to take a closer look.



### AVID Strategies

*High-engagement classrooms; teaching college success*

- › Goal setting
- › Organization
- › Personal responsibility
- › Note taking and study skills
- › Community building and collaboration
- › Professionalism and communication skills
- › Connecting with human development (HD) on course curriculum



### Learning Success Center Strategies

*Student centered support to foster active learning*

- › Assist learning while encouraging independence
- › Tutoring vs. teaching
- › Supporting MHCC course content and philosophy
- › Respecting diverse learners
- › Socratic methods

### Professional Development

#### *Faculty and staff:*

- › Advising for maximum student persistence
- › Career Technical Education
- › College Now and Dual Credit
- › Teaching tools for creative collaboration
- › Intercultural communication with adult learners
- › Technology in the classroom

#### *Students – Student Success Series:*

- › Saints email
- › Scholarship assistance
- › Overcoming test anxiety
- › Resume support and job search strategies
- › Understanding your learning style

### AVID/LSC Staff Contributions 2013-14

#### *Presented at:*

- › Oregon TRIO Association Conference
- › Student Success & Retention Conference
- › AVID National Conference

#### *Published in:*

- › *AVID Compendium*
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### Community Engagement

- › High school outreach
- › Oregon Metro Connects – Dual Credit
- › College Placement Test prep
- › MHCC 101
- › AVID alumni

CLCC1

Figure 1.2. MHCC AVID/learning success merger.

## LCs

Another major opportunity that the AVID HE program created was the implementation of LCs and a first-year seminar or experience for incoming students. Using AVID strategies, in conjunction with Downing's (2013, 2014, 2017) *On Course* curriculum, allowed MHCC faculty to create a well-rounded and largely successful 12-credit package of classes that not only teaches students the reading and writing skills that they need for success, but also the student and "life" skills that are not always explicitly taught or that some educators may assume students already possess. This LC model and college success class has shown preliminary success and will be used to create a campus-wide, first-year experience for students at MHCC. It is assumed, based on preliminary data, that it will have a very positive effect on student persistence and completion.

Furthermore, the AVID Center expanded during Spring 2014, allowing AVID Learning Specialists to reach more students in a larger and more learning conducive space. The AVID Center has become a home on campus for many students creating and expanding relationships built with peers and AVID instructors. In addition, AVID staff assists in retaining students and developing their intrinsic motivation and desire to reach the goals that they have created.

In an AVID LC at MHCC, the keystone class is the AVID seminar (HD100C and EL115). These classes are critical to student success because they enable students to build the institutional knowledge and non-cognitive skills needed for success in higher education. These seminar classes include metacognitive topics such as professionalism,

organization, communication skills and time management. The primary focus of the AVID program at MHCC is to help students transition into certificate and degree programs from developmental education courses and considerable energy and focus is spent in providing students the tools they need to be successful in life.

While the efficacy of AVID at the secondary level is well-documented and the strategies promoted by AVID, outlined above, reveal evidence-based effectiveness, the data supporting AVID HE at postsecondary are still evolving. Several studies reveal that AVID HE is showing effective trends at preparing students for college-level courses. However, while AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap for all students, the identified student demographic focus is on students in the academic middle (i.e., those students who have the demographic traits identified such as poverty, under-represented students) but that are in the B and C grade range who have the motivation to go to college.

AVID students report that they feel supported in their LC and notice similarities in the teaching strategies. Within their LCs, they form study groups and a support network of students who are experiencing similar struggles in pre-college and college level classes.

The Academic Success or Freshman Year Seminar courses offered to AVID students prepare them for coursework beyond their first year—and beyond developmental (pre-college) education. The tutorial and advising support they receive in the AVID Center will help propel them toward graduation and academic success.

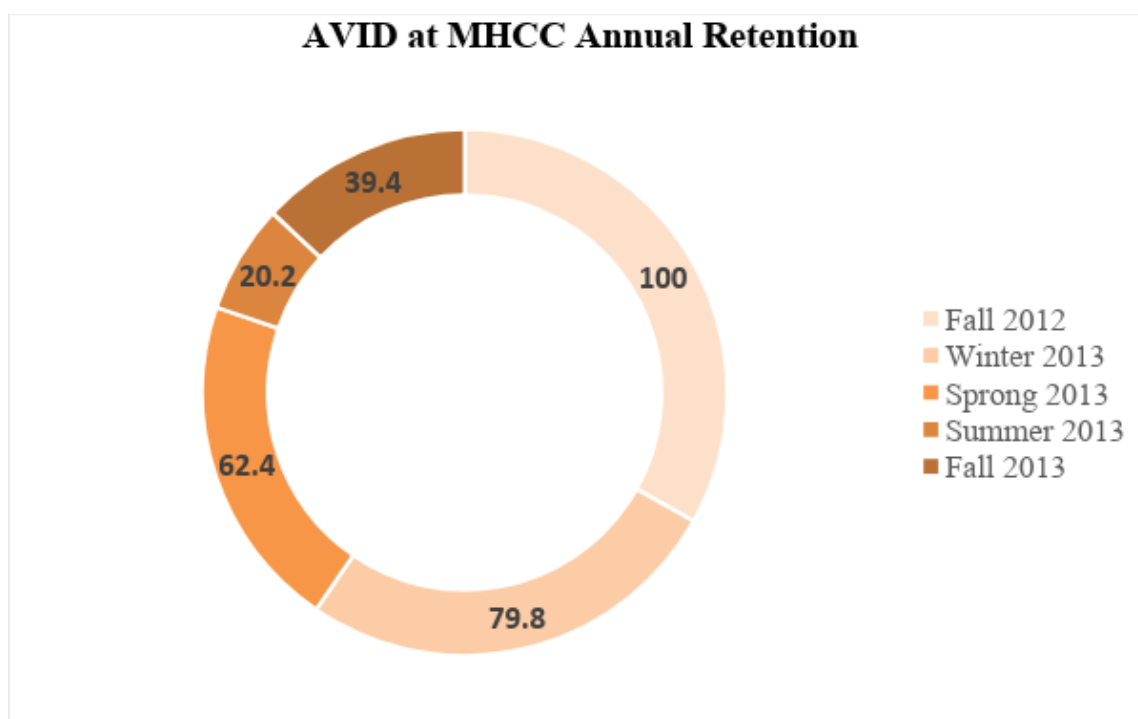
As students move through the LCs at MHCC, it is often the AVID Center staff that continue to provide ongoing advising support and case management. The AVID Center collaborates with the advising team at MHCC, along with Adult Basic Skills/GED and ESL/IECC staff and faculty to identify students who may be first-generation, non-traditional students and who may need additional support. All AVID LC instructors have been trained in AVID teaching strategies (high engagement instructional practices) based around five core teaching and learning areas: Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading. Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading is a learning model that faculty may use to guide students through advanced comprehension and concepts, articulating ideas, critical thinking, working collaboratively, and so forth. It provides students with strategies to scaffold learning.

**AVID Strategies and Activities**

- Cornell note-taking, revision and review of notes process
- Time and stress management and organizational strategies
- Knowledge of college campus and participation in student activities
- Educational and career planning—academic and personal goal setting
- Inquiry based activities that are collaborative and engaging (philosophical chairs or Socratic seminar)
- Academic writing and reading activities to help students navigate and understand difficult college level texts and improve formal writing skills
- Study and test taking strategies
- Self-reflection, journaling, quick-writes, summaries to help improve writing skills
- Health and wellness assessment and promotion of individual wellness.



AVID LC and AVID Center data reveals promising data trends and increases in student services since implementation (MHCC, 2013). Figure 1.3 reveals preliminary data showing positive impact on MHCC AVID student retention (the rate or percentage of students who return from one term to the next; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012; Kuh et al., 2005b). Figure 1.3 reveals that MHCC students enrolled in AVID LCs persisted from 39.40% in Fall 2013 to 79.80% in Winter 2013.



*Figure 1.3.* MHCC AVID annual retention.

While each term revealed variation, the persistence of students in MHCC LCs increased remarkably as evidenced in Figure 1.4 and Table 1.1.

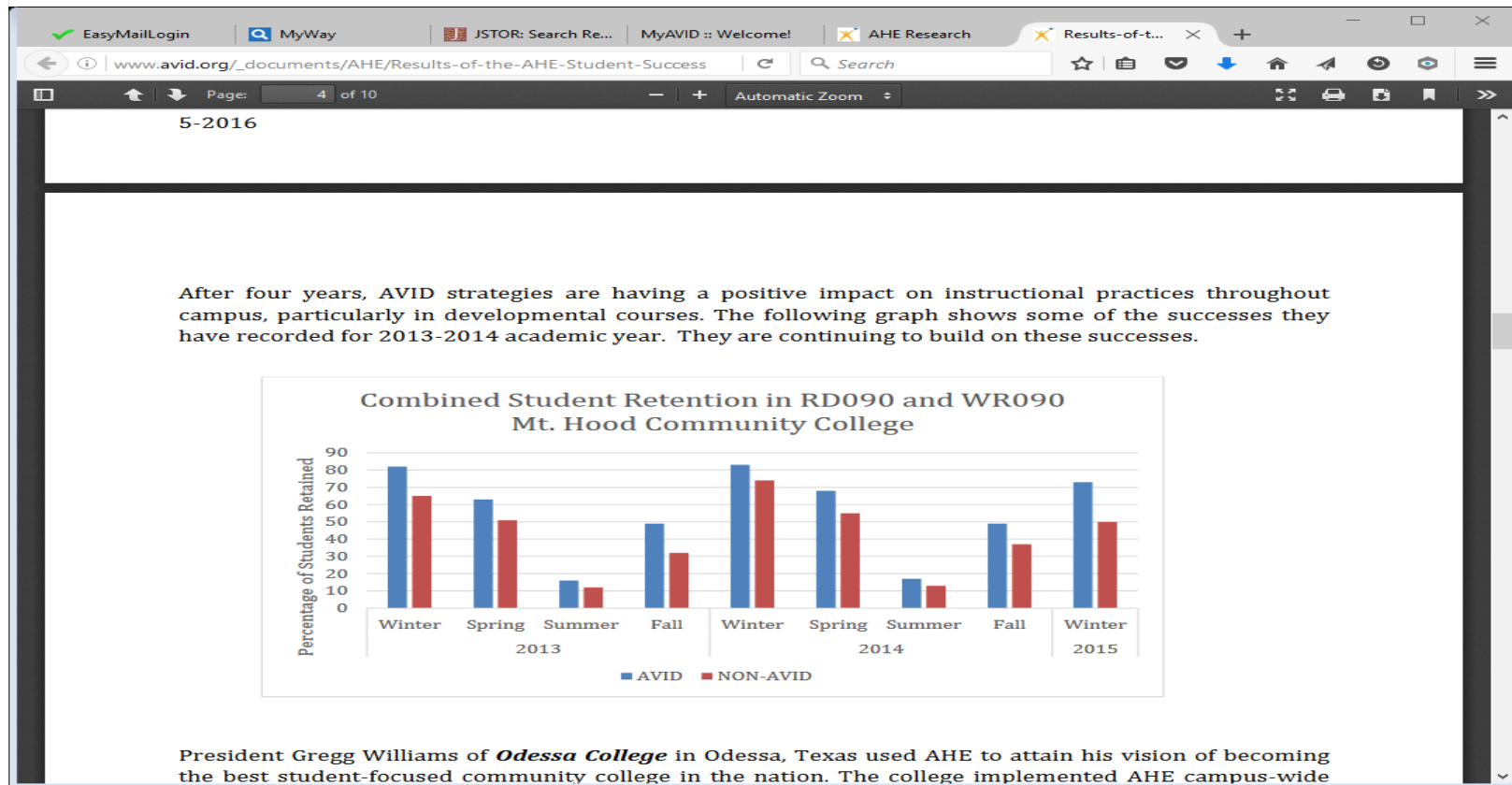


Figure 1.4. MHCC retention in RD90/WR90.

### Outcomes of AVID HE at MHCC

Overall, the college found that AVID strategies have had a positive impact on student retention. In fact, when comparing LC 2 versus comparable stand-alone courses in Fall 2012, we found that AVID LC students persisted at a much higher rate than students taking stand-alone courses as indicated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

#### *MHCC LC Student Retention/Persistence*

Course	Percentage Retained
LC 2.99 Average (AVID)	89.7%
WR090.03(non-AVID)	64.3%
RD090.02 (non-AVID)	78.3%

- LCs are paired specifically AVID student success courses and AVID student support;
- WR090.03 and RD090.02 are stand-alone classes, not paired with AVID student success courses or AVID student support.

The AVID strategy of developing communities of learners with effective, intentional institutional support appears to have had a positive impact on student persistence and retention at MHCC as revealed in Figure 1.4. Based on this initial implementation, the AVID Campus Planning team makes an assumption that AVID HE is a promising practice for increasing student retention and persistence for pre-college students at MHCC.

Simultaneous to the AVID HE LC development, MHCC also began training advisors, tutors, orientation staff, AVID elective teachers and faculty with AVID HE strategies. Trainings were conducted throughout the first year before the pilot LCs were formed and ongoing professional development opportunities were offered on four different occasions throughout each academic year since implementation. Overall, (including full-time faculty, part-time faculty, Advisors, tutors and staff) nearly 50% of MHCC institutional staff has experienced AVID HE training. All participation in AVID professional development was voluntary. Surveys conducted at the end of trainings revealed that the majority of staff and faculty who participated in the trainings found them beneficial, informative and helpful. They identified high engagement practices as being beneficial, and they planned to use these strategies in their work.

With a more focused, evidence-based approach to faculty professional-development that supports faculty in exploring best-practices in teaching, MHCC can better implement and scale up the AVID HE Student Success Initiative. The MHCC AVID Campus Planning Team believes that this strategy, in addition to implementation of the other four AVID HE essentials would create a supportive and enhanced learning environment that supports student persistence/retention and success. The AVID Campus Planning Team also believes that high-engagement teaching practices *in conjunction with* student support strategies (already evidenced in this report) will increase student success.

### **Focus of This Study**

With the increase in need for remediation at the postsecondary level, and the need to find strategies to support underrepresented, under-resourced FGS who place into one or more courses in the developmental education sequence (presumably below the academic middle), the research question that prompts this study is whether AVID HE supports in the form of LCs coupled with the AVID elective (FYE) class (AVID HE holistic support strategies) improve term to term persistence, progression and retention in developmental education students, promote self-confidence, social capital and increase the number of students who successfully transition from pre-college (developmental education) to college-level classes at a community college.

While there is growing evidence that AVID HE improves student success at 2 and 4-year colleges, there appears to be little, if any, research on student persistence with AVID supports in developmental education. This gap in the literature is the focus of this study.

The assumptions made for this study are that the proven strategies of AVID at the secondary level in increasing college readiness and determination for students in the academic middle will also improve and increase term-to-term persistence, progression toward credited courses, and social capital in those students placing into pre-college (developmental education) at the postsecondary level. I also assume that the AVID HE strategies and support will build the necessary social capital in developmental education students to persist into college-level classes successfully. AVID HE strategies will be implemented with fidelity (accuracy to best-practices) for pre-college level students.

Should the results of this study reveal the effectiveness (both quantitatively and qualitatively) of AVID HE in supporting student persistence, academic success and social capital for FGS placing into developmental education at MHCC, the findings would be significant in adding to the research on holistic and proven best practices in supporting this demographic and increasing success and completion.

There were some limitations to this study. First, AVID HE has only been implemented at one postsecondary institution in Oregon and it is one of only two known institutions nationally (Odessa College in Texas) to specifically use the AVID strategies with pre-college (developmental education) students. These limitations provided some trends and revealed possible future studies in the use of AVID HE with pre-college level students, but there are insufficient numbers of students served to provide clear data trends. The use of a mixed methods approach to studying this phenomenon and treatment was that the collection and analysis of multiple forms of (both quantitative and qualitative) provides increased strength, credibility and generalizability. However, an additional limitation was that the institution utilizing these strategies is MHCC where this researcher served as Vice President of Instruction and Student Development and was responsible for instruction, instructional strategies, professional development and student supports. This previous role and the fact that through my research, I brought AVID HE to MHCC (see Appendix G, MHCC Innovation Fund Request for 2011 implementation), could lead to author bias. To mitigate bias of any type, I ensured that my role was strictly as researcher. In cases where necessary, I asked proxy interviewers to conduct the conversations.

To effectively understand the impact of AVID HE strategies on FGS in pre-college (developmental education) courses, the identified delimitations for this study include the methodology and intent of the study. I conducted a mixed methods approach to this study using both quantitative analysis of students in AVID supported LCs and those in stand-alone courses. I also used a qualitative case study methodology to determine the impact on student perceptions, degree of motivation, support and increase in social capital that they have received through and with AVID HE strategies.

### **Research Questions**

Research questions that drove this study:

1. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) placing into pre-college (developmental education) classes in community college differ in persistence toward degree and participation in credit-bearing courses than first year, non-low income, non-first-generation students entering community colleges? What is the direction of any differences?
2. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) entering community college participating in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than non-first-generation students (FGS) entering community college who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?
3. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) have different rates of term-to-term persistence toward degree than first-generation students (FGS) who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?
4. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?
5. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “connection” to institutional agents at the college (identified as social capital)

than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

6. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “cooperation” with peers in their AVID HE supported Learning Community than first-generation students who do not participate in AVID HE supported Learning Communities?
7. Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of cohesion to the community college than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?
8. Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of self efficacy and confidence than first year, first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

While the question of how students learn best has challenged educators for centuries, the theories of learning and development are essential in understanding ways to support students in achieving success and expanding access to higher education for all students. Vygotsky (1978) examined the concept of how students learn and established the framework for educators that has guided learning theories and reform efforts for decades. Fundamental to Vygotsky's theory is the notion that learning most often and most effectively occurs in a social context rather than isolation and that it is developmental in nature. It is this thinking that frames the social constructivist paradigm that guides this investigation in bridging learning from the pre-college to the college level. Concerned about the high numbers of underrepresented students who are unprepared for and encountering barriers to admission to postsecondary options, educators have explored reform efforts to bridge the gap.

Powell and Kalina (2009) posited that individuals learn new ideas through interaction with a teacher and other students. In other words, for ideas and new learning to have personal meaning for students, ideas are constructed from personal experience. It is this combination of teaching and social experience that Vygotsky (1962) believed enhanced student learning. Determining where a student is in their personal learning creates the framework (called the zone of proximal development) that Vygotsky believed

allows the teacher to build a process of learning that allows the student to reach the next level of understanding. Vygotsky labeled this process scaffolding and asserted that scaffolding allows students to build on prior learning and ultimately enhance personal learning. Drawing on this theory, Powell and Kalina stressed that scaffolding often occurs in a cooperative learning environment (i.e., one that occurs within a social constructivist classroom) and allows students to learn both from the teacher and from each other. In fact, Powell and Kalina stressed that “if they think critically, they will walk away with personal meaning that was constructed on their own” (p. 245).

It is the belief that learning, as one form of reality, is constructed in the form of multiple, intangible mental models that are socially and experientially based that guide the belief system for constructivist thinkers and educators (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1994) went on to assert that constructions are not absolutely “true” but rather more or less informed. In fact, Dweck (2006) asserted that ability and achievement in students is more a condition of mindset and drive. Increasing a student’s sense of self-competence, focus and drive can improve student learning outcomes. Dweck asserted that a student’s mindset is not fixed; that it can be developed and strengthened.

In the previous chapter, the concept of student learning occurring as a growth process in which new knowledge is formulated within a social context was thoroughly explored. This context is often theoretically referred to as social constructivism. Additionally, in the previous chapter, several barriers were described that under-resourced, underprepared, FGS often encounter when they enter college for the first time.

These barriers can often be insurmountable in the progression and persistence of FGS in completing college and/or career goals.

### **Purpose of Study**

With the lens, therefore, of social constructivism, the purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of AVID HE as a method to support FGS who place into developmental education courses, to persist toward a degree and progress successfully into credited classes at a community college (MHCC). Further, because of the often-insurmountable social barriers that FGS encounter when they enter college, this study also examines development of the necessary social capital to navigate the college environment successfully.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Guba (1990) used the term paradigm as a vehicle for understanding knowledge—whether new or existent—within the framework of a set of belief systems. The work of Kuhn (1970) introduced the concept of paradigms to distinguish and acknowledge how we structure and conduct research. Guba considers Kuhn’s work seminal in establishing the term “paradigm” and providing fundamental understanding of the way knowledge is understood and interact with by the researcher. Guba extended this concept of paradigm and suggests that a researcher’s understanding of his/her own set of personal beliefs is essential in understanding the decisions that guide a choice of methodologies in educational research. As I embark on this journey of understanding research methodologies and my own role as a researcher, I use Guba’s and others’ (Donmoyer,

2006) prompting to examine and identify the unique set of values that I bring to the process of inquiry.

Guba (1990) provided a general definition of paradigm as “a set of beliefs that guides action, whether the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry” (p. 17). He identified four essential paradigms and suggested that we use three separate lens to conceptualize and sort each: (a) Ontological—the nature of “knowing” or reality, (b) epistemology—the nature of the relationship between the knower (inquirer) and the known, and (c) methodological—how should the inquirer go about finding out about knowledge (Guba, 1990, p. 18). In a later work, Guba and Lincoln (1994) furthered this framework, clarifying that an investigator must understand and define a personal paradigm because choice of methodology originates from a paradigmatic framework. Guba and Lincoln asserted that in identifying a personal paradigm using the lens of the three defining questions, “the sets of answers given are in *all cases human constructions*; that is, they are all inventions of the human mind and hence subject to human error. No construction can be incontrovertibly right” (p. 108).

### **Epistemology**

From an epistemological perspective, knowledge is considered transactional and subjectivist; that learners must interact with new findings to guide and inform thinking. Guba and Lincoln (1994) identified the concept of the quality or authenticity of knowledge; current research that is authentic and conducted by trusted educators fits this framework. It is in understanding others’ conceptualization (construction) of new knowledge in the field of education that can inform and reshape practice. Denzin and

Lincoln (1994) posited that the very aim of inquiry is the transformation of the social, ethnic and demographics conditions that restrain human beings and that the role of the investigator is as an instigator and/or facilitator of what changes need to occur based on current constructions.

Indeed, it is the question of ethics and research that deeply shapes this study. Recognizing the high stakes of educational reform research with an eye toward improving equity, access and readiness, it is essential that researchers remain neutral and observant, passionate yet objective. These are difficult balances to achieve. Yet questions of ethics color the landscape of research in the name of science as in the case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study (Bozeman, Slade, & Hirsch, 2009; Brandt, 1978). It is essential as a budding researcher—and with the stakes so high involving high-needs students in our educational settings—that ethical behavior, objectivity and pragmatism guide this work.

With the broad demographics and needs that students bring to community colleges through the door of open access, it is essential that colleges create a comprehensive understanding of what supports student success. Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek, (2007) provided a visual representation of the conditions that matter. Clearly it is a comprehensive view of the many factors that impact student access, persistence, retention and success. Unraveling these factors and developing systemic conditions that matter is the overarching purpose of this literature review in an effort to understand the needs of under-represented, under-resourced, FGS who place into remedial (Developmental Education) courses.

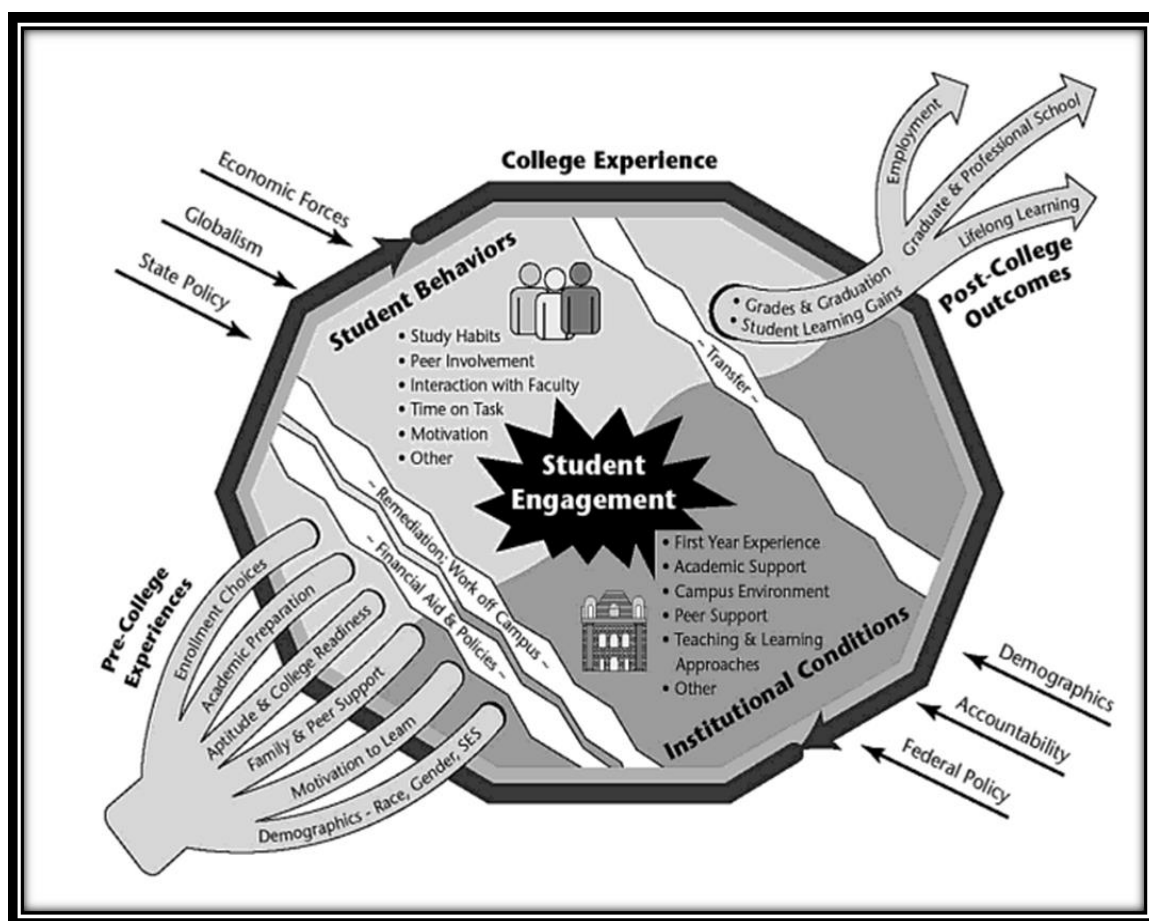


Figure 2.1. Conditions that matter for college readiness. Source: Kuh et al. (2007, p. 11).

While somewhat confusing to look at, Figure 2.1 reveals the complexity of the institution of college and the many internal and external conditions that impact student learning. Successful implementation of strategies at any college must include many of these identified conditions in order to impact the outcomes for students and particularly for those students who are under-resourced, under-represented, FGS, many of whom place into pre-college (Developmental Education) courses before they can begin credited courses and a degree path.

### **Type of Study**

This study used a mixed methods approach that examined the impact of participation in a holistic student support strategy called AVID HE. This study includes both a statistical analysis of a treatment group (WR91 + HD100C AVID-supported LCs) and stand-alone RD90/WR90 courses, along with a case study qualitative methodology to investigate how AVID HE supports pre-college developmental education students to develop sufficient social capital to transition from non-credit (pre-college) to credited courses and programs. While promising trends have identified preliminary success for students, this study investigated through both a quantitative analysis of treatment/control groups the data around AVID HE supports in a LC along with a case study approach, to determine *how* AVID support strategies help Developmental Education FGS successfully navigate developmental education courses and move into credited classes within a community college.

### **Case Study Data Collection**

There are a variety of definitions of Case Studies, including the ability to “illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result” (Schramm, 1971, p. 3). Yin (2009), however, defined it as an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within the real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 17). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) described it as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world ‘visible’” (p. 6). Creswell

(2015) described a case study as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system.

Through qualitative data collection in the case study component of a study, the researcher gathers data to “build concepts, hypotheses, or theories, rather than deductively testing hypotheses as in positivist research” (Creswell, 2015, p. 17). Separate bits of information were gathered through observations, interviews, survey questions and other significant data gathered while in the field. Through this process, themes emerged to establish hypotheses. The use of a mixed methods framework added depth and value to the integrated results of this study and provided a rich description of students’ feelings, thoughts and social capital.

While there are limitations in using case study as a methodology, it also is a method by which to gain closer insight into individual, group, institutional or programmatic issues. One of the strengths of a good case study, is its ability to manage a variety of applicable evidence (surveys, artifacts, interviews, observations) beyond what might be available in a different type of study (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) suggested that it often is used to explore complex social phenomena and “allows the investigator to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (p. 4). Case studies are selected as the methodology when the questions being investigated are “how” and “why”—such as the questions identified for this study and when the investigator has little or no control over the environment or behaviors. The case study examines the thoughts, feelings, interactions of participants in a real-life situation—and the impact of the program or intervention (as a whole) on individuals or groups.



A researcher selecting a case study methodology, however, must be extremely cautious and transparent in the gathering, analysis and reporting of the data in order to avoid researcher bias (Yin, 2009). Additionally, because of the limited environment within which case studies are conducted, they provide little basis for scientific generalization. In this study, however, using a mixed methods approach, selecting and controlling the treatment as well as gathering the thoughts, feelings, perceptions of FGS both in and out of the AVID-supported LCs helped to illuminate the effectiveness of AVID-support for students placing into remedial courses at MHCC. This data both adds to and expands the data collected about AVID HE both locally and nationally, and provide direct insights, feelings and thoughts from FGS. Creswell (2015) suggested that the use of a mixed methods approach lends greater strength and provides a better understanding of the research problem. While quantitative data analysis provides clear objective, generalizable results, it does not offer the insights nor the personal stories of the participants, which in this case of FGS in developmental education courses supported by AVID HE, is equally as important.

### **Embedded Unit of Analysis for Case Study**

The case for this study was the system of AVID HE support strategies for FGS in developmental classes at MHCC, which is a holistic strategy, bounded by the AVID HE principles and by MHCC's implementation for developmental students. This case study examined the AVID HE impact on improving developmental education students' term-to-term persistence and progression into credited classes, reduction of barriers, and increase in social capital. Case study as part of a mixed methods approach—forces the researcher

to share the same research questions, to collect complementary data and to conduct counterpart analysis. Case study may be part of a larger, mixed methods research strategy—but the case study (as outlined above) helped investigate the conditions and strategies of AVID HE at MHCC on the outcomes for students at MHCC. The investigative strategies used in this case study follow.

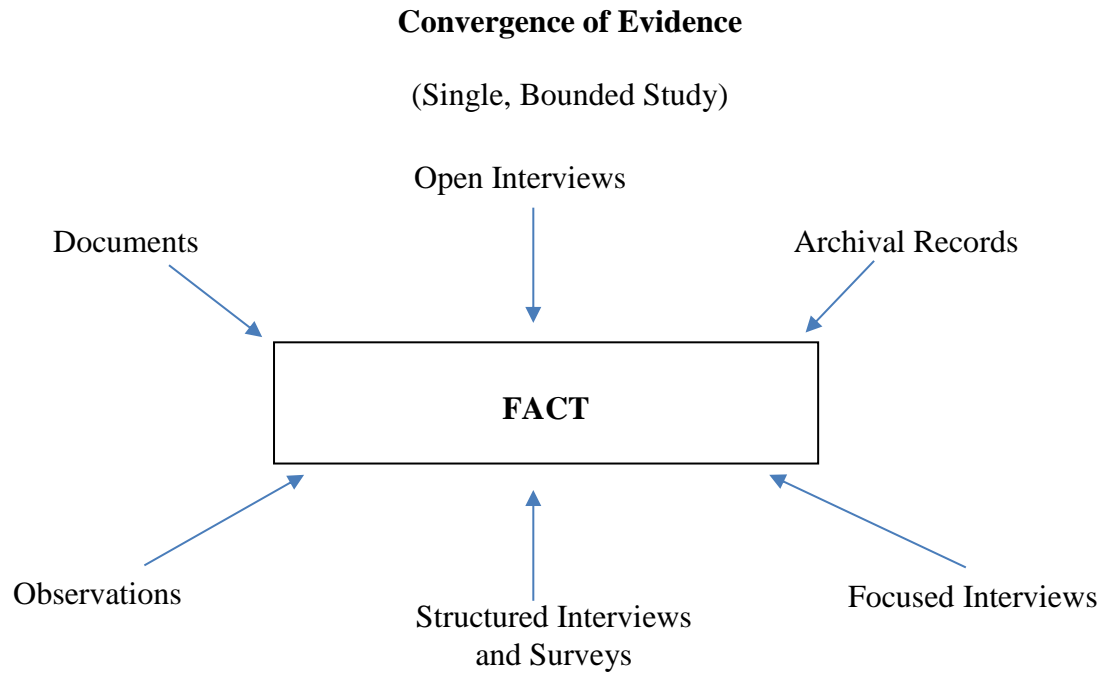
### **Principles of Data Collection in Case Study**

Principle 1: use multiple sources of evidence

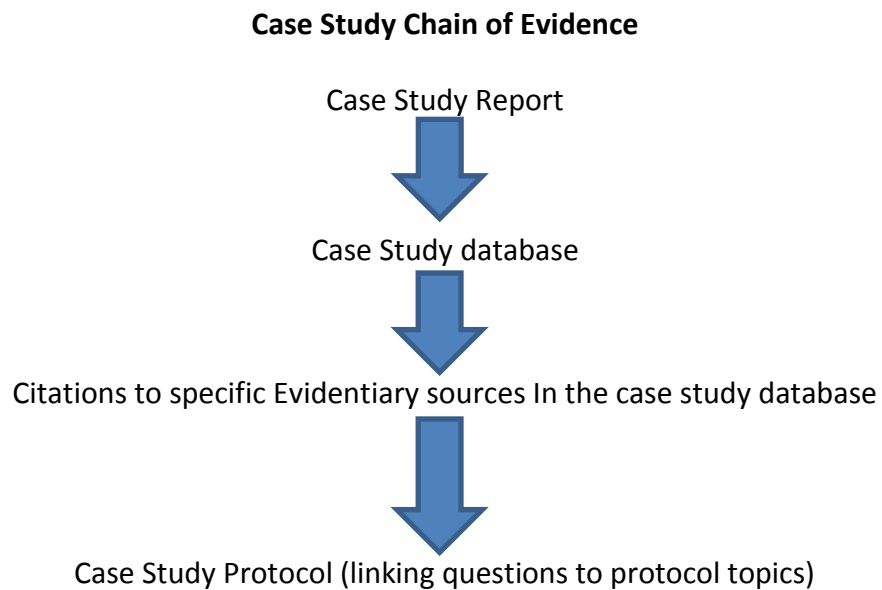
- Triangulation—rationale for using multiple sources of evidence
- Using multiple sources of evidence allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues. Most important advantage is the development of *convergent lines of inquiry*, a process of triangulation and corroboration emphasized repeatedly in CS collection. (Basu, Dirsmith, & Gupta, 1999)
- four types of triangulation:
  - Of data sources (data triangulation)—problems of construct validity can also be addressed because the multiple sources of evidence provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Yin, 2009, p. 117).

Using the four types of data triangulation (collecting information and data from multiple sources) is aimed at corroborating the same fact or phenomenon and to increase construct validity (Yin, 2009, p. 117). See Figure 2.2.

Yin (2009, p. 117) also encourages the maintenance of a chain of evidence as depicted in Figure 2.3 as an investigator collects data in a case study to ensure and increase reliability.



*Figure 2.2.* Convergence of evidence.



*Figure 2.3.* Chain of evidence in case study.

While collecting a broad array of data from many sources increases the construct validity of a case study, it also impacts the investigator's time for collecting, coding and analyzing these types of data. This type of study also requires that the investigator is skilled and trained in carrying out this type of data collection, particularly as it pertains to interviewing and conducting focus groups, which requires a level of communication and listening that is specialized. Within the collection of data, this case study gathered narratives of individuals (both students and teachers) who had experienced the culture of FGS and what had helped them expand.

Additionally, random student participants in both the pre-college credit level (developmental education) WR91 and RD90/WR90 were identified for semi-structured interviews. Observations, surveys and focused interviews were conducted to identify themes in the open-ended data collection portion. This data were then analyzed and coded to identify trends and themes.

### **Empirical/Statistical Design**

The role of this statistical experiment is to analyze the impact of AVID HE (as a holistic student support strategy) on the term-to-term progression and year-to-year persistence to credited classes and degree completion for first term under-resourced, underprepared FGS placing into developmental education courses (RD90/WR90, non-AVID HE class(es) and the WR91+HD100C AVID HE supported LC. There are a variety of statistical techniques to compare groups.

Field (2009) suggested that when we are interested in categorical variables, it is advisable to begin with the simple case of two categorical variables (treatment group and

control group) and to use the Pearson's chi-square test. In this case, we are analyzing frequencies—or the number of students impacted by AVID HE in the treatment group. The chi-squared test is considered a nonparametric test to determine the effectiveness of the fit. The chi-square test has two basic assumptions: “(1) for the chi-square test to be meaningful, it is imperative that each person, item or entity contributes to only one cell of the contingency table (i.e., cannot use a chi-square test on a repeated measures design; and (2) the expected frequencies should be greater than .05” (Field, 2009, p. 691).

In this particular study, the chi-square test examined whether there was an association between two categorical variables (control group and treatment group). The initial test that was performed in this study was the Pearson's chi-squared test to determine association/relationship between AVID HE treatment on developmental education students and non-AVID HE treatment on the control group of developmental education students.

Additional tests were conducted to test the impact of the treatment AVID HE on developmental education students at MHCC. One possible test is a regression analysis to test the relationship and significance of one dependent variable (FGS placed into developmental education courses at MHCC) from one or more independent variable (AVID HE treatments).

An additional statistical analysis referred to as the analysis of variance (ANOVA) is considered a sort of special case of regression (Field, 2009). Field (2009) suggested that regression and ANOVA are “usually used in different situations because of different

branches of methodology in social sciences: correlational research and experimental research” (p. 349).

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques are used when there are two or more groups or time points in the study. Two-way analysis of variance is used when there are two independent variables to compare. Multivariate analysis of variance is used when you have more than one dependent variable and Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is used when one needs to control for additional variables that may influence the relationship impact between the dependent and independent variables (Pallant, 2013).

For this study, there was a comparison of the term-to-term persistence and progression rates of developmental education students placed into stand-alone RD90/WR90 vs persistence and progression rates of those students in the AVID HE enhanced WR91 + HD100HC LCs. Finally, a survey to students and faculty in the stand-alone class and the AVID HE-supported LC were used to determine specific variables (age, gender, income, FGS status, ethnicity, etc.).

The survey was given at the beginning of spring term, 2017, to both students and faculty in both the two stand-alone sections of RD90 and the two RD90+WR90+HD100C LCs to determine demographics of enrolled students.

### **Review of Literature**

The review of the literature is four parts: (a) a changed learning environment; (b) best practices in supporting FGS academically and institutionally; (c) AHE; (d) Strategies to improve social capital in FGS.

## **Background**

The college completion initiative articulated by AACCC's "Call to Action" and the impact of changing learning environments to better serve the challenges of first-generation, under-resourced and underrepresented students is a dominant theme in higher education. Changing educational institutions from a teacher-centered to a learning/student centered learning environment better meets the needs of under-resourced, FGS. Many under-resourced, FGS and underrepresented students have low literacy skills and are often enrolled in pre-high school level courses in Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language and Adult Secondary Education accounting for over 44% of the total national enrollment in 2-year colleges (Bragg as cited in Perna & Jones, 2013, p. 36). Additionally, many of these students work full or part time. Some are unemployed, on public assistance and/or financial aid. The knowledge or ability to access support services is often lacking (Bragg as cited in Perna & Jones, 2013, p. 36). Further troubling is that while many of these students enroll in college (through open access), many do not complete credentials or certificates. Indeed, the struggle of many under-resourced, underrepresented students in moving successfully from non-credit (pre-college level work) to credited courses is overwhelming. Many studies have documented the failure of underrepresented students and FGS to make progress (Bailey et al., 2010; Bowen et al., 2009; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Often underrepresented, FGS find the pathway between remedial education (non-credit, pre-college level) and credited courses frustrating, unclear and insurmountable and opt instead to leave college before they have completed a certificate or degree (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008).

The fact is, student success and completion at community colleges is startlingly and persistently low. Karp, Hughes, and O’Gara (2008) reported on a study conducted by Calcagno, Baily, Jenkins, Kienzl, and Leinbach (2008) that only 45% of community college students persisted (earned a certificate, degree or transferred). In other words, roughly 47% of enrolled students leave school without earning a credential. Further studies reveal that there is a startling differential between high or middle-income student college completion rates and those of low-income students. Engstrom and Tinto (2008) cited data from the National Center for Education Statistics that “indicate that while an estimated 56% of high-income students who begin postsecondary education will earn their 4-year degrees within six years, only about 26% of low-income students” (p. 47) earn degrees within the 6-year timeframe. This is a trend that is troubling given our economic and social reliance on technology and advanced critical thinking skills. Some level of postsecondary education is essential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century information-based society (Lumina Foundation, 2013).

Several studies including Adelman (2010) and others (Bowen et al., 2009; Conley, 2007; Martinez & Klopott, 2005) found that inadequate preparation and readiness were significant barriers to college success and completion. In the 2010 study conducted by Adelman, a significant difference in performance was found between students at different income levels. He found that access (walking-through-the-door) rates among traditional students from the top third of the family income range is 91% while it is only 69% for those from the bottom third of family income. Because of the different outcomes for students from different income levels and those considered



underrepresented, Adelman posited that access without support does not provide equal opportunity and suggested income disparity has some connection to preparation.

Conley (2005, 2007, 2010a) and others (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Martinez & Klopott, 2005) emphasized that academic rigor alone is not sufficient to increase college access and success rates, particularly among low-income and minority students. They identify a combination of social supports including a supportive, personalized learning environment as well as the development of specific non-cognitive student behaviors identified as strong predictors of college success. These non-cognitive strategies are a range of behaviors that include self-monitoring, study skills, work habits, time management, self-advocacy and problem-solving (Roderick et al., 2009). Conley (2010b) identified these behaviors as forms of metacognition that allows students to think and reflect about their thinking and learning.

### **Changed Learning Environment**

O'Banion (1997) identified the cultural shift of the mission of community colleges and suggested that we cannot improve the outcomes for students unless we change instructional practice to better meet the needs of a changing student population. He suggested that the way to change student learning outcomes at the community college level is to "place learning and the learner first" (p. 19). However, he cautioned us that resistance is prevalent at educational institutions. He stated that "resistance to change is a hallmark of higher education. It has been said that changing a college is a lot like moving a cemetery—you don't get much help from the residents" (p. 28). Included in the group identified as "residents" are faculty members and others at the college who are

comfortable in the status quo. Several faculty at institutions working to change pedagogy from teacher-centered to learning centered reflected their resistance in this way: “As faculty we always have been and continue to be primarily focused on learning. It is an insult to suggest otherwise” (p. 30).

Creating a learning environment that engages students in active, collaborative learning is often difficult in institutions of higher education, however. Claxton (2007) suggested that current professional development strategies focus on the workshop model, an approach Selfridge and Sokolik (1975) referred to as the “iceberg phenomenon.” While this approach helps to expose faculty to new strategies, it rarely effects real change. Claxton asserted that “changing practices in teaching and learning calls for changes in the culture of an institution” (p. 218). Evolving to a learning environment that engages students in active, collaborative learning is often difficult.

Institutional culture has been defined as the “pattern of shared basic assumptions” (Schein, 2004, p. 17). Claxton (2007) asserted that whatever teaching practice currently characterizes a community college is often supported by its culture. Therefore, to effect cultural change is to change current practice. Barr and Tagg (1995) suggested that a cultural shift to a learning college requires teachers to move beyond the concept of simply transferring knowledge (didactic, lecture-based, passive learning) and move to a constructivist approach of engaging students in contextual learning. However, systems theory research reveals that resistance to change is deep and pervasive within institutional cultures. The status quo is comfortable and known; change is difficult and requires changing assumptions.

Mellow et al. (2015) posited that college faculty often focus more on *what* is taught to students than *how* it is taught. And while the importance of content cannot be ignored or understated, increased emphasis on changed pedagogy to better engage students today who often do not have the non-cognitive skills to be successful in college, needs to be an increased focus. Mellow et al. asserted that underprepared and under-resourced, FGS lack the academic resiliency to succeed in classes where pedagogy is weak or unengaging.

O'Banion (1997) suggested that to begin this transformative change is to become a learning college. O'Banion defined a learning college as one that "places learning first and provides experiences for learners anyway, anyplace, anytime" (p. 22). Kuh (1996) took this a step further in suggesting that "two central features impact student learning at the postsecondary level: students' behaviors and institutional conditions" (p. 138). Kuh suggested that "high levels of student engagement including purposeful student-faculty contact, active and collaborative learning, and institutional environments perceived by students as inclusive and affirming" (p. 142) contribute to student success (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Mellow et al. (2015) cited Laurillard who defined teaching as interactive and iterative and the learning process as a dynamic set of relational activities by teachers and learners that cycles between theory and practice. Mellow et al. (2015) suggested that the practice of teaching and learning involves different pedagogical approaches of didactics, social constructivism, constructionism, and collaboration.

Creating conditions that matter to embody this interactive model of teaching and learning on college campuses is paramount. Kuh (1996) suggested that simply implementing conditions that matter on a college campus are insufficient in and of themselves to impact student learning. He suggested that one strategy that provides strong evidence of supporting student retention, progression and persistence is the participation in a LC. These findings have been well documented in other studies (Pike, 1999; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

To successfully participate in LCs requires faculty training and changed pedagogy. Chickering and Gamson (1987) suggested that students from diverse backgrounds or who are under-resourced, FGS are often seen as less capable by many postsecondary instructors, and their talents may be discounted. Learning styles of underrepresented, underprepared, minority or low-income (under-resourced) students may be viewed by some faculty as deficiencies that require more support than an individual faculty member can provide (Treisman, 1992). Kuh (1996) suggested that one way institutions can counteract this perspective is to adopt educational philosophies that value diverse student learners through the use of such engaging strategies such as active and collaborative learning, classroom-based problem-solving, peer-teaching, service-learning.

Furthermore, the literature on teaching and learning reveals that learning environments in which faculty mostly lecture and students listen passively are contrary to almost every principle of an optimal learning environment (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Guskin, 1997; Tagg, 2003). Kuh (1996) identified three elements that have surfaced repeatedly in

the literature that impact student learning, increasing students' time on task, taking advantage of peer influence and involving students.

While the importance of the learning environment cannot be overstated, however, other studies have explored other resources that under-resourced, FGS need to be successful (Adelman, 2006; Becker et al., 2009; Conley, 2007; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Kuh, 2008; Pascarella et al., 2004). These studies reveal that under-resourced students are often the first in their family to enter college (FGS) and further that they complete degrees at rates significantly lower than those of their non-FGS peers (Davis, 2010). This growing body of literature reveals that under-resourced, FGS need institutional supports at a greater degree than their non-FGS peers. The research identifies those resources that are critical for supporting first-generation, under-resourced students to degree/educational goal attainment.

Several studies identify academic preparation and rigor as key to improving academic success and persistence for FGS, but when academic rigor is missing or under-developed, what strategies can be implemented to bridge this gap? Costa and Kallick (2008) identified key strategies that can be taught that he calls habits of mind. Conley (2007, 2010a, 2010b) also defined these behaviors as key cognitive strategies and asserted that these strategies are shown to be closely related to college success. Conley (2007, p. 9) identified six specific cognitive strategies: (a) intellectual openness; (b) inquisitiveness; (c) analysis; (d) reasoning, argumentation, and proof; (e) interpretation; and precision and accuracy. Haycock (2010) contended that in order to bridge the gap between college aspirations and college access and success for students, a collective

effort must occur to align curricula, expectations and strategies. McGuire and McGuire (2015) identified these strategies as meta-cognitive strategies that help students think about their thinking and learning in a more structured, cohesive way.

Conley (2005, 2007, 2010a) and others students (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Kuh, 2008; Martinez & Klopott, 2005) emphasized that academic rigor alone is insufficient to increase college access and success rates, particularly among low-income, under-resourced, minority and first-generation. These studies emphasize that a combination of social supports including a supportive, personalized learning environment as well as the development of specific non-cognitive student behaviors are strong predictors of college success. These non-cognitive strategies include a range of behaviors that include self-monitoring, study skills, work habits, time management, self-advocacy and problem solving (Roderick et al., 2009).

## **LCs**

A strategy designed to group students into cohorts called LCs is gaining momentum in postsecondary institutions to begin to address the gap experienced by under-resourced and underrepresented students. In the Engstrom and Tinto (2008) study, students in LCs were found to be “more academically and socially engaged . . . they perceived themselves as having experienced significantly more encouragement, support and intellectual gain than did similar students not enrolled” in LCs” (p. 47).

However, LCs are more than just a linking of curricula. Faculty involved in teaching within LCs must often reorganize their syllabi and instructional strategies to include shared, collaborative learning experiences. Learning is active, engaged, and

collaborative (Tinto, 2003). Learning begins where the student is, scaffolds instruction (Vygotsky, 1978) and evolves from there within a safe learning environment that incorporates shared knowledge (a shared coherent curricular experience), shared knowing (learning together with their peers) and shared responsibility (students become responsible to each other in the process of knowing (Tinto, 2003). Despite the findings of many studies, some institutional faculty are reluctant to shift to a LC model.

What is further interesting about students within LCs is that their sense of self-competence improves, which ultimately increases social capital in students. Even those students in LCs who had to take non-credit (developmental) courses, did not describe themselves as “developmental students.” When learning occurred within LCs, non-credit students (most often under-resourced) perceived themselves as part of the college, as capable and with sufficient support and belief by their faculty to succeed (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008, p. 49). Yet recent data reveal that many low-income (under-resourced), FGS, minority or other underrepresented students begin postsecondary education less prepared and with fewer resources than their more affluent peers (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). How are these potential deficits addressed to better serve these students?

As mentioned previously, many studies advocate the effectiveness of a collaborative learning environment. In fact, the AVID HE model intentionally endorses the use of LCs to more actively engage students in constructivist learning. It refocuses education from remedial (noncredit) education to a strong classroom support structure. Mehan, Hubbard, and Villanueva. (1994) stated, “Instead of simplifying instruction or reducing the curriculum for underachieving, under-resourced students, AVID HE

attempts to maintain a rigorous curriculum for all students while adding increased support for low-achieving students” (p. 99).

As described earlier, AVID HE is a support strategy intended to help underrepresented students become college and career ready through intentional cognitive and behavioral interventions to help manage rigorous course content and navigation of the complex system of college. In other words, AVID HE is designed to improve academic preparation, college readiness, social capital and reduce barriers to successful college completion. Unlike other retention and persistence strategies, it incorporates the elements identified as predictors of college readiness: academic rigor, key cognitive and non-cognitive strategies, and college knowledge (Conley, 2007).

## **AVID**

AVID is a holistic, college-readiness system designed to increase the number of students who enroll and persist in college. AVID for Higher Education (AHE) builds on this 30-year history of successfully preparing students for college and career. The focus of AVID HE is twofold: student support systems and teacher training/professional development. AVID HE supports the college persistence and completion goals by identifying barriers to success, needs of students, faculty professional development and ongoing analysis of student learning outcomes. When all five essentials of AVID HE are implemented with fidelity, AVID impacts the behaviors and expectations of postsecondary students and faculty and changes a postsecondary culture from one that is teacher-focused to one that is student/learning focused. While the AVID HE initiative is relatively new, several studies have provided data that suggest it is a highly effective



method of engaging and supporting under-resourced, FGS with similar results to the decades long success of AVID at the secondary level (V. Bernhardt, 2013; Mendiola, Watt, & Huerta, 2010; Rendón, 2006; Watt, Huerta, & Mills, 2010).

AVID HE supports implementation flexibility. Program elements are customized to meet the unique needs of each participating institution. Through collaborative efforts with colleges and universities nationally and with AVID National staff, the AVID National Center has identified five essential activities that transform campus culture by engaging all key campus members and programs in the change process that are required for successful implementation. These AVID HE Essentials are: (a) Administrative Leadership and Support, (c) AVID HE Campus Team and Campus-Wide Collaboration, (c) Faculty Development and Professional Learning, (d) AVID Experience—First Year through Completion, and (e) Assessment and Research. AVID HE campuses participate in the evaluation of AVID *for* Higher Education through data collection and the AHE Certification process (<https://www.avid.org>).

It is this combination of rigorous academic expectations, tutorial support and intentional instruction around key self-management skills that contribute to AVID's success. Conley (2010b) suggested, in fact, that self-management is one of the key ingredients necessary for college success and readiness. While many programs and schools incorporate aspects of intentional self-management skills into their curriculum, Conley suggested that AVID's elective program is one of the most intentional and systematic approaches in teaching these identified key skills. It is the intentional focus on specific study skills, what Conley referred to as “non-cognitive skills” that appears to be

a feature of AVID's success (p. 115). Furthermore, it is this intentionality of teaching specific behaviors that builds the confidence in students that they can, in fact, succeed when many students (often minority and economically challenged) encounter several barriers that often impede student success. Building a sense of self-competence and self-confidence increases the social capital in FGS. The systematized implementation of AVID HE strategies includes what Kuh (2008, p. 21) referred to as HIPs that include:

- First Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- LCs
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and projects

The systematic and institutional learning environment created by AVID HE supports both academic rigor and non-cognitive learning strategies sufficient to prepare students to enter and succeed in college begin with teaching and pedagogy. Kalsbeek (2013) posited that as we begin to examine student progress and readiness, we must focus on course design, pedagogy and curricula. He suggested that course redesign and curricular and/or instructional changes exemplify retention strategies that “reframe the challenge from one focused on persistence to one focused on the conditions required for progress” (p. 10). Focusing on instruction—on teaching and learning—is an essential strategy in supporting student learning and equalizing the journey.

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation Grant (2013-2018) conducted an analysis of AVID HE effectiveness on student success. Nine campuses were involved in this study and the first cohort of students was in 2014. The study follows three first-time, full time student cohorts through 2018 and compares them to matched comparison groups. Data for the first cohort (2014,  $n = 1,538$ ) after one year of participation in AHE support

services is represented in Table 2.1. At 4-year campuses, student retention was measured against a baseline cohort from the previous year (2013) and against a cohort of students during the same year (2014). At 2-year campuses, the cohort comparison was from the same year.

Table 2.1

*Dell Study on AVID HE Effectiveness on Student Success*

Student Retention	% Difference 2014/2013 of AVID Cohort vs. Control Group	% Difference 2014 Cohorts of AVID Cohort vs Control Group
	4-year campuses	
Fall to Spring	+2.2	+1.8
Fall to Fall	+9.9	+1.5
	2-year campuses	
Fall to Spring	NA	+3.9
Fall to Spring	NA	+5.5

Figure 2.4 reveals the results when students were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), how engaged they were in the course content and pedagogy, whether the course increased their skills and confidence, and whether the course connected them to the college/university resources. Figure 2.4 shows the results.

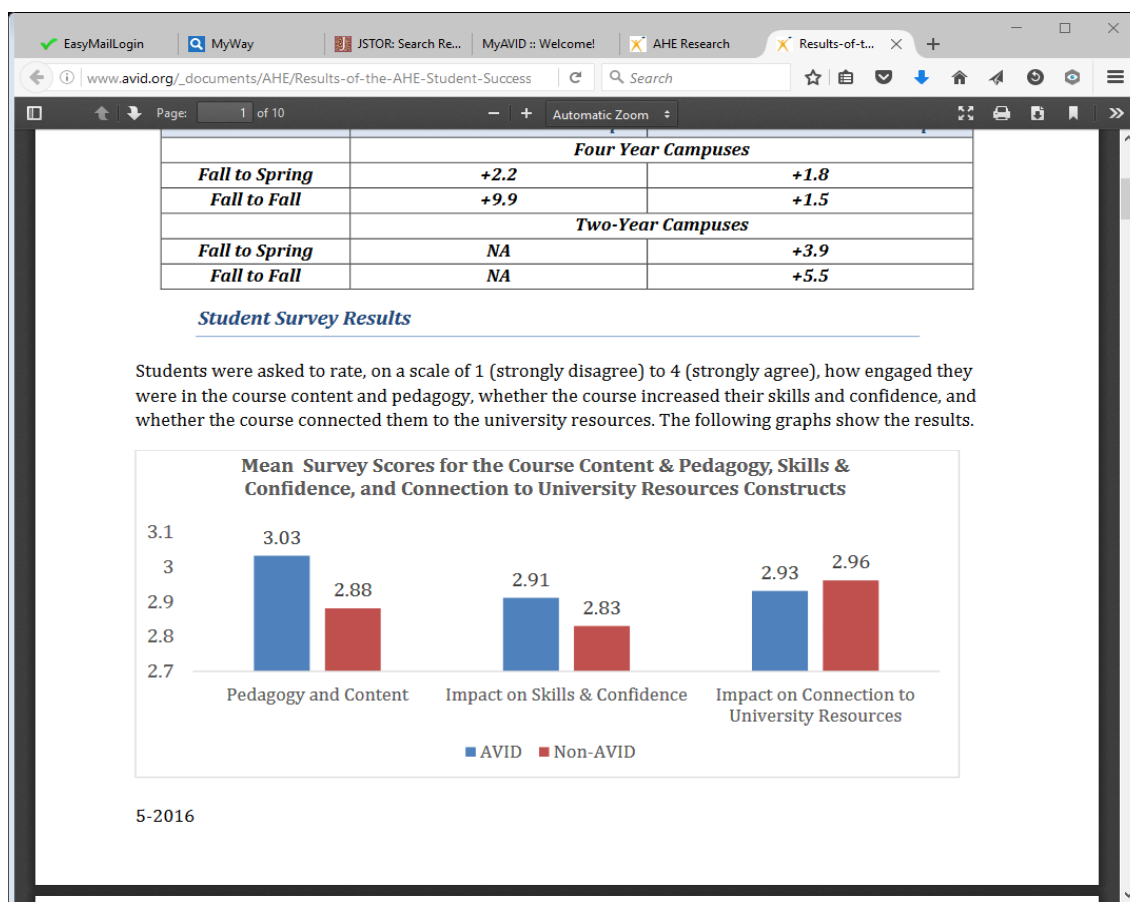


Figure 2.4. AVID student engagement.

By reflecting students' persistence and retention as well as student perspectives on pedagogy and content, this study reveals that AVID supports positively impact student success. While these results are encouraging, this study does not necessarily reflect the persistence and success of students placing into developmental education (non-credit) courses.

Moschetti and Hudley (2008) captured these concepts and strategies through a lens of social capital and asserted that successful practices that best support under-resourced, FGS possess four common characteristics: (a) cohesion—describes program

personnel who work together with consistent approaches, (b) cooperation—reflected in personnel who work together toward a common goal and develop good relationships with students, (c) connection—defined personnel ability to develop and maintain relationships with other departments within the college, and (d) consistency—describing continuous program behaviors that work to ensure the program goals are achieved and shared by all (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015b). Moschetti and Hudley maintained that of these four characteristics, three (cohesion, cooperation and connection) demonstrate the significance of developing social capital for under-resourced, FGS.

Kuh (2008) asserted that it is the intentionality of teaching specific behaviors that builds the confidence in students that they can, in fact, succeed when many students (often minority and under-resourced, first-generation) encounter several barriers that often impede student success. What is interesting about Kuh's recommended strategies is that they resemble the characteristics of cohesion, cooperation, and connection identified by Moschetti and Hudley (2015b). Creating conditions that matter to positively impact student learning for under-resourced, FGS create community, relationship, support systems while teaching behavioral strategies that help FGS know how to study, how to learn effectively, how to think analytically and critically, and how to manage their time effectively. These are strategies identified in the literature that are consistent with improving educational outcomes for FGS and supporting students in becoming ready for the rigors of college.

## **AVID Effectiveness**

Several studies on AVID supported the assumption that most AVID students originated from underrepresented student populations. One study underscored the concept that among underrepresented Hispanic and African American students, a greater proportion continued to college from high school AVID programs.

A notable study by Martinez and Klopott (2005) provided a review of then-current high school reform models. The study limited its investigation to those programs that addressed both academic and social support structures. Key findings from this study revealed four practices that promoted success and increased enrollment in postsecondary among low income, FGS and minority high school students: access to academic core curriculum for all; some sort of personalized learning environments; a balance of academic and social supports and alignment of curriculum between secondary and postsecondary. Of all the programs that were reviewed in this study, the authors posited that

because AVID proactively seeks to raise achievement and increase college preparedness for students at risk, it deliberately addresses the predictors of college-going behavior and uses college entrance and completion as measures of its success, making it unique among the reform models examined in this study. (p. 18)

Another study conducted by Watt, Yanez, and Cossio (2002) used both a quantitative and qualitative approach to reviewing considerable data sets including grade point averages (GPAs), course enrollment and certain test scores for approximately 1,000 students in 26 secondary schools. The researchers also conducted structured interviews with teachers, counselors, and administrators from 1999-2000 in the state of Texas. Key findings from this study revealed several things. AVID students outperformed their peers

on state mandated tests, GPAs and attendance. In fact, AVID students' attendance improved substantially and surpassed the general school population. Additionally, AVID students demonstrated success in rigorous courses; AVID students were easily identified by their inquisitiveness and use of AVID strategies (including Cornell note-taking and collaboration with peers); nearly 92% of AVID students were on track for graduation and in fact 91% were on what is referred to as the Distinguished Achievement Plan in Texas.

A study conducted by Mendiola et al. (2010) sought to investigate the postsecondary educational progress of Mexican American students who participated in AVID. The study sought to explain how specific elements of the AVID program identified by AVID graduates enrolled in college influenced their college experiences. They found that AVID students were better prepared for college, they formed strong relationships and bonds with others, and 79% were on track to graduate from college within the 6-year timeframe.

Further, a study conducted in 2014 by Llamas and Lopez used a mixed methods approach to examine the effects of AVID from the student perspective. The study used focus groups and surveys to better understand student perceptions of the AVID program, and specifically for those students who were minority, low income or first-generation. The study sought to understand from the students' perspective the effectiveness or impact of the AVID program. Results from both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the AVID program improved school support and engagement, the development of individual resilience (self-awareness, problem solving and self-esteem: i.e., elements of social capital).

Cuseo (2009) and others (McKeachie, 1986; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) have conducted several studies that reveal that students are more attentive and engaged when they are actively involved in the learning process. Active student involvement in the learning process is also shown to have a positive impact on student retention and degree completion (Astin, 1993). A study conducted by Watt, Huerta, and Alkan (2012) examines this challenge of cultural change through the lens of AVID at a community college. The results of their study reveal that implementation of the AVID HE essentials (including faculty training and professional development) found that when faculty and staff used high engagement instructional practices and intentionally taught strategies for student success, student outcomes changed. In this study, as in our proposed project, the challenges of getting buy-in from faculty is contingent upon training, discussion of mission/vision and goals of the institution and expectations from the college president.

### **FGS**

Several studies have examined the impact of first-generation and income status on college persistence. To ensure an increase in student retention and success, it is essential to examine the characteristics and needs of first-generation, under-resourced students. Several studies reveal that first-generation and other non-traditional students often enter college with Fenske, Porter, & DuBrock, 2000; lower skill levels in reading, writing and mathematics (Pascarella et al., 2004). FGS often show lower academic performance and display fewer skills that demonstrate they are comfortable with effective studying techniques (Davis, 2010; Martinez & Klopott, 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pike & Kuh, 2005). FGS often demonstrate lower analytical reading skills, and they spend less time



studying than more traditional students (Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996).

These tendencies suggest that more first-generation and other non-traditional students often enter community colleges through the door of pre-college (developmental education) courses, intended to increase their skill levels, improve study skills and build supportive networks.

Several studies reinforce these findings. A study conducted by Vargas (2004) revealed that low-income, minority and FGS are especially likely to lack specific types of college knowledge, including how to navigate the institution and institutional services like advising, financial aid, tutoring. Helping FGS develop comfort and skill in navigating the institutional culture and support systems is vital to developing cultural and social capital in helping FGS succeed in college. Thayer (2000) revealed that FGS often lack the specific non-cognitive behaviors linked to college success, including effective time management, advising, counseling support and the student support strategies embedded in each college or university. Thayer also found that FGS face barriers when accessing postsecondary institutions, including lack of the college environment, academic expectations and rigor, academic under-preparedness (which often land them in developmental education courses), and lack of family support (social support systems). In fact, Striplin (1999) found that families of FGS often discourage them from postsecondary training or completion, which can often lead to alienation from family members. Striplin suggested that overcoming these challenges and barriers is essential for college success for FGS. Hsiao (1992) found that the challenges and barriers that FGS face from family discouragement about college attendance may result in the absence of

study space or time at home, criticism for attending to school obligations and demands rather than family responsibilities. Vargas (2004) also suggested that a critical component of FGS success is understanding the link between educational pathways and future employment options and advancement.

Additionally, a study was conducted by Engle, Bermeo, and O'Brien (2006) that revealed insights from FGS about their college experience. The Pell Institute conducted focus groups with FGS in Texas to determine what services and supports had the most impact on FGS in deciding whether to enroll in college. Their results (detailed below) are revealing, but not surprising:

FGS identified three crucial steps along the pipeline to college where support was most helpful in making a successful transition from high school.

- Raising aspirations for college
  - Many FGS have low or no aspirations for going to college prior to participating in pre-college programs.
  - They did not think college was necessary to get a job—or possible because of money.
  - Connecting college to jobs and career interests help
  - Getting informed about college and how to pay for it.
  - Perceiving themselves as college material
  - Understanding that college is possible
  - Getting personal and being persistent about college
- Navigating the college admission process
  - FGS do not receive much help from their parents in applying for college or FA, i.e., “College knowledge”
  - FGS rely heavily on pre-college programs
  - Taking it step by step from college entrance exam to college visits to college applications to FA forms
  - Finding out how to pay
  - Getting the family involved
  - Making connections in the community

- Easing the initial transition into college
  - FGS say it is much more difficult to stay in college than it is to get in.
  - Financial aid and family issues made the transition difficult for FGS
  - Increasing college preparedness; tutoring and supplemental academic courses helped close the academic prep gap
  - Creating a bridge to college (Summer Bridge programs)
  - Continuing support through the first year of college
  - Acclimating students to the college environment.
  - Navigating campus life—often pre-college programs help
  - Connecting with peers
  - Balancing social (work?) life with academics (structure, discipline and commitment of pre-college programs help FGS acclimate.
  - Involving parents in the transition to college
  - Helping students manage the financial aspects of college
  - Making ends meet; tuition increases, stagnant grant aid and the high costs of textbooks and transportation left many FGS struggling for how to pay for college.
  - Working less

Overall, FGS say it is the relationships and trust they developed with pre-college program staff that allowed them to be receptive to the messages and services these programs offered. FGS and their parents must feel that they can trust program staff.

Engel et al.'s (2006) review also underscored the findings of other studies that suggest that FGS not only face barriers to their academic and social integration, but they also face barriers from cultural adaptations. The norms, values and expectations of a college campus are often quite different than the cultures in which FGS grow up. This can create intense stress for students (Engel et al., 2006, p. 18; Rendón, 1992).

A study conducted by Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) identified specific demographics of FGS which included (a) age (31% of FGS were 24 or older, compared to 13% and 5% respectively; (b) lower incomes—42% of FGS were from the lowest family income quartile (Choy, 2001); (c) entering FGS are more likely to be female (57%), African-American or Hispanic (20% vs 13%), married (18% vs 5%) or

independent (either with or without dependents of their own (37% vs 13%). FGS were more likely to attend part-time (30% vs 13%), live off campus or with family or relatives (84% vs 60%), delay entering college after high school graduation (46% vs 19%), receive financial (or other) aid (51% vs 42%) or work full-time while enrolled in college (33% vs 24% (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

Choy (2001) reinforced much of the data presented in the Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) study, citing that 44% of FGS enrolled full-time, full year as compared to 52% and 62% of non-FGS. Striplin (1999) also found that most FGS begin college at a community college and that even at community colleges, the acclimation to the college environment is a struggle for FGS.

Choy (2001) also found that FGS attending a 4-year institution were twice as likely as non-FGS to leave school before their second year (23% vs 10%). FGS status was a strong indicator of students leaving college before their second year. For students entering a 2-year college with an associate's degree goal (or certificate), FGS were as likely as others to persist and attain the degree (Choy, 2001). Choy also found that the persistence gap seemed to disappear for FGS who had enrolled in a rigorous high school curriculum (often including Advanced Placement). Hodara (2015) reinforced this, finding that students who took Dual Credit (college classes) while in high school were also more likely to avoid developmental education in college.

Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) found that FGS had lower levels of social integration than non-FGS and therefore less likely to socialize with friends from school

or participate in co-curricular activities. This isolation often impacts the acquisition of cultural and social capital.

Despite the lack of college readiness skills for FGS as identified in many of the above studies, most faculty at postsecondary institutions expect a level of college readiness in students who enter their classrooms that include effective study skills and time management. Rarely do postsecondary instructors intentionally teach these practices; rather they expect students to seek this support outside of the classroom. For many FGS, however, the various abstract mental processes that go into effective solitary study, time management and effective study practices are unfamiliar and difficult to master (Davis, 2010, p. 40).

FGS often need to be introduced directly to the methods and procedures of efficient study. If they are not introduced to them, they will continue to study using their own methods, not knowing that they need help or that their methods are not effective. Treisman conducted a study in 1992 when many students failed or performed poorly in his mathematics classes. He discovered that nontraditional students did poorly because they tended to study only by themselves. Only 10% of them studied with their classmates, whereas traditional students were much more likely to do so. Treisman's "prescription" for helping nontraditional students excel in math was to "convince students in orientation that success in college would require them to work with their peers to create for themselves a community based on shared intellectual interests and common professional aims" (p. 370).

FGS have the same intellectual capacity as their non-FGS counterparts. What may not be as obvious, however, is that FGS think and learn *differently* from their non-FGS counterparts. By administering the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) test to some 3,840 college students, Terenzini et al. (1996) revealed that the cognitive skills of FGS were “weaker” than the cognitive skills of non-FGS. Other studies corroborated this evidence of weaker cognitive skills of FGS than their counterparts—particularly at the outset of their college experiences (Filkins & Doyle, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

### **Social Capital**

Bourdieu (1986b) defined social capital as

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acceptance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various sense of the word. (pp. 248-249)

Coleman (1986) added to this concept of social capital and asserted that a specific social structure allows for the establishment of certain norms, values, and expectations. The norms specify which actions are perceived as appropriate within that social structure. Coleman further distinguished between different kinds of social capital based on mutual trust and authority:

- Relations of mutual trust
- Informational potential
- Effective norms
- Appropriate social organizations

Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) found that genuine, trusting and supportive relationships with institutional agents (including peers) were related to

academic success among low-income, Latino students. While this study was limited to high school and minority students, its findings have been supported in other studies (Astin, 1984; Attinasi, 1989; Pascarella et al., 2004). These studies also confirmed that once a student enrolls in college, their socio-economic status and parental education influence a student's social capital. Moschetti and Hudley (2008) conducted a study to measure social capital among FGS and non-FGS, working-class white males. Part of the framework for this study includes many other studies that suggest that gender has an impact on student's access to social networks in college. Female students are more likely than males to seek out both parental and institutional supports (Flacks & Thomas, 1998; Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Kenny & Donaldson, 1991). In this study, students were asked to rate how often they communicated with institutional agents (professors, advisors, counselors, tutors) during their first semester. The hypotheses framing this study included (a) FGS, white, working-class males would report less communication overall with institutional agents; (b) that FGS, white, working class males would access fewer institutional agents for social emotional support and help with their coursework; (c) that higher levels of communication with institutional agents about college experiences, along with a greater variety of agents accessed would be positively related to GPA; (d) higher levels of communication with institutional agents about college experiences and greater variety of agents would be positively related to more optimism toward the future for all students.

The results were interesting and while the results underlying the hypothesis was not supported at a level of statistical significance, the data revealed a trend supporting

this thinking which is consistent with the findings of the Stanton-Salazar's (2001) study. In that study, it was found that FGS' pre-college networks provided them with more insights on how to seek help when needed and how to negotiate access to campus support and resources. Despite this trend, working class, first-generation white males tend to be less likely than any group to access institutional agents for support once they are on campus.

The most significant finding emerged surrounding the final hypothesis, which predicted that communication and access to social agents would be associated with expectations toward the future for both FGS and non-FGS. Significant correlations were found between the three types of social capital and expectations for FGS only. The findings suggest that working-class, FGS either access institutional agents more frequently if they have high aspirations for the future or that contact with institutional agents raises students' aspirations (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008).

An additional study conducted by Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) examined the determinants of FGS to second generation students with  $n = 1,167$  FGS to 3,017 non-FGS at 4-year institutions. First, they found that FGS are disproportionately overrepresented in the most disadvantaged racial, income and gender groups with all of the challenges and barriers these demographics present (Choy, 2001). For the purposes of this specific study however, the effects of independent variables on persistence were studied separately for FGS and continuing generation students. This study conceptualized and operationalized retention (i.e., first to second year persistence at the same institution) instead of postsecondary system-wide and examined the relationship between the



dependent variable (first-to-second year persistence at the same institution) and five sets of independent variables for students who began at 7-year institutions. Dependent variables in this study included the following:

- First to second-year persistence (defined as continuous enrollment at same institution) from Fall to spring (of the same year).
- Remaining enrolled the subsequent Fall (as of October), exclusive of summer breaks;
- Students who attained a certificate or degree during the first year were also considered persisters.
- First-to-second year persistence was coded as 1 = persist, 0 = did not persist
- Four categories of independent variables
  1. Background characteristics (including marital status, gender, primary language, number of dependents, total income, race);
  2. Pre-college achievement including rigor of high school course taking, standardized test scores and delayed entry into postsecondary;
  3. Institutional variables including institutional control, attending a historically Black college, institutional selectivity, institutional enrollment size, attendance status;
  4. In-college experience including measures of academic success (GPA, satisfaction with own intellectual growth), social (frequency of participation in school co-curricular, satisfaction with social life and campus climate), and financial (total grant aid received, total loan(s) received, work study aid received, hours worked per week, student's residence location).

Key findings from this study revealed substantial differences between the persistence-related characteristics, behaviors and experiences of FGS and non-FGS. For example, 76.5% of students in the FGS sample persisted at the same institution from first to second year, and 15 independent variables were found to be statistically significant in relation to first-to-second year persistence for FGS. Males were 9.4% more likely than

females to persist; FGS whose primary language spoken at home when growing up was not English were 14.7% more likely to persist than those who grew up in homes where English was primary language. FGS who were more socially integrated into the institution and more satisfied with their social lives were 16.7% more likely to persist than those who were not satisfied or well-integrated (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005).

### **Social Capital and AVID**

Additional studies sought to understand the connection and effectiveness of AVID on providing cultural capital and college access for under-resourced and FGS. P. E. Bernhardt (2013) used the lens of cultural capital within an educational context as Bourdieu (1986a) suggested. Bourdieu also posited that cultural capital in its “embodied state” (Bourdieu, 1986b) is both consciously acquired and implicitly inherited through a process of socialization to certain cultural practices and norms. He further posited that AVID strategies and program essentials provide cultural capital to low-income, FGS. The AVID curriculum exposes students to the types of experiences, knowledge, and language useful for navigating the complex postsecondary environment. Stanton-Salazar, Vasquez, and Mehan (1995) asserted that the support students find within the AVID support system is “much more than giving students the fish they need to survive; it is teaching them how to fish, whatever waters they are in” (p. 30). Lareau and Weininger (2003) argued that intentional cultivation of cultural capital is necessary for success and since this is often commonly cultivated among high and middle income families, it is not often common within low-income families. Lareau suggested that the AVID staff and

instructors often provided the kind of cultural-capital supportive role for low-income, FGS.

Mendiola et al. (2010) found that skills taught in the AVID support system provided students with the key non-cognitive strategies found to be essential in successful college-going students, including Cornell note-taking, time management, organization, and group collaboration.

Martinez and Klopott (2005) asserted that AVID promotes the success of low-income, underrepresented students in two distinct ways: providing a personalized learning environment specifically focused on individual needs and creating opportunities for students to develop strong and meaningful social networks and relationships (p. 216).

Watt, Butcher, and Ramirez in a 2013 study sought to determine if there were significant differences in the retention rates of first-semester freshman enrolled in a paired non-AVID Learning Frameworks course and an AVID-supported pair of courses. They found that in the second year of implementation of this study, GPAs and retention rates were higher among AVID students in the AVID-paired classes. The study revealed that there appears to be some benefit to the support students receive in paired (LC) courses (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008).

### **Gap in Literature**

The literature review presented in this study reveals several key data surrounding improving the success of under-resourced, first-generation, underrepresented student in educational settings. In fact, throughout the review, AVID shows remarkable success in supporting students at the secondary level into postsecondary. AVID is a well-

documented strategy for student success and has largely been targeted for students in the *academic middle*. While there are emerging studies on the impact of AVID HE on student retention at college campuses, AVID HE is still unfolding and finding flexibility in models of delivery at the higher education level. While several research studies have documented success in using AVID HE to improve persistence and college-readiness for low-income, underrepresented students, few studies yet focus on FGS placed into developmental education. However, because of the need at the community college level for supporting increasing numbers of students in developmental education and because Oregon and MHCC are engaged in current practice to better understand and redesign developmental education at the community college, the question of AVID HE as an effective student support strategy for students in developmental education at the community colleges has not been examined. This research study explored the use of AVID HE strategies on developmental education students at MHCC. While it may be difficult to generalize the findings of this study to other institutions, the findings of this mixed methods study on the effectiveness of AVID HE in supporting academic success, term-to-term persistence, progression toward credit-bearing courses and development of social capital will provide new data on effective strategies for supporting FGS placing into developmental education. The findings from this study could bridge the gap in the literature that is increasingly significant in supporting first-generation, low-income, underrepresented students in completing college and entering the workforce.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the holistic student support strategy, AVID HE, on under-resourced, underprepared FGS placing into Developmental Education (pre-college credit) courses at a community college. This study specifically examined the impact of AVID HE strategies on students' term-to-term persistence and progression toward credit-bearing courses. A secondary question of this study is to determine if participation in AVID HE influences these outcomes for students and, if so, in what direction. This study explored and examined the rates of persistence and progression of students in both AVID HE-paired LCs and those students in non-AVID HE paired specific stand-alone developmental education classes (detailed below). An additional issue explored in this study was whether AVID HE-supported LCs impacts first-generation, under-resourced, underprepared students in gaining social capital represented in the following conditions: (a) Cohesion with the institution and their peers; (b) Cooperation (i.e., development of relationships with the institution and institutional agents to gain access and support); and (c) Connection to the institution in terms of developing community, support strategies and resources.

To examine these issues, this study used a mixed methods design strategy. Student data from one community college (MHCC in Gresham, Oregon) serving a large, diverse, low-income population (Appendix J) were examined to address whether students

who participate in AVID HE and students who do not participate in AVID HE have different outcomes on persistence and progression toward credit accrual. Results of AVID HE participation with developmental education LCs were compared to the outcomes of non-AVID students to determine if AVID participation impacts persistence and progression toward credit bearing courses and in what way. Additionally, students who participate in AVID HE and those students are enrolled in the same developmental education, but non-paired AVID HE courses, were assessed through the process of semi-structured interviews to determine if AVID HE students have gained social capital (represented in increased cohesion, cooperation and connection to the institution and to the institutional mores and values) than non-AVID HE students.

These questions were examined by first comparing term-to-term persistence and progression from non-credit courses (developmental education) to credited courses of student participants in the AVID HE supported developmental education LCs with non-AVID supported developmental education student participants. The research suggests that under-resourced, underprepared, FGS are particularly at risk of failing to persist to the second year and out of the often-rigid sequence of developmental education non-credit classes. The research also suggests that specific strategies increase these students' rates of persistence and progression. The research also suggests that specific institutional practices and holistic supports increase the acquisition of sufficient social capital to better prepare under-resourced, underprepared, FGS to persist and progress successfully through college. The influence of intervening variables of poverty, age, race and gender were also examined for their impact on any identified differences.

## **Research Design**

Selecting a methodology for conducting research represents both a theoretical and pragmatic approach. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) along with others (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010) suggest that mixed methods research combines a synergistic blend of both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggested that the mixed methods approach to research is timely and driven by contemporary needs to understand from both a statistical (quantitative) perspective as well as from an (experiential) qualitative or formative perspective.

Mixed methods research is relatively new and combines in specific ways, qualitative (reporting on lived experiences) of participants as well as a controlled quantitative statistical analysis of treatments. Qualitative design has, in fact, been questioned as a viable research method by many scientific researchers, yet the qualitative approach has gained increased credibility in the last few decades. Qualitative approaches have been used in many fields including education, sociology, psychology and other fields that attempt to situate the research in the real-world experience of participants to better understand the experiences they encounter and identify themes that can inform practice. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) described qualitative research as a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world of the participant visible. “They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self” (p. 28). Qualitative methods capture the perspective and voice of participants to better understand the context. However, because qualitative approaches collect multiple data from observations, interviews and

perspectives of a few participants, the analysis of these data can be considered interpretive, subjective and not as generalizable as quantitative (Creswell, 2015). Adding a quantitative (statistically valid) component to a research study through a mixed methods approach adds a level of verifiability and replicability that qualitative alone cannot often provide.

Yet, the process of collecting personal experiences in the “voice” of participants through the qualitative component, adds depth and breadth to a research study of this nature. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) further liken the process of making meaning out of qualitative data to that of a film maker, quilt maker or essayist, weaving disparate pieces together into a whole. In fact, they liken the researcher to a “bricoleur”—or a maker of quilts (p. 29) which particularly resonates with this novice researcher. They adopt this view from other researchers who actually clarify the meaning of bricolage and bricoleur, as one who “makes do by adapting the bricoles of the world” (Kincheloe, 2001; Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991, p. 161). Harper (1987) took this a step further in saying that “bricolage” is the “poetic making do” with such “bricoles—the odds and ends, the bits left over” (p. 74).

This study, then, is a bricolage of significant bits of information related to AVID strategies for first-generation, developmental education participants at MHCC. To conduct this study, I used the mixed methods design model, using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. There were two distinct but convergent stages in this investigation



The data collected by both methods were analyzed and integrated in a convergent design (Creswell, 2015). In this study, I investigated the strategies used by AVID HE to support student learning, term-to-term persistence and progression of students from non-credit developmental education, AVID LCs at MHCC into credited classes. This was done through a statistical analysis of student term-to-term persistence and year-to-year progression toward credited classes through a statistical analysis of treatment and control groups of LCs of students paired with an AVID HE elective compared to stand-alone courses. The statistical analysis of the treatment and control group of students in both the LCs + AVID elective as well as the stand-alone WR90/RD90 course expanded the investigative analysis and provided additional quantitative data. The mixed methods approach, utilizing both statistical analysis of outcomes of students in the AVID-supported LCs and stand-alone sections and the case study (qualitative) analysis seeks understanding of AVID support strategies from student perspectives and experiences while in transition from developmental education courses to credited courses and viable career pathways. The selection of a mixed methods approach is particularly appropriate for this study because it uses both close-ended, statistical analysis of variables impacting student learning in Developmental Education coupled with open-ended personal stories and perspectives of participants to provide context around gaining social capital within the framework of a case study. This study seeks to understand the meaning of support, college readiness and cultural/social capital in developmental education students along with a statistical analysis of variables in providing supports for developmental education students in pre-college level courses at a community college.

### **Assumptions**

Given the success of AVID at the K12 level (elementary through secondary), I made the assumption that fidelity to implementation of the AVID essentials (regardless of the population) will result in increased success, retention and college (credit) readiness. I also assumed that students receiving the AVID HE supports (treatment) will acquire the social capital necessary to successfully enter and progress through college-level, credited classes. This assumption is based on preliminary data results from AVID implementation at MHCC. These assumptions, however, could lead to research bias. As mentioned previously in describing the setting and implementation of AVID, this researcher was instrumental in bringing AVID to MHCC. While this research study does not impact implementation or ongoing support for the program, it could easily be viewed as biased. I have ensured that interaction with students followed the strictest of protocols and used a proxy interviewer when possible or necessary to avoid bias in the data collection.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) placing into pre-college (developmental education) classes in community college differ in persistence toward degree and participation in credit-bearing courses than first year, non-low income, non-first-generation students entering community colleges? What is the direction of any differences?
2. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) entering community college participating in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than non-first-generation students (FGS) entering community college who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?
3. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) have different rates of term-to-term persistence toward degree than first-generation students (FGS) who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?

4. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?
5. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “connection” to institutional agents at the college (identified as social capital) than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?
6. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “cooperation” with peers in their AVID HE supported Learning Community than first-generation students who do not participate in AVID HE supported Learning Communities?
7. Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of cohesion to the community college than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?
8. Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of self efficacy and confidence than first year, first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

### **Study Design**

To effectively conduct a mixed methods study, it combines both a quantitative (experimental) view of student persistence from developmental education courses to credit level classes with the support of AVID HE, along with a greater understanding of FGS stories, change in social capital and bridges out of the social/cultural barriers that inhibit their college success. A mixed method approach provides a holistic strategy for studying AVID HE on developmental education students at one community college. The method first identifies the variables to be tested under the hypothesis that FGS placing into developmental education courses at MHCC and provided the AVID HE supports,

successfully persist into credited classes. This study used an experiment of AVID HE-supported LCs in WR91 + HD100C (see description on p. 107) to determine the extent to which AVID HE supports increased term-to-term persistence and student progression into credited classes. The independent variable in any statistical study is a mathematical variable that is independent of the other variables in an expression or function and whose value determines one or more of the values of the other variables. A dependent variable in a statistical study is a mathematical variable whose value is determined by that of one or more other variables in a function. The independent variable in this study is college students placing into developmental (non-credited) Reading/Writing course at one community college. The dependent variables include:

- FGS status,
- gender,
- age,
- AVID HE support strategies,
- LCs (social supports).

### **Procedures**

Data were collected from a variety of sources for this research study to provide a rich array of information and details about the AVID Center supports at MHCC for developmental education students. A variety of tools were used, including (quantitative) statistical analysis of student term-to-term persistence in MHCC LCs + AVID (treatment group) against student term-to-term persistence in stand-alone (control) RD90/WR90 classes. Additional data included data from archival records, interviews, direct observations, pre- and post-survey questions and responses, along with numeric data revealing trends in student performance, persistence and success. The data collected quantitatively were analyzed through several statistical analyses and tests to determine

effect of the treatment. The data collected from student stories, interviews and observations were analyzed and coded for developing themes and trends. Once both close-ended and open-ended data were collected and analyzed, the results were integrated (see Figure 3.1). This uses the convergent mixed methods approach, the intent of which is to collect both qualitative and quantitative data and then merge the results (Creswell, 2015).

This study analyzed institutional data from AVID HE-supported students in the WR91+HD100C developmental education LC as well as the non-AVID HE-supported (stand-alone) WR90/RD90 developmental education courses. The questions that guided this analysis include the following:

- AVID-supported students:
  - Persistence (Term to term) (collected from MHCC Analytics)
  - Progression from developmental education classes to credited classes (Year to year progression) (collected from MHCC Analytics)
  - Social capital measured by (a) connection; (b) cooperation and (c) connection (semi-structured interviews)—qualitative
- Non-AVID supported students:
  - Persistence (Term to term) (collected from MHCC Analytics)

Progression from developmental education classes to credited classes (Year to year progression) (collected from MHCC Analytics). Social capital measured by (a) connection; (b) cooperation and (c) connection (semi-structured interviews)—qualitative.

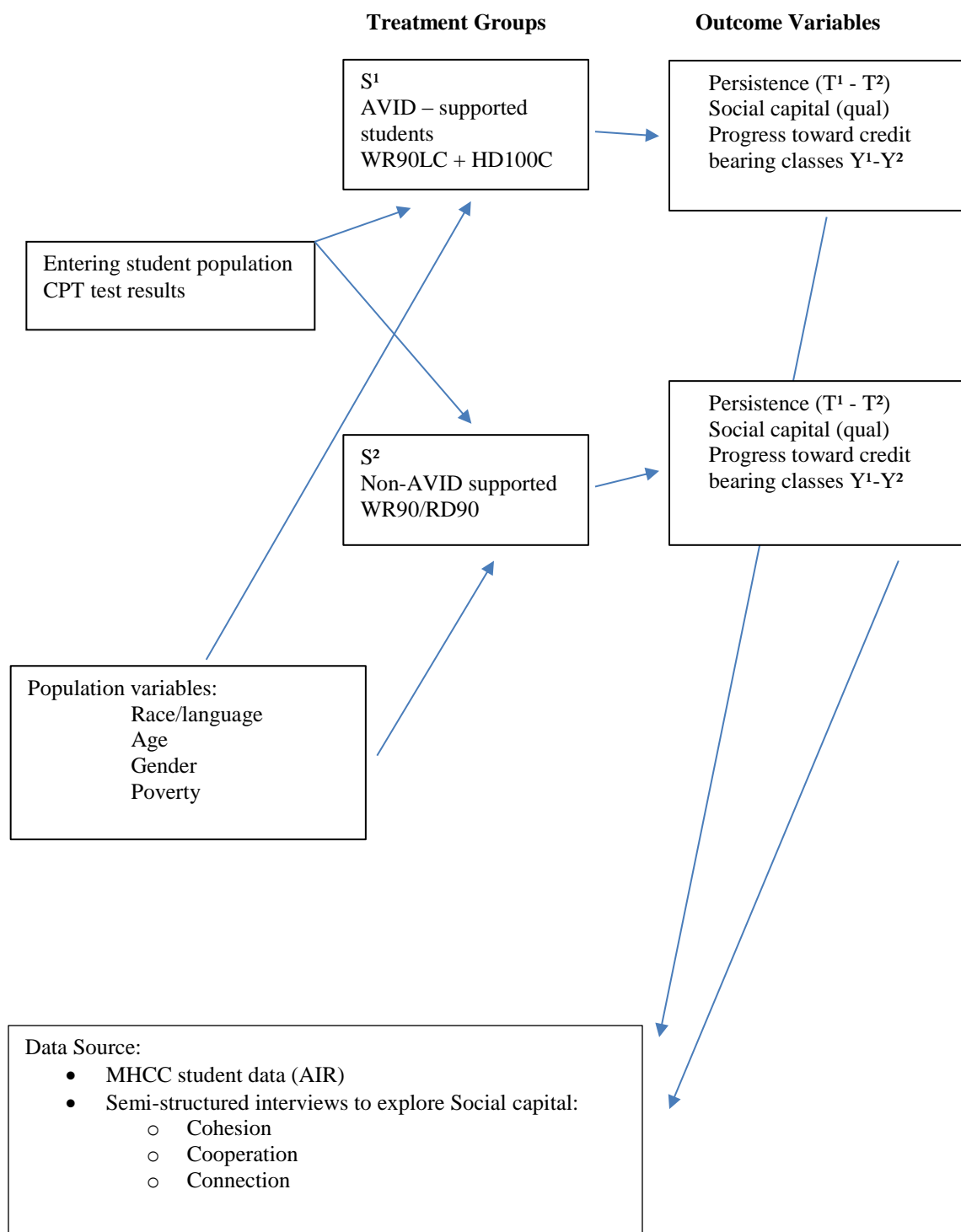


Figure 3.1. Study design.

## **Instruments and Measures**

### **Observations**

As a part of this bricolage (or compilation of information into a whole piece) this study utilized several data sources to reveal the impact of AVID HE support strategies for Developmental Education students at MHCC. One of the data sources utilized was direct observation within the field of the AVID Center at MHCC. This tool allowed the researcher to observe students within the AVID Center, interacting with one another and with the AVID Center support staff and provided descriptive data about the world of AVID from a student's perspective. This strategy provided a rich descriptive narrative of the setting from an objective, non-participant observer perspective. Field notes provided the descriptive data from this method. Direct observation was also done in both the treatment (WR91+HD100C) LC as well as the stand-alone WR90 and RD90 classes.

### **Pre/Post Survey Questionnaires**

All students who both participate in the AVID HE-supported LCs or utilize the AVID Center were asked to take a short biographical questionnaire when they entered and another questionnaire (post-survey) when they completed the AVID HE-supported LCs and transition into credited classes. The information garnered in these pre- and post-surveys provided basic background, demographic and biographical data about participants. Samples of these pre-and post-surveys are identified in the Appendix C and D.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Another source of data collection included semi-structured, open-ended interviews of participants (including students, faculty and staff). Kahn and Cannell (1957) provided a rather succinct definition of the research interview,

We use the term interview to refer to a specialized pattern of verbal interaction—initiated for a specific purpose, and focused on some specific content area, with consequent elimination of extraneous material. Moreover, the interview is a pattern of interaction in which the role relationship of interviewer and respondent is highly specialized, its specific characteristics depending somewhat on the purpose and character of the interview. (p. 16)

Kidder (1981), however, found little distinction between a formalized questionnaire and interviews and notes that in both “heavy reliance is placed on verbal reports from the subjects for both information about the stimuli or experiences to which they are exposed and for the knowledge of their behavior” (p. 226). Indeed, Mishler (1986) both expanded and narrowed these definitions by asserting that an “interview is a behavioral rather than a linguistic event” (p. 10).

This study utilized participant interviews through the qualitative analysis process to understand behaviors, perceptions and potential themes of emerging changes in social and cultural capital for students in AVID HE at MHCC. The primary themes are outlined in Chapter 1, including: (a) Cohesion, (b) Cooperation, and (c) Connection.

### **Archival Data**

The AVID Center at MHCC maintains quantitative data about student performance, academic gains, transition to credited courses and other relevant data. These data were also utilized in understanding impact of AVID strategies on developmental education student.



### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher for this study is a trained therapeutic counselor as well as a long-time educator who has used therapeutic interviewing to elicit information from students throughout a 30-year long career in both secondary and postsecondary education. Following interview strategies and active listening protocols is a practice that is used by the researcher in many settings. That being said, it must be noted that the researcher's former position at the college (Vice President of Instruction) creates a challenging asymmetrical power relationship between the researcher and the participant. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discussed the challenges of power asymmetry. Describing the research interview as an "instrumental dialogue," Kvale and Brinkmann suggested that the goal is not to conduct a "good conversation," but rather it is a scientific means for providing the researcher with descriptions, narratives, texts and experiences and to provide a tool with which to analyze and interpret the collected data (p. 33). As retired former Vice President of the college, it may be necessary to conduct interviews using a proxy interviewer to avoid the power differential. The protocols for generating open-ended questions and eliciting information that reveals the reality for the participant were followed carefully throughout this research study.

The qualitative research interview is used to develop understanding "themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspective" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 24). Qualitative research interviews are often semi-structured and open-ended, allowing for both a protocol for process as well as candidness in revealing experiences as well as flexibility to exploring emerging themes.

An interview protocol has been developed and is attached in the attached Appendix I.

### **The Setting: MHCC Student Data**

MHCC is a 2-year, public, nonresidential community college located in Multnomah County, Oregon. MHCC's main campus is located in Gresham, 15 miles east of Portland. A satellite campus, the Bruning Center for Allied Health Education, is also located in Gresham, and a second satellite campus, the Maywood Park Campus, is located in Portland. The College's 950-square-mile district encompasses a diverse range of communities, from the highly urban greater Portland area on the west side of the district, to the sparsely populated, rural communities on the east side of the district. The vast majority (70%) of MHCC's students reside in Multnomah County.

### **Students**

Total FTE enrollment for FA 2014 was 5,674, with a headcount of 9,319. Fifty-two percent of students are female; 48% are male. Forty-one percent of students attend full-time; 59% attend part-time.

The diversity of the district is reflected in MHCC's student population. An increasing percentage of MHCC's students rely on grant or scholarship aid (74% in Fall 2014) and a growing percentage are FGS (43.8% in Fall 2014). Ethnic diversity is also increasing at the college, reflecting the changing demographics of the community: after English, the three most frequently spoken languages among MHCC's student population are Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. With respect to student race/ethnicity, 59% are Caucasian; 11% are Hispanic/Latino; 13% are race/ethnicity unknown; 6% are Asian; 4%

are multiracial; 5% are Black or African American; and less than 2% are in other categories.

### **Programs**

MHCC offers more than 90 professional and technical programs as well as transfer degree options. The College awards the Associate of Arts, Oregon Transfer degree (AAOT); the Associate of Science, Oregon Transfer, Business degree (ASOT-Business); the Associate of Science degree (AS); the Associate of General Studies degree (AGS); the Oregon Transfer Module (OTM), which is a non-degree specific transfer degree.

MHCC is one of two public postsecondary institutions serving the area that awards 2-year associate degrees that are acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution. The overall enrollment of MHCC has reached a record 30,000 students representing a diverse population including teens, adults, senior citizens, urban and rural dwellers, high school graduates, GED/ABS/ESL learners, adults changing their career directions and a full range of socio-economic backgrounds. The district includes nine high school districts most of which have a high population of free and reduced lunch students (indicating high poverty). Some high schools within the district report over 70% of students on free and reduced lunch. Many of the neighborhoods within the district have large populations relying on governmental assistance for basic needs (MHCC, 2014).

Providing support for under-resourced students (those students living in poverty) is a commitment of the MHCC Board of Education. With roughly only 50% of students

who enter the college completing a degree, certificate or credential, MHCC invested in a new postsecondary initiative (AVID HE) in 2011 to provide systemic supports to help under-resourced and underrepresented students more successfully navigate college.

MHCC chose AVID HE over other systemic supports because it coupled student supports with a focus on focused faculty professional development around HIPs.

### **MHCC Demographics**

The MHCC service area has changed significantly in the last decade. As demonstrated in Table 3.1, the Hispanic population in the service area is growing both in absolute numbers and in percentage of population. The student population at MHCC reflects the changing demographics.

Table 3.1

#### *MHCC Student Population by Ethnicity*

	2014		2012		2010		2008	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	239,369	63%	235,641	64%	246,108	69%	238,840	70%
African American	15,462	4%	15,225	4%	9,423	3%	8,670	3%
American Indian	4,047	1%	3,828	1%	3,263	1%		0%
Asian	23,230	6%	22,068	6%	17,009	5%	16,527	5%
Hawaiian Pac Isle	2,326	1%	2,391	1%	1,128	0%		0%
Hispanic	53,562	14%	50,670	14%	41,356	12%	37,095	11%
Other	27,507	7%	26,088	7%	23,533	7%	37,921	11%
Multi-Race	15,283	4%	14,141	4%	13,477	4%		0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau cited in MHCC (2014).

Educationally, MHCC district residents have higher high school graduation rates but lower rates of Bachelor's degrees than Oregon and the rest of the United States (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

*Educational Attainment by the Population Age 25+*

	Population 25 Yrs No Table of Figures Entries Found +	High School Graduate	Some College	Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree
District Total	21,6358	29%	28%	8%	14%
Oregon	2,704,043	24%	26%	8%	19%
United States	210,910,615	28%	21%	8%	18%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau cited in MHCC (2014).

According to data acquired for the MHCC (2014) AMP, 14.6% of residents of the East Multnomah County MHCC district area are residents who are 25 years and older and have less than a high school diploma or equivalent. This includes over 30,000 residents within the college district area. In Gresham/East Multnomah County, 30.8% of children live in poverty, which is well above the national average of 22.5% ([http://portlandpulse.org/child\\_poverty](http://portlandpulse.org/child_poverty)). The need to provide support and access to this population of residents within the MHCC district area is clear.

## **Enrollment and Entry**

MHCC District provides instruction in college credit courses (to satisfy degree and transfer requirements), developmental education courses and personal enrichment courses.

All first time entering (degree seeking) college students seeking to enter MHCC must take the College Placement Test (CPT) also referred to as the Accuplacer in the MHCC Testing Services Center. The CPT measures reading comprehension, knowledge of English grammar and mathematics skills. The CPT is offered throughout the year at the college and takes approximately 90 minutes to complete (start to finish). Once completed, scores are calculated in all three areas (Reading comprehension, grammar, and mathematics skills) to determine entry level classes that fit their skill level. The charts and graphs in Appendix J reveal general placement levels and retention for entering MHCC students in mathematics, reading and writing. Pre-college level courses have been developed to meet the needs of students placing into pre-college level courses in each of these three general studies areas (mathematics, reading and writing). Cut scores for placement into pre-college credit courses (specifically reading and writing) are listed below:

- RD90 cut scores: 36-59 (reading comprehension)
- WR90 cut scores: 50-69 (sentence skills)
- RD115 cut scores (college credit level): 60-79
- WR115 cut scores (college credit level): 70-93

Specific to this study, the following course descriptions provide context about the skill level and instructional outcomes for the treatment and control groups identified in the study design:

- RD90: Effective Reading and Learning Strategies. This is a 5-credit course that provides instruction in reading comprehension skills for college-level materials, vocabulary development and study skills. Study skills instruction includes note taking, outlining, test-taking strategies, memory techniques and time management.
- WR90: Paragraph to Essay. This is a four-credit course that provides continued instruction on producing clear, mechanically correct sentences of maturing quality while providing students with both an introduction to and practice with the expository essay. Summarization skills are further developed and practiced in an effort to build upon and sharpen students' analytical reading and thinking abilities in preparation for college-level writing. The course emphasizes and provides the tools necessary for clear, correct writing aimed at a defined audience.
- LC10-L1: (AVID LC)—Integrated Reading/Writing and College Success course. This is a 9-credit course that provides skilled reading and writing through inquiry and is comprised of the following courses: WR91 (6 credit) and HD100C (3 credit).

Developmental Education courses are offered in a somewhat scattered fashion across campus. Academic Literacy (including reading and writing at the highest pre-college level (RD90/WR90) are offered through Humanities. All mathematics development education courses are offered through the Mathematics department. Courses lower than RD90/WR90 are offered through the Adult Basic Skills (ABS) department at the college. For purposes of this study, only the Academic Literacy courses (RD90/WR90) and WR91 LCs were analyzed.

### **MHCC Participants and Treatment Groups**

As with many mixed methods approaches, a purposeful sampling of FGS placing into developmental education (LCs WR91 coupled with an AVID HE support elective compared to students placing into stand-alone RD90/ WR90 classes without AVID elective support were selected. Participants were identified and selected from students

enrolled in the treatment (WR91) and control groups (WR90, RD90) of the MHCC developmental education courses. Maxwell (1996) asserted that the goal of purposeful sampling is to capture the heterogeneity of the population or to establish comparisons to identify the differences between individuals. Extended engagement and persistent observations help the researcher in the qualitative element to increase chances of detecting the underlying phenomenon at play within the use of these AVID HE strategies in transforming lives. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) advocated for a qualitative power analysis that includes metasyntheses and qualitative metasummaries. It is important that qualitative researchers work to capture the voice of each participant to ensure authenticity. Onwuegbuzie and Leech also asserted that when attempting to generalize findings from qualitative data collection that the sampling size must be sufficient to adequately represent the voices of those individuals not selected to participate. Indeed, given the purpose of this study to generalize the findings to pre-college, developmental education students participating in AVID at MHCC, it is essential that the sample size is both random and sufficiently large (Creswell, 2002; Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Additionally, the quantitative, data collection included a broader participant group from both the treatment and control groups of classes. This collection provides a more comprehensive view of the variables in AVID supported developmental education courses as compared to non-AVID supported developmental education courses at MHCC.



Currently MHCC provides two to three sections of LCs—directly serving approximately 75 to 90 developmental education students—per term. Generally, a student starts in LC 2 and upon successful completion, progresses into the next level—LC 3). After completing LC 3, the student embarks on their chosen field of study.

Preliminary data reveal some interesting trends from internal analysis of persistence and progression of AVID HE-supported and non-AVID HE supported students. This study furthers this analysis.

### **AVID/LSC**

Table 3.3 reveals the Educational attainment of students by age 25, including those within the district who have a high school diploma, some college, an Associate's degree and a Bachelor's degree. These data reveal that the MHCC district residents have higher graduation rates, but lower rates of bachelor's degrees than Oregon and the rest of the U.S.

Table 3.4 reveals the retention and persistence of MHCC AVID-supported students from Fall 2012 to Spring 2014. It further reveals term-to-term persistence and year-to-year progression for students within the MHCC AVID-supported cohorts.

Table 3.3

*AVID Retention: Persistence*

AVID Cohorts																			
AVID Cohort Term Year	Unduplicated Student Count	Course	First Term				2nd Term			3rd Term			4th Term			Next Year			
			Total	Passed		Not Passed		Term Year	Took Credit Crs.	Term Year	Took Credit Crs.	Term Year	Took Credit Crs.	Term Year	Took Credit Crs.				
				#	%	#	%									#	%		
Fall 2012	57	RD090	57	44	77%	13	23%	Winter 2013	47	82%	Spring 2013	36	63%	Summer 2013	9	16%	Fall 2013	28	49%
		WR090	57	43	75%	14	25%		47	82%	36	63%	9	16%	28	49%			
Winter 2013	28	RD090	28	11	39%	17	61%	Spring 2013	16	57%	Summer 2013	4	14%	Fall 2013	6	21%	Winter 2014	5	18%
		WR090	25	11	44%	14	56%		16	64%		4	16%		6	24%		5	20%
	19	RD115	18	12	67%	6	33%		12	67%		5	28%		5	28%		5	28%
		WR115	19	11	58%	8	42%		13	68%		5	26%		6	32%		6	32%
Spring 2013	25	RD090	23	12	52%	11	48%	Summer 2013	11	48%	Fall 2013	12	52%	Winter 2014	4	17%	Spring 2014	4	17%
		WR090	25	12	48%	13	52%		11	44%		12	48%		4	16%		4	16%
	14	RD115	14	10	71%	4	29%		8	57%		10	71%		5	36%		4	29%
		WR115	14	10	71%	4	29%		8	57%		10	71%		5	36%		4	29%
Summer 2013	13	RD090	13	9	69%	4	31%	Fall 2013	8	62%	Winter 2014	7	54%	Spring 2014	3	23%	Summer 2014	3	23%
		WR090	11	8	73%	3	27%		8	73%		7	64%		3	27%		3	27%
Fall 2013	44	RD090	44	34	77%	10	23%	Winter 2014	36	82%	Spring 2014	29	66%	Summer 2014	7	16%	Fall 2014	21	48%
		WR090	42	33	79%	9	21%		35	83%		29	69%		7	17%		21	50%
	19	RD115	19	11	58%	8	42%		15	79%		11	58%		1	5%		9	47%
		WR115	19	14	74%	5	26%		15	79%		11	58%		1	5%		9	47%
Winter 2014	27	RD090	25	16	64%	9	36%	Spring 2014	19	76%	Summer 2014	7	28%	Fall 2014	9	36%	Winter2015	N/A	
		WR090	27	16	59%	11	41%		19	70%		7	26%		9	33%			
	16	RD115	15	12	80%	3	20%		11	73%		4	27%		7	47%			
		WR115	16	9	56%	7	44%		11	69%		4	25%		7	44%			
Spring 2014	29	RD090	27	12	44%	15	56%	Summer 2014	13	48%	Fall 2014	9	33%	Winter 2015	N/A	Spring 2015	N/A		
		WR0990	29	13	45%	16	55%		13	45%		9	31%						
	9	RD115	9	7	78%	2	22%		4	44%		2	22%						
		WR115	8	5	63%	3	38%		4	50%		2	25%						

Table 3.4

*Non-AVID Retention: Persistence*

Non-AVID Cohorts																			
Non-AVID Cohort Term Year	Unduplicated Student Count	Course	First Term					2nd Term			3rd Term			4th Term			Next Year		
			Total	Passed		Not Passed		Term Year	Took Credit Crs.		Term Year	Took Credit Crs.		Term Year	Took Credit Crs.		Term Year	Took Credit Crs.	
				#	%	#	%		#	%		#	%		#	%		#	%
Fall 2012	1098	RD090	177	103	58%	74	42%	Winter 2013	113	64%	Spring 2013	86	49%	Summer 2013	18	10%	Fall 2013	53	30%
		WR090	236	137	58%	99	42%		154	65%		123	52%		32	14%		80	34%
		RD115	213	160	75%	53	25%		165	77%		143	67%		31	15%		98	46%
		WR115	670	473	71%	197	29%		529	79%		443	66%		128	19%		342	51%
Winter 2013	593	RD090	99	59	60%	40	40%	Spring 2013	76	77%	Summer 2013	24	24%	Fall 2013	43	43%	Winter 2014	26	26%
		WR090	102	57	56%	45	44%		81	79%		26	25%		49	48%		32	31%
		RD115	97	65	67%	32	33%		68	70%		17	18%		43	44%		37	38%
		WR115	386	269	70%	117	30%		274	71%		84	22%		188	49%		159	41%
Spring 2013	535	RD090	64	32	50%	32	50%	Summer 2013	27	42%	Fall 2013	28	44%	Winter 2014	18	28%	Spring 2014	12	19%
		WR090	73	36	49%	37	51%		28	38%		26	36%		24	33%		19	26%
		RD115	65	35	54%	30	46%		25	38%		26	40%		22	34%		21	32%
		WR115	402	302	75%	100	25%		86	21%		157	39%		211	52%		206	51%
Summer 2013	171	RD090	33	14	42%	19	58%	Fall 2013	17	52%	Winter 2014	8	24%	Spring 2014	5	15%	Summer 2014	4	12%
		WR090	34	19	56%	15	44%		25	74%		17	50%		10	29%		7	21%
		RD115	18	14	78%	4	22%		16	89%		13	72%		9			5	28%
		WR115	106	69	65%	37	35%		74	70%		53	50%		45	42%		30	28%
Fall 2013	790	RD090	116	79	68%	37	32%	Winter 2014	88	76%	Spring 2014	67	58%	Summer 2014	15	13%	Fall 2014	41	35%
		WR090	144	91	63%	53	37%		103	72%		73	51%		19	13%		54	38%
		RD115	151	122	81%	29	19%		123	81%		91	60%		28	19%		66	44%
		WR115	516	402	78%	114	22%		424	82%		355	69%		106	21%		285	55%
Winter 2014	437	RD090	62	42	68%	20	32%	Spring 2014	44	71%	Summer 2014	10	16%	Fall 2014	19	31%	Winter 2015	N/A	
		WR090	80	48	60%	32	40%		46	58%		16	20%		35	44%			
		RD115	64	49	77%	15	23%		50	78%		22	34%		34	53%			
		WR115	302	221	73%	81	27%		226	75%		81	27%		164	54%			
Spring 2014	377	RD090	21	11	52%	10	48%	Summer 2014	10	48%	Fall 2014	7	33%	Winter 2015	N/A		Spring 2015	N/A	
		WR0990	49	30	61%	19	39%		15	31%		20	41%						
		RD115	33	26	79%	7	21%		11	33%		20	61%						
		WR115	301	229	76%	72	24%		63	21%		101	34%						

Source: MHCC (2014).

### The AVID Center

As part of MHCC's Learning Success Center, the AVID Center provides on demand academic and institutional support to developmental education students (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5

#### *The AVID Center Usage*

Term	Students Served	Total Usage of AVID Center
Fall 2013	122	1,287
Winter 2014	170	1,252
Spring 2014	226	2,103
Summer 2014	147	1,373
Fall 2014	94	3,487

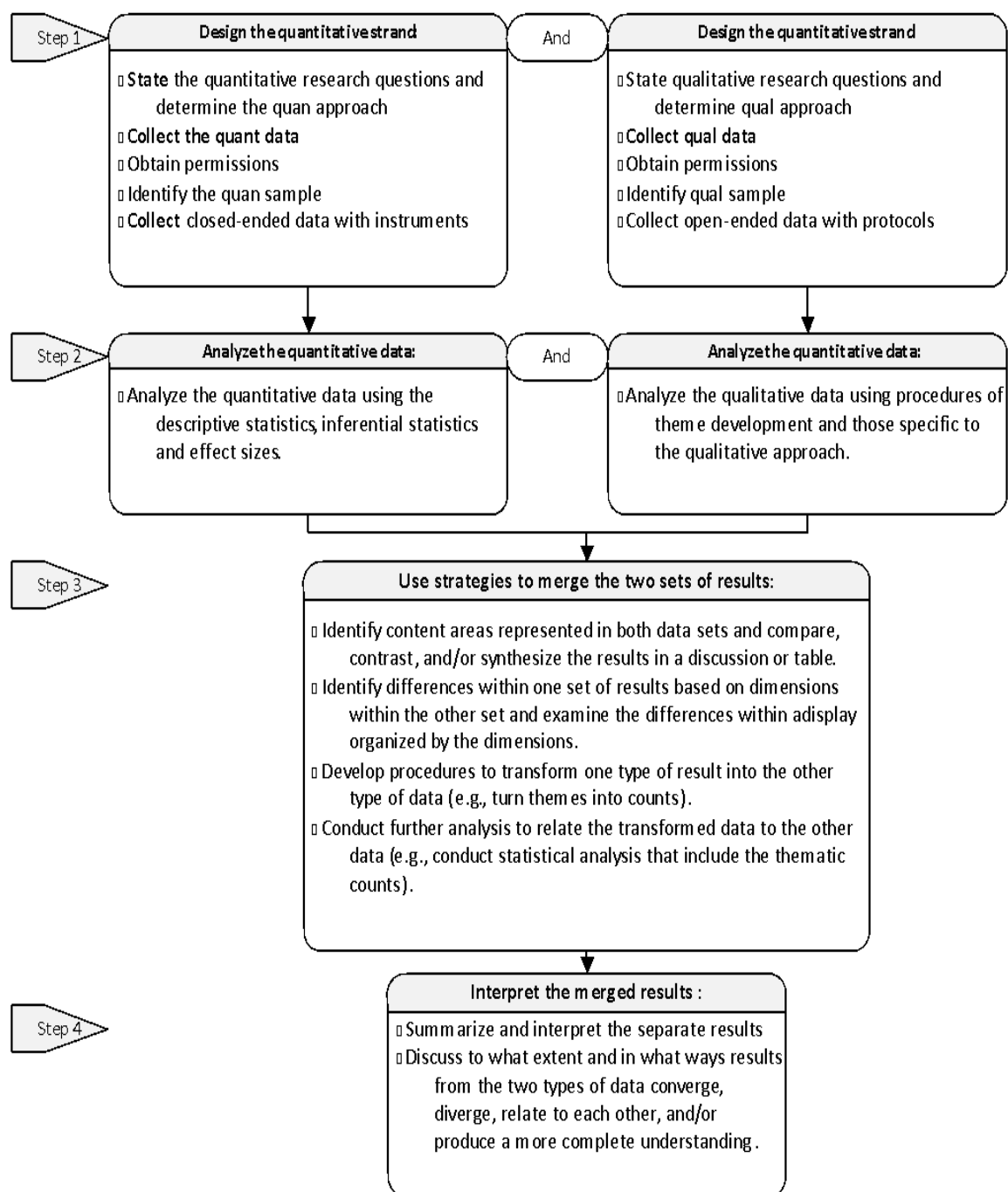
In addition to the statistical analysis of student term-to-term progression and persistence in the LC (RD91) +AVID HD100C (treatment group) as compared to student outcomes in the stand alone (Control) group of RD90/WR90 without AVID HE supports, a qualitative case study approach was utilized to examine student attitudes, behaviors, non-cognitive strategies and social capital. Participants included students participating in the AVID LCs as well as students visiting the AVID Center for support. Additional participants of this study included instructors teaching AVID students in the LCs as well as staff members and Learning Support Specialists within the AVID Center.

The participants were selected from the population of students who are first term MHCC students who take the CPT and are placed in Academic Literacy courses (RD90/WR90) or in the WR91 LC, engaged in the AVID LCs (treatment group) as well as those who have previously participated in the AVID LCs at MHCC and those who still visit the AVID Center for support. Table 3.5 shows the potential number of participants in these categories at the MHCC AVID Center.

All participants were vetted through human subject review. Participant names and any identifying characteristics were shielded and de-identified; all participants' identities were held strictly confidential. With a careful eye toward a strictly ethical view of reviewing data generated from participants, this study sought only to examine the efficacy of AVID HE as a method of preparing students for postsecondary access and success.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The process of identifying the setting, selecting participants, collecting and analyzing data is a process that must be followed carefully and with fidelity. Creswell (2007) identified the Data Collection cycle (see Figure 3.2) which identifies the convergent design process of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data independently and then integrating the merged results (see Table 3.6).



*Figure 3.2. Convergent design procedures: Flowchart in implementing a convergent design. Source: Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 79).*

Table 3.6

*Information for Procedures and Products in Diagram*

	Procedures	Products
Quantitative data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants</li> <li>• <i>N</i></li> <li>• Data Collection</li> <li>• Variables =</li> </ul>	Database with variables
Quantitative data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean database</li> <li>• Input into software program</li> <li>• Descriptive results</li> <li>• Inferential results</li> </ul>	Statistical results in tables Significance results, effect sizes, confidence intervals
Qualitative data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants</li> <li>• <i>N</i></li> <li>• Data Collection</li> <li>• Central phenomenon</li> </ul>	Text database transcribed for easy coding
Qualitative data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribing data</li> <li>• Coding</li> <li>• Themes</li> </ul>	List of quotes, codes, theme Possible diagram linking themes

Source: Creswell (2015, p. 60)

Data collection began with selection of participants and review of demographic/biographical information through pre/post questionnaires (see Appendix C and D). Field observations were be scheduled at various times throughout the study to ensure accurate and thorough field notes were collected.

Following the collection of data as depicted above, the researcher established protocols for storing and analyzing the data. For this study, the researcher used both copious (typewritten) notes of observations as well as audio-tapes of interviews. All data collected were transcribed, coded and carefully analyzed. The researcher used software specifically designed to help organize and codify data into themes. Several researchers

have identified common processes for data analysis following specific analytic strategies including note taking, summarizing field notes, working with words, identifying codes, reducing codes to themes, counting the frequency of codes, relating categories to analytic framework in literature, creating a point of view and displaying the data in graphic or pictorial views (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Wolcott, 1994).

### **Ethical Issues**

The process of collecting sensitive data through the qualitative methodology demands careful fidelity to confidentiality and ethical processes. Ethical issues include such things as informed consent procedures, Institutional Research Board (IRB) processes, confidentiality toward participants etc. (Lipson, 1994; Maxwell, 2007). A researcher conducting qualitative studies must ensure the confidentiality of participants and careful research processes. Another potential issue that could arise is for participants to share information with others, thus also breaching confidentiality. Ensuring that participants sign a Statement of Confidentiality is essential. The study occurred after informed consent had been obtained from participants and the study had been approved by the IRBs at both Portland State University and MHCC. During the study, the researcher maintained strict confidentiality and precautions were taken to minimize any risk of exposure to the participants as subjects and as students. One way that confidentiality was strictly maintained was through the use of pseudonyms rather than student real names and identities. The data were stored in a secured location including a firewall-password protected computer used only by the researcher to prevent exposure and breach of confidentiality.



Miles and Huberman (1994) stressed that data analysis is a carefully choreographed process that is custom-built, modified, reviewed and revised. The process of data collection, analysis and report writing are interconnected and interrelated. Often, the report writing happens somewhat simultaneously to the collection and analysis component of the study. Much of qualitative data collection is “insight, intuition and impression” (Dey, 1993, p. 78), yet the protocols and processes established help guide the collection process. Typically, the data collected is voluminous in the form of copious field notes, interview transcripts and archival data. The process established for this study ensured that the data collected over the duration of the study were reviewed, coded, analyzed, re-analyzed and summarized in notes, memos and online software.

One of the additional ethical issues that must be considered with this study is that of studying data from the researcher’s prior institution. Creswell (2007) cautioned that this kind of study within one’s own institution or workplace could be subject to greater scrutiny and political risk. Given the nature of this researcher’s former position at MHCC, it is essential to ensure complete objectivity, close adherence to identified protocols and the potential power differential with subjects as participants (both students and staff). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it may be necessary and expedient to use a proxy investigator in some of the interviews to ensure ethical standards.

Table 3.7 provides a Qualitative Data Collection Timetable for this study.

Table 3.7

*Qualitative Collection Timeline*

Qualitative Data Collection Tools		
Tool	Timeline	Frequency of Administration
Selection of participants	March 2017	
Pre-survey (demographics/biographical, education)	March 2017	Once at the beginning of the study and selection of participants
Field observation	April 2017	Four to five observations throughout the study (beginning of term, middle, end)
Interviews scheduled with student participants	April 2017	Minimally one hour face-to-face interviews with each subject will be scheduled
Interviews scheduled with staff/faculty	May 2017	once

**Limitations**

As with many research studies, validity of data is a concern, as is the generalizability of findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided certain criteria to establish the “trustworthiness” of a study and use terms such as “credibility,” “authenticity,” “transferability,” “dependability” and “confirmability.” In fact, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 277) created criteria for assessing rigor or trustworthiness in research as detailed in Table 3.8. They further cited criteria posed by Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999) that asserted that “qualitative research is conducted not to confirm or disconfirm earlier findings, but rather to contribute to a process of continuous revision and enrichment of understanding of the experience or form of action under study” (p. 220). Given that this study was conducted within this researcher’s prior institution, careful strategies to ensure that the criteria and processes used to conduct this study meet

standards of quality, credibility, dependability and transferability. The limitations of this study are that while the data collected measured and recorded the experience of participants in AVID strategies as a bridge to postsecondary success, they did not include longitudinal (quantitative) data to reveal the impact of AVID strategies of ongoing success of developmental education students.

Table 3.8

*Criteria for Assessing Rigor or Trustworthiness in Research*

Scientific Paradigm (Rigor)	Constructivist/Naturalistic Paradigm (Trustworthiness)	
(Reliance on method)	(Reliance on data)	(Reliance on internal ethical system)
Methodological criteria	Parallel	Authenticity/ethical criteria
Internal validity (coherence)	Methodologic Criteria (Extrinsic)	Intrinsic
External validity (Isomorphism)	Transferability (context embeddedness)	Educative authenticity
Reliability (replicability)	Dependability (stability)	Catalytic authenticity
Objectivity (value-freedom)	Confirmability (value explication)	Tactical authenticity

## Reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) were the first to conceptualize reliability in qualitative research as dependable or consistent. Joppe (2000) defined reliability as “the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability” (p. 1). Joppe further suggested that a study is reliable if the results can be replicated in subsequent, similar studies. While some researchers do not consider qualitative research as reliable and/or replicable because of

the potential subjectivity of the data collection and analysis, many qualitative researchers do not consider the question of replicability of results as a primary concern. Rather, many qualitative researchers consider the precision, credibility and transferability of the data (Hoepfl, 1997) to be a primary concern. However, reliability refers to the trustworthiness and authenticity of a study.

For this study, therefore, the use of a mixed methods approach has been selected to increase the replicability of the study results. The mixed methods approach to studying this phenomenon of AVID HE supporting FGS placing into developmental education courses at MHCC allowed a thorough collection of statistically analyzed data as well as a collection of field notes gleaned from interviews, observations and surveys merged into a convergent design model. The convergent design model collects both open and closed-ended data simultaneously and then works to summarize, interpret and merge the results.

### **Validity**

The intent of research is to collect and analyze data to provide a comprehensive analysis and report of the findings. To this end, research is considered valid if it is conducted ethically, rigorously and authentically. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posited that validity and reliability can be assured through thoughtful conceptualization of the study, careful collection and analysis of data and objective reporting of results. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to this process of data collection and analysis as authentic, transferable, and confirmable. They suggested that ways to operationalize these concepts in the search for validity can be through the use of “triangulation” (multiple data sources), methods and in some cases investigators. Creswell (2007, p. 206) defined

validation in qualitative research as the work to determine the accuracy of the findings.

Validation strategies in the qualitative element of this mixed methods approach included (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998):

- Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field
- Using multiple data sources (artifacts, statistical analysis, interviews, observations and surveys) to provide corroborating evidence
- Clarifying any researcher potential bias from the outset of the study

This study ensured validation of the study results and analysis by using a mixed methods approach to collecting and reporting on multiple forms of data.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

As outlined in Chapter 3, data collection for this study included both quantitative and qualitative data (a mixed methods approach). This chapter reviews a brief discussion of the purpose of the study, the data collection methodology, the identified research questions, the participants, and finally a presentation and analysis of the collected data for this study.

#### **Background**

The background for this study is broad and inclusive, embodying the changing demographics of students enrolling through open access into community colleges, the increase in first-generation under-prepared, under-resourced and underrepresented FGS entering postsecondary institutions that are often ill-equipped to meet their learning and social needs. However, the AACC and the Lumina Foundation have set a goal of increasing college (certificate/degree) completions by the year 2025. This is a daunting goal and one that is critical for student learning, student outcomes and economic outcomes.

As detailed earlier in this study, nearly 75% of recent high school graduates who enrolled in Oregon community colleges take at least one pre-college level (Developmental Education [DevEd]) class. Many who do, require some remediation (75%) and often drop out before completing the required sequence to enroll in college-level courses (Hodara, 2015). Mullin (2010) suggested that this is rapidly changing the

mission of the community college to one that “emphasizes less the curriculum that is offered (academic transfer, workforce development, developmental education, etc.), and more the objectives students seek to complete course enrollment, course completion and certificate and degree completion” (p. 4). Research reveals that roughly 28% of students at 2-year institutions had significant challenges and barriers preventing them from meeting their goals. Many of these students faced increasing poverty (Lumina Foundation, 2013), family and social challenges as well as a lack of the social capital necessary to navigate the intricacies of the postsecondary world and find adequate supports.

The background for this study provides contextual information for both social and educational barriers that many incoming students encounter, the challenges of successfully navigating pre-college courses before they can enroll in credited courses toward degree and/or certificate completion and the social/emotional barriers that many FGS students often face in entering the culture of a postsecondary institution.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the holistic student support strategy, AVID HE, on under-resourced, underprepared FGS placing into DevEd courses (pre-college) within a LC context at a community college in Gresham, Oregon. This study used a mixed methods design to specifically examine:

- The impact on term-to-term persistence (see definition of persistence p. 10 of this study) and progression toward credit-bearing classes;
- Determine if AVID HE influences the outcomes and progression year-to-year for students and, if so, in what direction;

- Explore and examine the rates of persistence and progression of students in both AVID HE paired LC's and those students in non-AVID paired specific stand-alone DevEd classes;
- This study also examined whether AVID HE-supported LCs impact FGS, under-resourced, underprepared, under-represented students in gaining social capital in (a) Cohesion; (b) Cooperation; and (c) Connection to the institution in terms of developing community, support strategies and resources.

A mixed methods design strategy was used to collect and analyze significant, identified data, including:

- Institutional data reviewing persistence, progression and movement toward degree completion for AVID and non-AVID students;
- Artifacts from the college along with (AVID) staff interviews;
- While Chapter 2 of this study identified case study as the qualitative methodology to assess student gains in social capital traits (Connection, cooperation and cohesion) this researcher determined that Narrative analysis from student interviews provided more insight into the personal stories of FGS and would better seek to understand the meaning of support, college readiness and cultural/social capital in DevEd students which were integrated with statistical analysis of identified variables in providing supports for DevEd students in pre-college level courses at a community college.

Several studies, detailed in Chapter 2, outline the social and academic barriers facing many under-resourced, under-prepared, FGS who often place into pre-college courses at a community college before they can begin work toward a degree or certificate completion. Several other studies identify the demographics and barriers that many FGS entering postsecondary institutions face, many of which align closely with the supports provided by AVID HE. Additionally, several studies also outline identified AVID strategies and outcomes for many students in secondary and postsecondary since implementation in the 1980s. Some studies as outlined in Chapter 2 identify the need for a changed instructional approach and a changed learning environment to better support



first-generation, under-represented, under-resourced students. In fact, the value of changed pedagogy in the classroom is found in a growing body of literature that recommend practices to better support FGS placing into remedial or DevEd due to lack of or inadequate academic preparation. Having an inclusive, multicultural curriculum and using pedagogical strategies such as LCs and active engaged learning, has provided evidence of increased persistence and progression for students. While a study has not yet examined the impact of AVID HE on the persistence, progression and acquisition of social capital for under-resourced, underprepared, FGS who place into DevEd courses, this study began the process and provided analysis, predictions and trends.

This study examined the following questions:

1. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) placing into pre-college (developmental education) classes in community college differ in persistence toward degree and participation in credit-bearing courses than first year, non-low income, non-first-generation students entering community colleges? What is the direction of any differences?
2. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) entering community college participating in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than non-first-generation students (FGS) entering community college who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?
3. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students have different rates of term-to-term persistence toward degree than first-generation students who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?
4. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?

Questions 5-8 use qualitative data collection method:

5. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “connection” to institutional agents at the college (identified as social capital) than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?
6. Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “cooperation” with peers in their AVID HE supported Learning Community than first-generation students who do not participate in AVID HE supported Learning Communities?
7. Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of cohesion to the community college than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?
8. Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of self efficacy and confidence than first year, first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

### **Data Analysis Process**

This study established a mixed methods design framework to examine and statistically analyze institutional data around AVID-supported students’ term-to-term persistence, year-to-year progression toward credited courses, and acquisition of social capital to better navigate the complex postsecondary environment with its own set of norms, values and expectations.

The process of data analysis for this study is the analysis and examination of institutional data (from MHCC—the source and location of this study) with statistical outcomes that make meaning out of the raw data or information collected. This study also used a qualitative analysis of a collection of personal stories, artifacts, surveys and observations of the impact of AVID HE supports for FGS. The collection of all data (both quantitative and qualitative) converge into a holistic study that examines the impact of

AVID HE supports on students placing into AVID-supported LCs in DE courses at MHCC.

AVID HE is identified as a holistic college-readiness system designed to increase the number of students who enroll and persist in college. AVID HE is a combination of rigorous academic expectations, tutorial support and intentional instruction around key cognitive and non-cognitive behavior strategies that includes what Kuh (2008) referred to as HIPs that include:

- FYE course
- Common intellectual experiences
- LCs
- Writing intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects.

### **Identified Variables for This Study**

#### **Dependent Variables to be Tested**

Dependent variables in this study:

- First to second year persistence (defined as continuous enrollment at same institution from Fall to Spring of same year;
- Remaining enrolled in the subsequent Fall (as of October) exclusive of summer breaks;
- Students who attained a certificate or degree were also considered persisters;
- In-college experience including measures of academic success (GPA, satisfaction with own intellectual growth), social (frequency of participation in school co-curricular).

Data were collected from MHCC Analytics and Institutional Research (AIR) department for students enrolled in DevEd (WR90) and the AVID-supported LC, WR91+HD100C. The data collected includes enrollment data, demographics, persistence and progression (including credit accrual). The data were then analyzed using specific

quantitative (statistical) analysis techniques through the software SPSS. Each research question is identified below, with corresponding data and analytics. Staff and participant interviews were also conducted with IRB approved semi-structured interview questions and qualitatively analyzed for themes and codes.

### **Participants**

Students placing into DevEd (DE) classes (WR90, RD90) which are non-AVID supported as well as AVID-supported students placing into WR91+HD100C (AVID supported LCs) from the Fall of 2016 were identified. Data for students in this identified cohort were collected from MHCC AIR department and analyzed using previously identified statistical analysis tools to determine impact on persistence and progression into credited classes. All students for this study (whether AVID-supported or non-AVID supported) were collected from the 2016 cohort of enrolled students. Students from the 2016 WR90+HD100C LC (AVID supported) cohort were identified and contacted by this researcher to participate in semi-structured interviews. Staff from the AVID Center were also interviewed in semi-structured interview style, with approved IRB interview protocols. Observations were made with detailed notes of the AVID Center, as well as the Summer Bridge event in the Fall of 2017. Other artifacts related to this work were also collected and analyzed.

For the first set of analytics, student demographics were identified in the specified 2016 cohort(s); a chi-square test was then run to identify statistical significance of AVID for students at MHCC who placed into DevEd (remedial) RD90/WR90 courses. This data set provides a background and overview of the demographics. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 review

the summary of several demographic characteristics, along with the statistical analysis (chi-square test) to determine statistical significance of AVID vs non-AVID support for students.

Table 4.1

*Gender \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Gender	Male	Count	665	349	1,014
		% within AVID Status	47.1%	44.3%	46.1%
	Female	Count	748	438	1,186
		% within AVID Status	52.9%	55.7%	53.9%
Total		Count	1,413	787	2,200
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The crosstabs in Table 4.1 reveal that 47% of male students are non-AVID placed, while 44.3% of male students in DevEd are AVID supported. The chi-squared test reveals a  $p$  value of .220, which is considerably above the .05  $p$  value and thus reveals no statistically significant difference for gender between AVID-supported and non-AVID supported students.

Table 4.2

*Chi-Square Test on Gender for AVID Supported Students*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	<i>df</i>	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.502 <sup>a</sup>	1	.220	.228	.119
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	1.395	1	.238		
Likelihood Ratio	1.504	1	.220		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.501	1	.220		
<i>N</i> of Valid Cases	2,200				

In Table 4.3, the number of students of Hispanic background that are AVID-supported shows 17.9%, while Hispanic students enrolled in the identified DevEd courses that are non-AVID supported shows 17.9%. In Table 4.4, the chi-square test reveals that the Asymptotic Significance (two-way) *p* value is .000, which shows that there is a significant statistical significance for Hispanic students when comparing AVID to non-AVID supported students.

Table 4.3

*Identifies as Hispanic \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Identifies as Hispanic	Yes	Count	155	141	296
		% within AVID Status	11.0%	17.9%	13.4%
	No	Count	1,258	648	1,906
		% within AVID Status	89.0%	82.1%	86.6%
Total			1,413	789	2,202
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.4

*Chi-Square Test on Hispanic Students in AVID HE*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.724 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	20.135	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	20.091	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.714	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

In Tables 4.5 and 4.6, the data reflect students of Native American descent who are AVID-supported versus those who are not AVID-supported. This table reveals that 2.9% are non-AVID supported, while 1.9% are AVID-supported. In Table 4.6, the Pearson chi-square test (Asymptotic Significance—2 sided) reveals .153 which is significantly above the .05 marker, showing that there is not a statistical significance for AVID-supported or non-AVID supported Native American students.

Table 4.5

*Identifies as Native American \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Identifies as Native American	Yes	Count	41	15	56
		% within AVID Status	2.9%	1.9%	2.5%
	No	Count	1,372	774	2,146
		% within AVID Status	97.1%	98.1%	97.5%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Table 4.6

*Chi-Square Test for AVID Supported Native American Students*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	<i>df</i>	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.045 <sup>a</sup>	1	.153	.161	.097
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	1.661	1	.197		
Likelihood Ratio	2.137	1	.144		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.044	1	.153		
<i>N</i> of Valid Cases	2,202				

In Tables 4.7 and 4.8, measuring students of Asian descent who place into AVID-supported WR91 class as compared to non-AVID supported students of Asian descent, the data reveal that 4.6% are non-AVID supported, while 4.2% are AVID supported. The Pearson chi-square test (*p* value) reveals that a .649 which is significantly above .05, showing that there is not a statistical significance in this category.

Table 4.7

*Identifies as Asian \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Identifies as Asian	Yes	Count	65	33	98
		% within AVID Status	4.6%	4.2%	4.5%
	No	Count	1,348	756	2,104
		% within AVID Status	95.4%	95.8%	95.5%
Total			1,413	789	2,202
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.8

*Chi-Square Test of AVID Supported Students of Asian Descent*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.208 <sup>a</sup>	1	.649	.747	.367
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.121	1	.728		
Likelihood Ratio	.210	1	.647		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.208	1	.649		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

In Tables 4.9 and 4.10, it is clear within the Cross-tabs that 21.4% of AVID-supported students identify as Black or African-American while 19.9% of non-AVID students identify as Black. When looking at the Pearson's chi-square results, we see that the  $p$  value is .392, which is far below the .05 measure which reveals that there is not a statistically significant difference in levels of Black/African American students when comparing AVID to non-AVID.

Table 4.9

*Identifies as Black/African-American \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Identifies as Black/ African-American	Yes	Count	281	169	450
		% within AVID Status	19.9%	21.4%	20.4%
	No	Count	1,132	620	1752
		% within AVID Status	80.1%	78.6%	79.6%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.10

*Chi-Square Test Revealing Impact of AVID on Black/African American*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	<i>df</i>	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.732 <sup>a</sup>	1	.392	.409	.211
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.640	1	.424		
Likelihood Ratio	.728	1	.394		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.731	1	.392		
<i>N</i> of Valid Cases	2,202				

Table 4.11 and 4.12 reveal demographics of students of Pacific Islander descent in AVID-supported vs non-AVID supported courses. The crosstabs in Table 4.11 reveal that .08% are non-AVID supported while 1.4% are AVID supported. The Pearson chi-square test reveals a .228 level which again is far above the *p* value of .05, meaning that there is no statistical significance among AVID and non-AVID supported Pacific Islander students.

Table 4.11

*Identifies as Pacific Islander \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Identifies as Pacific Islander	Yes	Count	12	11	23
		% within AVID Status	0.8%	1.4%	1.0%
	No	Count	1,401	778	2,179
		% within AVID Status	99.2%	98.6%	99.0%
Total			1,413	789	2,202
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.12

*Chi-Square Test on AVID Supported Students of Pacific Islander Descent*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.454 <sup>a</sup>	1	.228	.275	.161
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.975	1	.323		
Likelihood Ratio	1.401	1	.236		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.454	1	.228		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

Tables 4.13 and 4.14 compare AVID to non-AVID supported Caucasian students placing into DevEd courses at MHCC. In this case, the crosstabs show us that 46.4% of students are AVID-supported, while 56.1% are non-AVID supported. The  $p$  value for the Pearson chi-square test is .000, which is far below the  $p$  value of .05, meaning that there is a statistically significant difference in levels of White/Caucasian students when comparing AVID to non-AVID.

Table 4.13

*Identifies as White/Caucasian \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Identifies as White/Caucasian	Yes	Count	793	366	1,159
		% within AVID Status	56.1%	46.4%	52.6%
	No	Count	620	423	1,043
		% within AVID Status	43.9%	53.6%	47.4%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.14

*Chi-Square Test on AVID Supported Caucasian Students*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	<i>df</i>	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.242 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	18.853	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	19.242	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.233	1	.000		
<i>N</i> of Valid Cases	2,202				

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 measure demographics, enrollment and status of those students identifying as multi-racial in DevEd courses for AVID supported and non-AVID supported students. While the percentages of students identifying as multi-racial in non-AVID supported classes is 6.3%, the percentage in AVID-supported classes is 7.6%—both relatively small. The Pearson chi-square test in Table 4.16 reveals a *p* value of .242 which is far above the *p* value of .000 and thus reveals no statistical significance on multi- racially identified students in AVID-supported classes.

Table 4.15

*Identifies as Multi-Racial \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Identifies as Multi-Racial	Yes	Count	89	60	149
		% within AVID Status	6.3%	7.6%	6.8%
	No	Count	1,324	729	2,053
		% within AVID Status	93.7%	92.4%	93.2%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.16

*Chi-Square Test on Multi-Racial Students*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.369 <sup>a</sup>	1	.242	.251	.140
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	1.169	1	.280		
Likelihood Ratio	1.348	1	.246		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.368	1	.242		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				



Interestingly, Tables 4.17 and 4.18 (showing rates of FGS (FGS), the crosstabs show us that 80.7% of AVID students identify as FGS, while 79.4% of non-AVID students identify as FGS. When examining the chi-square test results, however, we see that the  $p$  value for the Pearson chi-square is .504 which is far above .05 meaning that there is not a statistically significant difference in levels of FGS when comparing AVID to non-AVID. This outcome is discussed further in the qualitative section of this chapter.

Table 4.17

*FGS \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
FGS	Yes	Count	870	527	1,397
		% within AVID Status	79.4%	80.7%	79.9%
	No	Count	226	126	352
		% within AVID Status	20.6%	19.3%	20.1%
Total		Count	1,096	653	1,749
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.18

*Chi-Square Test on FGS*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	<i>df</i>	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.447 <sup>a</sup>	1	.504	.538	.273
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.368	1	.544		
Likelihood Ratio	.449	1	.503		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.447	1	.504		
<i>N</i> of Valid Cases	1749				

In the case of Tables 4.19 and 4.20 and Tables 4.21 and 4.22, the crosstabs show us that 80.0% of AVID students apply for financial aid. When we examine the chi-square results, we see that the *p* value is .602, which is far above .05, meaning that there is not a statistically significant difference in levels of students who applied for financial aid when comparing AVID vs. non-AVID students.

Table 4.19

*Applied for Financial Aid at MHCC \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Applied for financial aid at MHCC	Yes	Count	1,143	631	1,774
		% within AVID Status	80.9%	80.0%	80.6%
	No	Count	270	158	428
		% within AVID Status	19.1%	20.0%	19.4%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.20

*Chi-Square Test of Students Applying for Financial Aid*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.272 <sup>a</sup>	1	.602	.613	.320
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.217	1	.642		
Likelihood Ratio	.271	1	.603		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.272	1	.602		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

Table 4.21

*Is Pell Grant Eligible \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Is Pell Grant Eligible	Yes	Count	1,151	628	1,779
		% within AVID Status	81.5%	79.6%	80.8%
	No	Count	262	161	423
		% within AVID Status	18.5%	20.4%	19.2%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.22

*Chi-Square Test for Pell Grant Eligibility and AVID Status*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.133 <sup>a</sup>	1	.287	.310	.157
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	1.016	1	.313		
Likelihood Ratio	1.125	1	.289		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.132	1	.287		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

Interestingly, when looking at Tables 4.23 and 4.24 reflecting students who have served on academic probation while at MHCC, the crosstabs reveals that 63.9% are AVID-supported while 36.1% are non-AVID supported. The chi-square results, however, reveal a  $p$  value of .044% which is below the .05 indicating that there is a statistically significant difference for AVID-supported and non-AVID supported students. This outcome is discussed further in the qualitative section of Chapter 4. It is interesting also, to note the differences in demographics by year for students who are AVID-supported vs non-AVID supported. In most of the data, the differences are relatively similar (Hispanic, Black, Caucasian, FGS, Pell-eligible) which suggests that students with these demographic characteristics are highly represented at MHCC and also highly represented in DE courses.

Table 4.23

*Has Served Academic Probation at MHCC \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Has served academic probation at MHCC	Yes	Count	841	504	1,345
		% within AVID Status	59.5%	63.9%	61.1%
	No	Count	572	285	857
		% within AVID Status	40.5%	36.1%	38.9%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

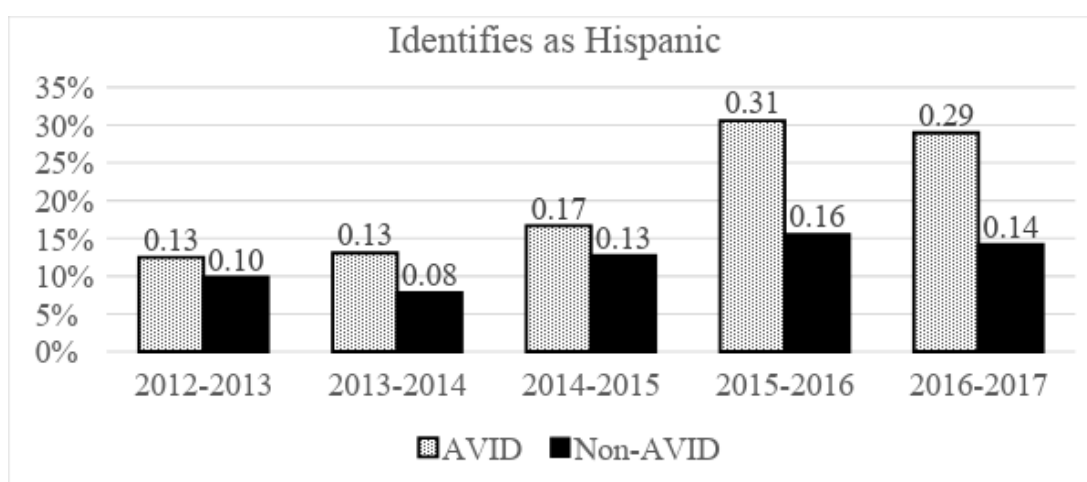
Table 4.24

*Chi-Square Test on Academic Probation and AVID Status*

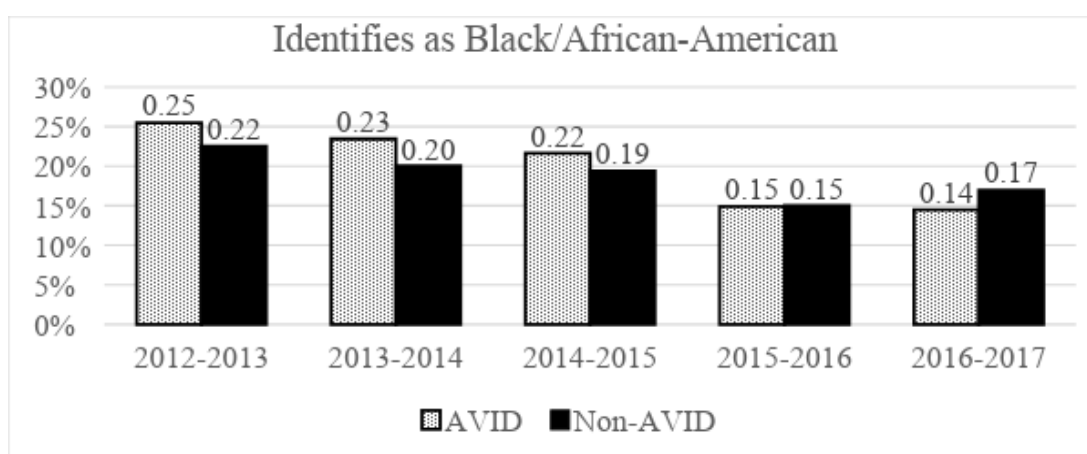
Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	<i>df</i>	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.048 <sup>a</sup>	1	.044	.045	.024
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.867	1	.049		
Likelihood Ratio	4.065	1	.044		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.046	1	.044		
<i>N</i> of Valid Cases	2,202				

Figures 4.1 to 4.5 reflect the enrollment trends at the college and also the diversity trends of the district. The AMP (2014-2017) which is a compilation of data, enrollment, completion trends and program offerings at the college, reveal that an increasing number of MHCC's students rely on grant or scholarships (74% in 2014 for example) and a growing percentage of FGS (MHCC, 2014, p. 21). Ethnic diversity is also increasing somewhat at the college, reflecting the changing demographics of the community and East Multnomah County. More than 50% of the students enrolled at MHCC are Caucasian; 11% are Hispanic/Latino; 13% are Black and less than 2% are other categories. These numbers correspond roughly with the tables above, providing some explanation as to why there are more Caucasian AVID-supported students and roughly similar numbers of Caucasian non-AVID supported students in the overall enrollment at

the college. The tables above also reveal that there are relatively few Hispanic and Black students enrolled and AVID-supported, while FGS reveal high numbers of AVID supported students as well as slightly less high numbers of non-AVID supported students. Similar trends are evident in Pell-eligible students who are AVID and/or non-AVID supported at the college.



*Figure 4.1.* Hispanic population in AVID vs non-AVID supported.



*Figure 4.2.* Black/African American status of AVID-supported vs non-AVID supported.

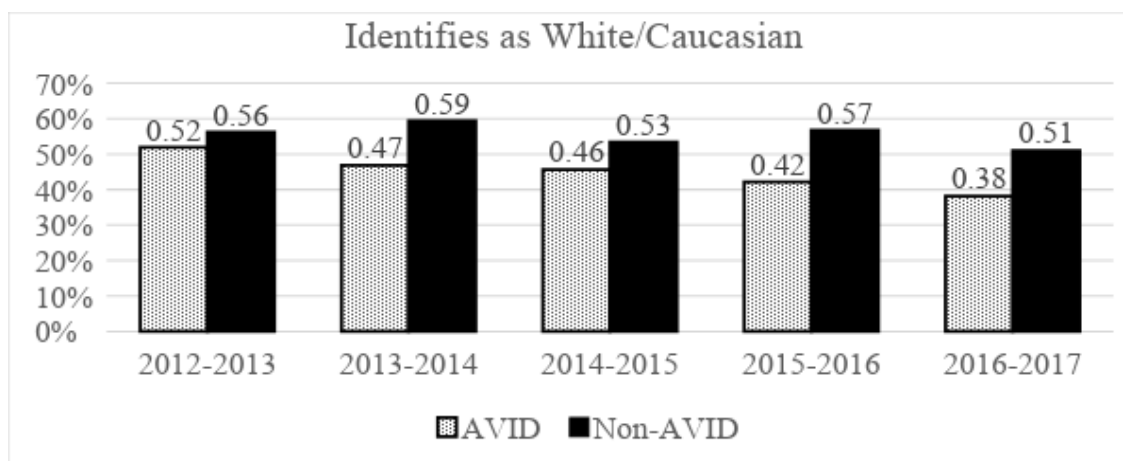


Figure 4.3. Caucasian status of AVID supported vs non-AVID supported.

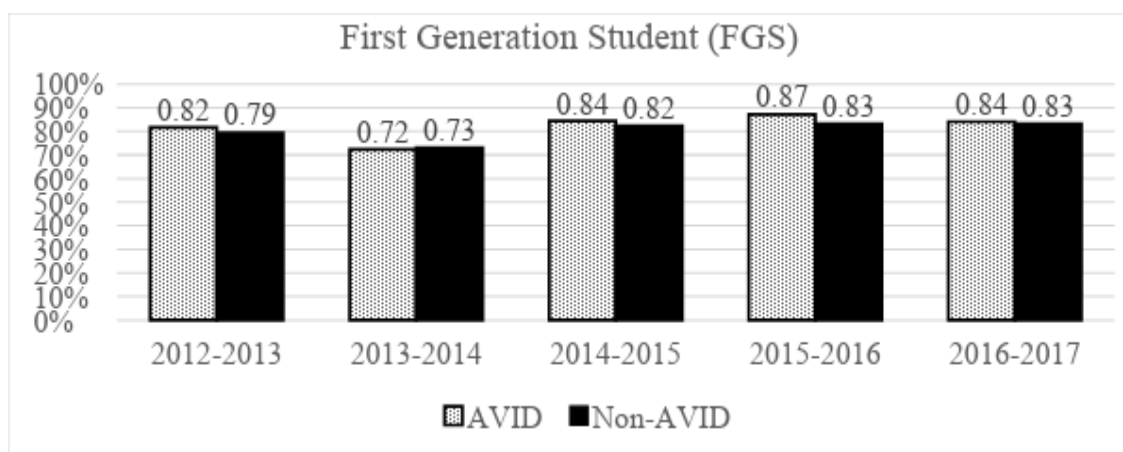


Figure 4.4. FGS status in AVID-supported vs non-AVID supported.

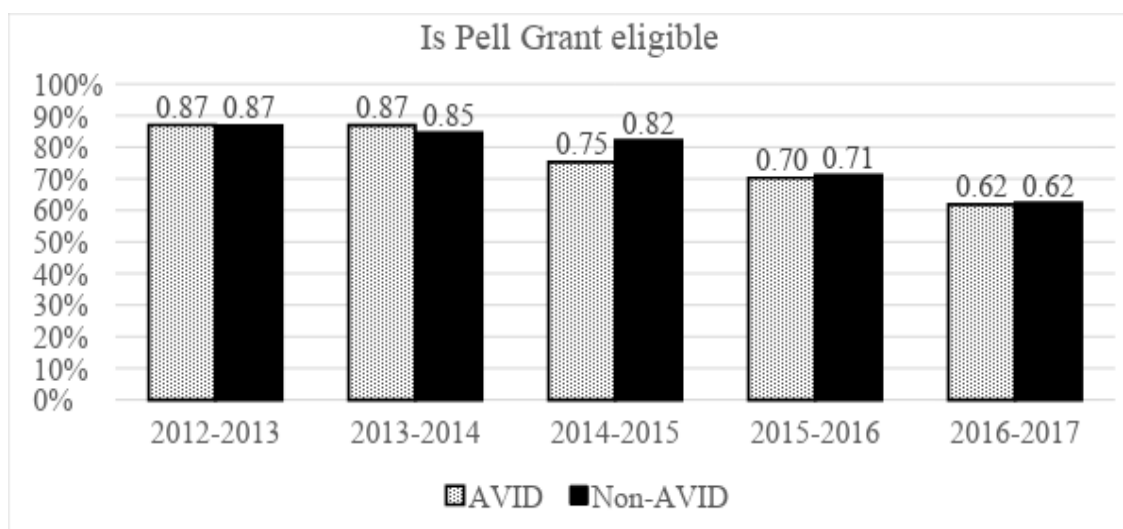


Figure 4.5. Pell grant eligibility of AVID supported vs non-AVID supported.



## Summary of Demographics

### Research Analytics and Results

Data for Research Questions 1-4 were collected from the MHCC AIR department and analyzed quantitatively to determine statistically significant differences in persistence, progression, credit accumulation and GPAs. The data are presented below.

**Research question 1.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) placing into pre-college (DE) classes in community college differ in persistence toward degree and participation in credit-bearing courses than first year, non-low income, non-first-generation students entering community colleges? What is the direction of any differences?

The first test conducted to analyze this question was a chi-square test to determine persistence to the following term (delineating whether the student was AVID or non-AVID supported). Tables 4.25 to 4.29 reveal the persistence rate of AVID versus non-AVID supported students into credit-bearing classes (WR115) following their term of DE. Table 4.26 and 4.28 reveal that 61.1% of AVID-supported students enrolled in the credit-bearing WR115 immediately following the DevEd class, while only 44.7% of non-AVID supported students enrolled in WR115. Table 4.26 reveals pass rates among AVID-supported students and non-AVID supported students at 33.5% pass rate for non-AVID supported students and 44.5% pass rate for AVID-supported students. The Pearson chi-square test reveals a  $p$  value of .000 for pass rates, which is far below the  $p$  value of .05 and which indicates a statistical significance in the difference of pass rates for AVID-supported students.

Table 4.25

*Persistence Rates of AVID vs Non-AVID Supported Students*

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Took WR115 at MHCC * AVID Status	2,202	100.0%	0	0.0%	2,202	100.0%
Passed WR115 at MHCC * AVID Status	2,202	100.0%	0	0.0%	2,202	100.0%
Enrolled in MTH111 at MHCC * AVID Status	2,202	100.0%	0	0.0%	2,202	100.0%
Passed MTH111 at MHCC * AVID Status	2,202	100.0%	0	0.0%	2,202	100.0%
Persisted to following term after starting DevEd * AVID Status	2,202	100.0%	0	0.0%	2,202	100.0%
Persisted to following year after starting DevEd * AVID Status	2,202	100.0%	0	0.0%	2,202	100.0%

Table 4.26

*Took WR115 at MHCC \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Took WR115 at MHCC	Yes	Count	632	482	1,114
		% within AVID Status	44.7%	61.1%	50.6%
	No	Count	781	307	1,088
		% within AVID Status	55.3%	38.9%	49.4%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.27

*Chi-Square Test for WR115 at MHCC AVID Status*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	54.227 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	53.575	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	54.574	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	54.203	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

Table 4.28

*Passed WR115 at MHCC \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Passed WR115 at MHCC	Yes	Count	473	351	824
		% within AVID Status	33.5%	44.5%	37.4%
	No	Count	940	438	1,378
		% within AVID Status	66.5%	55.5%	62.6%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.29

*Chi-Square Test for Students Who Passed WR115 at MHCC—AVID Status*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	<i>df</i>	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.217 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000	.000	.000
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	25.749	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	26.008	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.205	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

While math course taking was not included in this study, we looked at the enrollment in MTH111 (credit-bearing course) at MHCC for AVID supported students and non-AVID supported students. Tables 4.30 to 4.33 reveal MTH111 (credited course) course making trends at MHCC for non-AVID supported students. We expected to see a similar outcome (i.e., that more AVID supported students enrolled in and passed MTH111) but found that this assumption did not bear out. In fact, the  $p$  value in the chi-square test (see Table 4.31) is .533 which is significantly higher than the standard  $p$  value of .05 indicating that there is no statistical correlation in Math taking courses. This could result from the fact that Math faculty were deeply embedded in historically developed pedagogy and were not interested in AVID training nor in AVID supported LCs. Based on demographics from the AIR department at MHCC (2014), contained in the 2014-2017 AMP, Math performance at the college remains problematic. The AMP reveals that the majority of students at MHCC are placed in MTH60 (developmental math). Additionally, “almost two-thirds of those (students) who dropped off either did not take a math or failed it. This math success appears to be the most significant factor in students’ retention” (MHCC, 2014, p. 64). A future study could examine mathematics course taking, progression and persistence with AVID-supported electives.

Table 4.30

*Enrolled in MTH111 at MHCC \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Enrolled in MTH111 at MHCC	Yes	Count	82	51	133
		% within AVID Status	5.8%	6.5%	6.0%
	No	Count	1,331	738	2,069
		% within AVID Status	94.2%	93.5%	94.0%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.31

*Chi-Square Test of AVID vs Non-AVID Supported Status*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.389 <sup>a</sup>	1	.533	.576	.296
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.282	1	.596		
Likelihood Ratio	.386	1	.535		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.389	1	.533		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

Table 4.32

*Passed MTH111 at MHCC \* AVID Status*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Passed MTH111 at MHCC	Yes	Count	63	37	100
		% within AVID Status	4.5%	4.7%	4.5%
	No	Count	1,350	752	2,102
		% within AVID Status	95.5%	95.3%	95.5%
Total			1,413	789	2,202
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.33

*Chi-Square Test of AVID vs Non-AVID Supported Passing MTH111*

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.062 <sup>a</sup>	1	.803	.831	.440
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.020	1	.886		
Likelihood Ratio	.062	1	.803		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	.062	1	.803		
N of Valid Cases	2,202				

While the significance of demographics (demographic background) in the tests above reveal that there is not a statically significant difference in persistence between all AVID-supported and non-AVID supported students, it does reveal that the financial barriers that many students encounter when entering college *does* impact student term-to-term persistence. This impact is more fully described in the narrative stories provided by AVID-supported students below.

**Research question 2.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) entering community colleges participating in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than non-first-generation (FGS) students entering community college who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?

Table 4.34 reveals Credit Accrual and Persistence for AVID vs non-AVID students.

Table 4.34

*Credit Accrual and Persistence*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Persisted to following term after starting DevEd	Yes	Count	865	555	1,420
		% within AVID Status	61.2%	70.3%	64.5%
	No	Count	548	234	782
		% within AVID Status	38.8%	29.7%	35.5%
Total		Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Table 4.35 reveals credit accrual by AVID and non-AVID students one term after starting DevEd.

Table 4.35

*Credits Taken 1 Term After Starting DE*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Credits taken 1 term after starting DevEd	0-5	Count	67	22	89
		% within AVID Status	7.6%	3.9%	6.1%
	6-10	Count	295	140	435
		% within AVID Status	33.4%	24.6%	30.0%
	11-15	Count	485	388	873
		% within AVID Status	54.9%	68.3%	60.1%
	16 or more	Count	37	18	55
		% within AVID Status	4.2%	3.2%	3.8%
	Total	Count	884	568	1,452
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.36 reveals credits taken by AVID and non-AVID students 2 terms after starting DevEd

Table 4.36

*Credits Taken 2 Terms After Starting DE*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Credits taken 2 terms after starting DevEd	0-5	Count	61	28	89
		% within AVID Status	10.1%	6.7%	8.7%
	6-10	Count	190	104	294
		% within AVID Status	31.4%	24.8%	28.7%
	11-15	Count	328	273	601
		% within AVID Status	54.2%	65.2%	58.7%
	16 or more	Count	26	14	40
		% within AVID Status	4.3%	3.3%	3.9%
	Total	Count	605	419	1,024
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.37 reveals credits taken by AVID and non-AVID students 3 terms after starting DevEd.

Table 4.37

*Credits Taken 3 Terms After Starting DE*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Credits taken 3 terms after starting DevEd	0-5	Count	53	38	91
		% within AVID Status	13.0%	13.7%	13.3%
	6-10	Count	123	57	180
		% within AVID Status	30.1%	20.6%	26.3%
	11-15	Count	213	169	382
		% within AVID Status	52.2%	61.0%	55.8%
	16 or more	Count	19	13	32
		% within AVID Status	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%
Total		Count	408	277	685
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The cumulative credits of AVID-supported students and non-AVID supported students is summarized in Table 4.38.

Table 4.38

*Cumulative Credits*

CUMULATIVE CREDITS	AVID	Non-AVID
Credits after 1 term	11.07	10.00
Cumulative credits after 2 terms	22.60	20.84
Cumulative credits after 3 terms	33.83	31.86
Cumulative credits after 4 terms	44.97	42.86

In looking at the credit accumulation above, it appears that AVID supported students accumulate more credits over the first 4 terms than non-AVID supported students. While AVID supported students are no longer enrolled in the AVID-supported elective, nor in the LCs, AVID supported students visit the AVID Center for ongoing support, tutoring, advising and guidance.

**Research question 3.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) have different rates of term-to-term persistence toward degree than first-generation students (FGS) who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of any difference?

For this test, data were again gathered from the AIR department at MHCC regarding rates of persistence and credit accrual toward degree or certificate completion for both AVID-supported students and non-AVID supported students. As in prior statistical analyses, data were entered into SPSS and a Pearson chi-square test was run to determine statistical significance.

Tables 4.39 to 4.41 identify the case processing summary, reflecting credits taken during initial DevEd course with AVID-support for the first term after DevEd course, two terms following, three terms following, along with GPA. Table 4.40 reflects that 71.9% of AVID-supported students took 11-15 credits during the DevEd term, while 47.5% of non-AVID supported students took 11-15 credits during the DevEd term.

Table 4.39

*Credits Taken During Initial DevEd Term*

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Credits taken during initial DevEd term * AVID Status	2,202	100.0%	0	0.0%	2,202	100.0%
GPA during initial DevEd term * AVID Status	1,668	75.7%	534	24.3%	2,202	100.0%
Credits taken 1 term after starting DevEd * AVID Status	1,452	65.9%	750	34.1%	2,202	100.0%
GPA during term 1 term after starting DevEd * AVID Status	1,123	51.0%	1,079	49.0%	2,202	100.0%
Credits taken 2 terms after starting DevEd * AVID Status	1,024	46.5%	1,178	53.5%	2,202	100.0%
GPA during term 2 terms after starting DevEd * AVID Status	854	38.8%	1,348	61.2%	2,202	100.0%
Credits taken 3 terms after starting DevEd * AVID Status	685	31.1%	1,517	68.9%	2,202	100.0%
GPA during term 3 terms after starting DevEd * AVID Status	585	26.6%	1,617	73.4%	2,202	100.0%

Table 4.40

*Credits Taken During Initial Term of DE*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Credits taken during initial DevEd term	0-5	Count	149	39	188
		% within AVID Status	10.5%	4.9%	8.5%
	6-10	Count	565	176	741
		% within AVID Status	40.0%	22.3%	33.7%
	11-15	Count	671	567	1,238
		% within AVID Status	47.5%	71.9%	56.2%
	16 or more	Count	28	7	35
		% within AVID Status	2.0%	0.9%	1.6%
	Total	Count	1,413	789	2,202
		% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

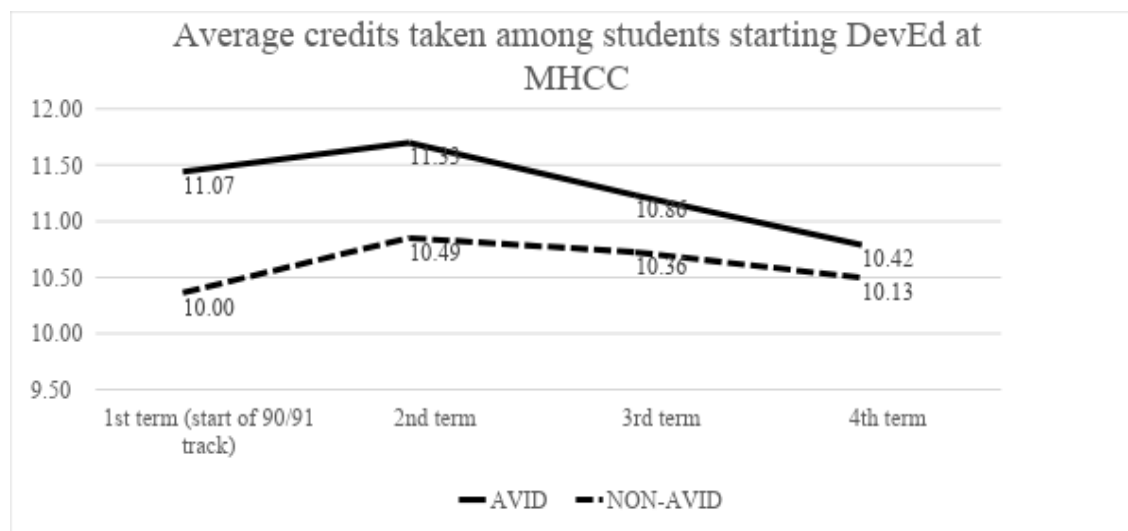
Table 4.41

*Credits Taken 1 Term After Starting DE*

Crosstab					
			AVID Status		Total
			Non-AVID	AVID	
Credits taken 1 term after starting DevEd	0-5	Count	67	22	89
		% within AVID Status	7.6%	3.9%	6.1%
	6-10	Count	295	140	435
		% within AVID Status	33.4%	24.6%	30.0%
	11-15	Count	485	388	873
		% within AVID Status	54.9%	68.3%	60.1%
	16 or more	Count	37	18	55
		% within AVID Status	4.2%	3.2%	3.8%
Total	Count	884	568	1,452	
	% within AVID Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Figure 4.6 provides a visual representation, showing that while credit progression among all FGS is often uneven, those students who are AVID supported seem to progress more rapidly with higher grades. Figure 4.6 reflects that while AVID-supported students appear to start with more credits, their credit accrual appears to decline and even out with non-AVID supported students in the fourth term following DevEd at MHCC. While there is no statistical evidence to support this supposition yet, the credit accrual decline may be

connected to the fact that AVID-supported students no longer have the AVID LC support after the first term. This question would make an interesting subsequent study.



*Figure 4.6.* Credits taken by students starting DevEd at MHCC.

**Research question 4.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation (FGS) community college students who participate in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE? What is the direction of difference?

While Research Question 4 mirrors Research Question 2 in persistence and credit accrual, data were nonetheless collected showing accumulated GPAs for both AVID and non-AVID supported students, which provides additional information to analyze and to factor into the overall summary of the impact of AVID supports for FGS placing into DevEd classes.

Figure 4.7 reveals the number of credits for AVID and non-AVID students in the terms following the initial DevEd sequence and Figure 4.8 reveals the average term GPA



by the number of terms enrolled. AVID-supported students appear to have accrued more credits per term than non-AVID supported students (44.97% vs 42.86% with a  $t = 2.723$  and a  $p$  value of .007).

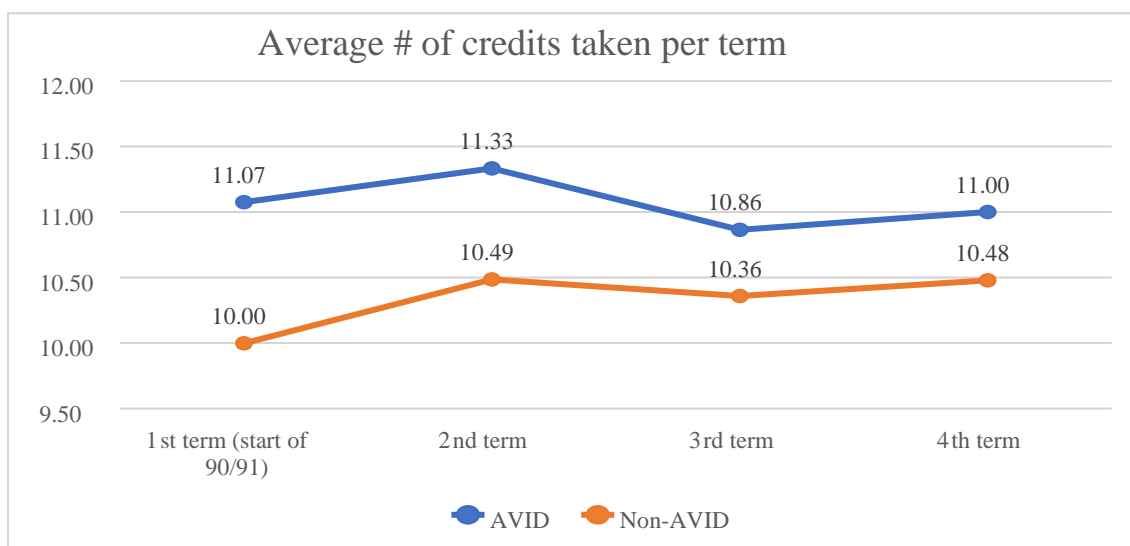


Figure 4.7. Average number of credits for AVID and non-AVID supported students.

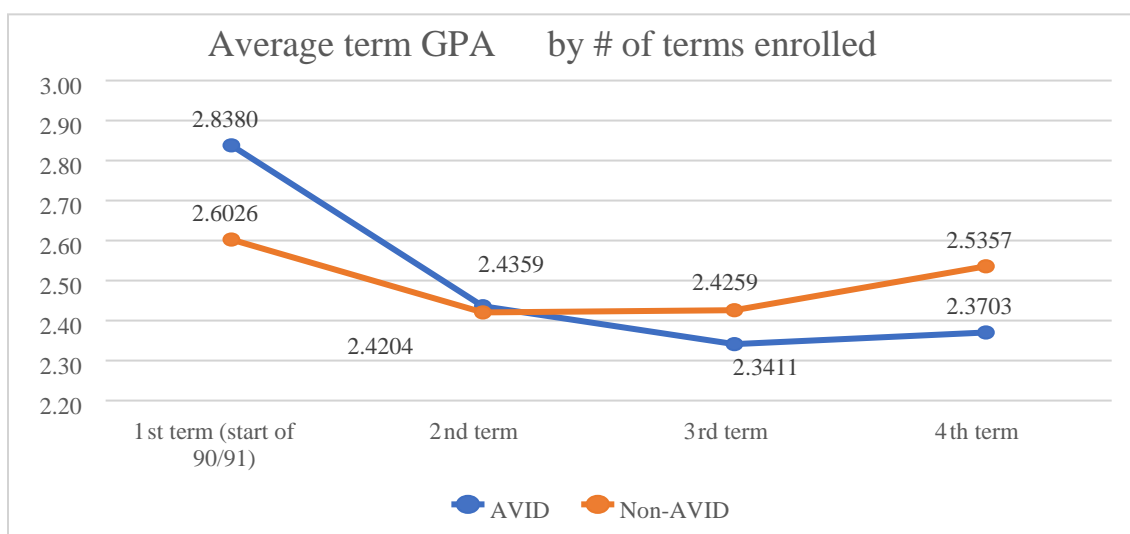


Figure 4.8. Average GPA for AVID vs non-AVID supported students.

Term GPA and credit accrual by AVID-supported students and non-AVID supported students during first, second, and third terms following DevEd courses at MHCC can be found in Tables 4.42 to 4.46.

Table 4.42

*Term GPA and Credit Accrual by AVID and Non-AVID Supported Students*

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
AVID Status * GPA during initial DevEd term	1,668	75.7%	534	24.3%	2,202	100.0%
AVID Status * GPA during term 1 term after starting DevEd	1,123	51.0%	1,079	49.0%	2,202	100.0%
AVID Status * GPA during term 2 terms after starting DevEd	854	38.8%	1,348	61.2%	2,202	100.0%
AVID Status * GPA during term 3 terms after starting DevEd	585	26.6%	1,617	73.4%	2,202	100.0%

Table 4.43

*GPA for AVID vs Non-AVID Supported Students*

Crosstab							
			GPA during initial DevEd term				
			0.00-1.00	1.01-2.00	2.01-3.00	3.01-4.00	Total
AVID Status	Non-AVID	Count	147	189	290	425	1,051
		% within AVID Status	14.0%	18.0%	27.6%	40.4%	100.0%
	AVID	Count	61	90	170	269	617
		% within AVID Status	9.9%	14.6%	27.6%	48.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	208	279	4,690	721	1,668
		% within AVID Status	12.5%	16.7%	27.6%	43.2%	100.0%

Table 4.44

*GPA of AVID vs Non-AVID Supported Students 1 Term After DE*

Crosstab								
				GPA during term 1 term after starting DevEd				
			0.00- 1.00	1.01- 2.00	2.01- 3.00	3.01- 4.00	Total	
AVID Status	Non- AVID	Count	92	162	221	197	672	
		% within AVID Status	13.7%	24.1%	32.9%	29.3%	100.0%	
	AVID	Count	74	86	144	147	451	
		% within AVID Status	16.4%	19.1%	31.9%	32.6%	100.0%	
Total			Count	166	248	365	344	1,123
			% within AVID Status	14.8%	22.1%	32.5%	30.6%	100.0%

Table 4.45

*GPA of AVID vs Non-AVID Students 2 Terms After DE*

Crosstab							
				GPA during term 2 terms after starting DevEd			
			0.00-1.00	1.01-2.00	2.01-3.00	3.01-4.00	Total
Enrolled in AVID	Non-AVID	Count	64	121	167	145	497
		% within AVID Status	12.9%	34.3%	33.6%	29.2%	100.0%
	AVID	Count	49	95	127	86	357
		% within AVID Status	13.7%	26.6%	35.6%	24.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		113	216	294	231	854
	% within AVID Status		13.2%	25.3%	34.4%	27.0%	100.0%

Table 4.46

*GPA of AVID vs Non-AVID Supported Students 3 Terms After*

Crosstab							
			GPA during term 1 term after starting 90/91				
			0.00-1.00	1.01-2.00	2.01-3.00	3.01-4.00	Total
Enrolled in AVID	Non-AVID	Count	30	84	129	105	348
		% within AVID Status	8.6%	24.1%	37.1%	30.2%	100.0%
	AVID	Count	27	64	88	58	237
		% within AVID Status	11.4%	27.0%	37.1%	24.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	57	148	217	163	585
		% within AVID Status	9.7%	25.3%	37.1%	27.9%	100.0%

When it comes to the pace of academic credit accrual among DevEd students at MHCC, AVID students accrue credits more rapidly than non-AVID students by every available measure. To investigate this, we examined the average number of credits that students had completed following each of their first four MHCC terms. The results show that AVID students accumulated a significantly higher average number of credits than non-AVID students after one term (11.07 vs 10.00,  $t = 9.203$ ,  $p = .000$ ), two terms (22.60

vs 20.84,  $t = 7.028$ ,  $p = .000$ ), three terms (33.83 vs 31.86,  $t = 4.354$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and four terms (44.97 vs 42.86,  $t = 2.723$ ,  $p = .007$ ).

A  $t$  test was run on accumulated credits for AVID-supported vs non-AVID supported students, revealing slightly different rates for AVID-supported and non-AVID supported students.

The data in Figure 4.9 as well as the attached  $t$  test results reveal that there is a significant statistical difference in credit accumulation between AVID-supported students and non-AVID supported students.

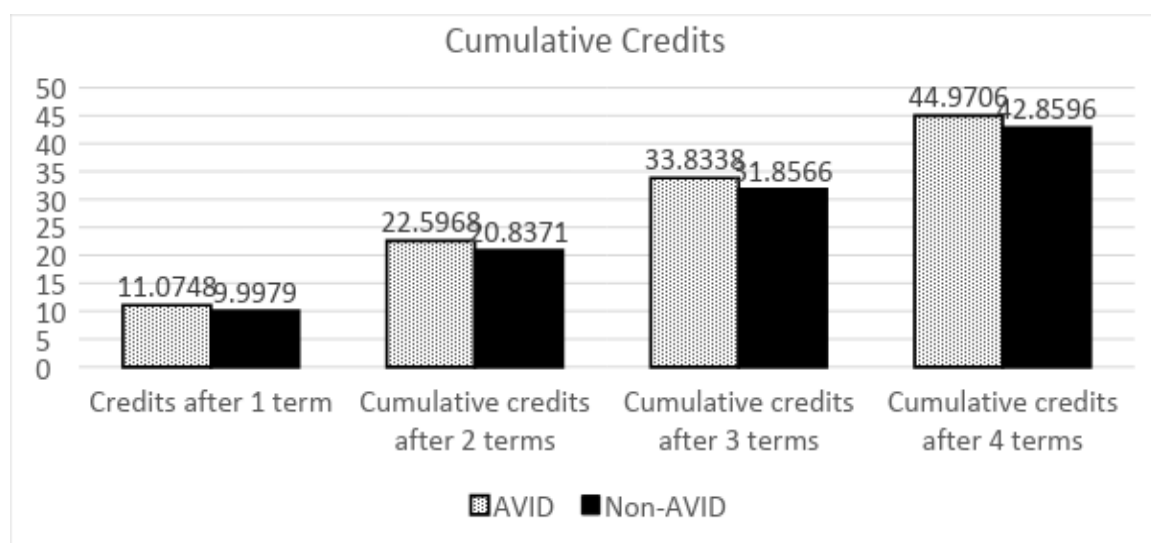


Figure 4.9.  $t$  Test of cumulative credits.

As Tables 4.42 to 4.46 reflect, the credits taken, and GPA earned during subsequent terms following DevEd courses (RD90/WR90/WR91) reveal slightly different rates for AVID-supported and non-AVID supported students. AVID students accrued roughly the same GPA as non-AVID-supported students one term after starting 90/91, showing a 31.7% of non-AVID-supported students earning 2.0-2.99 while 31% of

AVID-supported students earned 2.0-2.99. The percentage is roughly the same for AVID and non-AVID supported students in the 3.0-4.0 range one term after starting 90/91.

Table 4.45 examines GPA two terms after starting 90/91, revealing that 33.6% of non-AVID supported students earned a 2.0-2.99 while 34.5% of AVID students earned a 2.0-2.99 GPA. Table 4.46 reveals that 37.8% of non-AVID supported students earned a 3.0-4.0 GPA two terms after starting 91/91 while 31.1% of AVID students earned a 3.0-4.0 GPA.

As Tables 4.42 to 4.46 reflect, the credits taken, and GPA earned during subsequent terms following DevEd courses (RD90/WR90/WR91) reveal slightly different rates for AVID-supported and non-AVID supported students. AVID students accrued roughly the same GPA as non-AVID-supported students one term after starting 90/91, showing a 31.7% of non-AVID-supported students earning 2.0-2.99 while 31% of AVID-supported students earned 2.0-2.99. The percentage is roughly the same for AVID and non-AVID supported students in the 3.0-4.0 range one term after starting 90/91.

Table 4.45 examines GPA two terms after starting 90/91, revealing that 33.6% of non-AVID supported students earned a 2.0-2.99 while 34.5% of AVID students earned a 2.0-2.99 GPA.

***Summary for research question 4.*** The data in the earlier figures reveal that there is no statistical difference in the demographics of AVID supported and non-AVID supported students enrolled in the 90/91 DevEd sequence at MHCC, other than for Caucasians. Further there is no significant statistical difference in AVID-supported or non-AVID supported students who applied for financial aid or were Pell eligible. This is



likely because the overall enrollment and demographics of the college reveal a higher percentage of Caucasian students and those students living in poverty and/or applying for financial aid. Yet, the tables and statistical analyses above reveal that AVID supported students took more credits (in the 11-15 credit range) than non-AVID supported students even up to three terms following their DevEd LC which suggest a longer-term successful impact on academics. Tables 4-42 to 4-46 also reveal that GPAs throughout the three terms following the AVID support class did not reflect higher GPAs in AVID-supported students. It does, however, reflect higher term-to-term persistence and year-to-year progression rates for AVID supported students. This may be due to the fact that once AVID-supported students have taken the WR91+HD100C (LC) in their first term, they are then on their own (as are non-AVID supported students) in taking selected classes. AVID supported students still have access to tutoring and support of the AVID Center, but the social supports of the LC environment are no longer available. A further study on this aspect would add further understanding and clarification.

## **Qualitative Data**

### **Background**

Qualitative research provides a detailed perspective and the personal voices of participants (Creswell, 2015). In the case of this research study, the qualitative research component consists of a variety of elements, including, observations, semi-structured interviews with FGS AVID-supported participants in the DevEd (WR91 + HD100C) LC as well as interviews with staff and faculty involved in the AVID supported course. While qualitative data typically involves fewer participants than quantitative data

analysis, thus limiting the generalizability of the data, the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data provides a broader view (both statistically and socially/behaviorally) of the impact of AVID on FGS placing into DevEd at MHCC. A convergent design model for a mixed methods study was used to integrate, analyze and summarize the findings. The qualitative data in this study respond to Research Questions 5 through 8 which are specifically identified below.

In initial preparation for review and analysis of qualitative data collected for this study, surveys given to AVID-supported students at the beginning and ending of their AVID supported classes were reviewed and analyzed. The review revealed some interesting results that added context but little significance to the overall study.

This qualitative study and analysis addressed the following research questions.

**Research question 5.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “connection” (i.e., connection to the institution in terms of developing community, support strategies and resources.) to institutional agents at the college (identified as social capital) than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

**Research question 6.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “cooperation” (i.e., development of relationships with the institution and institutional agents to gain access and support) with peers in their AVID HE supported

Learning Community than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE supported Learning Communities?

**Research question 7.** Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “cohesion” (i.e., connection to and with the institution and their peers) to the community college than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

**Research question 8.** Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “self-efficacy and confidence” (i.e., the power to produce an effect; confidence is a feeling or consciousness of one’s powers or of reliance on one’s circumstances (a) had perfect *confidence* in her ability to succeed (b) met the risk with brash *confidence*) than first year, first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

These research questions are identified and referenced prior to the specific data and analysis that address the questions.

### **Artifacts Related to AVID at MHCC: Background Information**

This study also examined artifacts and documents from MHCC to reflect a broader view of the impact of AVID HE on student outcomes. While the data and analysis do not specifically answer one of the identified research questions, it does provide additional background on the impact of AVID HE on the campus of MHCC.

On November 16, 2017, the *Advocate* (the student publication from MHCC) wrote an article called, “AVID Center” trying to “bridge” the gap (see Appendix K). The article described the fundamental purpose of the AVID program and Center, saying, the AVID Center tries to “assist students who live a commuter lifestyle” and it “provides an avenue for students to find help and tutoring for whatever projects they are working on.” While this is partially true, the AVID Center has a much broader purpose as outlined in Chapter 1 of this study. However, the impact of the AVID Center does help students find tutoring help and support for projects in their academic classes. For the last four to five years since its origination on the Mt. Hood campus, the AVID Center has primarily focused on helping students placed into DevEd classes (specifically WR90/RD90) at the college. Later data and narratives from students reflect the impact they have had on student outcomes. Additionally, as reflected in the *Advocate* article in November of 2017, the AVID Center plans to start a “social media blitz” according to AVID Center Coordinator, Sarah Aimone. She explained,

what we would really like to do is a promotion, so that students start to view our pages a lot more. We know that there are a lot of students on campus that either truly don’t know about our services or they truly don’t know about how welcoming we are, or how you could really see us at any stage in the game.

The article further stated, “The most successful effort AVID staff has used to help keep students enrolled in school is an effort called Summer Bridge,” said Aimone and (Grant) Burgess (an AVID learning specialist and unofficial social media coordinator. “It’s called bridge because it’s like a bridge from where they were, to where they’re trying to get to,” said Burgess. “The program is a three-day boot camp that is designed to ‘boost academic and non-cognitive skills, plus foster a connection to the MHCC campus community.’” The

*Advocate* article reported that this year (2017) the program had 152 students and explained that a “Bridge” is offered for one day during winter and spring (see Appendix K).

An additional element of the data collection for the qualitative component of this study included a direct observation of “Summer Bridge” program in the Fall of 2017 by this researcher. Summer Bridge has been offered at the college for the last 4 years and has grown substantially throughout the last 4 years.

### **Summer Bridge Observation**

Summer Bridge was originated in the summer of 2014, as an intensive orientation for new AVID LC students. Students initially participated and over the course of three days, developed friendships, met staff and faculty, explored campus and program/career options, bought textbooks and were provided with school supplies, learned more about the college and student culture at MHCC, including how to manage their time, emotional intelligence and stress reduction techniques, how to navigate financial aid and more. Through Summer Bridge, students also gained confidence in themselves and were well prepared for their first day and first term at MHCC.

As a part of the data accumulated and analyzed for this study, this researcher observed the first day of Summer Bridge 2017 at MHCC. Summer Bridge 2017 started with students filing in to the Town & Gown room at the upper floor of the Student Development Center on the campus of MHCC. The AVID Coordinator, Sarah Aimone, welcomed students as they entered, along with other AVID support staff. Sarah introduced herself and directed students, “Some people might be coming late. Your color,

your team should have five or more students, so if you are by yourself, please condense.”

Students moved to consolidate to different tables. Sarah explained to students that the day would start with a Pre-Survey (in a stack in the center of each table). Students filled out the surveys and staff collected them. Sarah explained,

you are going to be with this team for the next two days. I’ll tell you why you are here. Wouldn’t it be great to help students avoid some mistakes as they enter college? This is the fourth year of Summer Bridge. It’s going to be fun and entertaining. Being in a group like this can sometimes be awful and intimidating.

Sarah further explained to students that each had a packet of information in front of them. She said, “The binder in front of you is *your* binder. In it, you are going to find two pencils, a pen and a flash drive. Open up the rings and put it all in the binder.”

Students followed directions, clicking their packets into the binders. Sarah went on to say,

You’ll find a pink agenda with a list of all the things we are going to do today. It has two columns. The left side has everything that is going on today. Some restroom breaks are built in and the restrooms are right across from the Town & Gown room. The right side is for notes—set up similar to a Cornell Notes system. Feel free to write on it. This is your day to learn about MHCC, so please ask questions. Talk to your fellow students. Learn staff names. Let us help you. We have about 100 students here today and another 100 Thursday and Friday.

Sarah continued guiding students into the next part of the day’s activities, calling it “The Graduation Expo Game” which was introduced by Matt Farina. Matt explained the game and process to students, telling them, “we’re going to be throwing things from long distances into garbage cans. So, follow me.” Students followed Matt out to the hall and then gathered in groups with their staff leaders. The goal of the game was to get 15 (points) credits. After the game, Matt asked,

What is this game all about? What does it have to do with college? Pressure? Did pressure feel greater when you were further out or closer in when throwing?

Looking at the scores and how they turned out, would you do things differently if you could? Take your time. For those of you not throwing, would you do things differently if you could?

Matt then led students in a discussion about the challenges of credit accrual with balancing many other demands (work, family demands, activities, homework). He asked,

How much homework do you expect to have? Not much? You can expect about two to three hours times the number of credits you are enrolled in. If you sign up for 15 credits per term, it's about 30 hours—or more than a full-time job. It's difficult to balance all of the demands while in college. How many of you are taking 15 credits? How many of you have concerns?

Matt then explained that the AVID Center and FYE course helps students learn strategies for time management. He said, “One of our goals is to introduce you to support systems at the college.”

The team-building and informative activities continued throughout the day, with students becoming more vocal and more actively involved with their peer groups and with the group as a whole. The next significant event was a CASE study handed out to all students at every table. Sarah briefly explained the situation within the CASE study, describing student “Audrianas” who had a very stressful first week. Students were asked to rate and discuss how they would deal with the stressors presented. From this activity, students were then led on a tour to a different location on the campus to meet important staff members (Financial Aid, Advising, etc.). This Bridge activity was engaging for students and through observation, it led to team-building among the participants.

The Summer Bridge observation provided a detailed view of the activities of the AVID Center to welcome and initiate students to the college. While the observations are informative, they do not specifically answer or reference any research question posed for this study.

### **AHE 2014 Compendium Related to MHCC**

A third artifact that was reviewed and included in this data review was a “2014 AHE Compendium” which contains the case study of MHCC, along with five other colleges and universities from across the U.S. who had implemented AVID for High Education (AHE). The Compendium and case stories revealed that AVID HE is “making a difference in student learning” (Appendix L, 2014 AHE Compendium, p. 1).

The case study on MHCC began with the origins of the AVID program on the campus of MHCC. It revealed demographics and inadequate completion rates, stating,

Like many institutes for higher education, MHCC faced low persistence, retention, and completion rates, especially among students who place into DevEd coursework (courses below the 100 level). In addition, there was a need for innovative and effective ways to encourage and support recent GED (General Education Development) graduates and adult basic skills (i.e., ESL, ENL) students with their transition into general education coursework. From these needs came the AHE program, which began with just one group of students taking reading and writing courses together and that has expanded to a current level that includes several AVID LC offerings per term, an AVID Center staffed by Learning Specialists and an AVID Coordinator. (p. 1)

“After 4 years, AVID strategies are having an impact on instructional practices throughout campus. AT MHCC, AHE has truly meant transformative pedagogy and student support.” Lauren Smith, AVID Coordinator, added:

The challenges to implementing AHE at Mt. Hood were largely caused by funding and hesitance on the part of faculty and staff. Trends in higher education tend to be fast-moving and ever-changing and instructors were wary of the next “shiny new object” or trend that they would need to adopt, and that cost the college money in an already stretched economy. These challenges were largely overcome by the outcomes of the AHE program and its impact on student persistence. (p. 1)

She went on to add,

While most DevEd courses see dismal persistence rates, AVID LC students persisted at nearly 85% during the first full year of Implementation in fall 2012.



In addition, the AVID Center served hundreds of students, supporting them in their academics, future course and career options, and providing much needed mentorship and coaching when life barriers got in the way of college success. Through small- and large-scale professional development sessions, AHE at MHCC was able to show that AVID is not a passing fad, but rather, a collection of best practices encouraged by any campus looking to provide greater support to their underrepresented and underserved student populations as well as providing quality professional development opportunities to their faculty. (Appendix L, 2014 AHE Compendium, p. 1)

The Compendium (case study) went on to outline the strategies that MHCC implemented both across campus with AVID HE as well as to area school districts and focusing on a unique student population. Several student narratives were included in the case study, drawing attention to the fears and challenges that are barriers to success for FGS in college but also the supports that seemed to bridge the gap for many. One student, Wendell, was a returning African American student who had successfully passed both AVID LCs and moved on to credited college-level classes. Wendell stated, “It was scary at first coming back to school (after a 10-year break). I knew college was going to be different from high school. I knew the work was going to be harder. The LCs made it less scary” (p. 3).

When Wendell moved from DevEd (pre-college) level courses to college-level courses in the spring of 2014, he described increased nervousness. “I thought I might be on my own, but I got continued help in the AVID Center, especially with Biology” (p. 3). Other students reflected Wendell’s feelings of support from the AVID Center. One student said, “I feel they want to see me succeed. I never leave feeling like a failure. On my bad days there is still staff to encourage me.” Another student said, “AVID has kept me on my feet and has readied me for college success.” One other student said, “The AVID Center is the best help you can get on campus. And I would recommend all

students to go there.” Returning to Wendell, he said, “I definitely wouldn’t have made it this far without you guys!” (p. 5).

This case study and student reflections provided strong examples of the support provided by the AVID Center at MHCC upon initial implementation. And while significant, it was difficult to determine if these student statements were an anomaly or whether they continued throughout the years of AVID’s work on campus. More evidence was needed in the form of more persistence and progression data as well as student narratives.

### **Staff Interviews**

While the initial artifacts and Compendium provided some clarification and breadth to the AVID HE program implemented at MHCC, it left many unanswered questions. In order to get more evidence on the role that AVID HE played on the campus of MHCC and in the lives of FGS placing into DevEd (pre-college) course, interviews were conducted both with AVID staff as well as with AVID student participants. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured protocol and approved through the IRB process before the study began. This researcher conducted the interviews and the semi-structured interview questions are identified in Appendix K of this study. These interviews reflect the efforts to enhance social capital and academic achievement in students placing into Development Education at MHCC. These interviews provide background information that expand understanding of the Research questions but do not necessarily provide specific data to support the questions.

There were a total of five Learning Specialist staff and faculty involved in this interview process. Each participant signed an IRB permission form. Each described their experience within the AVID Center and the LCs. One staff member said,

The AVID Center or LC creates a positive, warm environment. We take it very seriously that being in college can be very intimidating. We work to set students at ease. I'm not sure if it's the AVID Center, but we are an approachable, friendly, and down-to-earth and genuinely care about students. When students come to the center—they know who to talk to (not like coddling) there is also follow-up after tests with the AVID Center. They can continually ask and get help. (p. 1)

Another staff member mentioned course materials, namely *OnCourse* (Downing, 2013, 2014, 2017) which is used to teach non-cognitive skills in the FYE course in the LC. *OnCourse* uses more soft skills, emotional strength, instead of Cornell Notes—it is more of an approach to problem-solving, level-thinking, questioning. They have found high student engagement with using *OnCourse* materials. In fact, one Learning Specialist stated, “*OnCourse* provides strategies and activities for high engagement strategies. *OnCourse* and AHE are like two halves coming together” (p. 3). She went on to say that,

she had worked with a group of students in Nursing. She had tried to pull in the idea of the 10-2 lecture—which was different from all of the skills they had been doing for the pre-requisite level of critical thinking they needed to do in their professional program. This Learning Specialist, Stephanie, is going to adopt 10-2 strategies. What are the 10-2 strategies? Think/pair/share, then strategies to learn; *OnCourse* gives you another set of tools. AVID provides the foundation for why we are doing this, but then how do I do that for college level students? *OnCourse*. (p. 3)

One of the ongoing challenges AVID HE has faced since inception at MHCC was faculty resistance. Coordinator, Sarah, says they have “done a good thing with the reputation and data and shared with people in a qualitative fashion. They treat faculty with the same care as a student. One PT faculty in Nursing/Health came in to get more strategies.” She said that more Career Technical Education faculty are open to the

strategies, but there is a different attitude from academic faculty. She mentioned that if you are “training students for a job, like Dental Hygiene—you see how they need to be applying these skills (soft skills as well) a whole package rather than just writing a paper” (p. 4). One other Learning Specialist noted,

the cost of non-college level courses impact students. The length of time is the biggest barrier; the length of time of the sequence. The longer the time it takes a student to get to credited classes, the less likely they are to persist. FGS often don’t have anybody who provides the support, like “you’ll get through this.” Instead, they often hear, “why are you wasting your time?” (p. 4)

Sarah also stated,

Student success is a really big thing. They demonstrated a big 320+ students in the Student Success program—with some persisting at rates 20% higher than the college in general. That got noticed. The MHCC Foundation is now interested in having emergency scholarships for students, along with putting in social services help so students have an easier time getting help at college. (p. 4)

The social services help would include

wrap around services for students on campus—more staff/faculty training in how to qualify and refer them (students) for extra supports. On top of every DevEd student should be assigned an academic coach; that coach is a person who may do some advising, but also keep track of what is happening.

Stephanie and Sarah stated that,

the needs of DevEd students coming out of high school into DevEd courses, that is. But, when these students are in a LC, their experience is much richer or stronger. There is more career counseling and planning; more Guided Pathways helping students understand career and financial choices. (p. 4)

Matt Farina, another Learning Specialist and former AVID Director for the AVID Center, commented on the strength of AVID professional development. He said, “Not only was it best practices, but they provide the strategies and the tools to implement.” He went on to say,

They organized them very well” (p. 5). Matt further suggested that AVID HE doesn’t really “understand how to speak the language of higher education. DevEd is already trying to bridge the gap.” He stated that, “often higher education people are intellectual elitists. (p. 5)

Stephanie said she has seen this on other campuses; “faculty often have a PhD in content areas but not in teaching strategies” (p. 5). Another faculty member and Learning

Specialist at MHCC, David, stated,

the college would be way worse off if they didn’t have AVID. It’s a really excellent model for what DevEd should be across campus. Many faculty concerns are misguided. The feeling that this (AVID) is a high school thing is misguided. They are content experts and yet faculty often don’t know strategies about effective classroom engagement strategies. No one spends the time working with faculty about how to engage students. (p. 5)

David went on to say, “it was the support systems that have helped students. Not just DevEd students, but anything I (David) did with students outside of the classrooms, that gained interest in students’ lives (privacy and society; listened to a speaker, or a homeless person).” David participated in some outside events with students, which really seemed to help students.

### **Participant Interviews**

Through the support and assistance of the Coordinator of the AVID program at MHCC, students were randomly contacted, and interview times were established. Seven interviews were set up with participants from the DevEd WR91 LC. Participants interviewed privately from a pre-established semi-structured interview script approved by the IRB. Participant Interview Protocols can be found in Appendix I. The interviews varied in length from 45 minutes to 1 hour. Given that this researcher is a trained and experienced counselor, the interviews were conducted in a safe and confidential environment. Student interview participants shared many details of their lives before

attending college, while they participated in the AVID-supported LCs and their progress in classes at the college after. The interviews revealed personal stories of the participants and provided depth and detail of the impact of AVID supports. While the initial research plan in this mixed methods study was to examine the qualitative data through a case study model, the depth and breadth of the personal stories of participants evolved into more of a Narrative Analysis. It is believed that development is about social and personal experiences; that “human development is a social process involving individuals, institutions, and cultures, and therefore, requiring multiple levels of analysis” (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. xiii).

The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed (verbatim) for each participant and then exported to the qualitative data coding software NVIVO for identification of themes and codes. The primary themes are identified in the research on Social Capital (and are identified in the research questions). The primary themes are: greater sense of connection to institutional agents; greater sense of cooperation with peers in their AVID-supported LCs; a greater sense of cohesion to the community college (MHCC). These primary themes were identified, analyzed and interpreted in light of the Research questions in this section. Further, specific quotations from participants were identified and integrated into overall interpretation of this study to provide personal stories and narrative analysis of the impact of AVID on students’ lives.

The participants shared personal stories of their lives and families, their fears and trepidations and the challenges and barriers they faced on entering college. The stories revealed much about the impact of the AVID Center, but also the concept of LCs and

teacher outreach and input. Personal stories were revealed first to provide background of the challenges many FGS face when entering college. Research questions and theme analysis were presented thereafter.

**Student Christian: Male student whose parents came from Mexico. FGS.**

About two years ago, um, I decided to go to MHCC because I've been wanting to go to a community college for a very long time, but I just did not decide what career I wanted to study. Uh, after my senior year, I started looking at doing internships through computer technology so I went to a computer force for about six months at an internship and decided that I wanted to do Cyber Security and Networking through MHCC because I heard MHCC has the best computer technology around and I wanted to take classes. (p. 2)

There was a sense of community in my high school. All the teachers were, if you got stuck on something or anything, they'll help you out from time to time if they're open to their schedule.

Well, about my parents, it's kind of really hard what I'm doing. Um, currently, my parents are together, but I feel like that's not going to last because um during my years of birth and through now, they've been having troubles, uh well my dad's been telling me that he's been through divorcement with her, right now, it's like three or four times. Um, and the case is well, it's really personal, but I don't mind telling you, is that my mother's been cheating on my dad. And I knew through my birth years, but currently where I'm old and she came up to me and she said she wanted a divorce. But she didn't know, she just told me she didn't like my father. But the first thing that she did was not really forgivable. Um, what she did. Uh, she disrespected our family's name and basically disrespected me in a really harsh way that no child should ever disrespect their own father. And that really did hurt. And this was through the beginning of my first year of college. So that really affected me, really bad. And Sarah, this is why Sarah and Sean was, would have a place in my heart. They knew what was going on, they helped me through um my ways, and I still managed to successfully succeed in their classes (WR90+HD100C) and obtain an A and I got that class with a 4.0 GPA and um, right now I have an AVID Hall of Fame certificate (p. 6). I mean they are my family, but I don't have connections with my mom. I really don't talk to her, because what she did didn't deserve the level of my accomplishments toward her. So, I felt like more accomplished that I did and everything, but more of a family now, is my friends that I have. My friends, my cousins, they have the family respect that they deserve and everything. And I do that for them and a little bit towards my father and everything. But it's just that, I told my parents that you are my family, but yet I grew up by myself. (p. 5)

**Student Nyasia: Female, African American student in foster care as a child living in New York.**

I lived in New York when I was little and moved to Oregon after my grandma passed and lived with my dad in Oregon. But at the age of 5, I was actually placed into foster care . . . and I grew up in the system and then when I was about 12 or 11, my grandmother became my foster mother. And then my mom got sick, so she gave my grandma her rights. And my dad actually had his revoked because he moved here (to Oregon). My grandma adopted me when I was 14 years old and then she pretty much raised me. When she passed away I was like, “I can’t depend on anybody. You know? I live my life, I have to, you know, take care of myself.” So, when she passed, I’m like who can I count on or depend on? And I’m like 19. So, I’m like I can’t really think that way. I can’t think, “Who do I depend on? Who do I run to?” Like I’m gonna be 20, you know. I can’t depend on anybody. I have to figure out how to take care of myself. It was really hard because my financial situation was really crazy and um Matt (AVID Center) helped me figure out all the information that I needed. And when I didn’t have a job, and really like struggling and trying to get to school buying food like, I was really struggling. Audrey (AVID Center) helped me get bus passes, food, like she helped me get all these things. And then when I came to work, Sarah (AVID Center) helped me upstairs in AVID; she helped me do SOAR. (p. 4)

They helped me get through darkness, right there. (p. 4)

**Student Jess: Female, Hispanic student. Moved from Hood River to Gresham after high school to attend MHCC. FGS.**

**Student Kesha: Female, Hispanic student; 26 years old. Has three kids, is married, and has been out of school since age 15.**

In high school, my grades were perfect until I got pregnant (laughs). Yeah, I was a straight A student. Middle school and high school. And the first term in the LC, straight A’s. (p. 14)

Husband doesn’t work—helps with kids. Sometimes when her kids get sick or if her nanny doesn’t show up, she can’t make it to class. Some teachers understand. Others are like, “Well, life happens.” (p. 10)

I had a real bad experience in one of my classes. I didn’t pass my WR121 ‘cuz of the teacher. Uh, my husband had those three surgeries; during that and that was the transition between one job to the other. So, I was kind of trying to be at the hospital with my husband. And trying to do the orientation at the new job, but



also be here, and I did everything she asked for, the only thing was that because I wasn't present at the classroom, it didn't count. So, I got an F in that class even though I did every single thing she asked me to do. (p. 10)

And I had to pay out of my pocket for that class. I mean knowing you had failed it and you had to pay for it. (p. 12)

In the LC, it makes a difference. (p. 13)

Yeah, it's like, I understand, you know, I didn't, I couldn't kind of conversation and I said, "You know, I understand," and she's an older lady and there were older students too in there that were passing through moments like that were homeless, or you know, all that stuff, but it's like, if you have sympathy for them. (p. 13)

Like if they didn't come to class, they were ok, you know, that's one of the reasons why she called me selfish in the middle of the classroom 'cause I got actually in line in front of other people and then the person who was waiting at the end, and she's like "Well, it's her turn, don't be selfish." I say, "Well, I've been standing here next to you." (p. 13)

I honestly, I step out, I was like, "I'm selfish?" I'm waiting for you to look at my paper, but if you can't, I'm just going to go.

My step dad lives around here but I don't see much of him. My mom is back in Mexico. I lived with grandparents in Mexico til 14 (both teachers) when her mom (who had moved to U.S. years before) and then brought K and her siblings to U.S.

**Student Huda: Female student from Kuwait.**

I've been in U.S. since 2014. When I came here, started my junior year in high school—I spoke no English (p. 2). And I was like crying every day because I don't understand like what the students say and like when they talk to me and um I'm sure I don't even understand them. I used to like study every day at home like just to learn English and like to understand people. I graduated in the time two years from high school. I worked hard. I used to stay after school every day just to get it done. Um, I have been on my own for two years. This is my second year and you know, because um, I'm um I'm a second language speaker so I was so scared of college, but AVID Center helped me a lot. (p. 2)

I'm 20 years old. My dad finished high school in Kuwait. My brother attended college and mom now is attending college. She's in ESL classes. I help her with that too. (p. 5).

Parents can't help her financially, so she does work study at the college.

**Student Jessica: Jessica is a female student whose family is originally from Mexico, but she grew up mostly in Hood River, Oregon.**

I knew I didn't want to stay home (laughs) and then I figured Corvallis was too far, PCC was in the middle of downtown and I didn't want that, so I kind of narrowed it back down to MHCC. I came last year to new student welcome day with my dad. And I kind of got the feel of what Mt. Hood had to offer. And I like it, so I was like, ok, this is something I like, something I want to do. And so, I decided to make the big move down to Gresham. And it was life changing, just in general. Um, when I got, when I took the CPT I didn't, first of all, I don't test good. And I got placed into reading and writing 90 and it said, like LC and AVID. And I was like, AVID sounded familiar cause they had it at my school, but I was fortunate to have Sean and Sarah (AVID Center) cause I also had to take an HD100C class. And I kind of, I honestly, that was probably my (laughs) full year after I completed my year here at Mt. Hood I was like, I like it. I was like, the, the AVID and the LC opened, like, opened so many doors. And I'm still very close with Matt Farina, Sarah, um, not really like.

Sean Mc 'cause he was like, obviously just a teacher. Um, but Sarah and Matt, like, I, I still keep in contact with Matt. I'm gonna be actually talking about, he, he and this other student that goes here are gonna be going to like a, learn—I think we're gonna try to push more LCs for um, like, writing 121, 122, try to get a math. And I, I personally 'cause, I kind of have a soft spot for that, so he kind of, Matt, I think saw that in me. And I was like, I've always told him, always since last year, I was like, there needs to be a writing 121 LC. And I got approached with that, so, like I said, the LC and AVID has opened several doors for me. And I do miss it a lot (laughs) because it's like I go into my regular classes and I'm like, this is not like the LC (laughs).

**Student Juan: Juan is a male student (FGS) from Mexico.**

I'm gonna have to piggy back, um, on that one, because I feel like family is the biggest support. Um, like, even though my parents have not gone to college, they still are willing to offer to help me with either, homework, even to look at it and still like give me some moral support. Um, like, with my dad, like he's good at math and sometimes I need help with math, even though he's not gone to like, college or high school or middle school, he's still good at math and he helps me out. My brother even, even though he's not even at my level, but like sometimes he'll like forget stuff, he even helps me with some math as well, which is, like I say, kind of embarrassing, but I mean. (p. 12)

His family is from Mexico.

**Research question 5.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “connection” to institutional agents at the college (identified as social capital) than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

The participants interviewed for this study represented the AVID-supported students who were FGS, underprepared and placed into DevEd. Seven students were interviewed with semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix I). Each interview was conducted solely by the researcher. Each participant signed a release statement (see Appendix I) and each interview was tape-recorded. The tape recordings were then transcribed (verbatim). Each transcribed interview was then extensively analyzed and reviewed for the following themes:

- Greater sense of connection to institutional agents (identified as social capital by (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015b)
- Greater sense of cooperation with peers in their AVID HE supported learning (Moschetti & Hudley, 201b)
- Greater sense of cohesion to the community college (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015b)
- FGS status
- Barriers
- Career goals
- Self-awareness/grit

All of the participants expressed clearly that participating in the AVID Learning Community gave them an enhanced sense of connection to institutional agents at the College as reflected in the comments that follow.

Student Christian commented, “There was a sense of community in my high school. All the teachers were, if you got stuck on something or anything, they’ll help you out from time to time if they’re open to their schedule.” He also stated,

Oh yes, um, and while I was in AVID Center, this really opened my mind because I met Sarah, and Sean, through my first year of uh college. I was really nervous, but those two people really opened my mind on my writing and reading, it significantly improved by having both of them through—through my years of college so far. (p. 3)

Nyasia stated, “When I arrived at MHCC and decided to enroll, I was ‘luckily’ placed in AVID LC” (p. 1).

My first two professors (Sarah and Matt in AVID Center) have been awesome. She (Sarah) helped me get work-study here and helped me become part of SOAR. So, I’ve grown in AVID and now have the ability to come back, you know? I passed both terms here with AVID and now I’m helping other students pass their terms in AVID. (p. 1)

so, like all my issues they helped me, like, you know, it was maybe simultaneously, but it all jelled together and now I’m all set. Like, I have a job, I work for SOAR, I still do full time here and still work for Mike. So, it’s like, I’m still here and I’m still growing? You know? So, it’s pretty awesome that I had those people in my corner. (p. 4)

So, I never talked about my feelings, my problems. And I think Sarah caught on to that a bit. I’m not gonna lie. I feel like she caught on to it and she kind of like brought me out where she like, talked to me, like every time I have a problem, she comes up to me and she’s like, “Are you ok?” You know? (pp. 7-8).

Jess stated,

I got placed into AVID and didn’t know. The connection to AVID staff (Sarah, Matt, Sean) was great. I learned it was a LC and I was grateful for the connections with the teachers! Once they told me what this (LC) was, the LC tutoring helped me a lot. It became, to some extent, your family on campus. (p. 11)

Student Kesha related much of the same. She stated,

When I first came in to the LC, I was scared of what I was going to do, but I feel comfortable with the fact that as a LC, it was like all the classes in the same classroom, I didn’t have to worry about you know, running around looking for

another classroom. Uh, I didn't have to meet, meet new people every time I moved around um, kind of feel like we made a good connection with all of us friends that were there. And the teachers were really helpful, uh, they give you the feeling of like you say you're not alone. (p. 8)

The teachers in the AVID supported LC they are here for you, they're always going to help you and if you needed them, they could help you in everything you needed. And if not, at least they will try to help. Yeah, like that's why I keep telling um Sarah, oh man, please what's going on with the rest of the teachers, why can't I have teachers like the ones I had in the first term. Like, they're completely different. (p. 15)

This student mentioned that she too, had had Sean the next time she took WR121,

I tell him straight up, I said, "I hate writing, and I hate reading." I was like, he was like "just do your best." I try you know, and it worked. Yeah, yeah, I was, you know, that was so good (having Sean), that's why I'm trying to go, trying to find him back again, but I don't know if he teaches WR122, I don't know. (p. 15)

### **Connections Through Teaching Style**

Student Kesha also stated about the connection in LCs (supported by AVID).

About LC's:

Yeah, I think that I had different, like I don't know if it's the, you know, depending the class or what, but it's like . . . the they don't . . . the community, they don't actually treat you like just a student. Like Ashley (AVID Learning Specialist) tried to teach you or show you stuff as an individual. Like a family, they'll help you feel comfortable with what you're doing, not just hey, this what you're doing and here you can go ahead and do it. They're actually there with you step-by-step and trying to help you. (p. 9)

Kesha also stated,

So everything was ok, you know, I'm in front of the line, and she even told me, she's like "you should take, you know, another class again, if not, you know you're never going to make it." Like practically telling me that my goals of trying to be a nurse were crashed because I didn't pass her class. And the . . . how those emails, that even if someone read them, it might not be me, the only one who thinks the way they sound, even though they're just an email. But the ways she says it, its wow, well thank you. (p. 15)

“Like, kind of like a teacher trying to crush your dreams telling you no, that you can’t” (p. 15). Kesha further commented, about the staff in the AVID Center, “that they are here for you, they’re always going to help you and if you needed them, they could help you in everything you needed. And if not, at least they will try to help.” “Yeah, like that’s why I keep telling um Sarah, oh man, please what’s going on with the rest of the teachers, why can’t I have teachers like the ones I had in the first term. Like, they’re completely different” (p. 15). She had Sean the next time she took WR121, “I tell him straight up, I said, ‘I hate writing, and I hate reading.’” I was like, he was like “just do your best.” I try you know, and it worked. “Yeah, yeah, I was, you know, that was so good (having Sean), that’s why I’m trying to go, trying to find him back again, but I don’t know if he teaches WR122, I don’t know” (p. 15).

Student Huda from Kuwait referenced similar connections to the AVID Center staff in her interview. She said,

the AVID Center helped me a lot, really. Like every time I’m not, I’m a shy person. I’m not that person that asks questions, but I feel so comfortable with them. They’re like, they’re like, they help a lot. They’re so helpful, so I used to stay every day and work with them. (p. 2)

She also mentioned that she “has friends from all the classes she took. The WR90—they’re so cool. They know the, when I need help. They help me. They know that I like sometimes hard to understand things so they, they explain for me” (p. 6). She also commented, that when she was in the LC,

so the instructor was like, she’s not forcing us but she’s like letting us talk to each other. Work as groups and that’s what helped me a lot. Made me like ask questions. Don’t feel shy. Don’t like . . . I’d never talk to students to be honest. In the other classes, if I have a question, I don’t even ask (other students) I just go like to the instructor after class. (p. 7)

This student had remarkable experiences in the AVID Center, saying: When she first came to MHCC, “I was, I was, I didn’t understand anything. I was like, I have to go to like ask, ‘How was that gonna work?’ And the, I just I don’t, I don’t remember who told me about the AVI Center. I was asking and someone took me there and I don’t remember” (p. 8). Matt told her. “he explained to me like everything. Help work. He make it, he made it easy. So yeah. It was (p. 9). In the AVID Center, “um, they started us from the zero I mean even or schedule. They like they taught us how to do it and uh every time we, I need help I ask them and the student to like, I’m like. I feel like, my house (laughs). I know everybody. Kind of like a family” (p. 9)

Students Jessica and Juan also referenced repeatedly the connection they felt with the AVID staff, teachers and peers in the LCs. Connection seems to be a strong outcome of the AVID work and the AVID-supported LCs for FGS placing into DevEd courses.

Jessica stated,

with AVID, um, I didn’t know too much about AVID when I came into college because, I’ve seen it, cause I first learned about it in middle school. And I didn’t really pay attention to it much. Um, high school, I was also kind of a part of AVID around high school, um, and it kind of got me interested in coming into, uh, seeing if college had one. But yeah, I was glad that they have an AVID here, cause once I got here, um, it really opened up my, um, it was really, like I didn’t expect to pick as, when I came to college, I heard all about like, it’s gonna be hard. Uh, you’re not gonna have any friends, or more like, um, more like, it’s gonna be like, you’re gonna be on your own and everything. But once you come to AVID, it really like, uh, better, like myself coming to school. Like I would be always, um, like I would be like, the one person that, that like, would be kind of like, shy to talk to people. And when I got to a lot of people and became friends. Cause especially with that whole, like, you have three classes with the same instructor, well, not the same instructor, the same students., it really felt, made me feel closer like, doing study groups with people in that class cause you would know them throughout the whole, uh, term. And with AVID, it really helped me with my grades, because the teachers really care about you, like, I had this one instructor named Dave and he was really like . . . yeah, he was amazing. I’m like I

even told him like, I was like um, called up for a whole speech here that they did a while back. And I mentioned to him that he was one of my inspirations to be here because he really cared about students. And he really, like, got you to think about deeper meaning and keeping an open mind in life, and he really helped me out a lot and I really appreciated everything he's done for me. Um, but . . . instructors like him make me, like, love Mt. Hood and just make me love the AVID community. Cause he really made a huge impact in my, uh, coming here to Mt. Hood. (pp. 5-6)

Juan stated very similar connections in the following,

I would say, if, um, the AVID community would be teaching every class I would prefer that. Like, if it was possible, I would love for AVID community to be teaching, um, or having all the classes together. Because it felt like, with the AVID community they really made sure that you want to feel comfortable with everyone around your surroundings and make sure that the teachers will actually have a close connection with you rather than other instructors. Um, uh, I have had the privilege to have teachers that do care without the AVID community, I did have teachers that do care about their students. And some didn't, but if it were to be possible that AVID would like, have the whole school be part of it, I would so take it because . . . um, without their help and support, like, um, I wouldn't, like, I feel like without them it would, college would have been a little bit more difficult. But thanks to them, they really opened up my eyes and got me ready for what, what after AVID was gonna be. Like, they, uh, after taking the whole AVID I've gotten all straight A's from their program. Um, and it's really helped me, um, and got my GPA really high and it really opened up, uh, being on the dean's list and everything. And it really like made, just made me really like, excited about college and like, really opened up my eyes, and thinking like, like I can make it far because AVID helped me with all this. (pp. 14-15)

The connection that FGS AVID students conveyed in the statements above clearly identify that AVID and the LCs supported students. It became a safe environment for many students who could seek help and assistance whenever they needed it. Students gained a greater sense of connection to the AVID Center, to their student peers and AVID faculty, and to the MHCC community.

**Research question 6.** Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense



of “cooperation” with peers in their AVID HE supported LC than first-generation students who do not participate in AVID HE LCs?

Christian revealed that he had been invited to talk to other students about the AVID program and said,

Well I did go to, I think Sarah—uh you know how they have summer grades, stuff like that. Sarah invited me to go talk to the people. Um and I was like, sure I’d be glad to talk to people about how MHCC should be. You know MHCC should be an eye opener for you guys, you know, just be out there. I mean, it’s going to be scary at first, obviously when you enter new school, you’re going to be—have that nervous feelings, it’s like I don’t have any friends. I don’t have anybody to talk to, but you should really not feel that way because MHCC and the AVID Center really helps you out. It makes you basically a family member to you know, to the students, to the teachers, you just feel like you’re at the place. This is the place where you should make yourself something that you really are. And for me, it’s been hard . . . because your schooling is going to lead you to your life. (p. 16)

Nyasia also revealed that she learned to put aside her shyness and work collaboratively with peers in her class. She also revealed that she now helps others in the AVID program. “So, it’s really a good vibe to where they help me and now I can help them help other people. You know? And some of the people that I did go to AVID and we’re still really good friends. Some of the people work on SOAR were actually in my AVID class” (p. 2). “It’s really awesome; its created a family in a way” (p. 2).

I feel like everything that I’ve grown or got into . . . so far it has been here, and it really started with AVID, because AVID is where I started. That’s where all . . . everything really branched out for me, and not only . . . so I did have a wall up when it comes to like putting . . . like people coming into my life. So, my, my first . . . I would say my first week or so in first starting, I was very quiet. I sat in the back and, and Sarah would say, “You can move up closer,” and I’m like, “No, I’m okay.” (pp. 9-10)

“And um, Matt told me about a student panel last term; he wanted me to remember and be there.” “He was like, ‘I want you part of the student panel.’ And I was like ‘All right. I got you.’ And so, it actually worked well, ‘cause after that panel, I had three students who

came to SOAR and asked for my name, actually just me to give them a tour of campus” (p. 11). “And I feel like, that made a difference because they are now all three students here.” “And I always tell them, I’m like, ‘From where I was at in my university and here I liked being here (MHCC) more because the school cares about their students and they want their students to succeed. And then it’s not just a school, but it’s the people here as well” (p. 11). “Yeah, and, like, here I just . . . it’s totally different, like, I like . . . I feel like, this is a home, you know? Like, you want to call your school a home” (p. 12).

Nyasias went on to describe her role as a helper to other students.

So, it came to a point where a young kid who, um, really struggled with the . . . He wasn’t from here I think he was from Vietnam. So, he struggled with dealing with the computers. So, the term that I had class and he was free, we would go into this site of the computer lab and I would sit there and tutor him and help him with the work. So, that, ‘cause she felt bad, like he wasn’t really caught up. So, I got him as far as caught up ahead of the class. So, that he wouldn’t be behind on an assignment again. (p. 18)

Nyasias also said, “Yeah, Sarah took me under her wing. Because I feel, like, ‘cause she was my first professor, but even being in her class before I really knew her . . . I felt comfortable in her class. She, she’s like out-of-the box thinking in a way. And I find myself thinking out of the box” (pp. 28-29).

I had a friend who still lives in New York, who I’m her kids’ godparents, as well. And she wanted to go back to school and I still have connections in New York. So, I called my old high school counselor, who went to College, and I was like, “I have a student who lives there, but wants to go back to school.” Um, she is like, “But she’ll need to get her GED first.” So, she, my counselor set her up . . . so now she’s . . . she’s working now, she’s able . . . Cause before I was financially supporting my god-kids. (p. 29)

“Helping other students surfaced with other participants as well.”

Jess talked about her relationship with her peers in the LC. She said, “Peers in the LC became good friends. I made new friends and new connections to cooperate because of the LC” (p. 9).

Kesha described cooperation a little differently but with the same outcome.

About LC’s: Yeah, I think that I had different, like I don’t know if it’s the, you know, depending the class or what, but it’s like the . . . they don’t . . . the community, they don’t actually treat you like just a student. Like Ashley tried to teach you or show you stuff as an individual. Like a family, they’ll help you feel comfortable with what you’re doing, not just hey, this what you’re doing and here you can go ahead and do it. They’re actually there with you step-by-step and trying to help you. (p. 9)

Um, I just, I don’t know, it just feels like they were having more patience with the students I guess. Or maybe ‘cause I was so nervous and needed kind of help feeling like hey, I don’t know if I was just keeping their attention more, trying to you know, bothering them every time I needed them, and they were always there or something. But it’s not the same. Like, I tried to do the same with different teachers. (p. 9)

And it’s like asking, going to ask for a question and instead of helping to draw it out, well like that’s what I’m asking you to figure it out so. I don’t know, that’s why I’m asking you like, give me a hint, something, but uh, theirs, its way different from that many teachers and now there are ones that are outside of it. Like they just go do their thing, teach you and that’s it. Make sure you get what you get, so you can pass, that’s that. (p. 9)

“they’re the teacher; you’re the student; you’re on your own (in other classes)” (p. 9). She went on to say, “Yeah (connecting with people in the LC and the AVID Center) really helped me feel like I had someone I could trust. Yeah, they’re actually the ones that I can go and ask help without feeling embarrassed of not knowing what I’m doing” (p. 20).

And that’s the feeling I get when I go to ask someone else. With them, I can be clear, and I can say, I cannot understand this thing. Even though it’s a simple thing. And they’re going to tell me, “You got it.” You know, but they won’t look at you like why are you come here for help if you know what you’re doing. They are actually trying to explain to you, like . . .

When asked what she would tell other students like her coming in to college for the first time, she said,

Certainly, to be part of the Community, to be part of you know, be . . . but, be there. You know, tell them that there's help, they might think there's not in there at all. It's like I said, it was much better even though, you know, they look at us all weird because we got our break, and then come back to the same classroom. But its, it's much better, it makes you feel like you're actually important to someone. And that, uh, someone cares about you. (p. 22)

I still have classes now with some of the students who were in my LC. "It would have been so much nicer, um, to have someone like them, like the first term and be there for the students" (p. 23).

Huda from Kuwait had a very similar view and perspective on the supports and cooperation she felt with the AVID Center staff and with students in her class. She stated, "It was hard but I go, like went well cause I told you every time I had to write an essay I'd go them first. They explained to me everything how, like you should do it. And then when I write I go back to them too to like correct my grammar, spelling and cause I worked so that" (p. 12). "Got A's and B's." She's taking WR121 now and got 10 out of 10 on first essay (laughs) (p. 12) "'cause I worked with Patricia and Larry so they're, they were so helpful. Other classes at the college could be more helpful if they were in a LC with AVID. 'Cause they're so helpful. I asked them if there's like WR121 there too? And they said, 'no, you have to like be on your own.'" When asked what she would like to say to MHCC, she said, "We really need things like AVID Center. I mean more like this program. Cause the students being success and like they're, they're doing good" (p. 18).

Juan reflected many of the same things in his interview, saying,

I would say, if, um, the AVID community would be teaching every class I would prefer that. Like, if it was possible, I would love for AVID community to be

teaching, um, or having all the classes together. Because it felt like, with the AVID community they really made sure that you want to feel comfortable with everyone around your surroundings and make sure that the teachers will actually have a close connection with you rather than other instructors. Um, uh, I have had the privilege to have teachers that do care without the AVID community, I did have teachers that do care about their students. And some didn't, but if it were to be possible that AVID would like, have the whole school be part of it, I would so take it because . . . um, without their help and support, like, um, I wouldn't, like, I feel like without them it would, college would have been a little bit more difficult. But thanks to them, they really opened up my eyes and got me ready for what, what after AVID was gonna be. Like, they, uh, after taking the whole AVID I've gotten all straight A's from their program. Um, and it's really helped me, um, and got my GPA really high and it really opened up, uh, being on the dean's list and everything. And it really like made, just made me really like, excited about college and like, really opened up my eyes, and thinking like, like I can make it far because AVID helped me with all this. (pp. 14-15)

And Jessica, who co-interviewed with Juan, said about the AVID program,

because I personally think that you'd have a lot more success in the community—in the rate of the college. You wouldn't have as much dropouts, you wouldn't have a lot of people being, um, on academic probation, having to pay their school back when they're underneath a grant because they, they go through like first warning . . . and I feel like, with more LCs and having that ex—I think more faculty should be involved in not really gonna listen to each other in my personal opinion. But if you have these two or three students in a meeting with faculty . . . it opens their eyes up because they teach, they don't have to. (p. 22)

Jessica made a comment that seems to capture the cooperative spirit among students in the LC.

And when I got to AVID, it opened up, it pretty much like, invaded my space bubble and I just opened up to talk to a lot of people, and became friends. Cause especially with that whole, like, you have three classes with the same instructor, well, not the same instructor, the same students. It really felt, made me feel closer like, doing study groups with people in that class 'cause you would know them throughout the whole, uh, term. And with AVID, it really helped me with my grades, because the teachers really care about you . . . (p. 4)

Huda stated, "She has friends from all the classes she took. The WR90—they're so cool. They know the, when I need help. They help me. They know that I like sometimes hard to . . . understand things so they, they explain for me" (p. 3).

Jess also mentioned, “Teachers really made a difference, too, in how they approached teaching (p. 16). Teachers show they care—and help students. It makes a huge difference” (p. 16).

The statements made by students around a sense of cooperation for Research Question 6 are compelling and reveal an increased sense of cooperation with peers, with AVID faculty and staff. Some described the connection they felt to their peers in the LCs (AVID supported). Taking the same class(es) with the same group of students built a sense of community for students. AVID and LCs increase the sense of cooperation that students felt, confirming Research Question 6 about increased cooperation.

**Research question 7.** Do first year, under-prepared, under-resourced first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of cohesion to the college than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

In several of the participants’ stories about their entrance into MHCC and the support of AVID HE and LCs, a common theme emerged—that of involvement in activities and leadership roles across the campus. Many of their stories centered on the relationship-building factor that started them on their postsecondary journey in the AVID Center.

Jessica stated that her greatest support within the college was the AVID Center staff.

Definitely Matt and Sarah (AVID Center). Um, it was Audrey F when she was here. Uh, but definitely Matt because now that I’ve been in student government, I see his face a lot more often because like, I, I have to sit in like, council meetings

for Access and Diversity. And I have to sit in those, um, I was also part of the commencement speech? Uh, the convocation. (p. 13)

And Matt liked what I said at convocation and he, uh, he told me, he was like, I want you to speak for the students, and I was like, ok. I have no problem doing that (laughs). And like, I've known him ever since I was that little 18-year-old that was wandering in MHCC. Had no friends, had no body here. Um, Matt has definitely been a big supporter. And then Sarah, she's in general just like an awesome person. When I was in the LCs, I was a lot closer to her, but now unfortunately, like student government, like I saw her the other day and I was like, "whoa haven't seen you in a while, Sarah." And we just talked and caught up and then she emailed me about this one and I was like, oh I'll do it. Like, I don't I'm always willing to talk (laughs). Um definitely those two within the faculty. (p. 13)

Juan mentioned a staff member in the Student Development Office (outside of the AVID Center), saying,

Um, just that I'm not gonna piggy back off. Totally different person. Um, I haven't mentioned her, but the person that's really, uh, had an impact on me here at Mt. Hood for like, the last two years I've been here, is uh, Jessica R. Cuz I worked with, and saw her, given the tours. Um, she has really been a go—really well inspiration on me because she would always uh, Um, just because the teacher, she wasn't willing, to go that extra milestone. Um, because she was, I called her the off the wall teacher because she would, she was just something else. Um, and I just mean, obviously I have to take the class, but I didn't care for the teacher. But my WR115 and my WR90 teachers, like, I actually, like, I knew the people in my class, they, I got really close with them. I'm actually, my roommate is a former, I met her through WR90 and we had classes the whole year last year. And now she's my roommate. And then I'm also really close with a girl, she left to go to Western, and I still keep in contact with her. So, I think that, just in general, the teach—the teaching style in a LC in a—the AVID, is much more better than a regular. (p. 14)

Huda stated,

Other classes at the college could be more helpful if they were in a LC with AVID. Cause they're so helpful. I asked them if there's like WR121 there too? And they said, "no, you have to be like on your own." We really need things like the AVID Center at Mt. Hood. I mean more like this program. Cause the students being success and like they're, they're doing good. (p. 18)

Kesha also mentioned the care aspect of AVID supports,

Yeah (connecting with people in the LC and the AVID Center) really helped me feel like I had someone I could trust. Yeah, they're actually the ones that I can go and ask help without feeling embarrassed of not would like, check on me how I'm doing. Um, I would call her like, my second mom 'cause she was literally like a mom figure to me 'cause she was always there to support me no matter what. And um, she was basically my big, big supporter. That's all I have to say, 'cause I don't think there's words that can describe how amazing she is. (p. 14)

Jessica went on to say,

first off, I think every community college and university should have an AVID and LCs, um, just because college is not, not easy. And I also feel like it's not meant to be easy. Its higher education. But going from WR90, WR115, um, and then going to WR121, I'd rather, in a heartbeat, I'd rather prefer my WR90 and my WR115 than my WR121. Knowing what I'm doing. And that's the feeling I get when I go to ask someone else. With them, I can be clear, and I can say, I cannot understand this thing. Even though it's a simple thing. And they're going to tell me "You got it." You know, but they won't look at you like why are you coming here for help if you know what you're doing. They are actually trying to explain to you like . . . (p. 11)

Kesha also stated, when asked if she could give advice to a student very much like herself,

certainly, to be part of the Community, to be part of you know, be . . . but be there. You know, tell them that there's help, they might think there's not in there at all . . . but it's much better, it makes you feel like you're actually important to someone. And that, uh, someone cares about you. (p. 22)

Nyasias took the cohesion a little further, stating,

so like, all my issues they helped me, like, you know, it was maybe simultaneously, but it all jelled together and now, I'm all set. Like, I have a job, I work for SOAR, I still do full time here and still work for Mike. So, it's like, I'm still here and I'm still growing? You know? So, it's pretty awesome that I had those people in my corner. (p. 4)

Nyasias also reflected on the impact of AVID on her in many other ways.

I feel like everything that I've grown or got into . . . so far it has been here, and it really started with AVID, because AVID is where I started. That's where all . . . everything really branched out for me . . . so I did have a wall up when it comes to like putting . . . people coming into my life. Literally, my first term they were, like, the people I went to. And um, Matt as well. So, they were the group that



went to and, um, it really helped. And not only that, Lauren also played a role when it comes to like, um, my work. She is . . . she works with you, so, um, like, if you have an issue, you can go to her. She's so understanding, and it got to the point where we developed like a bond as a coworker and then a boss . . . to where she took me out of AVID to help her and Nancy do the FYE program . . . as an actual staff. (p. 8)

If I hadn't placed into AVID, I probably would have freaked out, like, I would have probably felt like really down. And probably like, in half way into the term, I was, like, a different person, you know? I was talking to people. I actually made friends in my class . . . so it was like Sarah, uh, actually, Sean, um there was one thing we were writing, and I said I couldn't do something, and he says, "Never say you can't do something because that just means you need practice at it. You just say, 'I can't do it yet.'" (p. 10)

She went on to say,

If I put my mind to it, I have someone in my corner. If I have an issue, I'll give them a call. You know, a lot of people . . . these kids in foster care, they, they go through so much. For one, being in foster care is enough...because you are separated from your family. You don't understand it, because you don't even understand your own feelings at that point . . . and so you're so confused and lost. (p. 19)

Like, one of the students who I gave a tour to the reason why she came for me, I didn't say it in the panel, she just read it, she knew I was in the system and she was too. She just aged out of the system about three months ago. And she felt comfortable coming to me . . . and talking to me. And that's why she asked for me to give her a tour. Yeah, I actually see her every day. (p. 22)

I see her all the time. I tell her . . . I gave her my email and my number, "So, if you ever need anything, you come down." She knows where my office is, she knows I'm upstairs, as well. So, you know . . . so when she needed . . . she needed a bus fare at one point . . . and . . . But she didn't have any money, so I took her to the career and planning. I was like, "They will give you bus passes." And if you need more, you see a counselor and "they'll give you more too." (p. 23)

I asked Nyasia and other participants, "So do you think you would be where you are right now without AVID?" Nyasia responded,

No. Because, um, if I had to do it on my own without the system, you know, without people there, I probably would have quit and gave up. Because, like, my dad, he dropped out of high school and my stepmom went to cosmetology school,

but she never took, like a degree. So, she doesn't know the advice to give. So, it's like, if I go to them. (p. 23)

I took the question a step further, asking,

You have made connections. You, you have support at home. You have support here at college, and please correct me, if I'm wrong, what I'm hearing is that if you hadn't had the support systems here at the college, that, that also matched the support from your dad and your family, you still could be lost. (p. 28)

Nyasia responded quickly,

I . . . yeah I would. And it um like I always tell people, "I'm like, Sarah took me under her wing" because I feel like, cause she was my first professor, but even being in her class before I really knew her . . . I felt comfortable in her class. "She's like out-of-the-box thinking in a way. And I find myself thinking out of the box" (pp. 28-29)

"I want them to know that here, their cousin, their aunt, their uncle . . . made that difference and they can continue it. Change the cycle, you know?" (p. 38).

Christian described the whole of the college of MHCC through his expanded experience in AVID, by saying, "MHCC is really a respectful place, even in—even in the AVID Center. Yeah, that, I took Mount—uh, the AVID classes and they were all respective, you know, they're respectful people and they treat you like family" (p. 10).

He went on to say,

Yeah, what kind of college you know isn't valued family? And that's what a college should be, you know, valued family, talk to each other. I mean, I was a shy person, now I'm just out there interviewing, you know, and just talking to people, so I—this is a big step, you know? Just getting out there, being, talking, just getting idea. (p. 10)

"So, by the end of the term on that year, I was, almost a 4.0 GPA" (p. 12).

The overall message infused in these participant statements is that the AVID Center and the LCs helped them bond to the college, build significant relationships and

trust and become more involved in activities, student government and support groups which supports the increased sense of cohesion identified in Research Question 7.

**Research question 8.** Do first-year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of self-efficacy and confidence than first-generation community college students who do not participate in AVID HE?

This is a difficult question to answer with specific data. There is clear evidence from the statistical analyses that FGS participating in the AVID HE and LCs progressed term-to-term more steadily than FGS who did not participate. The data also reveal that FGS participating in AVID HE and LCs had higher, over-all GPA's than non-AVID supported students. The qualitative data for this study reveal an overall trend that AVID-supported student gained more self-confidence both academically and personally/socially from their support from the AVID Center.

Christian reflected,

Oh yes, um, and while I was in the AVID Center, this really opened my mind because I met Sarah and Sean, through my first year of uh college. I was really nervous, but these two people really opened my mind on my writing and reading and it significantly improved by having both of them—through my years of college so far. (p. 3)

Christian also mentioned some specific support from AVID HE that benefitted his progress. He said,

Um, what we did is um, what values do we have and that was you know, what values you have that are strong, and which values you have that are weak, and you can continue on. My values were, you know, I like to work hard, I like to study, I like to you know, just do the normal basic routines. And what my weaknesses were, you know, having to manage time to sleep, having you know, time to do sort of my homework because I work here and there. I'm just a busy person. I like to be an open person having time. So, I'm just like you know, time

for me is really not a goal. I've been managing my time like if I have my homework, can I give myself two hours to homework? Just, you know? AVID was really helpful. (p. 13)

He went on to say,

I work, I study, I manage my time very wisely, and I still have time to have fun here and there. You, I'm practically a busy person. Uh, I go home, I study, I go to work. I have family to run because right now basically my family is all over the place, and it's going to fall again, but I'm always the person that they always come to me. You know, I'm like a fatherhood to my brother, my sister, and my dad, you know, and my grandparents. My grandparents told me, you know, you're the one who's in charge because you're the one who acts like a real father. You know, all my teachers who have taught me through the years, they looked to me as you know, you're going to be a great father and a great person to seek advice, because you just, all the negativity, you turn it into positive. (p. 8)

Nyasias said,

I feel like everything that I've grown or got into . . . so far it has been here, and it really started with AVID, because AVID is where I started. That's where all . . . everything really branched out for me, and not only . . . so I did have a wall up when it comes to like putting . . . like people coming into my life. So, my, my first . . . I would say, Sarah? Where's Audrey? I want to talk to somebody. (p. 8)

"Literally, my first term, they were, like the people I went to" (p. 8). "They helped me get through darkness right there" (p. 4). She went on to say,

At my low point, I want to be that for someone else. And being that way for kids, it's like, if I can stop the trauma now . . . they can grow up actually, I can do this, you know? If I put my mind to it, I have someone in my corner. If I have an issue, I'll give them a call. You know a lot of people . . . these kids in foster care, they, they go through so much. For one, being in foster care is enough because you are separated from your family. You don't understand it, because you don't even understand your own feelings at that point . . . and so you're confused and lost . . . but there's people in there trying to work in. Be there for me and help me get better. And I think that's what's missing. Cause once that falls they start really reaching into their own feelings . . . not understanding it, and then it kind of wraps around them and makes them build a wall. So then, now they're stuck in that feeling, but don't know how to get out of it. And I think that if I can prevent that wall from being built . . . let them see that there's a light that's gonna be beaming ready for you. You know? And then I want that to happen. I want them to be able to know, like, I'm in their corner. I'm here to listen, but I'm also there to help you with resources if you need something, you know? I tell people my story and . . . or

there's people who may be currently going through it . . . and you're able to, you know, help them. And you're helping yourself in a way by talking about it. (pp. 20-21)

Nyasia also reflected into the future a bit, by saying,

And future AVID students will see that you can also get from the bottom and make something better out of it. And share your story. You know? Cause when you share your story, I feel like, it helps you because you keep painting that picture that you're doing something for the better. And then not only that, you're helping paint the picture that they can do something better. So, it's like, you're helping someone, but you're also helping yourself and you don't even know it. (p. 40)

Nyasia mentioned that after she “finished the LC classes, she felt more comfortable about myself. You know, about what I was doing and everything. I felt like everything was ok. I feel, feel like I could take on the world in one hand, and do it, you know?” (p. 20). When asked why she wanted to go to college, Huda responded, “I just wanna show the girls in my country that we can (laughs)” (p. 18).

The comments students made in the interview revealed that many students gained a much stronger sense of self-efficacy (the power to produce an effect) on others in which they came into contact. They felt more self-confident and felt that they could do whatever they set out to do because they had had the help and support of the AVID Center staff. They stated that future AVID students will see that you can also get from the bottom and make something better out of it. And share your story. This supports Research Question 8 about an increase in self-confidence and self-efficacy.

### **Summary Mixed Methods Data Analysis From This Study**

The convergence of data in this study yields interesting results. While the first set of data presented above is not tied to a specific research question (i.e., Demographics and financial status of AVID-supported and non-AVID supported students represented), it

does provide an overview of students at MHCC. The data and test results reveal that overall, demographics plays a small role in the impact of AVID on students. This may be because the College is not as demographically diverse as other institutions, but many students struggle with financial and social barriers regardless of race. As evidenced in the data provided in Appendix G of this study, MHCC has seen an increase in students who drop out or stop out before completing a degree or certificate—over 50% of those who enroll (Appendix G). The college has also experienced a rising number of students placing into the rigid sequence of DevEd (remedial) courses before even starting on a degree or certificate path. These data suggest that many students who enter MHCC are underprepared and/or under resourced when first beginning the college journey. Many of these same students are facing significant barriers, including financial constraints, family and social issues. The first data set suggests that demographics are not a significant factor in the progression of students toward degree. As the analysis of the qualitative data reveals, the most significant factors impacting FGS are the financial and social barriers. Yet, with the support of the AVID staff, the AVID Center and the sense of community established within the AVID-supported LCs, AVID students progressed term-to-term, persisted year-to-year, took more credits and had higher GPAs than non-AVID supported students. Additionally, through the stories that students relayed in their interviews (despite a small sampling) AVID supported students gained greater social capital (connection, cooperation and cohesion) to their peers, the AVID staff and the college, in general.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study**

Community colleges are often considered the bridge to the middle class. It is the possibility of open access that provides opportunity for all students to enter postsecondary. Yet, nearly one-half of students who enter community college through the door of open access fail to persist to the next term let alone complete their career or educational goals. Many of these students are first in their family to attend college. Many live in poverty. Many are minority or underrepresented students. Many are older, returning to school after years of absence and carrying the challenges of life. And many must start their journey into postsecondary education through a lengthy sequence of remedial education classes. One common trait among most of these students: they are under-prepared (academically or behaviorally) for the rigors of college and few find the support they need to succeed (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008).

Community colleges provide an affordable education to almost half of undergraduate students in the United States and often provide the impetus and access to create a lifetime of economic stability and educational attainment (AACC, 2014). Yet, for many in the United States, college completion remains an elusive goal and completion is particularly elusive for adults aged 25-34 year olds, many of whom enter through the doorway of DevEd (AACC, 2014). Poverty is becoming increasingly prevalent in the United States—more than at any other time in U.S. history. The middle class is shrinking

and income inequality increasing. By 2018, nearly two thirds of all jobs in the United States will require some level of postsecondary education and training (AACC, 2014; Lumina Foundation, 2013). Research reveals that 28% of students at 2-year institutions had family income at \$28,000 or well below the poverty level (Lumina Foundation, 2013). Yet, for many of these individuals, family, life challenges, under-preparedness and lack of college readiness provide nearly insurmountable barriers to goal, certificate or degree completion. However, for those individuals who complete college—or attain even some level of postsecondary training—there is potential for greater lifetime income earning potential than those who do not, leveling the income and social strata inequality (Lumina Foundation, 2013).

Many efforts have been made to discover workable solutions; national and state policies have been written and systems restructured but with limited impact on providing sufficient supports for students who enter community colleges through the door of open access. The Blueprint for Reform (2010) provided a national call to ensure a world-wide education for all in America in 2010, with priorities for establishing college-readiness. The state of Oregon followed this initiative in 2011 with a clear call for reform in the 40/40/20 Plan that calls for increased completions for all Oregonians by the year 2025. These policies and subsequent evolving theories from leading educators recommend a changed learning environment that ensures access for students and adequate support to bridge the gaps for those who enter college under-prepared (Tinto, 2012). Yet, despite these efforts to build institutional bridges of support for diverse, under-represented, under-resourced and under-prepared students, many continue to face often



insurmountable barriers (Kuh et al., 2005b; Perna & Jones; 2013). The need for effective, evidence-based institutional supports for under-prepared, FGS in community colleges has never been greater. The purpose of this study is to examine one institutional, holistic strategy called AVID HE on improving retention and persistence for students placing into remedial education and increasing social capital associated with college persistence and success.

This study occurred at MHCC, a 2-year community college located in Gresham, Oregon and serving students in the East County of Portland, Oregon. The MHCC Service Area has changed significantly in the last decade. As demonstrated in the Table 3.1, the Hispanic population in the service area is growing both in absolute numbers and in percentage of population. The student population at MHCC reflects the changing demographics.

Educationally, MHCC district residents have higher high school graduation rates but lower rates of bachelor's degrees than Oregon and the rest of the United States. MHCC District provides instruction in college credit courses (to satisfy degree and transfer requirements), DevEd courses and personal enrichment courses. According to data acquired from the MHCC (2014) AMP, 14.6% of residents of the East Multnomah County MHCC district area are residents who are 25 years and older and have less than a high school diploma or equivalent. This includes over 30,000 residents within the college district area. In Gresham/East Multnomah County, 30.8% of children live in poverty, which is well above the national average of 22.5. As detailed earlier in this study, nearly 75% of recent high school graduates who enrolled in Oregon community colleges take at

least one pre-college level (DevEd) class. Many who require some remediation (75%) drop out before completing the required sequence to enroll in college-level courses (Hodara, 2015). Mullin (2010) suggested that this encapsulates the rapidly changing mission of the community college to one that “emphasizes less the curriculum that is offered (academic transfer, workforce development, DevEd, etc.), and more the objectives students seek to complete (course enrollment, course completion and certificate and degree completion” (p. 4).

In an effort to meet the needs of students who enroll through open access at MHCC and place into DevEd courses (remedial), MHCC introduced a holistic student support strategy in 2010-2011 called AVID which has long been a successful secondary strategy to increase college readiness at the secondary level. AVID HE had recently been nationally introduced at the postsecondary level. MHCC was the first college in Oregon to implement AVID HE, with the intent to increase persistence and progression toward degree for FGS placing into remedial courses. MHCC first implemented AVID HE as a faculty and student support strategy, creating an AVID Center on campus and integrating AVID strategies into evolving FYE courses. This strategy evolved further in 2011, with the creation of AVID-supported FYE in LCs around DevEd reading and writing courses.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of AVID HE on term-to-term persistence, credit accrual and progression toward degree/certificate completion as well as the acquisition of increased social capital (represented in increased sense of connection to institutional agents, increased cooperation with peers, and increased sense of cohesion with the college). As outlined in Chapter 2 of this study, research has documented both

the often-insurmountable barriers facing FGS in successfully moving from remedial courses to credited courses in postsecondary (Bailey et al., 2010; Bowen et al., 2009; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Research has also revealed the startling differential between high or middle-income student completion rates and those of low-income students (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Several other studies have identified strategies that prove effective in increasing persistence and credit accrual for low-income and minority students. These studies identify a combination of social supports, including a supportive, personalized learning environment as well as the development of specific non-cognitive student behavior strategies as strong predictors of college success (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Conley, 2005, 2007; Martinez & Klopott, 2005).

In an effort to better meet the needs of FGS placing into remedial courses at MHCC, the college developed personalized LCs with AVID-supported (non-cognitive behavior strategies) embedded into the personalized LCs. This study was established to track and analyze the persistence, credit accrual and acquisition of social capital in FGS placing into DevEd courses (RD90/WR90/WR91) coupled with an AVID-infused FYE course.

### **Summary of Findings**

Data were collected and analyzed from MHCC for the 2016 LC (WR90/RD90/WR91 + HD100C) student cohort. The assumptions that guided this study were that the proven strategies of AVID at the secondary level in increasing college readiness and determination for students in the academic middle will also improve and increase persistence, retention and success in those students placing into pre-college

(DevEd) at the postsecondary level. The assumptions also included the acquisition of the necessary social capital through AVID HE in DevEd students to persist into college-level classes successfully. AVID HE strategies were implemented with fidelity (accuracy to best-practices) for pre-college level students. There are eight research questions that guided this study and summary findings are outlined below for each question.

### **Research Question 1**

Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students (FGS) placing into pre-college (DevEd) classes in community college differ in persistence toward degree and participation in credit-bearing courses than first year, non-low-income, non-first-generation students entering community college? What is the direction of difference?

The data for this question were collected and analyzed for students in the 2016 AVID-supported LCs and non-AVID supported students in stand-alone courses comparing progression from remedial courses (WR90/RD90/WR91) to credited courses (WR115). The data revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in AVID-supported student progression from remedial courses into credited writing courses (WR115), meaning that AVID-supported students' progress from remedial WR/RD courses into WR115 at a consistently higher rate than non-AVID supported students. While math progression (from remedial to credited courses) was not provided in AVID-supported personalized LCs, Math progression to credited courses was also analyzed. The data revealed that there was no significant statistical difference between AVID-supported students in remedial WR/RD courses into credited math courses (MTH111). These data

need further analysis, but the outcome suggests that while AVID HE strategies may have provided the necessary non-cognitive skills for FGS, the missing link may have been the personalized LC as well as AVID-trained Learning Specialists. With math outcomes at the college among the lowest, it is highly recommended that math faculty consider AVID-supported LCs.

### **Research Question 2**

Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation students (FGS) entering community college who are AVID-supported have different rates of credit accrual than non-AVID supported FGS?

Again, data were collected from MHCC Institutional Research and Analytics department for all AVID and non-AVID supported students for overall credit accrual. The data looked at credit accrual up to three terms after students took the AVID-supported LC remedial course. The data revealed a consistently higher rate of credit accrual for AVID-supported students than for non-AVID supported students. The chi-square test revealed that there is a significant statistical difference in credit accrual for AVID-supported versus non-AVID supported students.

### **Research Question 3**

Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared students (FGS) have different rates of term-to-term persistence toward degree?

The data analysis for this question revealed that AVID-supported students progressed term-to-term more rapidly and consistently than non-AVID supported

students. The chi-squared test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in credit-accrual for AVID-supported students than non-AVID supported students.

#### **Research Question 4**

Do first year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have different rates of credit accrual than non-AVID supported students?

This question roughly mirrors question 3 above and the data clearly presents a statistically significant different difference in AVID-supported students than non-AVID supported students. However, to gain a more in-depth understanding of credit accrual and progression, we examined both credit accrual and cumulative grade-point averages (GPA) for AVID-supported versus non-AVID supported students. Again, credit accrual and cumulative GPA showed a statistically significant difference for AVID-supported students compared to non-AVID supported students.

The data analyses in the above three questions reveals and confirms that AVID-supported students consistently outperform their non-AVID supported peers, which supports the assumptions for this study that AVID HE provides the supports for FGS placing into remedial courses. However, the personal narratives of the students interviewed in the qualitative portion of this study provide additional information that clarifies and broadens the concept of AVID support for students.

**Research Question 5**

Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “connection” to institutional agents at the college than their non-AVID supported peers?

For this question and the two questions following, related to the acquisition of social capital necessary for successful college progression, semi-structured student interviews were conducted with seven AVID-supported students. Consistently and repeatedly, AVID supports (including the AVID Center, AVID Center staff and Summer Bridge) reveal deep relationship building strategies that build a sense of trust and “family.” In fact, all seven students made various statements about the trust established with AVID Center staff that they could seek support and help (even for non-academic reasons) from staff without guilt or shame. Students also frequently identified the sense of family that the LC and AVID Center staff created for students. The connection to institutional staff was clearly represented in student narratives.

**Research Question 6**

Do first year, under-resourced, underprepared first-generation college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of “cooperation” with peers than non-AVID supported peers?

Through the Summer Bridge observations to staff interviews and student narratives, the sense of team-building and cooperation with peers was consistently identified. Team-building activities provided the framework for Summer Bridge orientation for students. Student narratives also revealed a sense of family with their LC

peers, and an enhanced sense of group study and openness/trust. Several of the students revealed their fears and hesitation to share ideas aloud in their classes until the familiarity and trust was established in their LCs. Students revealed that being a part of the AVID-supported LC made college easier. One student stated, “. . . it’s like the . . . they don’t . . . the community, they don’t actually treat you like a students. . . . Like a family, they’ll help you feel comfortable with what you’re doing.” “They are actually there with you step-by-by and trying to help you.”

### **Research Question 7**

Do first-year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of cohesion to the community college than their non-AVID supported peers?

Student narratives again consistently revealed that AVID support helped students feel—and be—more connected to the college. Some of the students described their participation in student panels, student support programs (SOAR), and work-study opportunities. Students gained access to different support programs and work/study opportunities through their AVID connections. A couple of students narrated that because of their AVID support and connection, they had become a part of Student government at the college—which provides a tremendous opportunity for students.

### **Research Question 8**

Do first-year, under-resourced, under-prepared first-generation community college students who participate in AVID HE have a greater sense of self-efficacy and confidence than their non-AVID supported peers?



This is a difficult question to answer because of the ambiguous nature of self-efficacy and self-confidence. However, when linked to a “growth mindset” that imbues a sense of confidence that they can do whatever they set their mind to do, this question would have to be answered yes. Students described feeling more clarification on values of hard work, time management, study strategies—but also that the connection and trust established through the AVID Center supports and staff helped one student “get through the darkness.” One student also stated that “future AVID students will see that you can also get from the bottom and make something better out of it.”

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The convergence of data in this mixed methods study is compelling, revealing that FGS AVID-supported students’ progress, persist, accrue credits and social capital at a significantly higher rate than their non-AVID supported peers. For colleges and universities with a higher drop out/stop out rate and higher rate of low-income, underprepared students, AVID support on the college campus would increase student progression, persistence, credit accrual and social capital. Postsecondary institutions are encouraged to adapt AVID HE programs that teach cognitive and non-cognitive strategies to students.

However, this study reveals a broader picture than simply implementing AVID supports for students. Based on prior research as outlined in Chapter 2 of this study, a cultural shift needs to occur simultaneously on postsecondary institutions to create a learning college— which “requires teachers to move beyond the concept of simply transferring knowledge (didactic, lecture-based, passive learning) and move to a

constructive approach of engaging students in contextual learning” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 13). Other studies reference a transformative change on college campuses to become a learning college, defined by O'Banion (1997) as one that “places learning first and provides experiences for learners anyway, anyplace, anytime” (p. 22). Kuh (1996) took this perspective even further by suggesting that “two central features impact student learning at the postsecondary level: students’ behaviors and institutional conditions” (p. 138). Kuh further suggested that “high levels of student engagement including purposeful student-faculty contact, active and collaborative learning and institutional environments perceived by students as inclusive and affirming” (p. 142) contribute to student success (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Kuh suggested further that one strategy that provides strong evidence of supporting student retention, progression and persistence is the participation in a LC. These findings were well-documented and supported in other studies (Knight, 2003; Pike, 1999; Pike, Schroeder, & Berry, 1997; Price, 2005; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). This LC environment is important as supported by the literature, particularly for first-generation, under-prepared, under-resourced, minority students. In fact, when learning occurred within LCs, non-credit students (those placing into DevEd) perceived themselves as part of the college, as capable and with sufficient support by faculty, capable of persisting term-to-term and progressing year-to-year (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). This research is supported by the findings and personal narratives of students in this study. Learning became a shared and trusted event between students and institutional faculty and staff participating in AVID-

supported LCs. In fact, the importance of LCs, increased social capital is evidenced in the personal stories of participants in the student interviews related earlier in this study.

While implementing AVID HE on college campuses to support FGS, under-prepared, under-resourced students provides students with support and non-cognitive strategies for success (time management, study skills, cooperation with peers and social capital), it is also suggested based on the data contained in this study that AVID support provided within a LC provides greater support, more trust, more cooperation and connection to the institution. Student learning is enhanced in a learning environment that values diverse learners through the use of “engaging pedagogies as active and collaborative learning, classroom-based problem-solving, peer-teaching, service-learning, and various forms of electronic technologies” (Kuh, 1996, p. 137).

With the growing economic shift in our culture, and the increased need for some level of postsecondary training, students who are first in their families to attend a college or university need not just equity of access, but increased levels of support including teaching specific cognitive and non-cognitive study strategies (through AVID HE) but also a greater sense of connection, cohesion and cooperation by FGS to the institution, to the institutional agents (faculty and staff) and to their peers. Learning within a community of learners with high-engagement pedagogical practices build a stronger sense of engagement, a growing sense of self-efficacy, and college/career readiness skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As cited earlier in this study, O’Banion (1997) defined a “learning college” as one that “places learning first and provides experiences for learners anyway, anyplace, anytime” (p. 22). Coupled with the specific instruction of AVID HE study

habits and non-cognitive practices, LCs enhance a student's ability to successfully navigate the postsecondary world.

Changing the culture of an institute of higher education is not an easy process. It involves evolving teaching philosophies from delivering content to facilitating learning in a safe learning environment. As the demographics of colleges change and the demand for some level of postsecondary education increases in our economy, it is essential that we begin to adjust theories and strategies from a teaching college to a learning college. AVID-supported LCs as outlined in this study provide a campus-wide strategy to change the persistence, credit accrual and social capital of FGS. However, AVID-supported learning strategies alone are often insufficient to change a learning environment and the experience for FGS into increased term-to-term persistence and year-to-year progression toward completion goals. As this study revealed, the combination of AVID-supported learning strategies, connected to strong and engaging LCs increases a student's connection, cohesion and cooperation—which builds the social capital and sense of self-confidence to succeed in college and beyond.

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APPENDIX A

AVID HIGHER EDUCATION AT MHCC

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Christie Plinski and I am the retired Vice President of Instruction at Mt. Hood Community College and a doctoral student at Portland State University. I am beginning a study on the effectiveness of AVID (or other intentional support systems) in preparing successful, independent learners in developmental education (pre-college) courses at MHCC as they transition to credited courses and career pathways.

You are being asked to take part in this study because you have participated in the AVID Learning Communities or found support within the AVID Center at Mt. Hood Community College. As part of the study, I am interested in your opinions and attitudes about support systems (AVID or others) that you may have experienced in either high school or college that helped you develop study strategies that helped you in your educational journey. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in at least one and perhaps more taped interviews which involve answering questions about personal, past educational or current educational experiences or support systems that helped you navigate the system successfully and move from pre-college to credited courses and career pathways. It should take anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes.

As a result of this study, you may experience questions or frustrations about your prior or current educational experiences around effective support systems. However, I assure you that the opinions, experiences and beliefs that you share with me will be kept in strict confidence. Your name or identify will never be shared. You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, but the study may help to increase knowledge that may help others in the future.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to you or identify you will be kept confidential. Subject identities will be kept confidential by non-identifying coding information and by secure storage procedures.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Your decision to participate - or not - will not affect your relationship with the researcher, with Mt. Hood Community College or with Portland State University. If you decide to take part in this study, you may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study or your rights as a research subject, please contact Christie Plinski at Mt. Hood Community College at 503.491.7197 or at 503.730.0404.

Sincerely,

Christie Plinski  
Retired Vice President of Instruction at Mt. Hood Community College  
Doctoral student at Portland State University

APPENDIX B  
BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

## Appendix J

## The Setting: Data and Demographics (AMP)

## STUDENT INTAKE QUESTIONNAIRE

## Tell us a little about yourself...

Do you have a job?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, how many hours per week will you work while in school?		
Do you have kids or family obligations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has anyone else in your family attended college? Who?		
Will you have a safe and secure place to live while in school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
How do you plan to get to school every day? Bus? Bike? Walk? Drive? Carpool?		
What was your favorite subject in school?		
How many hours of homework do you expect to have per week from your classes? (circle one)	1-5 hrs. 6-10 hrs. 11-15 hrs. 16-20 hrs. 21+ hrs.	
Have you attended MHCC or another college before?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
What is your dream job?		
Why did you decide to attend MHCC?		

Read each statement and circle how much you agree with it.	Strongly Agree -4-	Agree -3-	Disagree -2-	Strongly Disagree -1-
Earning a college degree is very important to me	4	3	2	1
I often need to skip school because of other commitments	4	3	2	1
College will prepare me for a better job	4	3	2	1
Planning ahead and making decisions is something I often struggle with	4	3	2	1
I feel positive about my future	4	3	2	1
When faced with a difficult situation, I know people who I can turn to for help	4	3	2	1
My friends and family support my educational goals	4	3	2	1
Participating in student activities and campus events is an important part of my college experience	4	3	2	1
Financial aid is not my only source of income while in school	4	3	2	1
I have a strong desire to make something of my life	4	3	2	1

Is there anything else that you would like to share with us? (Instructors only – no students will see this form.) Include any personal issues or barriers that might interfere with your ability to succeed in your classes. Please use the back of this page if necessary.

AVID @ MHCC  
Intake Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID# \_\_\_\_\_

**Tell us a little about yourself...**

Do you have a job? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*If yes, how many hours per week will you work while in school?*

Do you have kids or family obligations? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has anyone else in your family attended college? Who?

Will you have a safe and secure place to live while in school? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How do you plan to get to school every day? Bus? Bike? Walk? Drive? Carpool?

What was your favorite subject in school?

How many hours of homework do you expect to have per week from your classes? (circle one) 1-5 hrs. 6-10 hrs. 11-15 hrs. 16-20 hrs. 21+ hrs.

Have you attended MHCC or another college before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is your dream job?

Why did you decide to attend MHCC?

*Read each statement and circle how much you agree with it.*

	Strongly Agree -4-	Agree -3-	Disagree -2-	Strongly Disagree -1-
Earning a college degree is very important to me	4	3	2	1
I often need to skip school because of other commitments	4	3	2	1
College will prepare me for a better job	4	3	2	1
Planning ahead and making decisions is something I often struggle with	4	3	2	1
I feel positive about my future	4	3	2	1
When faced with a difficult situation, I know people who I can turn to for help	4	3	2	1
My friends and family support my educational goals	4	3	2	1
Participating in student activities and campus events is an important part of my college experience	4	3	2	1
Financial aid is not my only source of income while in school	4	3	2	1
I have a strong desire to make something of my life	4	3	2	1

Is there anything else that you would like to share with us? (Instructors only – no students will see this form.) Include any personal issues or barriers that might interfere with your ability to succeed in your classes. Please use the back of this page if necessary.



APPENDIX C  
READING PRE-SURVEY

### AVID Pre-Survey

#### EXAMPLE

For each set of words below, please choose which better describes **your commute to school this morning**:

Easy	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Difficult
Calm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Crazy
Loud	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Quiet
Rushed	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Mellow

1. For each set of words below, please choose which better describes **your confidence** as a college student:

Ready	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Nervous
Calm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Worried
Organized	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Messy
Prepared	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Confused

2. What words best describe your **past school experiences**?

Fun	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Painful
Easy	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Hard
Comfortable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Uncomfortable
Useful	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Questionable
Exciting	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Boring

3. I generally **enjoy school** (circle which best describes you):

That's me! ----- It's OK ----- Kind of ----- Not really ----- I  
hate school!

4. Your **reading** and **writing skills** are best described as:

Solid	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Weak
Tested	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unknown
Golden	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Grey

5. I am good at math.

(Circle one)

- Agree!
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- No way!

6. I understand what it takes to be successful in college

(Circle one)

- I'm not sure
- I have a guess
- I think I do
- I know I do!



APPENDIX D  
WRITING POST-SURVEY

## AVID Post-Survey

## EXAMPLE

For each set of words below, please choose which better describes **your commute to school this morning**:

Easy	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Difficult
Calm	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Crazy

1. For each set of words below, please choose which better describes **your confidence** as a college student:

Ready	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Nervous
Calm	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Worried
Organized	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Messy
Prepared	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Confused

2. What words best describe your **school experiences so far this term**?

Fun	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Painful
Easy	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Hard
Comfortable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Uncomfortable
Useful	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Questionable
Exciting	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Boring

3. I generally **enjoy school** (circle which best describes you):

That's me! ----- It's OK ----- Kind of ----- Not really ----- I hate school!

4. Your **reading** and **writing skills** are best described as:

Solid	o o o o	Weak
Tested	o o o o	Unknown
Golden	o o o o	Grey

5. I am good at math.

(Circle one)

- Agree!
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- No way!

6. I understand what it takes to be successful in college

(Circle one)

- I'm not sure
- I have a guess
- I think I do
- I know I do!

7. People who can help me with my school work are:

Near	o o o o	Far
Dependable	o o o o	Questionable
On campus	o o o o	Off campus
Friendly	o o o o	Mean

8. What best describes your study habits? (Choose one)

- I keep a consistent study schedule

- I tend to study the night before exams
- I study a little bit every week
- I'm not sure how to study

**Short Answer – Please be as specific as you can**

1. What are your current academic/career goals?
2. Do you have any concerns about college? What, if anything, makes you nervous about school?
3. To help you do well in your classes, what kinds of support would be useful?



APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

AVID @ MHCC  
Intake Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID# \_\_\_\_\_

**I currently have... (Check all that apply)**

- ☐ A computer at home with internet access
- ☐ A computer at home with NO internet access
- ☐ I use my phone for internet
- ☐ NO internet

**My knowledge level and use of email is...**

- ☐ High – I use email daily
- ☐ Average – I use email weekly
- ☐ Less than average – I rarely use email
- ☐ Zero – I never use email

**Please select the statement that best fits you:**

- ☐ I send emails with attachments on a regular basis
- ☐ I have sent an email with an attachment in the past and should have no problem doing it again
- ☐ I have never sent an email with an attachment and do not know how

**If an instructor asked for a paper that is double-spaced and uses 12-point Times New Roman font:**

- ☐ I would know what to do and could format the paper with no problem
- ☐ It may take me longer, but I could figure it out
- ☐ I would need assistance
- ☐ I would have no idea where to begin

**I am comfortable using a word processing program (like Microsoft Word or Google Docs) to type papers and other assignments.**

- ☐ True
- ☐ False
- ☐ Not sure

**I know how to use MyMHCC (the online student gateway to Mt. Hood Community College) to... (Check all that apply)**

- ☐ Register for classes
- ☐ See my class schedule
- ☐ Check my grades
- ☐ Email my instructor
- ☐ None of the above

APPENDIX F

MHCC INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH BOARD APPLICATION

For Office Use Only: Date Reviewed: _____	IRB Case No: _____
Action: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	IRB Reviewer: _____

**Mt. Hood Community College  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)  
APPLICATION FOR THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH  
INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

The Mt. Hood Community College IRB reviews all requests to conduct research involving human subjects. It is the Investigator's responsibility to give complete information regarding procedures and the informed consent process. If the principal investigator is a student, the application must be approved and signed by the applicant's faculty sponsor and the Dean of the faculty's division.

After completing the application and obtaining required signatures, one original of the application and all supporting materials must be forwarded to the MHCC IRB, Office of Instruction and Student Services, 26000 SE Stark Street, Gresham, Oregon 97030. The IRB will notify each applicant of the IRB's decision. If you have questions, please contact the IRB at 503-491-7295.

The Principal Investigator must supply the required documentation listed below:

- ☐ A copy of all questionnaires or survey instruments
- ☐ Informed consent document(s) or minor assent document(s)
- ☐ Letters of approval from cooperating institutions (if appropriate)
- ☐ All required signatures

**Please type or print responses.**

**PROJECT TITLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Principal Investigator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

(If more than one principal investigator, provide supplementary page with contact information.)

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a class project? yes ☐ no ☐ Thesis? yes ☐ no ☐ Other ☐

2. Project Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Project End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is a proposal for external support being submitted? yes ☐ no ☐

Agency or Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, you must submit one complete copy of the proposal with this application.

a. Is this a continuation of a MHCC IRB project? yes ☐ no ☐

If yes, previous IRB case number: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** *The IRB must have sufficient information about what will happen to the subjects in order to evaluate and estimate possible risks. Assurance from the investigator, no matter how strong, will not substitute for a description of the transactions between the investigator and subject. Provide a brief, non-technical summary of the proposed research.*

#### 5. SUBJECT SELECTION:

Will subjects be less than 18 years of age? Yes ☐ No ☐

Age range of subjects From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Will subjects be students at MHCC? Yes ☐ No ☐

How many subjects will participate? \_\_\_\_\_

How will subjects be selected, enlisted or recruited? \_\_\_\_\_

6. **INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS:** *Describe the informed consent process and attach a copy of all consent and/or assent documents.*

7. **PROCEDURES:** *Provide a step-by-step description of each procedure, including the frequency, duration, and location of each procedure.*

8. **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY:** *How will subjects' privacy be maintained and confidentiality be guaranteed?*

- 9. RISKS:** Describe all known and anticipated risks to the subject including side effects, risks of placebo, risks of normal treatment delay, etc.

- 10. BENEFITS:** Describe the anticipated benefits.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

- Any additions or changes in procedures in the protocol will be submitted to the IRB for written approval prior to these changes being put into practice.
- Any problems connected with the use of human subjects once the project has begun, must be brought to the attention of the IRB.
- The principal investigator and his or her designee are responsible for retaining Informed Consent Documents for a period of three years after the completion of the project.

The principal investigator may not initiate any research involving human subjects until written notification of IRB approval or compliance with any and all contingencies made in connection with said approval has been received. Failure to provide all required information will result in return of your IRB application for correction prior to IRB review.

**SIGNATURES:** I certify to the best of my knowledge the information presented is an accurate reflection of the proposed research project and that I intend to comply with the guidelines set forth by MHCC Institutional Review Board's Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator (required) Date

B. Approval by faculty sponsor (required for all students):

*I confirm the accuracy of this application, and I accept responsibility for the conduct of this research, the supervision of human subjects, and maintenance of informed consent documentation as required by the IRB.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Sponsor Date

C. Approval by Vice President of Instruction and Student Services (required):

*I approve of the procedures that involve human subjects.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice President Date

APPENDIX G

MHCC INNOVATION PAPER APPLICATION

## Mt. Hood Community College

### FY 2012 Budget Development

#### Innovation Fund Request [number]: AVID POSTSECONDARY AT MHCC

NOVEMBER 2011

#### General Policy Issue:

Summary statement of issue to be addressed: **Increase student retention and completion at Mt. Hood Community College by funding and implementing AVID Postsecondary. Since it was first introduced at the secondary level in the mid-1980's, AVID has shown remarkable, data-driven results. Now, more than 4,500 schools nationwide (elementary, middle, high school and now post-secondary) utilize AVID strategies. AVID by the numbers:**

- 400,000+ current AVID students nationally
- 20,000+ Educators trained annually
- 4,500 current AVID schools
- 47 states
- 30+ years
- 16 countries/territories
- 25 AVID Postsecondary sites (of which MHCC is one)

Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) District is located in East Multnomah County, Gresham, Oregon and is the only postsecondary institution serving this area. With an enrollment of nearly 33,000 students, MHCC has a diverse student population that increasingly includes GED/ABS/ESL students as well as students needing remediation in Academic Literacy, math and other content areas. Many students fall in low SES quartiles and minority groups. Many MHCC students enter college with hopes of completion only to face discouragement, remediation, academic and economic challenges, all of which often cause a delay or suspension of college. Many of MHCC feeder schools (elementary, middle and high) have implemented, with great success, an academic support system known as Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) which is now making its way onto college campuses with great success. MHCC has committed to bring AVID Postsecondary to the MHCC campus through implementation of AVID strategies and support in identified cohorts: Academic Literacy, a cohort (perhaps Mental Health and Human Services, OPABS and other content areas, including math.

**The AVID Postsecondary mission is to increase learning, persistence, completion and success in and beyond college.** AVID mission is to close the achievement gap for all students. AVID initiatives include: (1) Administrative Leadership and support; (2) The AVID campus Team which involves campus-wide collaboration with a multi-year plan; (3) faculty and staff professional development; (4) AVID experience – first year through completion; (5) Assessment and research (all 25 AVID Postsecondary campuses nationwide participate in ongoing research and assessment to ensure effectiveness of high engagement strategies in student completion and success rates.

While MHCC has invested initially in AVID Postsecondary, this support provides us with only the basics which includes initial Campus Team training and ongoing professional development and support. While this initial support is essential in launching this work, it is not enough to expand the work with the kind of system-wide support that is needed to sustain the work with enough supports college-wide to make a difference in the lives of our MHCC students.

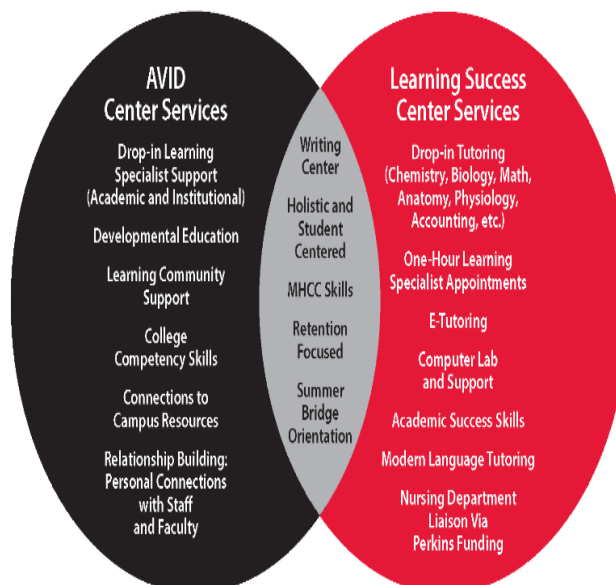


APPENDIX H  
MHCC AVID FLYER

**AVID Strategies**

*High-engagement classrooms; teaching college success*

- › Goal setting
- › Organization
- › Personal responsibility
- › Note taking and study skills
- › Community building and collaboration
- › Professionalism and communication skills
- › Connecting with human development (HD) on course curriculum


**Learning Success Center Strategies**

*Student centered support to foster active learning*

- › Assist learning while encouraging independence
- › Tutoring vs. teaching
- › Supporting MHCC course content and philosophy
- › Respecting diverse learners
- › Socratic methods

**Professional Development**
**Faculty and staff:**

- › Advising for maximum student persistence
- › Career Technical Education
- › College Now and Dual Credit
- › Teaching tools for creative collaboration
- › Intercultural communication with adult learners
- › Technology in the classroom

**Students – Student Success Series:**

- › Saints email
- › Scholarship assistance
- › Overcoming test anxiety
- › Resume support and job search strategies
- › Understanding your learning style

**AVID/LSC Staff Contributions 2013-14**
**Presented at:**

- › Oregon TRIO Association Conference
- › Student Success & Retention Conference
- › AVID National Conference

**Published in:**

- › *AVID Compendium*
- › *Case Studies for First Year Experience*

**Community Engagement**

- › High school outreach
- › Oregon Metro Connects – Dual Credit
- › College Placement Test prep
- › MHCC 101
- › AVID alumni

APPENDIX I  
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## **Individual Interview Protocol**

### **Staff Participant**

1. Tell me about yourself and your background
1. Describe the training in providing student supports that you have had.
1. Describe the training you have experienced in AVID and what you see as its strengths? Weaknesses?
1. Describe students' experience in the AVID Center and the growth/confidence that they experience.
1. Describe the training in high engagement practices you have experienced.
1. Describe AVID at MHCC and your thoughts about it? Probes: what are some faculty concerns?  
Describe how you see AVID supporting students.
1. Describe Developmental education students at MHCC. What do you see as the biggest barriers to students' success into credited classes?
1. Have you encountered or experienced any support systems that have helped DE Students? Describe.
1. As a faculty member, if you could provide any support to DE students what would it be and why?

## **Individual Interview Protocol**

### **Faculty/Staff Participant**

1. Tell me about yourself and your teaching background
1. Describe the training in providing student supports that you have had.
1. Describe the training in high engagement teaching practices you have experienced.
1. Describe AVID at MHCC and your thoughts about it? Probes: what are some faculty concerns?  
Describe how you see AVID supporting students.
1. Describe Developmental education students at MHCC. What do you see as the biggest barriers to students' success into credited classes?
1. Have you encountered or experienced any support systems that have helped DE Students? Describe.
1. As a faculty member, if you could provide any support to DE students what would it be and why?

## APPENDIX J

## THE SETTING: DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS (AMP)

## STUDENT INTAKE QUESTIONNAIRE

**Tell us a little about yourself...**

Do you have a job?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>If yes, how many hours per week will you work while in school?</i>		
Do you have kids or family obligations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has anyone else in your family attended college? Who?		
Will you have a safe and secure place to live while in school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
How do you plan to get to school every day? Bus? Bike? Walk? Drive? Carpool?		
What was your favorite subject in school?		
How many hours of homework do you expect to have per week from your classes? (circle one)	<u>1-5 hrs.</u> <u>6-10 hrs.</u> <u>11-15 hrs.</u> <u>16-20 hrs.</u> <u>21+ hrs.</u>	
Have you attended MHCC or another college before?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
What is your dream job?		
Why did you decide to attend MHCC?		

<i>Read each statement and circle how much you agree with it.</i>	<b>Strongly Agree -4-</b>	<b>Agree -3-</b>	<b>Disagree -2-</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree -1-</b>
Earning a college degree is very important to me	4	3	2	1
I often need to skip school because of other commitments	4	3	2	1
College will prepare me for a better job	4	3	2	1
Planning ahead and making decisions is something I often struggle with	4	3	2	1
I feel positive about my future	4	3	2	1
When faced with a difficult situation, I know people who I can turn to for help	4	3	2	1
My friends and family support my educational goals	4	3	2	1
Participating in student activities and campus events is an important part of my college experience	4	3	2	1
Financial aid is not my only source of income while in school	4	3	2	1
I have a strong desire to make something of my life	4	3	2	1

Is there anything else that you would like to share with us? (Instructors only – no students will see this form.) Include any personal issues or barriers that might interfere with your ability to succeed in your classes. Please use the back of this page if necessary.

## APPENDIX K

*“THE ADVOCATE”* ARTICLE



5/23/2018

AVID CENTER TRYING TO 'BRIDGE' THE GAP | The Advocate Online



NEWS OPINION SPORTS ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT VIDEOS STAFF VENTURE CONTACT

Home » News » AVID CENTER TRYING TO 'BRIDGE' THE GAP

## AVID CENTER TRYING TO 'BRIDGE' THE GAP

📅 NOVEMBER 16, 2017 🗳️ GREG LEONOV 📰 NEWS 💬 0

To assist students who live a commuter lifestyle, Mt. Hood Community Center's AVID center provides an avenue for students to find help and tutoring for whatever projects they are working on.

While traditionally the main way the center draws students is by word-of-mouth and teacher referrals, AVID (short for Advancement Via Individual Determination) is working on getting its services better exposure.

In January, the center plans to start a "social media blitz," according to AVID Coordinator Sarah Aimone.

"We've always had social media pages, like a Facebook and (an) Instagram, but we haven't utilized them very well. What we would really like to do is a promotion, so that students start to really view our pages a lot more."

While the center currently helps many Mt. Hood students, most of them are repeat students. Aimone hopes to change that.

"We know that there's a lot of students on campus that either truly don't know about our services or they truly don't know about how welcoming we are, or how you could really see us at any stage in the game," she said.

In the mezzanine level of the MHCC library, the Tutoring Center, Learning Success Center, and AVID are all part of an effort to help students keep up with their education.

"It's just really helpful to be in a space with other people who are working on the same kinds of things or who need the same kind of assistance," said Grant Burgess, an AVID learning specialist and unofficial social media coordinator.

Services offered by AVID and the tutoring center include a computer lab, textbooks, calculators, a Zen zone, and different areas to take breaks from studying. "It's designed to be an artistic space," said Aimone.

The most successful effort AVID staff has used to help keep students enrolled in school is an effort called Summer Bridge, said Aimone and Burgess.

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Fellow students, ASG debates will be taking place today from noon to 2 p.m. outside of the Student Union!



7h



The Advocate



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UNIVERSITY

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WITHOUT LEAVING CAMPUS  
IN BUSINESS OR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

5/23/2018

AVID CENTER TRYING TO 'BRIDGE' THE GAP | The Advocate Online

"It's called 'bridge' because it's a bridge from where they were, to where they're trying to get to," said Burgess. The program is a three-day boot camp that is designed to "boost academic and non-cognitive skills, plus foster a connection to the MHCC campus community," according to Aimone.

Originally, the program was offered in the summer only, and started with 20 students in 2014.

This year, the program had 152 students, and a 'Bridge' is offered for one day during winter and spring.

The AVID center is available for all students, no matter what point they are in their college career.

"(For) people who are really just starting out, and then, (those) people taking calculus... there's something for everybody there," said Burgess.

📌 trending

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**OREGON, MHCC TO EXPAND  
CULTURAL AWARENESS**

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AVID CENTER TRYING TO 'BRIDGE' THE GAP | The Advocate Online

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APPENDIX L  
COMPENDIUM

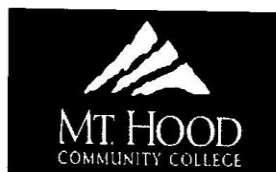


# 2014 AHE COMPENDIUM

**DRAFT**

**Fall 2014**

**Mt. Hood Community College**



The story of **Mt. Hood Community College** is part of a compendium which contains case studies of six colleges and universities from across the U.S. who implemented AVID for Higher Education (AHE). Whether implemented as a First Year Seminar course or as part of an existing tutoring or mentoring program, AHE is making a positive difference in student learning. ***Read more...***

# Mt. Hood COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Matt Farina**, AVID Learning Specialist  
**Beth Keegan**, AVID Learning Specialist  
**Sarah Aimone**, AVID/Trio-SSS Math & Science Learning Specialist  
**Sara Gregg**, AVID Learning Specialist  
**Aslinn Arcuri**, AVID Learning Specialist  
**Lauren Smith**, Mgr, AVID & Learning Services Center

## CAMPUS PROFILE & INFORMATION

**Type of Institution:** Public, 2 Yr-Comprehensive  
Community College

**Total Enrollment:** 9,393 Students

### Student Population

- Undergraduate Age 24 or below: 52%
- Under-Represented Minority: 27%
- Federal Aid Recipients: 46%
- Pell Eligible First-time Students: 70%

**AHE System:** Student Success Initiative (SSI)

**AHE Campus Timeline:** 3rd year (started in 2011)

**Source of Funding:** Institutional

**Professional Development**

**Administrators/Faculty/Staff/Tutors:** 501

**Summer Institute Attendance:** 3 years

## 'MOVING MOUNTAINS, TRANSFORMING LIVES & BUILDING COMMUNITIES'

In 2011, AVID for Higher Education (AHE) was implemented at Mt. Hood Community College's (MHCC) campus in Gresham, Oregon. Initial funding was provided by the Innovation Fund Request which was a collaboration between AVID Planning Team members and the MHCC Vice President of Instruction and Student Development. All saw the need for a comprehensive and holistic program that provided student support through learning communities and faculty professional development in high engagement teaching strategies.

Like many institutes for higher education, MHCC faced low persistence, retention, and completion rates, especially among students who place into developmental education coursework (courses below the 100 level). In addition, there was a need for innovative and effective ways to encourage and support recent GED (General Educational Development) graduates and adult basic skill (i.e., ESL/ENL) students with their transition into general education coursework. From these needs came the AHE program, which began with just one group of students taking reading and writing courses together and that has expanded to a current level that includes several AVID Learning Community offerings per term, an AVID Center staffed by Learning Specialists, and a designated AVID Coordinator.

After four years, AVID strategies are having an impact on instructional practices throughout campus. At MHCC, AHE has truly meant transformative pedagogy and student support. Lauren Smith, AVID Coordinator adds,

*"The challenges to implementing AHE at Mt. Hood were largely caused by funding and hesitance on the part of faculty and staff. Trends in higher education tend to be fast-moving and ever-changing and instructors were wary of the next 'shiny new object' or trend that they would need to adopt, and that cost the college money in an already stretched economy. These challenges were largely overcome by the outcomes of the AHE program and its impact on student persistence.*

### **Mt. Hood Community College**

*While most developmental education courses see dismal persistence rates, AVID Learning Community students persisted at nearly 85% during the first full year of implementation in fall 2012. In addition, the AVID Center served hundreds of students, supporting them in their academics, future course and career options, and providing much needed mentorship and coaching when life barriers got in the way of college success. Through small- and large-scale professional development sessions, AHE at MHCC was able to show that AVID is not a passing fad, but rather, a collection of best practices encouraged by any campus looking to provide greater support to their underrepresented and underserved student populations as well as providing quality professional development opportunities to their faculty. "*

### **COLLABORATING ACROSS CAMPUS**

As AHE begins its fourth year of implementation on this campus, many opportunities have presented themselves along the way, largely because of the commitment to the five AVID Essentials and the insistence that the Essentials, data, and student needs guide the work on the campus. What began as the mission of ten AVID Planning Team members has now become a part of the work of leaders and stakeholders from departments across campus that have seen and experienced the value of AVID. Professional development has taken place within the advising department, the diversity resource center on campus, and the learning commons, including MHCC's main campus tutoring center, the Learning Success Center. The college has consistently involved campus staff and faculty in the AVID Summer Institute and on-campus professional development. By identifying individual champions of the program, the success of AVID is not an isolated event but a collaborative effort. Consequently, AVID has played a part on several campus committees and councils committed to implementing best practices and creating a student success plan that serves all students in an equitable and student-centered way. This role has allowed the AHE program to shine and encouraged those who may have been initially skeptical of the program to take a closer look.

Another major opportunity that the AHE program created was the implementation of Learning

Communities and a first-year seminar or experience for incoming students. Using AVID strategies, in conjunction with Skip Downing's <sup>1</sup> *On Course* curriculum, allowed MHCC faculty to create a well-rounded and largely successful 12-credit package of classes that not only teaches students the reading and writing skills that they need for success, but also the student and "life" skills that aren't always explicitly taught or that some educators may assume students already possess. This Learning Community model and college success class has proven so successful that it will be used to create a campus-wide, first-year experience for students at MHCC and will have a very positive effect on student persistence and completion.

Furthermore, the AVID Center expanded during Spring 2014, allowing AVID Learning Specialists to reach more students in a larger and more learning conducive space. The AVID Center has become a home on campus for many students and the relationships built with peers and AVID instructors. In addition, AVID staff assists in retaining students and developing their intrinsic motivation and desire to reach the goals that they have created.

### **REACHING OUT TO AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

While the goal of the AVID program at MHCC continues to be transformative pedagogy and student support, the program has also grown in outreach to AVID schools in local primary school districts, partnerships with universities to provide tutorial training to new AVID tutors, and grant opportunities to expand services and the work that has been done. As the college changes under new leadership, the influence of the economy and the continued demographic shifts within the community, there is a clear role for AHE and the future looks positive.

### **FOCUSING ON A UNIQUE STUDENT POPULATION**

In community colleges across the country, students are enrolling to find a pathway to gainful employment. At MHCC, where the average student age is 31, this is also true. For many students, the community college is one of the few accessible and affordable avenues toward a career. To meet this need, the college has invested in the creation of new and affordable career pathways. Although these programs are steadily gaining in popularity, many potential students are arriving on

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campus without the academic background needed to be successful in college. AHE at MHCC supports the school's mission by focusing its attention on this unique student population. These developmental education students not only need academic skills, they often need non-academic support and guidance. The AVID Learning Community cohort class model was created to help bridge this gap.

In an AVID Learning Community at MHCC, the keystone class is an AVID Seminar. These classes are critical to student success, because they enable students to build the institutional knowledge needed for success in higher education. Additionally, these classes focus on topics that will serve students in both immediate and future job markets and include topics such as professionalism, organization, communication skills, and time management. Although the primary focus of the AVID Program at MHCC involves helping students transition into certificate and degree programs, a great deal of energy is put into giving students tools that will help them be successful in life.

In addition to the AVID seminar classes, students also receive a great deal of support and guidance from the AVID Center at MHCC. Learning specialists in the AVID Center are more than academic tutors; they provide holistic support to the college's students helping with scholarship applications, employment applications, resumes, letters of recommendation, financial aid, community support resources, and registration. Additionally, they work with students to develop more effective time-management and organizational strategies, which reinforcing the larger concepts that students learn in the AVID seminar classes. Beth Keegan, AVID Learning Specialist comments,

*"The AVID Program at MHCC empowers students to take control of their education. By focusing on both academic skills and work/life skills, AHE is preparing students for success. The global economy is dynamic and students need as much support as they can get. Along with the academic credential, students who understand the additional professional skills—often unwritten—will have a better chance in the labor market."*

## CREATING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

College can be overwhelming, even for the most prepared student. For students who come to community college with educational gaps and past negative experiences in formal education, it is a stressful and often confusing uphill battle to success. At MHCC, AHE supports less-prepared students through two avenues: the AVID Learning Communities, which are pre-college learning cohorts carried over from one term to the next; and the AVID Center, an inviting study space where all students have unlimited access to the center's computers, free printing, and most importantly, tutoring and support from six upbeat, experienced AVID Learning Specialists (most with a Master degree in Education or content areas).

Student Wendell T. is one recent AVID success story at MHCC. Wendell, a returning African-American student, has successfully passed both AVID Learning Communities and is now in his second term at college level.

*"It was scary at first coming back to school [after a 10-year break]. I knew college was going to be different from high school. I knew the work was going to be harder. The learning communities made it less scary."*

The AVID Learning Communities at MHCC bring together cohorts of pre-college students to take three linked courses: reading, writing, and college success. The courses are scheduled back-to-back so that students with family and work commitments can make the most of their time on campus. The reading and writing classes are centered on a theme, such as music, and are taught by instructors who use high-engagement instructional strategies. The college-success courses introduce students to college culture and expectations and also present essential life skills that will lead to student success beyond college walls. Wendell T. arrived at the college with a solid foundation.

*"Reading and writing were easy for me so [pre-college writing] was a brush-up, but I also got help with taking notes, organizing my work, and, especially, math."*

The learning communities are composed of approximately one half traditional-aged college



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students and the other half returning students, who range in age from their mid-20s all the way to age 50 and beyond. Many are first-generation college students whose families originated in Central America, Southeast Asia, Russia, or Northern Africa. With this diversity in age and ethnicities, it's easy for students to find other students "like me," while also gaining experience in relating to people of other ages and cultures. In this way, students truly become part of the MHCC community, rather than another anonymous face on campus.

### **HELPING STUDENTS THROUGH THE AVID CENTER**

From the student perspective, the stress of choosing a reasonable schedule is eliminated by just registering for a learning community! Because taking multiple classes in different parts of the campus can be daunting for less-prepared students, all of the courses in each AVID Learning Community take place in classrooms located in one colorfully decorated hall, with the newly expanded AVID Center housed in the same hall. This arrangement provides a school-within-a-school—safe and friendly community where students, teachers, and AVID Center staff greet each other on a first-name basis. At chairs and tables in the extra-wide hall, students check their phones and socialize, waiting for classes to begin. Before and after classes, students flock to the AVID Center for help with assignments, understanding instructions, navigating the class web or portal area, and figuring out financial aid. Many students study for 2 - 4 hours at a time in the AVID Center on a daily basis and take advantage of free coffee, a microwave, and no rules against eating, all of which makes long study sessions in the center easier.

When students enter the AVID Center, they not only find learning specialists knowledgeable in reading/writing, math/science, and overcoming administrative hurdles, they find caring professionals focused on building relationships with each student. AVID staff are willing to go the extra mile for students in almost any area of life that might affect their education. In one instance, a student was jailed for a week for a probation violation. The student's relative phoned the AVID Center (the only campus number the student had ever written down in his notebook) and asked AVID staff to let the student's teachers know that he would be back in class as soon as possible. Of course,

AVID staff relayed the message to the student's teachers, and the student later resumed class.

For many of the college's students, the AVID Center may be the first time in their lives that they have access to help from teachers and other educators in a low-stress, casual, and supportive environment outside of the classroom. When students observe mutual respect, even playfulness and humor, between AVID staff and teachers, students begin to see teachers and educators as people they can actually learn from, rather than intimidating authority figures. Celebrations of successes small and large are also significant elements of AHE's value. Students appreciate that we hold regular recognition events and distribute certificates of completion or awards of dedication to learning. They are excited to participate in our finals week study parties and our end of the year success receptions.

When Wendell T. transitioned into college-level courses in spring 2014, he was a bit nervous.

*"I thought I might be on my own, but I got continued help in the AVID Center, especially with biology."*

In Summer 2014, Wendell visited the AVID Center for help working through the multi-step, multi-source writing assignments for his college-level business courses.

*"If I ask for help from someone else, I might feel dumb," he said, "but I always felt comfortable coming here for help if I got stuck, because I already know you guys. I even got help when I was having some personal problems. You guys do a little extra, probably beyond what you have to do."*

Wendell's feelings are echoed in students' comments on anonymous end-of-term surveys. One student wrote,

*"I feel they want to see me succeed. I never leave feeling like a failure. On my bad days there is still staff to encourage me."*

Another student shared,

*"AVID has kept me on my feet and has readied me for college success."*

Yet another student said,

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*"The AVID Center is the best help you can get on campus. And I would recommend all students to go there."*

Students who responded to the anonymous surveys also gave positive comments about the AVID Learning Communities. One student wrote,

*"The AVID community provides me with everything I need. I do recommend AVID for students who are just starting out in college."*

Many other students agreed with one adding,

*"I like this because it's small and I know the people that run it."*

As Wendell T. said in July 2014,

*"I definitely wouldn't have made it this far without you guys!"*

### **BUILDING BONDS BETWEEN FACULTY & STUDENTS**

At MHCC, the primary mission of AHE is supporting developmental education students or students who require remediation in reading, writing, or math before entering general-education coursework. These students often have a long road in front of them and the necessity for innovative and engaging learning strategies is critical. The students within the developmental education program at Mt. Hood Community College come from a diverse population. This diversity stretches across age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and academic experience. Subsequently, as a teacher, it can be challenging trying to reach every student with every lesson.

With AHE, high engagement is the name of the game. This is essential in learning environments such as developmental education in which every student needs to feel connected to their learning so that he/she may succeed. For many developmental education students, previous academic experiences have been negative. AHE's focus on high engagement strategies in the classroom enables these students to gain confidence

and control over their learning, often for the first time in their lives.

At MHCC, AVID students are primarily organized into Learning Communities. A Learning Community is a cohort of students who are all taking the same classes together. Most Learning Communities consist of three classes: reading (RD090/115/117), writing (WR090/115/121), and college success or academic success strategies (HD100C/EL115C). In a Learning Community, instructors collaborate with one another to develop concepts and themes that stretch across all three classes. AVID Learning Communities tend to be very dynamic and bonds between students and faculty develop quickly. As AVID writing instructor Michelle Hampton observes,

*"the students who do very well in AVID are the ones who like to interact with each other, do not want to be lectured to nonstop and who are comfortable getting feedback from peers. They enjoy making relationships with people who will last from one quarter to the next. Students who haven't been in a classroom in a while want to come back and see what college is like. So this is a good way to get easily accessible support and also be in a class where students have a voice immediately."*

### **BOLSTERING ADJUNCT FACULTY**

In an AVID Learning Community, both students and instructors receive a great deal of support from Learning Specialists in the AVID Center. Instructors collaborate with them to ensure that all students are receiving effective academic support outside of the classroom. At MHCC, where more than 75% of faculty members are part-time, it can be difficult for many adjuncts to feel connected. One of the most effective aspects of the AVID program is its ability to bridge that gap for adjunct instructors. The vast majority of AVID classes are taught by part-time instructors who often receive support and curriculum ideas from the AVID Center staff. Just as AVID instructors collaborate with each other to plan and develop themes around a learning community, instructors and Learning Specialists also work together to meet the needs of students. Additionally, much of the scheduling,

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substitute support, and student conduct issues are handled by AVID Center staff.

While the AHE system is coordinated through the AVID Center, the center is open to all MHCC students. Any student can use one of the computers, study tables, white boards, or the lending library during open hours. The AVID Center's physical design fosters collaboration among students and offers a welcoming environment for students to get assistance from Learning Specialists on a drop-in basis. Additionally, part-time instructors are often found using the space to meet with students or prepare for classes.

Finally, AHE provides many avenues for professional development such as the AVID Summer Institute where each year a number of instructors attend to learn new strategies and perspectives. On campus, AHE promotes seminars and other learning opportunities through which instructors can learn and collaborate with their peers says MHCC's GED instructor Scott Plinski,

*"Instructors all want help because teaching can be so individual it's like we're each stuck in a cocoon. The professional development is great because we get to talk to instructors who are going through the same things as us."*

### **FOOTNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> Skip Downing is an international consultant in the field of faculty development and student success strategies.

APPENDIX M

STUDENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

## **Student Interview Transcripts**

### **Background**

Statement of relevant factors/context for discussion to follow.

Specific Recommended Program Change (including relevant background/history)

Address generally how this change will increase revenue and/or increase student completion rate. (specific budget information to be included later).

Implement AVID Postsecondary systemically at Mt. Hood Community College. We initially applied for a federal grant to implement AVID Postsecondary, seeking large-scale implementation with a cost of over \$750,000. The funding for this federal grant dissolved, however, before grant applications could be reviewed. Nonetheless, the College pledged an initial three-year investment in AVID Postsecondary, with a cost of \$33,000 for each of three years. This initial investment in AVID Postsecondary to initiate the process, training and supports but does not provide the systemic undergirding necessary to sustain the program nor to support student completions college-wide. With this initial investment, MHCC subsequently sent ten (10) faculty, staff and administrators to AVID Summer Institute in June 2011. At the Summer Institute, faculty, staff and administrators were trained in AVID strategies and were provided support in developing a campus AVID plan. The Campus Team, although initially hesitant and doubtful, soon became ardent supporters of AVID Postsecondary implementation at MHCC. The Campus Planning Team (comprised of the initial ten) will again attend Summer Institute 2012 and 2013 to complete the training. However, this initial training only begins the

AVID implementation process. To implement system-wide, the College needs an investment systemically in AVID Postsecondary.

The initial planning unfolded this year in the first of three professional development trainings offered by AVID Postsecondary Institute. Approximately 20 additional faculty were trained in October and responded to the training by asking for more training and more support.

The Office of Instruction has been invited to Faculty Senate to provide an overview of AVID Postsecondary to explain the tenets of AVID and the goal of AVID Postsecondary at MHCC.

### **Need for the Project**

The state of Oregon has recently implemented an audacious goal of 40/40/20 by 2025, meaning that it wants to ensure that 40% of Oregon residents hold a bachelor's degree, 40% hold an Associate degree or certificate and 20% hold a meaningful high school completion certification. This is both a challenging and worthwhile goal if we want citizens of the state of Oregon to be gainfully employed and meet the demands of both the global economy and the local need. To reach this goal, every educational institution in the state of Oregon must examine its policies and practices and do a much better job of supporting students in accessing college and in completing degree programs.

With 73% of MHCC's students coming from within the district, the demographics of the MHCC's students mirror the demographics of its district. The Metro Data Resource Center (Portland metropolitan regional government responsible for land use planning among others) completed an analysis of population and demographic information for the MHCC service area, including projections through 2020. Based on the East County area (MHCC district plus contiguous area), the area's population of 477,000 in 2000 (2000 census data) will increase to over 630,000 in 2020. Major trends are summarized below.

***Race and Ethnicity.*** The college district will change as the region changes becoming more diverse. In 1990, only 9% of the East County population was minority compared to 15% in 2010 (this is a conservative estimate since the minority population is probably undercounted). Hispanics and Asians will account for the majority of the growth in the minority population. Much of this growth is being fueled by in-migration, which accounts for the growing demand for English as Second Language courses. Ethnic/Race distribution by grade level provides a picture of changing demographics that will impact the college in future years. The most striking finding from review of the table is the large percentage of Hispanic students at the lower grade levels. Since 25-30% of local high school students attend MHCC, one can see the impact that this will have on the future Ethnic/Race distribution of the MHCC student population. For all grades and area-wide, Hispanics currently account for 10% of the school enrollment. However, at the Kindergarten level, Hispanics account for 17% of enrollment, 16% for grade 1, 13% for grade 2 and 12% for grade 3.

***Household Income.*** Based on 2008 data, the average income in East County is \$50,984. East County has the highest absolute level of low-income households in the Metro area and a significantly lower jobs-to-household ratio. Poverty rates in MHCC's service area are very high; in fact, Multnomah County's unemployment rate was 9.1% in March 2011. The Oregon Employment Department projects that poverty rates are likely to become even higher as the economy slowly recovers. The Oregon Department of Economic and Community Development reported a state unemployment rate of 10.0% in Mar 2011, which still places Multnomah County above national unemployment rates of 8.8% in Mar 2011. Despite some gains Multnomah County has made overall, East County consistently continues to lag behind the rest of the metropolitan area. Given the

steady movement of Multnomah County's poorer residents to East County neighborhoods, analysts predict that unemployment rates will continue to be higher in the service district as compared to Multnomah County as a whole.

***Children in Poverty*** The 2000 U.S. Census information reveals that 17.6% of the children in Multnomah County live below the poverty level; eastern Multnomah County is home to a disproportionately large number (25%) of these economically disadvantaged families. For example, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, 42.3% of East County's largest city's (Gresham) single mothers with children under five years of age are living below the poverty line. Between 1990 and 2000, the Portland Multnomah Progress Board reports that the "Portland Public School district lost households with children, while districts to the east...gained them." Some East County school districts have grown by more than 30%.

The educational attainment of our minority populations is lagging. Only 17.1% of the region's African American population has at least a bachelor's degree. More alarmingly, only 56% of our Hispanic population has a high school diploma and only 11.4% have attained a bachelor's degree or higher. The region's poverty rate stood at 11.9% in 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey) and, although this poverty rate generally compares favorably with the rates for Oregon (13.5%), and the U.S. (13.3%), we are concerned that the impacts of poverty are falling disproportionately on minority populations and note that poverty rates are inversely related to educational attainment: the poverty rate is 29.7% for African-Americans; 26.1% for American Indians and Alaska Natives; and 24.2% for Hispanics of all races. These poverty rates, based on 2007 data, may understate current poverty levels due to the rise in unemployment described above.

Based on income and other indicators (single parent households, public assistance, children living in poverty, and overall poverty rate), the disadvantaged of East County are concentrated in the southwest corner of the district but also within pockets throughout the area. MHCC will continue to be challenged to facilitate upward mobility by a growing disadvantaged population.

***High School Data.*** Six of the MHCC district high schools are located in Gresham. The overall school ratings from the Oregon Department of Education include one outstanding school, three satisfactory schools, and one school in need of improvement. Drop out and graduation rates are included in the table below for these high schools as well as average graduation rates for Oregon and the United States.

According to Silja Kallenbeck of the New England Literacy Resource Center, 15 to 20% of high school credentials awarded in the U.S. were GEDs. Of the 15-20% awarded GEDs, only 7% chose to go on to a two-year college. Reder found that the 28% of the GED students that attended a two year college had earned a degree or will still enrolled at the college five years after their initial enrollment. These numbers are



extremely low and we believe that the new OPABS curriculum coupled with the PEAK project will allow more students with GED to complete their degrees.

***MHCC Student Data.*** MHCC enrolls 26,000 students each year. The largest proportion of these students are less than 29 years of age (60%). As noted earlier, 73% of enrolled students come from within MHCC's district, with 19% coming directly to MHCC from district high schools--58% females and 41% males. Even though our ethnicity data reveals a high Caucasian population (65%), many of the individuals in this category are from the large East European community located in Gresham and eastern Portland. The majority of these individuals are non-native English speakers. There are also high percentages of Hispanic/Latino students (11%) and Asian students (7%). Many of our students are the first person in their families to attend college. MHCC awarded 1044 degrees last year.

***Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) as a Solution.*** High numbers of economically and otherwise disadvantaged students attend MHCC. The College is exploring ways to help students be successful in meeting their goals and earn a degree or certificate. The College started an appreciative advising model this past fall, and early indicators show that this model is more effective in helping students be successful than the previous model. However, our secondary partners have successfully used AVID to help their students thrive and complete their high school degrees on time. The data demonstrating the success of AVID to significantly close the achievement gaps between groups of students is undeniable. With the large percentage of students living in poverty and the large number of ethnic groups in the MHCC district, it follows that many students attending MHCC are high needs students. This is the population of students that we will be targeting with this program. Since the high school dropout rates are highest in the minority populations, and the GED completion rates are the lowest in this same population, a significant impact on the lives of these individuals and society as a whole can be accomplished through a program that will assist students in persisting and completing a postsecondary degree. The success of the AVID program can be seen in the percentage of students completing four-year admission requirements can be found in the table below.

The mission of AVID at the secondary level is to "close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness in a global society" ("AVID: Decades of college dreams," 2009). The purpose of AVID postsecondary is to work "with institutions of higher education to support students with the goal of increasing academic success, persistence, and completion rates."

The elements of the AVID program are well defined. The program is systematic, prescriptive and designed to both support underrepresented students and to teach them specific study skills, time management, attitudes and habits necessary for success in college. AVID is primarily targeted toward first-generation college-going students and those often under-prepared and underrepresented students who do not have knowledge

about nor access to college. AVID connects all levels of education (elementary, secondary and now postsecondary) through a variety of community sponsors and supporters, including business and corporate sponsors, mentors, foundations faith organizations and federal and state initiatives. AVID is made up of two distinct but interconnected elements: (1) support (including tutoring) in rigorous academic courses and (2) the AVID elective which intentionally and specifically teaches such behaviors as organization, time management, self-advocacy, specific cognitive strategies, college and career connections and academic-based training (in writing, critical reading, inquiry) (“AVID: Decades of college dreams,” 2009).

Faculty at AVID sites receive specific training around supporting student academic success and reducing institutional barriers to student persistence, acceleration and completion.

AVID has had remarkable success at both the middle and secondary level. One of the distinguishing features of AVID is that that differs from other educational reform programs is its astounding success rate. Since 1990, more than 65,300 AVID students have graduated from high school and planned to attend college. Of the 2009 AVID graduates, 92% planned to attend college; 60% to a four-year college and 32% to a two-year college (“AVID: Decades of college dreams”). A key element in finding this success, however, is the level of implementation of AVID program design (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002).

Today, completion of four-year college entrance requirements across demographic groups of students enrolled in AVID include the following: 89% Native American; 93% Asian; 91% African American; 91% Filipino; 89% Hispanic/Latino; 90% other and 89% white (not Hispanic) (“AVID: Decades of college dreams,” 2009).

Noting the success of AVID at the secondary level, there is a movement underway to bring AVID to the postsecondary level, using the same precepts. AVID at the postsecondary level is designed to bring the AVID strategies to college campuses to better support aspiring but under-prepared college students. An element of the systemic approach in becoming an AVID site is the professional development and support that faculty receive in order to better serve and support students.

Expected Outcome of Change (How will we measure whether it has been successful? Tie measures of success to specific timelines. If the project is funded for January 2012, what outcomes would be expected by September 2012, by January 2013, by July 2013? What are the benefits of the action or policy? Are there any potential unintended consequences or problems associated with the action or policy?)

## **AVID Cost Benefit Analysis**

### **MHCC Statistics:**

- In 2007, 27,677 students entered MHCC and in 2010, 2523 earned degrees and 10,939 transferred to OUS institutions.
- MHCC did not retain 14,215 students. Why? Many reasons. Research has shown that students do not persist because of poor grades, family and personal issues, and lack of funding, to name a few.

### **Facts:**

- In Oregon, there is a standardized test that high school students must take to graduate. This test ensures that all graduating students have at least a 10<sup>th</sup> grade level in reading, writing, and math.
- The MHCC College Placement Test measures a student's level in math, reading, and writing. The student is then placed according. Many students entering MHCC are placed in to developmental math, reading, and/or writing. Many students do not move on from these classes to regular college classes for various reasons. If a two-year degree turns into a 4-year degree due to the amount of remedial classes a student must take, a student can become disinterested.
- At MHCC, Adult Basic Skills generates 1063.78 SFTE per year. Unfortunately, only 7% of GED completers move on to credit classes and/or degree programs. The same is true of the ESL and ENL classes, where few students take credit classes and/or degree programs.
- Studies have shown that students that are from poverty, the first person in a family to attend college, and who are bright, but lack good academic skills will benefit from AVID.

### **Opportunity:**

- Retain students who enter college and those who complete GED and ENL classes. Increased retention results in increased revenue for the college.

### **Action Plan:**

1. Identify cohorts of 20 students from initially three different subject matter areas: Academic Literacy, one program (as yet to be determined) and OPABS. Cohorts will be identified in the Spring of 2012 with pre/post tests for collecting base-line data.
2. Embed AVID strategies in classrooms and in the LSC to reinforce student use of the strategies.
3. Help students build confidence through small, incremental successes.
4. Build an AVID center and AVID elective class that will allow students to connect with people on campus.

### **AVID Objectives:**

1. Implement AVID strategies to retain 60 additional students in college in year 1.\*
2. Implement AVID strategies to enroll 10 more GED students into credit bearing classes in year 1.\*
3. Implement AVID strategies to retain 120 more students in college in year 2. \*

4. Implement AVID strategies to enroll 20 more GED students into credit bearing classes in year 2.\*
5. Implement AVID strategies to retain 240-300 more students in college in year 3.
6. Implement AVID strategies to enroll 50 more GED students into credit bearing classes in year 3.\*

\*These numbers are taken from the pool of students that are at high risk for dropping out. They are hand selected by faculty as being high risk and capable so that they can benefit from AVID.

Research relevant to recommended change (what evaluation or experience supports this change?)

Successful AVID programs impact the culture of the entire schools. Guthrie (2002) states that “Success breeds more success, and AVID’s visible, data-driven success has helped foster a culture of academic excellence, high expectations, and going-to-college within the schools. The culture of the AVID classroom is the scaffolding upon which students develop life-long habits of mind, such as responsibility, accountability, discipline, collaboration, continuous inquiry and determination” (p. 13). The culture of the school often shifts because of the success of AVID students and non-traditional students now see college as an option.

This effect is significant because despite the importance of postsecondary education, nearly one-quarter of all students do not graduate from high school in four years. In fact, for African-American, Native American and Latino students the graduation rate hovers at approximately 55% but dropped to just 44% for African American males. (Hooker & Brand, 2009). The stakes have never been higher. Yet college going rates for low-income students is 23% below college-going higher income students and the rate drops to 35% for students with parents with no college education (Hooker & Brand, \_\_\_\_). The implications are staggering and make the culture-changing impact of AVID in schools with high populations of minority and low-income students that much more significant.

It is this combination of rigorous academic expectations, tutorial support and intentional instruction around key self-management skills that contribute to AVID’s success. Conley (2010) suggested, in fact, that self-management is one of the key ingredients necessary for college success and readiness. While many programs and schools incorporate aspects of intentional self-management skills into their curriculum, Conley suggested that AVID’s elective program is one of the most intentional and systematic approaches in teaching these specific skills and incorporating additional specific study skills, what Conley referred to as “cognitive skills” (p. 115). It is this intentionality of teaching specific behaviors that builds the confidence in students that they can, in fact, succeed and be successful, when this belief was forged through several barriers that often impede student success. Educator Alfie Kohn (as cited in Swanson, 2000) underscored the necessity of a student’s self-confidence and a student’s mindset,

when he said, “For students to do serious thinking, they have to feel confident in their ability to make sense of problematic situations” (p. 26).

With an eye toward efficacy and generalization, several studies have been conducted throughout AVID’s history around program effectiveness and student’s preparedness (Watts, 2008; Swanson, 2000; Guthrie, 2000). In fact, between 1990 and 1997, 92.8% (Swanson, 2000) of AVID graduates enrolled in universities, a rate of 75% higher than the overall student population nationally. In fact, two years later, 89% of these students were still enrolled (Mehan, 1996, as cited in Swanson, 2000, p. 27).

Today, completion of four-year college entrance requirements across demographic groups of students enrolled in AVID include the following: 89% Native American; 93% Asian; 91% African American; 91% Filipino; 89% Hispanic/Latino; 90% other and 89% white (not Hispanic) (“AVID: Decades of college dreams,” 2009).

Noting the success of AVID at the secondary level, there is a movement underway to bring AVID to the postsecondary level, using the same precepts. AVID at the postsecondary level is designed to bring the AVID strategies to college campuses to better support aspiring but under-prepared college students. An element of the systemic approach in becoming an AVID site is the professional development and support that faculty receive in order to better serve and support students.

AVID strategies have shown remarkable improvement rates among minority and underrepresented students. In fact, despite a persistent gap in achievement between white and minority students in the United States and high school persistence rates for freshman cohorts at hovering at about 74% (Hussar, 2010), AVID students showed a remarkable determination and diligence. Over 90% of African and Native American students and 89% of Hispanic persisted and completed college entrance requirements (“AVID: Decades of college dreams,” 2009).

Several recent studies have sought to uncover the impact of AVID on underrepresented students. Results of the studies revealed that students were better prepared for college, had formed stronger relationship bonds with peers that positively impacted their educational experiences, were more on track to graduate from college in six years (79%) than non-AVID students (54%) nationally (Mendiola, Watt, & Huerta, 2010) (Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, In Press).

Direct Budget Impact FY12. (What will it cost? How much additional money is required? What will be saved? What additional revenue will be generated? What is the projected timeline for generating additional revenue? When should the full impact of the proposal be known?)

Expense	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
AVID coordinator	\$45,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
AVID elective class–tutors	\$16,200	\$27,000	\$27,000
AVID expenses	\$33,800	\$34,800	\$35,800
Total	\$95,000	\$151,800	\$152,800

**Explanation:****Year 1**

- The AVID coordinator would be a 0.5 FTE employee. The other 0.5 FTE of this person's job would be College Now Coordinator = \$45,000 (includes half of salary and benefits.)
- The AVID elective class would be a 3-credit hour class and 3 sections would be offered each term for 3 terms (fall, winter, spring) = \$1800 per class @ 3 classes per term for 3 terms= \$16,200
- AVID expense- the charges levied by the AVID company for training and professional development = \$33,800

**Year 2**

- The AVID coordinator would be a 1.0 FTE= \$90,000 salary and benefits
- The AVID elective class is a 3-credit class that would have 5 sections offered for 3 terms (fall, winter, spring) = \$27,000
- AVID expense- the charges levied by the AVID company for training and professional development = \$34,800

**Year 3**

- The AVID coordinator would be a 1.0 FTE= \$90,000 salary and benefits
- The AVID elective class is a 3-credit class that would have 5 sections offered for 3 terms (fall, winter, spring) = \$27,000
- AVID expense- the charges levied by the AVID company for training and professional development= \$34,800

	Cost to participate in AVID	Total number of students in cohorts	Cost per student
Year 1	\$95,000	100	\$950
Year 2	\$151,800	160	\$950
Year 3	\$152,800	160	\$955
Total for 3 years	\$399,600	420	Approx. \$950

Table 1.1

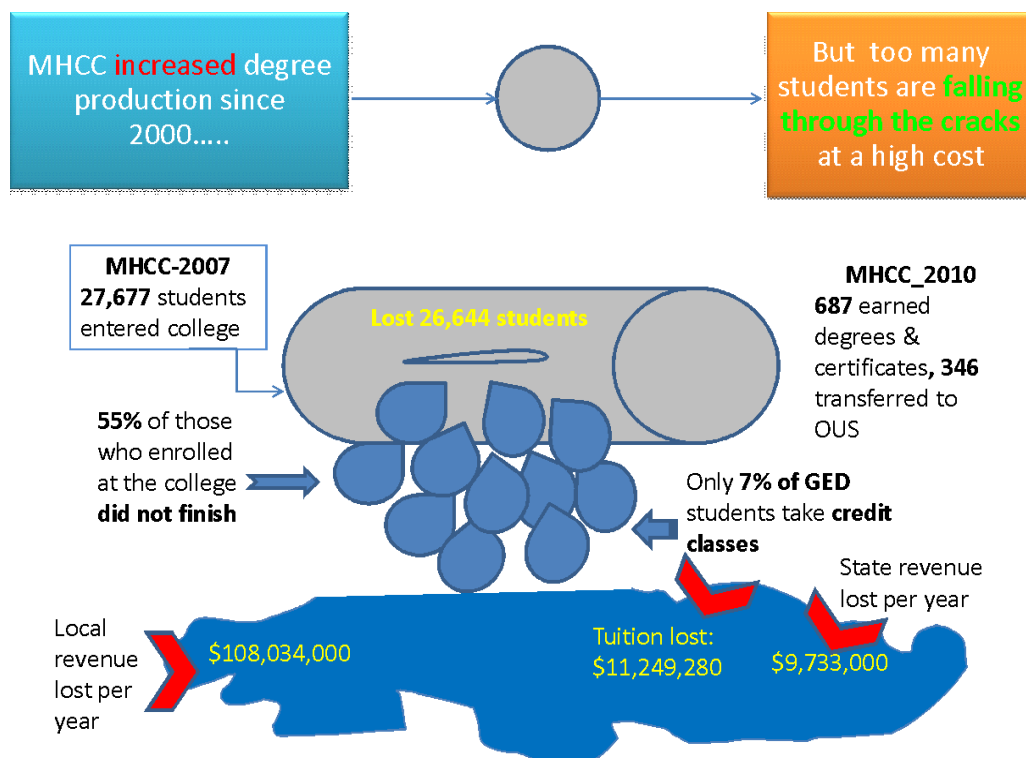


Table 1.2

## AVID COSTS

	AVID Costs	Cost per student initial cohort	Increase Students by 80%	Increase Students by 90%	Increase students by 100%
1 <sup>st</sup> year	33,800	\$338/stu (\$33800/100 stu)			
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	34,800		\$124/stu (34800/280 stu)	\$129/stu (34800/290 stu)	\$116/stu (34800/300 stu)
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	35,800		\$148/stu (35800/242)	\$99/stu (35800/361)	\$72/stu (35800/500)
4 <sup>th</sup> year	20,000		\$69/stu	\$62/stu	\$33/stu
5 <sup>th</sup> year	20,000		\$69/stu	\$62/stu	\$33/stu
6 <sup>th</sup> year	20,000		\$69/stu	\$62/stu	\$33/stu

Table 1.3

### AVID Benefits (increased revenue) Through Increased Persistence

Assumption— every student that stays attends for 3 years and takes at least 15 credits per term;  
GED students that continue attend for 3 academic years and take at least 15 credits per term

	Year 1	Year 2 (cum)	Year 3 (cum)
100 + persist	\$378,000	\$756,000	\$1,134,000
20 more GED	\$75,600	\$151,200	\$226,800
180 + persist	\$680,400	\$1,360,800	\$2,041,200
30 more GED	\$113,400	\$226,800	\$340,200
190+ persist	\$718,200	\$1,436,400	\$2,154,600
40 more GED	\$151,200	\$302,400	\$453,600
200 + persist	\$756,000	\$1,512,000	\$2,268,000
50 more GED	\$189,000	\$378,000	\$567,000
300+ persist	\$1,134,000	\$2,268,000	\$3,402,000
60 more GED	\$226,800	\$453,600	\$680,400
500+ persist	\$1,890,00	\$3,780,000	\$5,670,000
100 more GED	\$2,780,000	\$756,000	\$1,134,000

(What is the impact on employees – School or contracted. What types of employees will be added or eliminated?)

Faculty and staff (Learning Success Center, tutors, counselors, and advisors) will receive ongoing AVID professional development and support. Student cohorts will be monitored and tracked for achievement gains. AVID Postsecondary will provide ongoing support to MHCC faculty and staff, with the ultimate goal that all faculty college-wide will be trained in AVID engagement strategies and a college-wide culture shifts to both systemic and ongoing professional development in data-driven, best-practices in engaging students and a mind-set of completion envelops students and faculty. This kind



of culture change and systemic investment is essential if we are to support more students toward the goal of completion and transfer.

Budget Impact based on Shift to Completion Funding: (What is the anticipated impact of the proposal on the number of students completing courses of study?). See above

Indirect budget impact (how does this change impact other areas of the college's budget and operations?)

**What are the constraints/barriers to implementation (e.g., legislative action needed, change in contract language; conflicts with board policy)?**

The constraints include (1) budget implications and (2) culture change. We intend to work closely with faculty in creating the supports and development necessary to support student learning at all levels.

**What alternatives were considered (if applicable):**

There are several initiatives nationally that look at supporting student learning. We settled on AVID because of its longitudinal data (at all levels) for both engaging students and supporting student learning and retention/completion.

**How does the recommended change relate to prior Board actions or recommendations?**

What review process was used in developing this paper and reaching this recommendation? Who was consulted and what was the nature of their input? Are their stakeholders or interested parties who have not yet been consulted?

Other comments (e.g., impacts on other jurisdictions, stakeholders, revenues, etc.)

[End notes, attachments, references, as needed.]

## MHCC – The Setting: Data and Demographics

**Data provided by MHCC Factbook 2013 and IPEDs, and AMP  
Table J.1**

Enrollment by Credit and Non-Credit										
	Fall 2013		Fall 2012		Fall 2011		Fall 2010		Fall 2009	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Credit	8,804	77.4%	9,061	72.1%	9,292	73.7%	9,409	73.1%	8,578	73.2%
Non-Credit	2,568	22.6%	3,498	27.9%	3,321	26.3%	3,470	26.9%	3,142	26.8%
Total	11,372	100.0%	12,559	100.0%	12,613	100.0%	12,879	100.0%	11,720	100.0%

Source: MHCC Fact Book 2013

Of the credit students at MHCC approximately 36% are enrolled full time. The breakout of Non-Credit, Full-Time and Part-Time students is shown below.

**Table J.2**

Student profile by Credit and Non-Credit (Fall 2013)										
	2013		2012		2011		2010		2009	
Status	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0 Credits	2,568	22.6%	3,498	27.9%	3,321	26.3%	3,470	26.9%	3,142	26.8%
Part-Time	4,687	41.2%	4,543	36.2%	4,842	38.4%	4,958	38.5%	4,541	38.7%
Full-Time	4,117	36.2%	4,518	36.0%	4,450	35.3%	4,451	34.6%	4,037	34.4%
Total	11,372	100.0%	12,559	100.0%	12,613	100.0%	12,879	100.0%	11,720	100.0%

Source: MHCC Fact Book 2013

The student general intent “Transfer to a 4 Year College” has declined from 35.5% to 28.5% while the “Explore Options” has increased from 9% to 15%. In the degree intent the percentage seeking a certificate or degree has remained around 50% the “Here to Take Classes,” down to 9% from 14%, and “Undecided,” up from 9.9% to 15.5%, are the two-degree intent categories that have changed. Table 3.7 shows the intent numbers for 2009 through 2013.

Source: MHCC Fact Book 2013

Student demographics show an increase in both Hispanic/Latino and African American of 2% from 2009 through 2013 and a decline in White enrollment from 68% to 56.6% while the total enrollment peaked in 2010 and has steadily declined back to below 2009 levels by 2013.

**Table J. 3**

Provides the enrollment numbers and percentage for Race\Ethnicity, Gender and Age.

Demographics										
Report Year	2013		2012		2011		2010		2009	
Race/ Ethnicity	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Hispanic/ Latino	1,383	12.2%	1,220	9.7%	1,200	9.5%	1,479	11.5%	1,182	10.1%
American Indian	123	1.1%	143	1.1%	130	1.0%	151	1.2%	133	1.1%
Asian	786	6.9%	829	6.6%	868	6.9%	885	6.9%	734	6.3%
African American	602	5.3%	682	5.4%	613	4.9%	620	4.8%	422	3.6%
Hawaiian	61	0.5%	75	0.6%	61	0.5%	48	0.4%	0	0.0%
White	6,440	56.6%	7,436	59.2%	7,799	61.8%	8,389	65.1%	7,973	68.0%
Inter- national	42	0.4%	23	0.2%	10	0.1%	10	0.1%	29	0.2%
Multi- Race	648	5.7%	550	4.4%	408	3.2%	163	1.3%	19	0.2%
No Response	1,287	11.3%	1,601	12.7%	1,524	12.1%	1,134	8.8%	1,228	10.5%
Total	11,372	100.0%	12,559	100.0%	12,613	100.0%	12,879	100.0%	11,720	100.0%

Report Year	2013		2012		2011		2010		2009	
Gender	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	4,938	43.4%	5,352	42.6%	5,461	43.3%	5,254	40.8%	4,604	39.3%
Female	6,303	55.4%	6,944	55.3%	6,951	55.1%	7,486	58.1%	7,024	59.9%
Not Reported	131	1.2%	263	2.1%	201	1.6%	139	1.1%	92	0.8%
Total	11,372	100.0%	12,559	100.0%	12,613	100.0%	12,879	100.0%	11,720	100.0%

Report Year	2013		2012		2011		2010		2009	
Age	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
19 or Less	2,493	21.9%	2,172	17.3%	2,471	19.6%	2,674	20.8%	2,667	22.8%
20 - 29	4,479	39.4%	4,884	38.9%	4,822	38.2%	5,000	38.8%	4,537	38.7%
30 - 39	2,137	18.8%	2,285	18.2%	2,287	18.1%	2,201	17.1%	1,939	16.5%
40 - 49	1,128	9.9%	1,303	10.4%	1,319	10.5%	1,372	10.7%	1,197	10.2%
50 or More	883	7.8%	1,381	11.0%	1,347	10.7%	1,456	11.3%	1,289	11.0%
Not Reported	252	2.2%	534	4.3%	367	2.9%	176	1.4%	91	0.8%

Source: MHCC Fact Book 2013

The numbers of graduates steadily and dramatically increased in the 2009-2013 period.

Table 3.9 shows graduations by type of completion.

**Table J.4**

Graduation By Completion Type					
Report Year	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Completion Type	#	#	#	#	#
< 1 Yr Cert	95	35	32	47	3
1-2 Yr Certificate	115	97	106	79	90
Associate	1,219	1,065	894	905	800
Total	1,429	1,197	1,032	1,031	893

Source: MHCC Fact Book 2013

Completion time is reported to IPEDS as 100%, 150% and 200% of normal completion time. Although the graduation numbers have increased the percentage on time in each category has dropped. More students are earning awards, but it is taking longer.

Table 3.10 shows the completion as reported to IPEDS.

**Table J.5**

IPEDS Cohort Completions Percentage to Program Length								
Report Year	2013		2012		2011		2010	
Completed Within	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
100% of Normal Time	141	11%	141	14%	122	13%	140	14.8%
150% of Normal Time	216	16%	182	18%	170	19%	192	20.3%
200% of Normal Time	264	20%	214	21%	192	21%	211	22.3%
Degree Seeking Cohort	1,342		1,011		904		948	

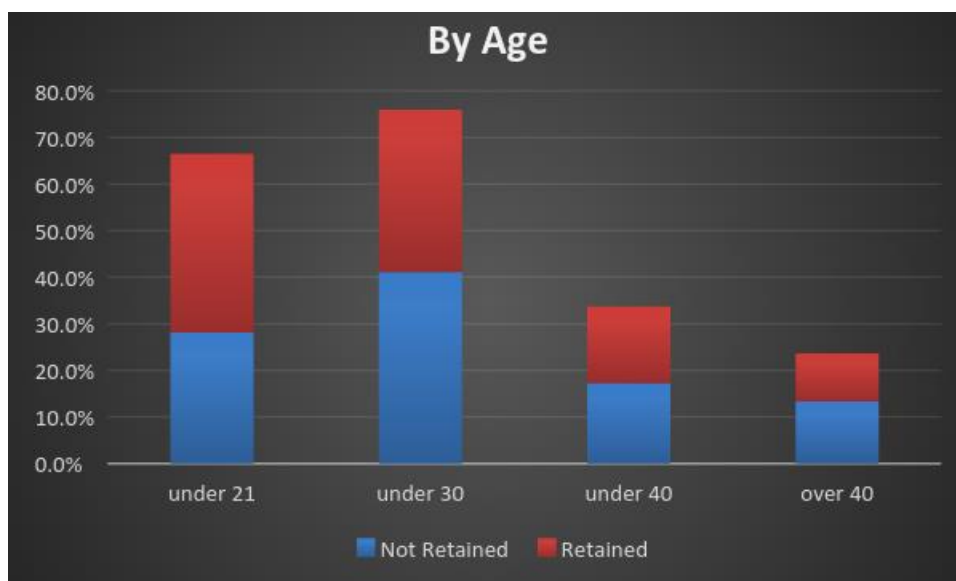
Source: MHCC Fact Book 2013

**Table J.6**

The average age of retained and not retained students was very similar with those dropping are slightly older about 28 years on average. The largest group of those not reenrolling are students in the 21-30 year age group.

	Not Retained		Retained	
Age (average)		27.8		26.3
under 21	520	28.1%	2053	38.4%
21- 30	760	41.1%	1865	34.8%
31 40	320	17.3%	879	16.4%
40+	246	13.3%	554	10.4%

However, while it's the smallest group, in relative numbers the worst dynamic is among the group of those over 40. MHCC loses about 45% a term.

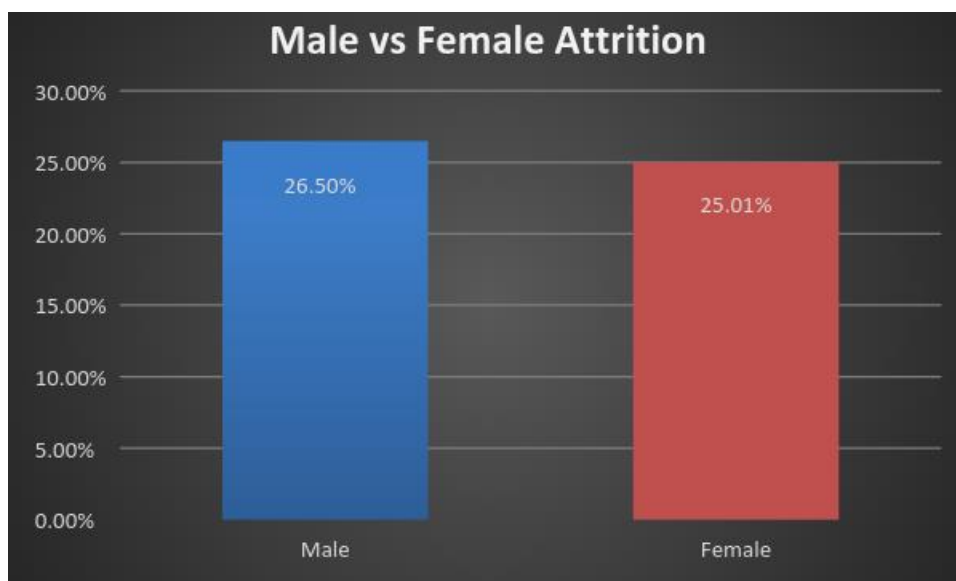


**Table J.7 - Gender**

The majority of the lost students are female. However this not due to the fact that we do worse retaining female students but just to the fact that we have significantly more female student in tuition credit bearing classes overall.

Gender	Not Retained		Retained	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Male	794	43.0%	2200	41.1%
Female	1051	56.9%	3148	58.8%

The attrition rate over the term among male students is a little bit higher.

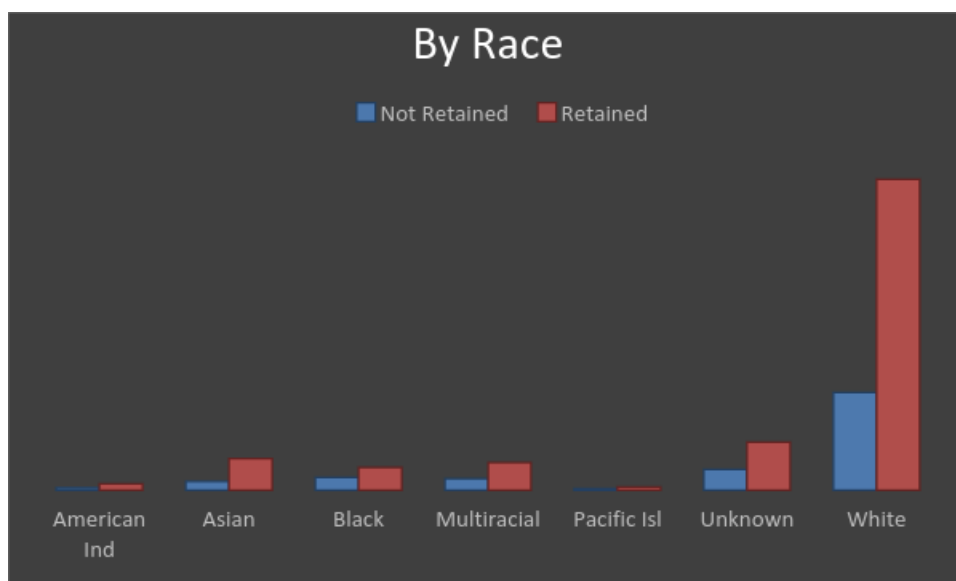


The majority of lost students are white again due to the fact that they make up a majority of our students.

**Table J.8 - Race**

Race	Not Retained		Retained	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
American Ind	29	1.6%	78	1.5%
Asian	105	5.7%	374	7.0%
Black	152	8.2%	269	5.0%
Multiracial	137	7.4%	329	6.1%
Pacific Isl	17	0.9%	39	0.7%
Unknown	247	13.4%	572	10.7%
White	1161	62.8%	3691	69.0%

The largest attrition rate is among black students.



**Table J.9 – Earned credit**

As expected those that have more credit hours are more likely to stay. Almost 50% of students who left earned less than 15 credits so far.

Earned Credit (avg)	Not retained	29	Retained	46
0	312	16.9%	79	1.5%
1-15	618	33.4%	1529	28.6%
16-44	454	24.6%	1330	24.9%
45-89	406	22.0%	1689	31.6%
>=90	58	3.1%	725	13.5%

However, among group in relative numbers significantly worse are doing those who did not earn any credit at all.



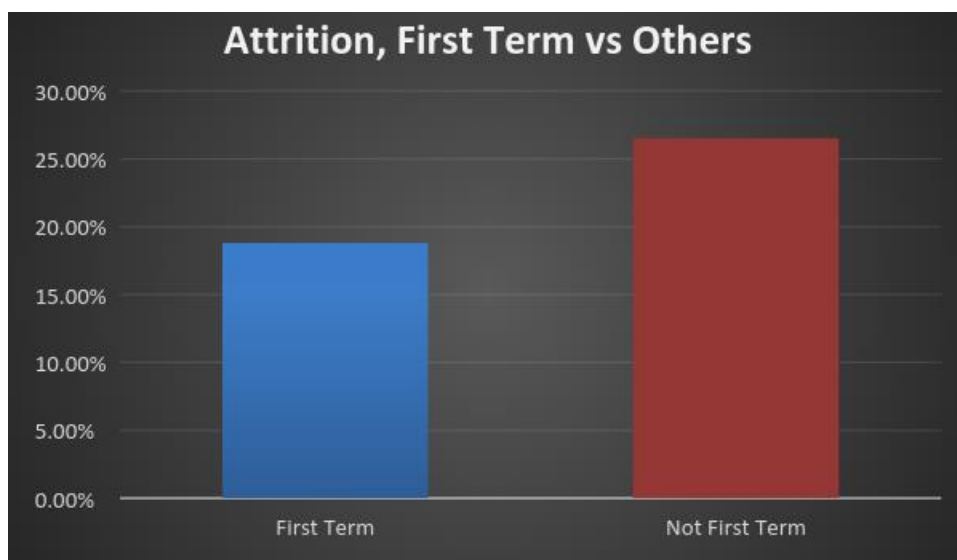


**Table J.10 – First Term**

Surprisingly enough the majority of those who drop off are not the first term students.

First Term	Not Retained		Retained	
Yes	160	8.7%	689	12.9%
No	1688	91.3%	4663	87.1%

Combined with a previous piece of data that the majority are still those who earned fewer than 15 credit hours shows that we normally have more than one term to help those students and they leave not right away but after failing to do well during two-three terms.





**Table J.11 Academic Status**

While overall GPA as shown above is somewhat correlated, getting an academic warning/ probation is significant.

Academic Status		
GOOD	987	53.4%
PROB	576	31.2%
SUSP	183	9.9%
WARN	102	5.5%

About a third of those not reenrolled are on a probation.

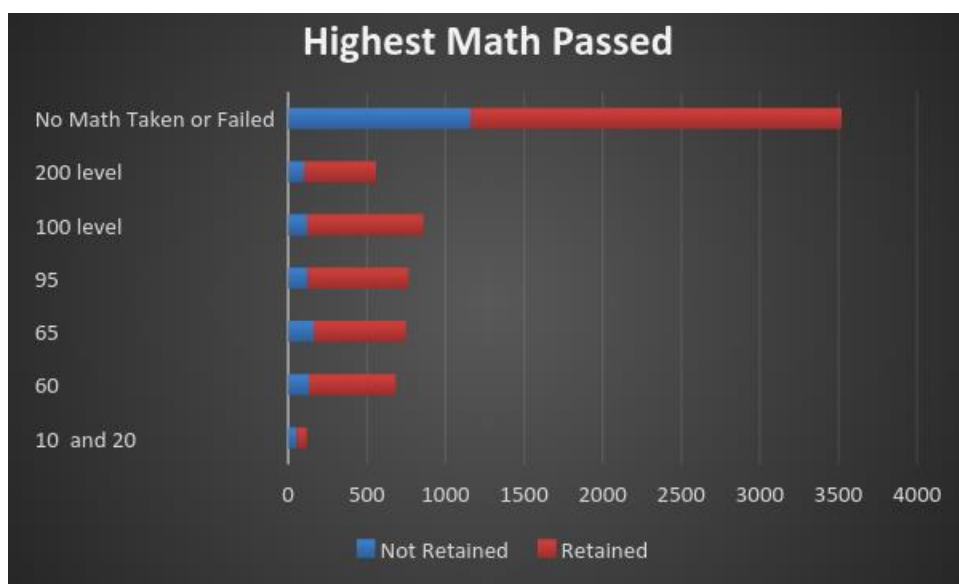
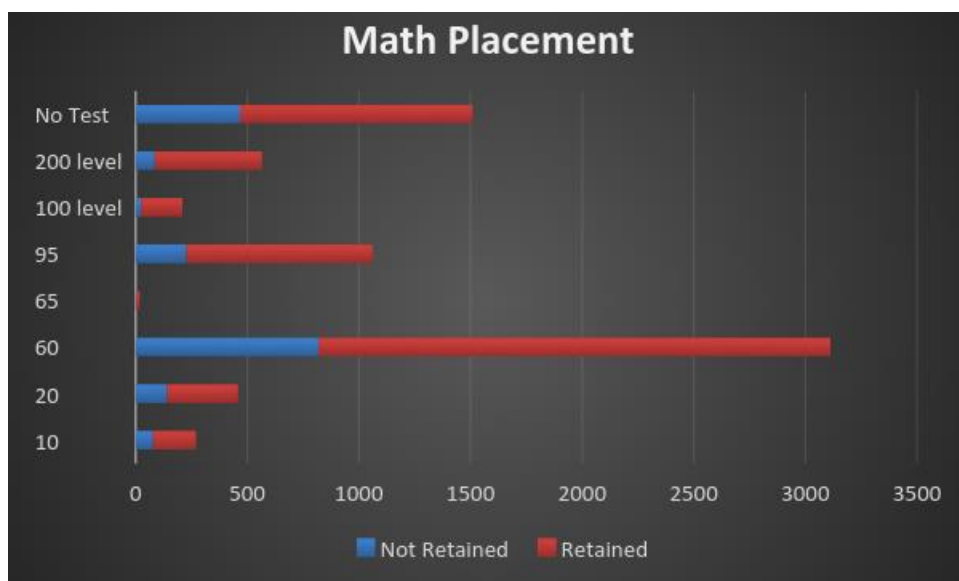
**Table J.12 - Math Placement and Success**

As previously found, initial math placement is a significant factor in future retention.

However, due to the fact that majority of students get placed in MTH060 (a Developmental Education sequence), by far the largest number of drop-offs were placed in MTH060.

Math Placement	Not Retained		Retained	
10	9	4.3%	191	3.6%
20	41	7.6%	317	5.9%
60	20	44.4%	2292	42.8%
65		0.2%	14	0.3%
95	27	12.3%	833	15.6%
100 level	5	1.4%	184	3.4%
200 level	6	4.7%	480	9.0%
No Test	67	25.3%	1041	19.5%
Math Highest Level				
10 and 20 (DE)	4	2.9%	64	1.2%
60 (DE)	30	7.0%	553	10.3%
65 (DE)	60	8.7%	590	11.0%
95	23	6.7%	642	12.0%
100 level	21	6.5%	738	13.8%
200 level	01	5.5%	457	8.5%
No Math Taken or Failed	159	62.7%	2360	44.1%

However, the interesting fact is almost two thirds of those who dropped off either didn't take a math or failed it. This math success appears to be the most significant factor in students' retention.



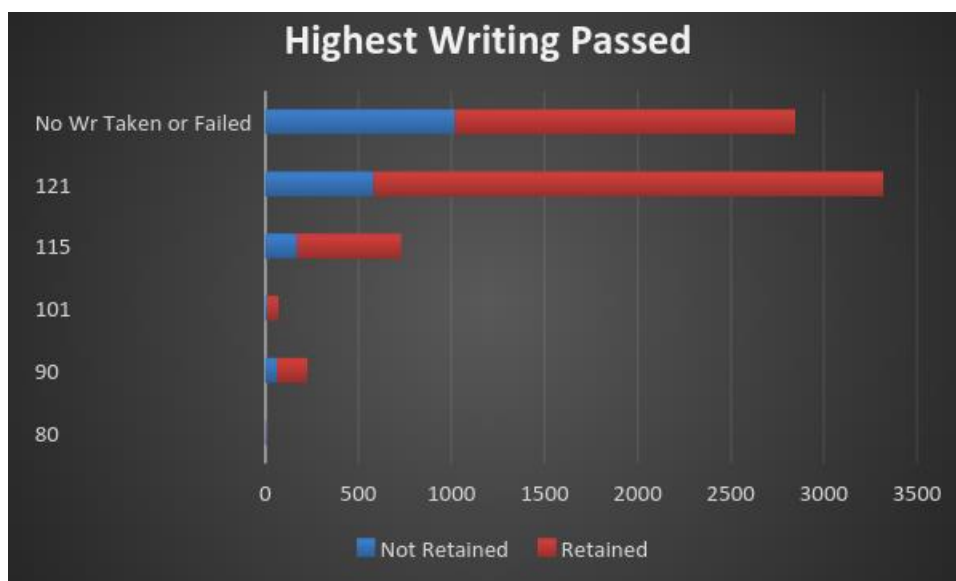
**Table J.13 - Writing Placement and Success**

The absolute majority of those who were not retained were placed into college level writing. So this doesn't appear to be a factor for retention.

Writing Placement	Not Retained		Retained	
80 (DE)	34	1.8%	83	1.6%
90 (DE)	245	13.3%	489	9.1%
115	606	32.8%	1849	34.5%
121	457	24.7%	1700	31.8%
NO Test	506	27.4%	1231	23.0%
Writing Highest Level				
80 (DE)	7	0.4%	5	0.1%
90 (DE)	61	3.3%	163	3.0%
101	11	0.6%	59	1.1%
115	171	9.3%	559	10.4%
121	581	31.4%	2737	51.1%
No WR Taken or Failed	1017	55.0%	1829	34.2%

However, the majority of the drop-offs did not take or fail a writing class, which makes it a second most significant factor in students' retention after passing a math class.

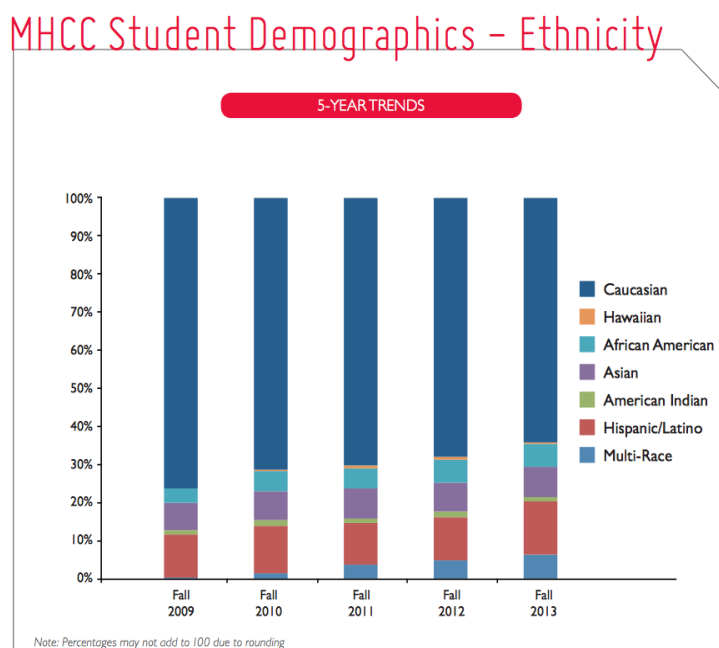




### Equity and Diversity at MHCC:

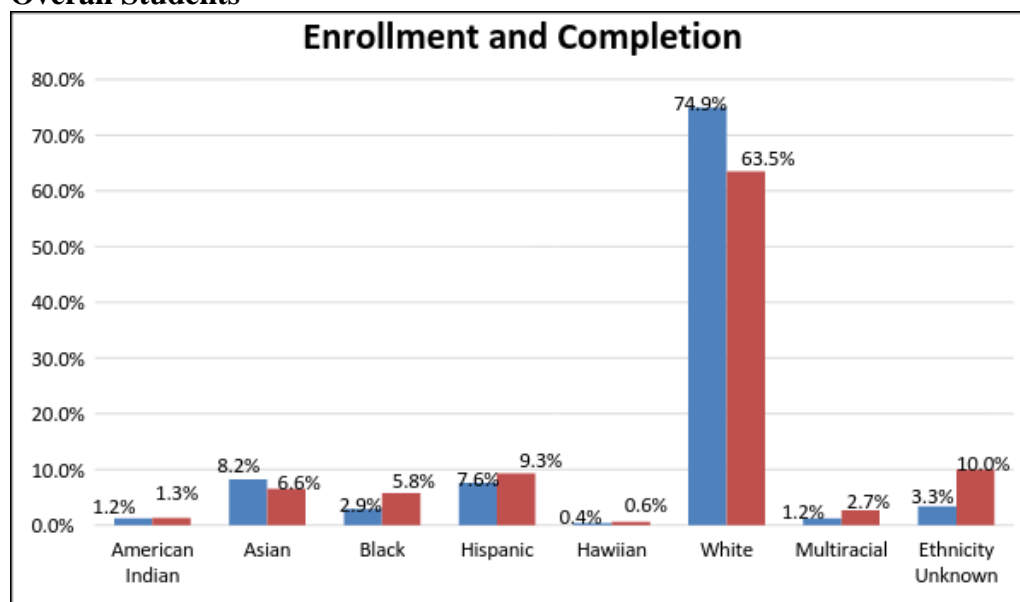
Based on changing demographics of the MHCC district, the College engaged in an Equity audit. From the data presented below, it is evident that the achievement gaps of racially and ethnically diverse students must be addressed with purposeful action that will help MHCC reach the completion goals of Oregon's 40/40/20 initiative. Initial 'vital sign' data on equity at MHCC reveal unsettling achievement gaps for students of color.

Enrollment averages disaggregated by race and ethnicity (figure 1), show that MHCC is becoming increasingly diverse. The figure below shows average enrollment at MHCC by racial group.

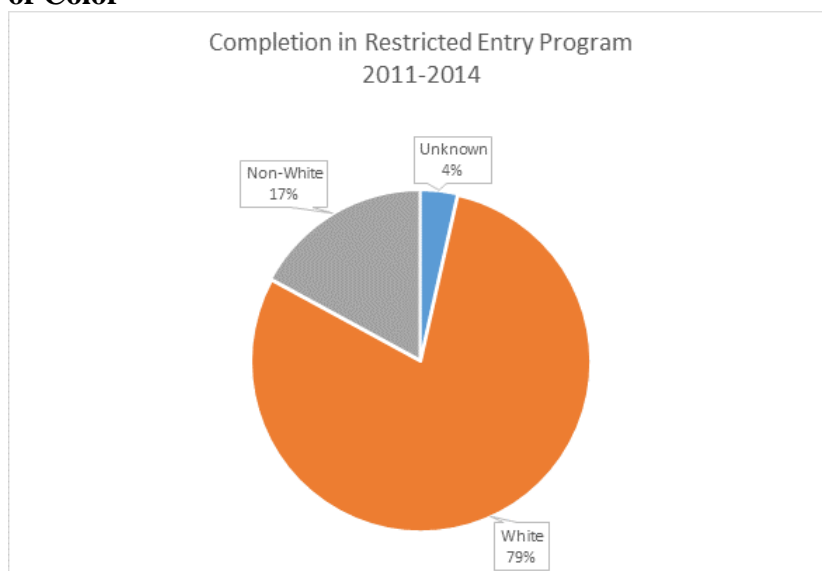
**Figure J.14**

At MHCC, completion data shows achievement gaps of Black and Hispanic students. Overall completion rates are based on total enrollment at MHCC (Figure 3.21). Black students make up 6% of the total student population, but only represent 2.9% of graduates showing an achievement gap of 3.1%. Hispanic students have an achievement gap of 1.7% (9.3% enrollment – 7.6% completion). White students make up 63% of the overall student population and represent 75% of graduates. This means that white students are completing at a significantly higher rate than Black and Hispanic students.



**Figure J.15****Black and Hispanic Students at MHCC Complete at Lower Rates than the Rate for Overall Students**

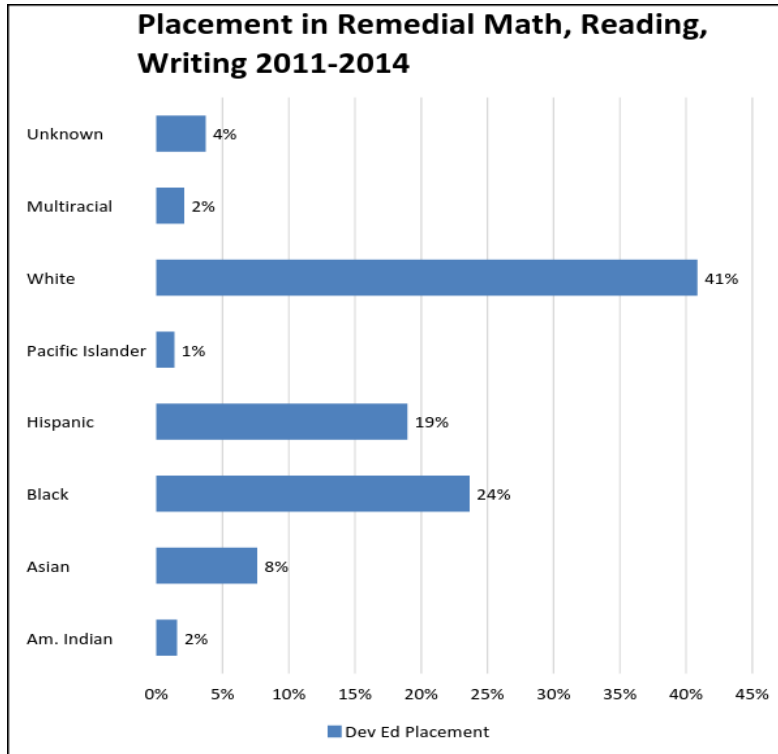
Restricted Entry Programs offer an example of achievement gaps for students of color at MHCC (Figure 5). Minorities make up 31% of the student population, but only represent 17% of those that complete Restricted Entry Programs. White students make up approximately 63% of overall enrollment but make up an average of 83% of restricted entry program graduates (some programs have over 90% White students completing, meaning White students are overrepresented by nearly 40%). Black and Hispanic students are the least represented groups in MHCC restricted entry programs.

**Figure J.16****MHCC Restricted Entry Programs Do Not Serve an Equitable Number of Students of Color**

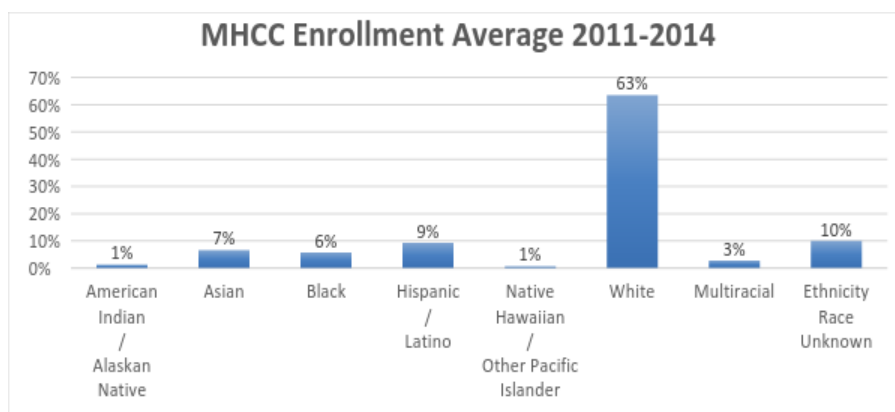
One of the biggest obstacles to minority student success in higher education is getting through basic math, reading and writing courses successfully. Placement in Developmental Education means a student's starting line is further back and research shows that the lower a student places, the less likely they are to complete (Harris III & Bensimon, 2007). At MHCC, placement of Black and Hispanic students in developmental education classes is disproportionately high while successful completion in these courses is extremely low (Figure 3.23).

**Figure J.17**

**Students of Color Test into Developmental Education Courses at a Significantly Higher Rate than Their Rate of Overall Enrollment**



Ethnicity	Fall 2009		Fall 2010		Fall 2011		Fall 2012		Fall 2013	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Hispanic/Latino	1,182	10%	1,479	11%	1,200	10%	1,220	10%	1,383	12%
American Indian	133	1%	151	1%	130	1%	143	1%	123	1%
Asian	734	6%	885	7%	868	7%	829	7%	786	7%
African American	422	4%	620	5%	613	5%	682	5%	602	5%
Hawaiian	0	0%	48	0%	61	0%	75	1%	61	1%
Caucasian	7,973	68%	8,389	65%	7,799	62%	7,436	59%	6,440	57%
International	29	0%	10	0%	10	0%	23	0%	42	0%
Multi-Race	19	0%	163	1%	408	3%	550	4%	648	6%
No Response	1,228	10%	1,134	9%	1,524	12%	1,601	13%	1,287	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,720</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,879</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,613</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,559</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,372</b>	<b>100%</b>



There was an average of 660 students over the past three years that placed into developmental education classes (reading, writing and/or math). Blacks make up 6% of the MHCC population and make up nearly 25% of those in developmental education courses. Hispanics, who make up 9% of the student population, represent 19% of students in developmental education courses.

Further, Black students are passing these courses, on average, less than 60% of the time. Below is a snapshot from 2012-2013, which shows extremely low rates of success by Black students in writing, but particularly in Math (Figure 3.24).

**Figure J.18**

**In 2012-2013 Black students pass rate was well below 60% in eight Lower Level Developmental Education Courses**

ENL094R	77.8%
ENL094W	81.8%
MTH010	39.6%
MTH020	38.6%
MTH060	36.2%
MTH065	58.8%
MTH095	43.6%
RD090	43.5%
SKD10	100.0%
WR080	45.1%
WR090	40.2%

With 73% of MHCC's students coming from within the district, the demographics of the MHCC's students mirror the demographics of its district. The Metro Data Resource Center (Portland metropolitan regional government responsible for land use planning among others) completed an analysis of population and demographic information for the MHCC service area, including projections through 2020. Based on the East County area (MHCC district plus contiguous area), the area's population of 477,000 in 2000 (2000 census data) will increase to over 630,000 in 2020. Major trends are summarized below.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

The college district will change as the region changes, becoming more diverse. In 1990, only 9% of the East County population was minority compared to 15% in 2010 (this is a conservative estimate since the minority population is probably undercounted). Hispanics and Asians will account for the majority of the growth in the minority population. Much of this growth is being fueled by in-migration, which accounts for the growing demand for English as Second Language courses. Ethnic/Race distribution by grade level provides a picture of changing demographics that will impact the college in future years. The most striking finding is the large percentage of Hispanic students at the lower grade levels. Since 25-30% of local high school students attend MHCC, one can see the impact that this will have on the future Ethnic/Race distribution of the MHCC student population. For all grades and area-wide, Hispanics currently account for 10% of the school enrollment. However, at the Kindergarten level, Hispanics account for 17% of enrollment, 16% for grade 1, 13% for grade 2 and 12% for grade 3.

**Household Income**

Based on 2013 data (U.S. Census), the average income in East County is \$54,367. East County has the highest absolute level of low-income households in the Metro area and a significantly lower jobs-to-household ratio. Poverty rates in MHCC's service area are very high; in fact, Multnomah County's unemployment rate was 9.1% in March 2011. The Oregon Employment Department projects that poverty rates are likely to become even higher as the economy continues to recover. The Oregon Department of Economic and Community Development reported a state unemployment rate of 10.0% in March 2011, which still places Multnomah County above national unemployment rates of 8.8%. Despite some gains Multnomah County has made overall, East County consistently continues to lag behind the rest of the metropolitan area. Given the steady movement of Multnomah County's poorer residents to East County neighborhoods, analysts predict that unemployment rates will continue to be higher in the service district as compared to Multnomah County as a whole.

**Children in Poverty**

The 2013 U.S. Census information reveals that roughly 17% of the children in Multnomah County live below the poverty level; eastern Multnomah County is home to a disproportionately large number (25%) of these economically disadvantaged families. For example, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, 42.3% of East County's largest city's (Gresham) single mothers with children under five years of age are living below the poverty line. Many of our feeder districts have disproportionately high numbers of

students in free and reduced lunch programs (70%), contributing to the need to support under-resourced students.

Based on income and other indicators (single parent households, public +assistance, children living in poverty, and overall poverty rate), the disadvantaged of East County are concentrated in the southwest corner of the district but also within pockets throughout the area. MHCC will continue to be challenged to facilitate upward mobility by a growing disadvantaged population.

## Student Interview Transcripts



## Order

Client	Christie Plinski
Order #	TC0183082448

How did we do?



If you rate this transcript 3 or below, this agent will not work on  
your future orders

- Christie :      Alright. So, Huda I'm gonna start this interview um, again my name is Christie Plinski um I'm conducting an a, an interview with students who have participated in the AVID Program at Mount Hood Community College and my intent in this is to just find out if AVID helped you. How AVID helped you. Okay?
- Huda:            Okay.
- Christie :      Okay. So I'm gonna ask you to start first with just introducing yourself just your first name only. Telling me a little bit about who you are um kinda your age ca-category
- Huda:            Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Christie :      And how you decided to come to college and how you decided to come here.
- Huda:            Okay. Um, my name is Huda [inaudible 00:00:42] and um, I have been here, I'm from Iraq.



- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I've been here in the United State uh since 2014 so when I came here I started my Junior year in high school. It was so hard cause I came with no English.
- Christie : Oh my goodness.
- Huda: And I was like crying every day because I don't understand like what the students say and like when they talk to me and um I'm sure them I don't even understand them.
- Christie : I can't even imagine how difficult that was.
- Huda: It was so hard but
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: I used to like study every day at home like just to learn English and like to understand people. I graduated in the time two years from high school. I worked hard. I used to stay after school every day just to get it done. Um, I have been on my own two years. This is my second year and you know because um, I'm a second language speaker so I was so scared of college but AVID Center helped me a lot.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: They helped me a lot, really. Like every time. I'm not, I'm a shy person. I'm not that person that ask questions but I feel so comfortable with them. They're like, they're like, they help a lot. They're so helpful, so I used to stay every day and work with them.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: [inaudible 00:01:58]
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: You know and I'm twenty years old. (Laughs)
- Christie : Okay. (Laughs) Well, you know I just have to say. I mean it gives me chills when I hear you talk about it.
- Huda: Mm-hmm (affirmative) - (laughs)

- Christie : Um, it just how much determination and courage you had. Your English is phenomenal.
- Huda: Thank you.
- Christie : I'm just I'm, I'm blown away. I really admire that. So what, what were your goals when you decided to come to Mount Hood?
- Huda: Uh, to get my Dental Hygiene degree.
- Christie : To get your what?
- Huda: My Dental Hygiene degree.
- Christie : Dental Hygiene. Okay and that's what you're currently in?
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I'm just taking the [inaudible 00:02:39] classes [inaudible 00:02:40]
- Christie : Yeah. Okay and uh how is that going for ya?
- Huda: Uh, I can't say easy cause nothing's easy but I'm trying. Like uh for my writing classes every time I go to the AVID Center or meet with a [inaudible 00:03:04] to correct grammars and you know. And yeah.
- Christie : Did you uh, when you first got here to Mount Hood, how did you, did you know that you had signed up for the Learning Community with AVID support?
- Huda: I came before the uh college start.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: And they told me about it.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: Uh, who Tim, you know him?
- Christie : Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

- Huda: I met him and he told me about this program, about the AVID Center and the classes that [inaudible 00:03:37]
- Christie : Right, right.
- Huda: Yeah and I was interesting because uh, that hard to take like a high level with the you know? [crosstalk 00:03:46]
- Christie : Without any support.
- Huda: Right and I just registered for the classes and I found that it's easier than this.
- Christie : Okay. So um, so you, you had taken the placement test here.
- Huda: Yeah, I did.
- Christie : And you placed into Writing 90?
- Huda: 90.
- Christie : Okay. Okay. Okay, um so I'm gonna shift gears just a little bit.
- Huda: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Christie : But tell me about your friends, your family how they supported you through high school coming to college. Moving here um, that must have been a really tough adjustment for all of you.
- Huda: They don't speak English so I'm the one that helped them with it. Helped them with everything. (Laughs) And that's the hardest thing.
- Christie : I bet.
- Huda: Yeah, I have oldest brother but they didn't attend high school.
- Christie : Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Huda: Um, the first one that I attended high school and I have older brothers too. I have seven brothers and I'm the only girl. (Laughs)
- Christie : (Laughs) Oh my gosh!

Huda: Um so um they support me but they do what they can. I mean I'm the one that helps them. (Laughs)

Christie : Yeah, yeah and did they go to college in Iraq?

Huda: Uh, my dad did but not my mom.

Christie : Okay and what did he finish a degree in Iraq?

Huda: He was, he was not in Iraq he was in Kuwait.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: And he finished high school there but oh he didn't attend college uh.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: He and then went back to Iraq.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: And uh my brother attended college but my mom now yes. She's late learning. She's in ESL classes.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: She just wants [inaudible 00:05:36] be. (Laughs)

Christie : I bet you help her with that too.

Huda: I do, yeah. All the time.

Christie : Wow, what a role.

Huda: (Laughs)

Christie : And you're trying to study too and...

Huda: Yeah, I have to. They need me.

Christie : Yeah, they they they do.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : Yeah and what a great role model you are for your younger brothers so do they help you financially with college?

Huda: Who?

Christie : Your parents.

Huda: Uh, what you mean exactly.

Christie : I mean do they pay for college tuition or give you money?

Huda: Uh, I work in the city.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: So.

Christie : And where do you work?

Huda: Uh, I do the work study here.

Christie : Oh work study. Got it, okay. Good for you.

Huda: It helped me.

Christie : Yeah.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : Yeah. You are one brave young woman.

Huda: (Laughs)

Christie : (Laughs) Good job.

Huda: Thank you.

Christie : Okay, so do you have friends that that help you here as well as family?

Huda: Uh, I got all my friend from the, the classes that I took. The Writing 90 (laughs). They're so, so cool. They know the, when I need help. They help me. They know that I like sometimes hard to...

Christie : Yeah.

- Huda: Understand things so they, they explain for me.
- Christie : Okay so when you met these, these students in the class and you had like um two to three classes together, right?
- Huda: Yeah, so the instructor was like she forced, she's not forcing us but she's like letting us talk to each other. Work as groups and that's what helped me a lot.
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: Made me like ask questions. Don't feel shy. Don't like...
- Christie : Yeah and if you had been in a class where it wasn't like a learning community you...
- Huda: I do know.
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: I, I'd never talk to students to be honest.
- Christie : And in, in the other classes you just go in and sit down and...
- Huda: Yeah, I'm and if I have question. I don't even ask I just go like to the instructor after class.
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : Very different.
- Huda: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Christie : So do you still see the students who are in your learning community.
- Huda: I do, yeah.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I do. Sometime, we still work in the AVID Center we just (laughs) and we see each other there.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: There, all the time.

Christie : Okay, so um do you and and how much do you work in the Work Study program?

Huda: Uh, this term um twelve hours a week.

Christie : Okay...and...

Huda: And I just found a new job. I'm gonna work on the weekend.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: So.

Christie : Wow. Is that off campus?

Huda: Uh-huh.

Christie : What is that doing?

Huda: Uh, cashier.

Christie : Good for you.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : Okay. It's gonna add a little to your schedule.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : (Laughs)

Huda: (Laughs)

Christie : Bless your heart. Alright, alright. Okay, so um. So when you first came to Mount Hood and you said you got here before the classes started.

Huda: In a few days, yeah.

Christie : Yeah.

- Huda: I was, I was, I didn't understand anything. I was like, I have to go to like ask, "How was that gonna work?"
- Christie : Uh-huh.
- Huda: And the, I just I don't, I don't remember who told me about the AVID Center. I was asking and someone took me there and I don't.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: Remember.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: And Tim. Uh.
- Christie : Tim.
- Huda: I mean not Tim, Matt. Sorry.
- Christie : Matt [inaudible 00:09:07]
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Huda: He explained me. He explained to me like everything. Help work. He make it, he made it easy. So yeah. It was.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: That was advising. [inaudible 00:09:20]
- Christie : Okay. And, and like describe your first day in the AVID supported class. The learning community.
- Huda: It was hard. The first day. (Laughs) I was scared and shy, don't talk to anyone but I told you the instructors were like, let us talk to each other. We had speech with them. I'm really not good in speech and presentations but I forced myself to do it and I'm good now. (Laughs)
- Christie : I can imagine. (Laughs) Okay, so what do you remember um about the AVID experience. You, you described you know meeting other students and and slowly getting more comfortable in talking with them and um



kinda getting to know them. Um, what else helped you in the AVID Center? The instructors, the support strategies?

Huda: Um, they started with us from the zero I mean even or schedule. They like they taught us how to do it and uh every time we, I need help I ask them and the student to like, I'm like. I feel like, my house. (Laughs) I know everybody.

Christie : Kind of like a family.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : Okay...Okay

Huda: They were so helpful. All them.

Christie : And did they, did they um. So they they kind of helped you with your schedule. How to understand what was going on at the college and how to...

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : Ask different places for help.

Huda: Yeah and if I don't understand anything they just made an appointment with me like...

Christie : Okay.

Huda: After class. They explained more like as a person. [inaudible 00:11:13]

Christie : So did you work primarily with who in the AVID Center?

Huda: I worked with Denise, with Sara a lot she's really helpful.

Christie : Yeah.

Huda: I worked with uh, Stephanie. I don't remember their name.

Christie : Matt.

Huda: Matt, yeah.

- Christie : Yeah, okay. Okay and then, and then in your classes did they teach you um strategies for being a, a better student like study strategies, organizational strategies?
- Huda: They did, yeah.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: The Writing 90, uh they did a lot. Like how to uh be organization. How to take like, how to study. How to make time for home, work, family, college.
- Christie : Has, has what they taught you, has that continued to help you?
- Huda: A lot.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I'm an organization person. (Laughs) I'm like...
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I know what to do.
- Christie : So if you could describe kind of um in one word or you know short phrase what AVID, here has helped you do. I mean how has it helped you be a, a better student?
- Huda: Oh.
- Christie : That's a, I know that's a big question.
- Huda: Successful. [inaudible 00:12:43] Yeah, um they made me successful. I know like I learned a lot of things...
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: From them.
- Christie : It sounds like you also learned um because of being in the AVID Learning Community, you you became more comfortable with the college and the process.
- Huda: Right.

Christie : Is that right?

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: I like. I don't feel shy anymore to ask questions. I just go ahead and ask.

Christie : Yeah. In the AVID Center?

Huda: In the AVID Center. (Laughs) I wanna go out now, different person.

Christie : Out now. So tell me then about that. Tell me um, your AVID Center classes lasted what, one term?

Huda: Uh, two term. Uh, two terms. Yeah.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: 90. Writing 90 and Writing 115.

Christie : Okay.

Huda: And the [inaudible 00:13:42] class which is [inaudible 00:13:42]

Christie : Yeah. [inaudible 00:13:43]D 100. Yeah. Very good class. So then when you um, how did your grades. How, how were your grades?

Huda: A's and B's.

Christie : A's and B's. (Laughs) Wow.

Huda: (Laughs)

Christie : And then when you got out of um Writing in 115, 90 and 115 and you progressed into other classes, how did that go for you?

Huda: It was hard but I go, like went well cause I told you every time I had like to write an essay I'd go to them first. They explained to me everything how, like how should I do it. And then when I write...

Christie : Yeah.

Huda: It I go back to them too to like correct my grammars, spelling and cause I worked [inaudible 00:14:26] so that.

Christie : Yeah.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : Yeah, so how did you do. Did you take writing 121?

Huda: I do. Now, I'm taking it now.

Christie : You're taking it now? How's that going for you?

Huda: I just got 10 out of 10 in my first essay (laughs).

Christie : Wow.

Huda: Cause I worked with Patricia and Larry so they're, they were so helpful.

Christie : Patricia.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : That's interesting. Patricia, um was a teacher for me at a high school where I was principal.

Huda: Really?

Christie : Long time ago.

Huda: Wow!

Christie : (Laughs)

Huda: She's, she's great.

Christie : She's, she's a character.

Huda: (Laughs) Yeah.

Christie : She's really good. Okay so you are, you just got a 10 out of 10 on the last essay.

Huda: Yeah.

- Christie : Good. How do you find the other um instructors who are not part of the Learning Community.
- Huda: I took uh, this is my second time I take Writing 121.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I took Writing, uh 121 last Spring term. Last term with Edward [inaudible 00:15:17].
- Christie : Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Huda: And he was not good, I mean every time I go up to him he's like, "It's not your native language. You should take ESL classes first to get to this level." I was like, "I know it's not my native language but I'm here cause I want my, yeah." I was like...
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: "Okay, I'm just gonna retake it."
- Christie : Yeah. So did you...
- Huda: But it goes well now.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I mean I'm good at it now.
- Christie : Okay. Obviously. (Laughs)
- Huda: (Laughs)
- Christie : Who do you have now?
- Huda: Uh, Robinson [inaudible 00:15:49]
- Christie : Okay. Okay. Alright, that's great. Um, so and and when you're in the other classes that are not the Learning Communities, you mentioned before that you don't talk to many people. You don't...
- Huda: I, I told you I'm not that person who like asks or talk to people.
- Christie : Uh-huh.

- Huda: But um so now with Writing 121, I don't talk to...
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: But my instructor, when asked to work he like would do the workshop every week so I'm like, "I have to do it."
- Christie : Okay. What's the workshop?
- Huda: The workshop is like if we write an essay, we have to bring four like four of my essay, four pages...
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: for four papers. And four person's gonna read mine and I'm gonna read like four for each.
- Christie : Oh, okay.
- Huda: One for each one.
- Christie : So you do it kind of in group.
- Huda: It's like yeah. Like that.
- Christie : Okay. Okay.
- Huda: I just remembered when it was like in the, where it's the AVID and the, this program (laughs) we used in that.
- Christie : Yes, yeah.
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : The group work, which really kind of helps. Other people see it and you get feedback.
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : Okay. What would you say is the biggest challenge for you to stay in college?

- Huda: Um, the only. The only one in my family that has the degree. (Laughs)  
Cause not one of them finishes college, get his degree. I just wanted them to be proud of me. (Laughs)
- Christie : Absolutely and I bet they are. So that just kind of leads me to another question. So your family, you graduated from high school. Um and you're, you're the first one in, and your family doesn't speak English. You're pretty much the a little tiny bits here and there but you're the only one who decided to go to college. What motivated you to go to college?
- Huda: First, I wanted my little brother to do the, cause I wanted them to study.
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: See me and like take that. Cause I didn't have anyone like, uh I didn't see anyone that went to college before me.
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: So and uh I love, I love study.
- Christie : Okay. How did you know you wanted to go into the Dental Hygiene?
- Huda: I just heard, it's a, it's a good job...
- Christie : Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Huda: And um, to be honest it didn't take a lot of time. Only two years.
- Christie : Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Huda: And that's what I want. Cause I feel it's hard to [inaudible 00:18:23] study like Dentist or something take like more than eight years.
- Christie : Yeah, yeah.
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : This is a, this is a first step and it is a well paying job and it's a career that can sustain you and if you choose to go on and get more education later you can. You've learned. You've made it. You've, you've accomplished that and your credits will transfer.
- Huda: Yeah.

- Christie : Good for you. Okay, um so tell me now about kinda your study strategies and time management. You learned some skills while you were in the AVID Center. Tell me how that's going for you now. Do you still use those?
- Huda: Yeah, I, I made my schedule every term. Like I just booked the study time which is Denise (laughs) she, she's the one that taught us this.
- Christie : She's good. I like her.
- Huda: Yeah so my study time, my fun time, my work. That's what I do. I just have my schedule in my room, everywhere. And my...
- Christie : Yeah so you can always see it.
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : And does it keep you focused?
- Huda: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Christie : Okay. And, and I know that um AVID teaches note-taking strategies. Do you remember that?
- Huda: Like you mean we took, we take notes?
- Christie : Yeah, and and I think they called them Cornell notes.
- Huda: Um.
- Christie : Maybe not.
- Huda: We did take notes but I don't know [inaudible 00:19:45]
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: But I don't [inaudible 00:19:46] that.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: I didn't.
- Christie : Yeah, that...



- Huda: I don't do it [inaudible 00:19:49]
- Christie : Yeah, that's fine. You but you learned some strategies that really helped you.
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : Okay. Certainly, connecting with others and managing your time and keeping yourself organized was very important to you. Okay. Um, if you could talk to a student like you...
- Huda: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Christie : Um, who is um, has only been here for a couple of years and is learning English and wants to come to college. What would you recommend?
- Huda: Uh, I have friends. She, it's her first year here.
- Christie : Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Huda: Or first term. I told her about the AVID Center.
- Christie : You did.
- Huda: Yeah. I was like, "Go there! They gonna help you. I'm not gonna help you that much cause they know more."
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: "and they will help you for sure." So she went to them and they were so helpful with her.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: She didn't know, even know how like to register for classes or how she, what she should do.
- Christie : And they helped her do it.
- Huda: I think she's okay now. She doesn't need me anymore. (Laughs)
- Christie : Well how nice though.
- Huda: Yeah.

- Christie : Do you think that um the other classes that you take, any of the other classes that you take would be more um satisfying and more helpful to you if they were AVID, um classes? Like a Learning Community?
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : Yeah?
- Huda: Yeah. For sure.
- Christie : Okay and why do you think so? What would be different?
- Huda: Cause they're so helpful. I told you. I asked them if there's like Writing 121 there too? They said, "No, you have to like.."
- Christie : Yeah. A be on you're own.
- Huda: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
- Christie : Which is really unfortunate.
- Huda: Yeah.
- Christie : So if, if you could tell Mount Hood Community College anything about helping students get through college and, and you know increase the graduation rate, what would you tell them?
- Huda: Mm. We really need things like AVID Center. I mean...
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: More like this program.
- Christie : Okay.
- Huda: Cause the students being success and like they're, they're doing good.
- Christie : That's really good. Okay, alright. Is there anything else that you wanna tell me, Huda?
- Huda: About college?
- Christie : About college, about um AVID Center, about your support, your family.

Huda: Well there's another thing. I wanna get, you asked me why you wanna like, why you attend college...

Christie : Right. Right.

Huda: I just wanna show the girls in my country that we can. (Laughs)

Christie : Good for you. You're an inspiration. Do you know that?

Huda: Thank you.

Christie : No, you truly are. I'm not just saying that. Um, it there's a lot of, a lot of people. Girls, guys, older people who just give up.

Huda: Yeah, especially girls there. They just like get married.

Christie : Yeah.

Huda: It's not their fault, I mean their families will.

Christie : It's the culture, right?

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : But you somehow pulled yourself in a different direction.

Huda: Yeah.

Christie : And you have the kind of um, strength of character that just...

Huda: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Christie : Doesn't stop. Boy, someday I, I bet I'm gonna be reading about you. (Laughs)

Huda: (Laughs)

Christie : I think that's terrific. I really do and I appreciate that. Alright, thank you. Tremendously.

Huda: Thank you.

Christie : It has been wonderful meeting you and talking with you.

- Huda: Thank you.
- Christie : You just kind of gave me chills throughout the entire interview. You know that?
- Huda: (Laughs) Thank you so much.
- Christie : It's so true. I'm just really impressed at how you've done and the AVID Center will continue to be here.
- Huda: Really?
- Christie : Yeah.
- Huda: Oh that's good to hear.
- Christie : The, the college part of my um.

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## Order

Client	Christie Plinski
Ref #	Christie Plinski
Order #	TC0352990192

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Speaker 1: Okay, can you start all over? (laughs)

Christian: Yeah. My name is Christian.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Christian: Uh I am 19 years old, just graduated out of uh Springwater Trail High School-

Speaker 1: Okay.

Christian: About two years ago. Um I decided to go to Mount Hood Community College because I've been wanting to go to a community college for a very long time, but I just did not decide what career I wanted to study for. Uh after my senior year, I started looking at doing internships through computer technology so I went to a computer force for about six

months at an internship, and decided that I wanted to do Cyber Security and Networking through-

Speaker 1: Oh good.

Christian: Through Mount Hood, because I heard Mount Hood has the best computer technology around and I wanted to take classes.

Speaker 1: Great, okay. So um, okay, just a sec, okay so how- how was your experience in high school? How did you-

Christian: My experience was up and down, but mostly pretty good. I enjoyed having a small, private, open school. Because uh the way you get into Springwater Trail is you have to write an essay, uh a two page essay to be exact, and then they uh interview you why you want to go to Springwater Trail and what would you represent them, and I represented the school really good. Uh and then after that, when you get accepted, um they'll rough draft you, so they'll pick up numbers because it's a fairly small class. They pick up maybe 100 students or so, but the class in total is like 250-300.

Speaker 1: The entire school?

Christian: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Man.

Christian: So it's not a lot of students.

Speaker 1: No.

Christian: So that was fairly nice to have.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Why did you want to go to Springwater Trail?

Christian: Uh I wasn't a fan of big schools because um back then in middle school, I was a really shy person, didn't know what to do. I was really struggling, and then Springwater really was a helpful place for me to like pick up my pace. And then from Springwater, I was trying out Mount Hood Community College because it wasn't a fairly big school, but it was a big school. I was like, okay, time for me to grow up and grow into a big college and here I am today and I am outstanced by this place.

- Speaker 1: Oh that's so good to hear. Well and congratulations. I mean you, you, it just sounds like you have you know, some real grit and determination about what you want to do and how to get there.
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: That's really impressive.
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Really, really impressive. So you talked a little bit about Springwater Trail being small.
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: About a total of 250 students. Um, was there, did the sense of community in that school help?
- Christian: The community was there. It was really helpful. All the teachers were, if you got stuck on something or anything, they'll help you out from time to time if they're open to their schedule. Uh some of the teachers over there, their, they have a place in my heart because they've been helping me through good and uh through thick and thin. Uh and they helped me throughout the whole way. But one of the teachers that I really remember was Mr Kramer, he was one of my writing teachers. He's- he's not here. He's all the way over there in Atlanta, because he moved to schools, but I still remember him and he still remembers me because I- I've been always working out in his class even though I got stuck most of the time and didn't run thoughts. He was the one that picked me up and run my memory through and get it all going.
- Speaker 1: It's sometimes those people that you make connections with during your educational journey that make a difference for you.
- Christian: Oh yes, um and while I was in avid center, this really opened my mind because I met Sarah, I met um Shawn McGenty, through my first year of uh college, I was really nervous, but those two people really opened my mind on my writing, my reading, it significantly improved by having both of them through- through my years of college so far.
- Speaker 1: Great. So did you- you must have had, did you place into like a writing 90?

- Christian: Right, I started off writing, I think it was 95 or 90.
- Speaker 1: Yeah.
- Christian: And then I um went up to 115.
- Speaker 1: Okay.
- Christian: And then I stopped at 115 currently because I'm working on my math, but I could be going as 121 right now. And uh but I want to take it easy because next year, or in the beginning of this year so far through fall or winter or spring term, I'll be starting my Cyber Security classes.
- Speaker 1: Have you done any of your-
- Christian: I did my Cyber Security classes last year, and they went really phenomenal. I enjoyed having those class keys and-
- Speaker 1: Good instructors, they're outstanding.
- Christian: Yeah good, good instructors. I remember one of them not being so good, but I- that's how teachers are.
- Speaker 1: Unfortunately, yeah.
- Christian: It made me drop two of my classes, which I really, really hated.
- Speaker 1: Why?
- Christian: It's because he laid up so much homework, and it had to be due by the next day at really early in the morning, I think at 8:30 in the morning he checks it. And it's just like, you know what, this is too much pressure, too much homework, and I just can't really do it. So I had to drop that class. Which one of the classes that I also dropped was the one that I really wanted to take, and really excited to take, with a really good instructor, instructor um, but I didn't have time to do it. And I felt really bad for that instructor and it just broke my heart. But I'm going to take it again because I have confidence and there's a new instructor too.
- Speaker 1: Okay that's great for you. You've just got that energy and grit, that's terrific.



- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Okay um, so- so your goals are to go into Cyber Security.
- Christian: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Speaker 1: And that means that when you finish the program here, you want to do, uh you want to work um on computer security at different places.
- Christian: Yeah um, one of the Mount Hood offers is once you graduated from Cyber Security and Networking, that you have a job opening at Sysco, in which I would love to do, but right now I'm currently working at Microchip.
- Speaker 1: Wow.
- Christian: Yeah and so I have documents and papers that I have to turn in later today at 12 in the, well in the afternoon. Um right now I'm a production support specialist, uh.
- Speaker 1: What's that? Tell me a little bit.
- Christian: Well production and support specialist is where we have to check out the product.
- Speaker 1: Oh okay.
- Christian: And we wear full on bunny suits, which is a full uniform covering our hands and everything, because what we're there dealing is some pretty private information with the little microchips, and they can have tons of them, which is a called a wafer, in which those are really expensive, and they keep their personal information that the company sends out through like big automotive or small like apple products or something like that um that they send through. And they get it, they put it on the phones or on the cars or anything. We just have to make sure that they're fine and ready to get shipped out, and just work on what I needed to get done for production.
- Speaker 1: And that's what you're doing now?
- Christian: Yes.

- Speaker 1: Man.
- Christian: Well not right now, but I will be starting on the 6th of November.
- Speaker 1: Wow good for you, that's exciting, okay.
- Christian: So I'm chasing my career.
- Speaker 1: Yeah you sure are. You sure are. I can really see a definite path. So November 6th?
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Okay.
- Christian: Which is a Monday.
- Speaker 1: Yeah, congratulations. That's exciting. That's going to be a balance of work and school and all of that.
- Christian: Oh yeah.
- Speaker 1: Okay so talk to me a little, a little bit about your family, your friends, um people outside of the college who supported you when you decided to go into college and how they supported you emotionally, financially, you know.
- Christian: Well about my parents, it's kind of really hard what I'm doing. Um currently, my parents are together, but I feel like that's not going to last because um during my years of birth and through now, they've been having troubles, uh well my dad's been telling me that he's been through divorcement with her, right now it's like three or four times. Um and the case is, well it's really personal, but I don't mind telling you, is that my mother's been cheating on my dad. And I knew through my birth years, but currently where I'm old and she came up to me and she said she wanted a divorce. But she didn't know, she just told me she didn't like my father. But the thing that she did was not really forgivable. Um what she did.
- Speaker 1: Yeah.

Christian: Uh she disrespected our family's name, and basically disrespected me in really harsh way that no child should ever disrespect their own father.

Speaker 1: That hurts.

Christian: And that really did hurt. And this was through my beginning of my first year of college.

Speaker 1: Oh my gosh.

Christian: So that really affected me, really bad. And Sarah, this is why Sarah and Shawn was, would have a heart in my place. They knew what was going on, they helped me through um my ways, and I still managed to successfully succeed their classes and obtain an A, and I got that class with a 4.0 GPA. Um and right now I have an avid hall of fame certificate there.

Speaker 1: Oh you do?

Christian: Yes. Because of during my avid center there, I tried my best, I tried to make a name for myself and I earned a hall of fame spot.

Speaker 1: Congratulations. You do have that grit, don't you?

Christian: Yeah.

Speaker 1: You're really a tough guy. And you know, you mentioned um that when you're in middle school, you were shy. And- and that you went to a small school because it kind of gave you more of a sense of-

Christian: More liberty and more people to talk to and it did open my mind, you know. Why I stay shy as there is a world update of the space board.

Speaker 1: Yeah. So it gave you kind of a sense of community.

Christian: Yeah, I'm still a little bit shy but I'm a little um more out the box now.

Speaker 1: Okay. Well being shy, I mean I have shy moments too.

Christian: Yeah, yeah. It's always good to be shy, but there's a certain effect, you know.

Speaker 1: Yeah, as you gain in your work world, your shyness will shift.

Christian: Yeah.

Speaker 1: That's good for you. And you've got the hall of fame certificate.

Christian: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So you-

Christian: I was really proud of that and I put my mom, my mother and my father were there, I told them. But I felt no family connection towards that.

Speaker 1: Okay, okay.

Christian: I mean they are my family, but I don't have connections with my mom. I really don't talk to her, because I mean, what she did doesn't deserve the level of my accomplishments toward her. So I felt like more accomplished through my father, and I like to show him the whole accomplishments that I did and everything, but more of a family is my friends that I have. My friends, my cousins, they have the family respect that they deserve and everything. And I do that for them and a little bit towards through my father and everything. But it's just that, I told my parents that, you're my family, but yet I grew up by myself. Obviously you guys throw me at places that I should follow, and not follow, and I follow them, not the way that they want to, but I have to make my own things.

So I'm making my-my own world, I'm making my own thoughts. What I should do, what I not should do. I just follow my dream, and my dream is to be a Cyber Security uh field and just be a really good person, get up there to the top, work my own company, you know. Be there like I wanted to work at Microsoft to be an IT technician. Maybe I can get there. All if I get there, I can go even higher, you know.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Christian: And I always put in my mind, it's like, I can always do better, I can always do better, I can always do better.

Speaker 1: It's a journey.

Christian: It's a journey. We take steps little by little, but we always get there to-

Speaker 1: Uh huh, especially when you have um supportive people around.

- Christian: Oh yeah.
- Speaker 1: And when you have um you know, the kind of support that you've had here.
- Christian: Oh yeah, um, I mean, I remember being bullied. I remember being you know, um being looked at as trash, you know. And I just, you know, I don't take offense to that. I feel- I take that as an accomplishment, you know.
- Speaker 1: Yourself-
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: As getting past that.
- Christian: Yeah, yeah. I see, it's like, you can call me like you know, like I- I'm a lazy person, you know I'm a- I'm a- you know something really hard- harmful to somebody, you know, but I look at that as like, you know, well what have you done?
- Speaker 1: Yeah.
- Christian: You know, I'm studying, I'm ... you know, looking towards my career, you know. I- I'm actually doing pretty good, what have you accomplished by just saying that he's a lazy person, you know?
- Speaker 1: Yeah.
- Christian: I work, I study, I manage my time very wisely, and I still have time to have fun here and there. You know, I'm practically a busy person. Uh, I go home, I study, I go to work. I have family to run, because right now basically my family is all over the place, and it's going to fall again, but I'm always the person that they always come to me. You know, I'm like a fatherhood to my brother, my sister, and my dad, you know, and my grandparents. My grandparents told me, you know, you're the one who's in charge because you're the one who acts like a real father. You know, all my teachers who have taught me through over the years, they looked as to me as you know, you're going to be a great father and a great person to seek advice, because you just, all the negativity, you take, you turn it into positive.

Speaker 1: So it's kind of how you view things, it's kind of how your mindset is.

Christian: I look through the world as a good place, even though it's really bad.

Speaker 1: Sometimes.

Christian: You know, life doesn't go your way, but always make it a good way.

Speaker 1: Yeah. That's a really- that's impressive. I really appreciate hearing that. Okay so then, when you got here ...

Christian: Yes.

Speaker 1: Um tell me a couple of things. First of all, how you felt about placing into um writing 90, reading 90, which was um a developmental ed class.

Christian: Well I didn't mind because high school was kind of rough through tough times and that's why Mr Kramer and all the people that work there, Ramsey and stuff like that, um they guide me. They knew also what was going on through my harsh times, and they pushed me around, and that makes me a little bit stumble, but like needs to push you around to get somewhere. And I'm glad that they pushed me around, I'm glad that they you know, had needed to do what to be myself. Um and through writing and reading, I always had a struggle with those. Math I was totally fine, math I can place anywhere I want, but I- the test said that I took math 60 and I was in math 90, I don't know, I don't know.

Speaker 1: Don't get me started on that one, as vice president of instruction here, that should not be happening, but I do know it does.

Christian: Yeah um, but I like taking math. But reading and writing was my hardest point, my weakness. And taking avid, it's a whole opportunity. I went to Math 90, 115, and there- they look at my writing and my reading and they see a significant improvement. You know, I love to learn. Uh learning has been difficult for me, but right now, it's been a big opportunity to learn a lot of stuff. There's a lot of things out there in the world to be learning upon, and I take that, you know, and I learn and I learn. I like to learn here and there, but there's a lot of stuff that we all like to learn, it's just too much.

Speaker 1: It is a journey.

- Christian: Yes.
- Speaker 1: You learn a little bit every day as you go.
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: If you're open to it. Some people are not open to it. Okay. So when you got into the avid center, and obviously you know, Sarah was a support, um and you placed into Matt, or Shawn McGenty's class.
- Christian: Well I was actually, Sarah was a teacher then.
- Speaker 1: Yes.
- Christian: Uh and I first saw her at Springwater Trail.
- Speaker 1: Oh you did?
- Christian: Yes. She was-
- Speaker 1: I didn't know that.
- Christian: She was speaking for avid, and I was like, at first I was like, I should, I've been through avid, I was like, I'm going to take it because avid through middle school was different, it was more like a study hall or whatever, and I didn't know Mount Hood Community College had a classes for avid. I was like, you know, I might as well try it. I don't know how it will go, if it will go good, if it will go bad, I took it, and I really glad I took it. It was a money saver, and you really do learn a lot. And the whole class, oh the whole class, the other acts just like a mini family, like right now I have some of my students still currently go to my class. You know, I have a PE class with two friends of mine, I mean, I always talk to them. We always hang out. They're just like my mini family.
- Speaker 1: And they were in the avid learning community with you?
- Christian: Yes, yes, yes.
- Speaker 1: Okay so so, you, when you talk about you know what avid, and being in the avid learning community provided you, so it gave you a sense of family here?

- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Okay, and-
- Christian: Mount Hood is a really respectful place, even in- even in the avid center.
- Speaker 1: It- it very much is. And um the avid center is kind of the hallmark of how you know, Mount Hood reaches out to students.
- Christian: Oh yeah, I took Mount- uh the avid classes and they were all respectful, you know, they're respectful people and they treat you like family.
- Speaker 1: Yeah that's, and that sometimes give you the courage um and the motivation to go forward.
- Christian: Yeah, what kind of college you know isn't valued family? And that's what a college should be you know, valued family, talk to each other. I mean I was a shy person, now I'm just out there interviewing you know, and just talking to people, so I- this is a big step, you know? Just getting out there, being, talking, just getting idea.
- Speaker 1: Making friends?
- Christian: Making friends. Back then I would just sit in a corner.
- Speaker 1: Yeah.
- Christian: Not even talk to anybody, just eat my lunch, go to school.
- Speaker 1: And you know, the sad thing is that that's what a lot of students do. Particularly the students who are the first in their family to go to college. They don't know what the college is all about.
- Christian: Yeah, me and my cousin, we are the first ones to ever be in step foot in a college, in a United States college. Because my parents, they're from Mexico. His parents, they're from Mexico. I mean, I don't know if they've been to college or not, but we're actually the first people to ever step on a United States Community College, or some sort of college. So for us, it's a big step, and we're making a great future. Um right now, he's also working, I mean he's also in a Mount Hood Community student. So he's a student here. He's following my career, but he's making a twist to it. Um he wants to follow a different career, but it follows my career. Um and



we're working together. He's actually working at Microchip, he's the one that got me the job.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Christian: You know, he helped me through it. We like to help each other out.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Christian: Because we want to represent our you know, um family tree, so what we can make ourselves into.

Speaker 1: Okay, and I really appreciate that. I think that that's very important. Um so was he in the avid center?

Christian: He was not in the avid center. I told him to be in the avid center because you know, it was a really good place to go, and it also saves money. But he was taking several classes so ...

Speaker 1: Okay yeah, so he- he just went. And- and so how have your grades been since you started college that first term, in the learning community, and then past that?

Christian: Um, it's been going up and down, but uh through the whole uh first year of taking that, both of those classes, um I was not taking the avid center, I was taking my major.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Christian: Because I wanted to focus on it a little bit. But that was my weakest point because my emotional problems and my homework problems that the teacher was giving me was really confusing and I- it dropped, but I raised it up. So by the end of the term on that year, I was, almost a 4.0 GPA.

Speaker 1: By the end of your first year?

Christian: Mm-hmm (affirmative) almost a 4.0 GPA, yeah. Besides those two classes that I had to withdraw.

Speaker 1: Right.

- Christian: So this year is going so far, I'm starting off to a slow start but I'm really picking myself up at the pace. So I was like weeks worth of homework, I finished it all in one day. I like to say, when it comes to math, I'll study for it. It's just, my time is really limited.
- Speaker 1: Yeah.
- Christian: So when I have the time, I just focus on it, complete it, and just stay home and enjoy my day.
- Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative) okay. So when you're in the- the learning community and had the avid support, um and did you um learn things in the avid center that helped you manage your time, study better?
- Christian: Oh yes, uh Sarah, when I was taking her class, we had a little planner, which this planner was, okay so check how much free time, check how much homework time we have so I- if I worked at my new job, so if I was working from six in the afternoon, at six in the morning, and I had to go to class from seven in the morning to 10 in the morning, uh how much time do I have to eat, how much time to have spend sleep and homework. Just organize that for that Monday or Tuesday, you know, check your time limit because you know, if I go to work from Thursday to Friday, um make that list, how much time you have homework, and if you have Monday and Tuesday, how much time do you have to do homework, and you can get caught up in advance. Just-
- Speaker 1: So you, they kind of helped you to look at your-
- Christian: Weekly schedule.
- Speaker 1: Your weekly schedule. And development something that could help you plan?
- Christian: Yeah. And I have that in my memory, like okay, I'm off at this time, I have to go to this interview, or I have to be at this place at an allotted time, how much time do I have to do my homework, how much time do I have to sleep, you know. Just manage a timely wise manner to do what I want.
- Speaker 1: And that seemed to really help you?
- Christian: Oh yeah, she's the one that really helped me through organize my life. And then she did um what values that I have.

- Speaker 1: Tell me a little bit about that.
- Christian: Um what we did is um, what values do we have and that was you know, what values you have that are strong, and which values you have that are weak, and you can continue on. My values were you know, I like to work hard, I like to study, I like to you know, just do the normal, basic routines. And what my weaknesses were, you know, having to manage time to sleep, having you know, time to do sort of my homework because I work here and there. I'm just a busy person. I like to be an open person having time. So I'm just like, you know, time for me is really not a goal. Just finding time to do anything is what I should really worry about, and I've been managing my time like if I have my homework, can I give myself two hours to do homework? Just you know.
- Speaker 1: Yeah wow, and Sarah helped you organize that?
- Christian: Yes.
- Speaker 1: So- so did they teach you other skills like note taking and-
- Christian: Note taking, yes. We did quarter notes, we have regular notes, notes uh that I didn't even know.
- Speaker 1: Okay.
- Christian: So note taking was a part of it. Um what else, we did uh reminders, uh a lot of stuff that I- I can't really remember-
- Speaker 1: Yeah, but it's sort of integrated into your-
- Christian: It um, well in the beginning it's like, what makes a better person? We had a book I- I rented it from there. Um but it that book taught me to be a more professional person towards work ethic or student ethic, just make myself a better person.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Okay. So avid was really helpful for you?
- Christian: Yes avid was really helpful.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Okay. Um all right, let me see, I kind of got off my questions here a little bit.

- Christian: It's okay.
- Speaker 1: It's so interesting talking to you. Um okay, so and what time, are we on track for time?
- Christian: Uh we're 11:28.
- Speaker 1: Okay
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: All right, so I'll hurry. Um so for how are you paying for college?
- Christian: Um FAFSA paying for me, but right now um I was a very late person and I turned my FAFSA really late, so I'm just waiting for them to respond, because I turned everything in, my parents, their picture, because it doesn't have social security because he wasn't from here, which I understand that. I turned in that form really late, but I turned it into the FAFSA student union here. Um but I don't know how long it's going to take for them to respond so I'm kind of running late on paying that, but I know FAFSA going to pay for it.
- Speaker 1: Yeah, they usually do.
- Christian: Yeah, so I'm just waiting on that, just for them to respond. Uh but FAFSA has been paying the whole thing.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Good. That helps.
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Um okay, uh so what would you say, I mean you've talked sort of globally about um some of the challenges that you faced um through all your educational experiences and as you've gotten here. What would you say were your biggest challenges?
- Christian: My biggest challenges was me controlling my emotional, because I am an emotional person, I do show my emotions. But I also do hide my emotions. It's just getting out to certain person, just, just try to talk to somebody. You know, and for me that's been really hard, because you know, I don't get out a lot and everything so when I do get to talk, I talk

to my best friends, or some of my college friends. You know just, and talk to my professors.

Speaker 1: And how has that been?

Christian: It's been going good. You know, since that whole mess, mess up through my whole parents divorcement and everything, I talked to Sarah, I talked to Shawn, I talked to David Ponias, my writing class.

Speaker 1: David is great.

Christian: Yes, he's a really great teacher. He's a really great writing instructor. I like him. Um I talked to them and they just helped me, they helped me guide and it's like, if I need counseling. I did try to go to counseling. Um I had like in middle school, I really had a really bad depression and I went to counseling, and she told me to go to Mexico, and Mexico really opened my eyes towards reality, instead of being you know, thinking.

Speaker 1: So the counselor told you to go to Mexico?

Christian: Yeah because um for here you know, I was stuck.

Speaker 1: Uh huh.

Christian: I was, my cage was being home.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Christian: I felt like a bird trapped in a cage. I didn't know where to go, I didn't know how to get out. You know and going to Mexico was uh letting the cage out. And I experienced, because where we live is a poor neighborhood, it's not even a neighborhood, it's a little small village, not a city, it's out. You know, the big part of major Mexico. It's just a little, tiny village, and it taught me how people are, how people treat each other, you know, since it's a small village, small people, they work together. Um and for me, it's just like you know if I live family circumstance you know, my parents are working, my dad is just trying to pick us up. You know, I was just like, you know, why can't I pick them up? But right now, I'm picking myself up because you should worry about yourself than worry about others.

Speaker 1: Especially at your age.

Christian: Yes.

Speaker 1: I mean, and it's, you, and I'm sorry if I get a little, I'm a counselor by training, but um you know what it sounds like is that you are finding yourself.

Christian: Yes.

Speaker 1: And-and who you are. And- and then getting- making sure that you don't get sidetracked-

Christian: Yes.

Speaker 1: Is really important. But also providing support and community.

Christian: Yeah um like if my friends are in trouble or anything where they need to be counseled, they talk to me. You know, I love to help others at the same, but I'm great by myself more. So if something comes up about myself, I will take care of it.

Speaker 1: Good for you.

Christian: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Okay. All right. Let's get through this. Um so you've talked a lot about your um study um techniques and how that's kind of improved, especially with time management.

Christian: Yes.

Speaker 1: Um if you were um in a position to talk to students entering Mount Hood, who had a very similar kind of life as you, and struggles and challenges, what would you tell them?

Christian: Well I did go to, I think Sarah- uh you know how they have summer grades, stuff like that, Sarah invited me to go talk to the people. Um and I was like, sure I'd be glad to talk to people about how Mount Hood should be. You know, Mount Hood should be an eye opener for you guys, you know, just be out there. I mean, it's going to be scary at first, obviously when you enter new school, you're going to be- have that nervous feeling, it's like, I don't have any friends, I don't have anybody to talk to, but you should really not feel that way because Mount Hood and avid

center really helps you out. It makes you basically a family member to you know, to the students, to the teachers, you just feel like you're at the place.

This is the place where you should make yourself something that you really are. And for me, it's been hard through what I'm dealing with, but what I'm dealing with shouldn't be my business, and I should be dealing with my school. Because your school is going to lead you to your life, and not your personal problems. Because your personal problems is going to be here and there, but you know it's going to be gone. So why not cherish your studying time, than just be partying out there, you know. I know it's going to be lame, but this is adulthood. It's time to be acting like adults and start doing what you need to be doing, because at the end, you're the one becoming a surgeon, becoming a Cyber Security, becoming something that you want to become instead of something that you're just going to regret your whole life.

Speaker 1: You would be an outstanding representative to talk to any incoming Mount Hood student.

Christian: Yes and I was not like this. I was a shy person not talking to anybody, you know. Just looking up to somebody. But now I just look up to myself just like, you know, you're doing good. You should follow what you're doing and continue to be a great person.

Speaker 1: You know, you um kind of bring tears to my eyes. (laughs)

Christian: It's okay.

Speaker 1: It's really, really um, I think, you know, the challenges for students um, any student coming to college for the first time, but a student who is first in their family and feels, has some of the family challenges that you had had.

Christian: Oh yeah.

Speaker 1: It can be very isolating.

Christian: Oh yeah.

Speaker 1: And it's safer to kind of tuck in.

- Christian: Yeah I've- I don't want to tuck in. I want to get out there, I want to talk to, you know, somebody, you know, just be out there.
- Speaker 1: I'm really impressed.
- Christian: Yeah. I try to make my name into something. I don't want to be isolated, you know, I want to make a name for myself. And that's what I've been doing here at college, there are Springwater, you know, I was a big part of, you know, something. I got a 4.0 GPA- or no 3.0 GPA or higher, which is a B or higher.
- Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christian: And then I was- I also got an award there for the city hall, I met the mayor, I met you know, everybody, uh I think I was- I don't remember the award that I got, but it was a big achievement that day.
- Speaker 1: Wow.
- Christian: Yeah I made a mark at that school and then continue to make marks everywhere.
- Speaker 1: And your quiet strength.
- Christian: Yes.
- Speaker 1: That's really impressive.
- Christian: Yes.
- Speaker 1: And that's why I think you would make a tremendous role model for so many students coming in.
- Christian: Oh yeah.
- Speaker 1: I'm really, brings tears to my eyes.
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Anything else you want to tell me about your experience here or with avid or um what you're thinking about after you finish your classes and your coursework here?



- Christian: Well try not to be shy, just get out there. Talk to your teachers, talk to your students, get out there. You know, don't be that shy person. You know, if you see that shy person, just talk to them, just walk, because you know, Mount Hood cherish people, you know, people walk out of here with diplomas, or they just do it again. Or if not, they just might go to their dreams. Because I mean, adulthood is really hard. We do have jobs, we do have kids, we have you know-
- Speaker 1: Financial.
- Christian: Yeah, just problems everywhere. But don't let your problems take advantage of you. Take this time to advantage on your study, you know, because at the end of the day, you're the one benefitting your family, your kids, your criminal record, you know, just anything. You know, take something good and make it better, instead of making something worse.
- Speaker 1: That's good.
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Okay. All right. Christian, thank you so very much, it's been wonderful meeting with you. Um if you ever need a reference at Courtland State University, uh-
- Christian: Um I was, is it, is it? I want to take uh, I think it's at Courtland State University, oh no, Oregon State University. I want to go there, yeah.
- Speaker 1: Oregon State, I know people down there as well.
- Christian: Yeah yeah, after I graduate from here, um my next goal is to go to Oregon State University-
- Speaker 1: Okay.
- Christian: Because my professors told me that Oregon State University does offer Internet Security classes.
- Speaker 1: Yes.
- Christian: And once I get the Sysco job or Microchip job, I want to continue to be better.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Christian: You know, because better's always better. You know, because um while taking Microchip, you have to take this test, and I thought it was like, I was like, man I'm not going to make it, or I'm not going to do it if- you know, I set a small goal. Setting small goals is really important. It's like, if I can get a bronze, I'll be perfect. I'll be in the Microchip job and everything. I set a goal. And for me, I was really shocked because I set a small goal, and I outdid it. You know, setting small goals won't always complete your accomplishment of what you're completing. But it's like, if I'm going to do a one mile walk, you can do that one mile walk. And then if you're just like, well can I do two? If you do two, if you can do higher. Setting- little by little, setting those baby steps really comes into an adult step, you know.

Speaker 1: And you kind of just keep nudging yourself.

Christian: Yeah you can't- yeah.

Speaker 1: And you also, I think it's the mindset, you know, looking- how you look at life and how you look at who you are in this life.

Christian: Yeah, don't- don't just say like I'm a failure in life. You're not a failure to life, you have something that you- you should be out there.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative) and it's all within you.

Christian: Yeah, you have to rely on yourself.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Christian: This is you know, find yourself before you find others, you know.

Speaker 1: So um you can always ask Sarah for my name, my phone number, if you want any kind of a recommendation.

Christian: All right.

Speaker 1: I'm happy to do that.

Christian: Okay.

- Speaker 1: Uh again, you know I've been an educator for 40 years at almost every level, and ... well actually at every level, and um uh finishing my doctorate, so I have lots of contacts at PSU, OSU-
- Christian: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: And I mentor, I have a student that um I supervised who was a student teacher that I supervised last year, and now she-she's actually from China, and she got through her teaching, and then she moved to Utah to find a job, and it really was hard for her because of the cultural changes and differences.
- Christian: Oh yeah.
- Speaker 1: So I continue to kind of mentor her. So let me know, anytime.
- Christian: All right. Thank you.
- Speaker 1: You bet. It's been very, very good to meet and talk with you. Good luck, and I have no doubt that someday I'm going to be-

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## Order

Client	Christie Plinski
Ref #	Nyasia interview
Order #	TC0995290909

How did we do?



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- Christie P.: All right, [Houda 00:00:01], I'm going to start this interview. Again, my name is Christie Plinski. I'm conducting an interview with students who have participated in the AVID program at Mt. Hood Community College. My intent in this is to just find out if AVID helped you, how AVID helped you, okay?
- Houda Mansour: Okay.
- Christie P.: Okay. I'm going to ask you to start first with just introducing yourself, just your first name only, telling me a little bit about who you are, your age category, how you decided to come to college, and how you decided to come here.
- Houda Mansour: Okay. My name is Houda [Mansour 00:00:43], and I'm from Iraq, I've been here in the United States since 2014. When I came here, I started my junior year in high school. It was so hard because I came with no English.
- Christie P.: Oh, my gosh.

- Houda Mansour: I was crying every day because I don't understand what the students say and when they talked to me, I'm sure I don't even understand them.
- Christie P.: I can't even imagine how difficult that was.
- Houda Mansour: It was so hard. I used to study every day at home just to learn English and understand people. I graduated in the time two years from high school. I worked hard. I used to stay after school every day just to get it done. I have been at Mt. Hood two years, this is my second year. Because I'm a second language speaker, so I was so scared for college, but AVID Center helped me a lot. They helped me a lot, really, every time ... I'm a shy person, I'm not that person that ask questions, but I feel so comfortable with them. They help a lot, they're so helpful. I used to stay every day and work with them.
- Christie P.: Okay.
- Houda Mansour: And I'm 20 years old.
- Christie P.: Okay. Well, it gives me chills when I hear you talk about it, just how much determination and courage you have. Your English is phenomenal.
- Houda Mansour: Thank you.
- Christie P.: I'm blown away. I really admire that. What were your goals when you decided to come to Mt. Hood?
- Houda Mansour: To get my dental hygiene degree.
- Christie P.: To get your what?
- Houda Mansour: My dental hygiene degree.
- Christie P.: Dental hygiene, okay. That's what you're currently in?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: Okay.

- Houda Mansour: I'm just taking the pre-req classes now, and then.
- Christie P.: Okay. How is that going for you?
- Houda Mansour: I can't say easy, because nothing easy, but I'm trying. For my writing classes, every time I come to the AVID Center or meet with a special tutoring to correct grammars, and yeah.
- Christie P.: When you first got here to Mt. Hood, did you know that you had signed up for the learning community with AVID support?
- Houda Mansour: I came before the college start, and they told me about it. Tim, you know him?
- Christie P.: Uh-huh (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Houda Mansour: I meet him, and he told me about this program, about the AVID Center and the classes, the Friday night tutoring. I was interesting because the hard to take, the high level with the ... you know?
- Christie P.: Without any support.
- Houda Mansour: Right. I just registered for the classes, and I found is easier than those.
- Christie P.: Okay. So you had taken the placement test here?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, I did.
- Christie P.: And you placed into Writing 90?
- Houda Mansour: 90.
- Christie P.: Okay. I'm going to shift gears just a little bit, but tell me about your friends, your family, how they supported you through high school, coming to college, moving here. That must have been a really tough adjustment for all of you.
- Houda Mansour: They don't speak English, so I'm the one that help them with everything. That's the hardest thing.
- Christie P.: I bet.

- Houda Mansour: Yeah, I have oldest brother, but they didn't attend high school. I'm the first one that attended high school, and I have other brothers, too. I have seven brothers, and I'm the only girl. They support me, but they do what they can. I'm the one that helps them.
- Christie P.: Yeah. Did they go to college in Iraq?
- Houda Mansour: My dad did, but not my mom.
- Christie P.: Okay. What did he finish a degree in, in Iraq?
- Houda Mansour: It was not in Iraq. It was in Kuwait, and he finished high school there, but he didn't attend college. He went back to Iraq. Now, my brother attended college, but my mom now, yeah, she's learning. She's in ESL classes. She just wants to speak.
- Christie P.: I bet you help her with that, too.
- Houda Mansour: I do, yeah. All the time.
- Christie P.: Wow, what a role. And you're trying to study, too.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, I have to. They need me.
- Christie P.: They do.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: Yeah, and what a great role model you are for your younger brothers. Do they help you financially with college?
- Houda Mansour: Who?
- Christie P.: Your parents.
- Houda Mansour: What do you mean exactly?
- Christie P.: Do they pay for college tuition or give you money?
- Houda Mansour: I work and study.
- Christie P.: And where do you work?

- Houda Mansour: I do the work-study here.
- Christie P.: Oh, work-study. Got it. Okay. Good for you.
- Houda Mansour: It helped me.
- Christie P.: Yeah. You are one brave young woman, tough. Okay. So do you have friends that help you here as well as family?
- Houda Mansour: I got all my friends from the classes that I took, the Writing 90. They're so cool. They know that when I need help, they help me. They know that I'm sometimes hard to understand things, so they explain for me.
- Christie P.: So when you met these students in the class, and you had two to three classes together, right?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah. The instructor was like, she's not the first thing as, but she's letting us talk to each other, work as groups. That's what helped me a lot, make me ask questions, don't be shy.
- Christie P.: And if you had been in a class where it wasn't like a learning community, you ...?
- Houda Mansour: I do now. I'm not a talk student, to be honest.
- Christie P.: In the other classes, you just go in and sit down?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, and if I have questions, I don't even ask, I just go to the instructor after class.
- Christie P.: Very different. So do you still see the students who were in your learning community?
- Houda Mansour: I do, yeah. I do. Sometimes we still work in the AVID Center. We see each other there all the time.
- Christie P.: Okay. How much do you work in the work-study program?
- Houda Mansour: This term, 12 hours a week. I just found a new job, and I work on the weekend.
- Christie P.: Okay. Wow. Is that off campus?



- Houda Mansour: Uh-huh (affirmative).
- Christie P.: What is that doing?
- Houda Mansour: Cashier.
- Christie P.: Good for you. Okay. That's going to add a little to your schedule.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: Bless your heart, all right.
- So when you first came to Mt. Hood, and you said you got here before the classes started.
- Houda Mansour: In a few days, yeah. I didn't understand anything. I was like, I have to go to ask how is that going to work? I don't remember who told me about the AVID Center. I was asking, and someone took me there. I don't remember. And Matt-
- Christie P.: Matt [Veener 00:09:08]?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, Matt. He explained to me everything, how it worked. He made it easy, so yeah. Matt was advising [inaudible 00:09:20].
- Christie P.: Okay. Describe your first day in the AVID-supported class, the learning community.
- Houda Mansour: It was hard the first day. I was scared and shy, don't talk to anyone, but I told you the instructors let us talk to each other. We had speech, which I'm not really good in speech, presentations, but I forced myself to do it, and I'm good now.
- Christie P.: I can imagine. What do you remember about the AVID experience? You described meeting other students and slowly getting more comfortable and talking with them, and getting to know them. What else helped you in the AVID Center? The instructors? The support strategies?
- Houda Mansour: They started with us from the zero, even our schedule, they taught us how to do it. Every time I need help, I ask them and the students. I feel like my house there, I know everybody.

- Christie P.: Kind of like a family.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, mm-hmm (affirmative). They were so helpful, all of them.
- Christie P.: So they helped you with your schedule, how to understand what was going on at the college, and how to ask different places for help.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, and if I don't understand anything, they just made an appointment with me after class, they explained more, just a person.
- Christie P.: Did you work primarily with who in the AVID Center?
- Houda Mansour: I worked with Denise, with Sarah a lot, she's really helpful. I worked with Stephanie, I don't remember their name.
- Christie P.: Matt?
- Houda Mansour: Matt, yeah.
- Christie P.: And then in your classes, did they teach you strategies for being a better student, like study strategies, organizational strategies?
- Houda Mansour: They did, yeah. The Writing 90, they did a lot, like how to be organization, how to study, how to make time for homework, family, college.
- Christie P.: Has what they taught you, has that continued to help you?
- Houda Mansour: A lot. I'm organization person now about what to do.
- Christie P.: If you could describe in one word or short phrase what AVID here has helped you do, how has it helped you be a better student?
- Houda Mansour: Huh.
- Christie P.: I know, that's a big question.
- Houda Mansour: Successful. They made me successful, I know. I learned a lot of things from them.

- Christie P.: It sounds like you also learned because of being in the AVID learning community, you became more comfortable with the college and the process. Is that right?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah. I don't feel shy anymore to ask questions. I just go ahead and ask.
- Christie P.: Yeah, in the AVID Center?
- Houda Mansour: In the AVID Center, but when I go out now, different person.
- Christie P.: So tell me then about that. Tell me, your AVID Center classes lasted what, one term?
- Houda Mansour: Two terms, Writing 90 and Writing 115, and the college success class, which is the only [crosstalk 00:13:43].
- Christie P.: HD 100, yeah. Very good class. So then, how were your grades?
- Houda Mansour: A's and B's.
- Christie P.: A's and B's. Wow. And then when you got out of Writing 90 and 115, and you progressed into other classes, how did that go for you?
- Houda Mansour: It was hard, but it went well because I told you, every time I have to write an essay, I go to them first. They explain to me everything, how should I do it, and then when I write it I go back to them too, to correct my grammars, spelling. Because I work on it, so that's why. Yeah.
- Christie P.: So how did you do? Did you take Writing 121?
- Houda Mansour: I do now. I'm taking it now.
- Christie P.: You're taking it now? How's that going for you?
- Houda Mansour: I just got 10 out of 10 on my first essay.
- Christie P.: Wow.
- Houda Mansour: Because I worked with Patricia and Larry, so they were so helpful.

- Christie P.: Patricia?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: That's interesting. Patricia was a teacher for me at a high school where I was principal.
- Houda Mansour: Really?
- Christie P.: A long time ago.
- Houda Mansour: Wow. She's good.
- Christie P.: She's a character. She's really good. Okay, so you just got a 10 out of 10 on the last essay.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: Good. How do you find the other instructors who are not part of the learning community?
- Houda Mansour: This is my second time I take Writing 121. I took Writing 121 last spring term, last term, with Edward [Duval 00:15:17], and he was not good. I mean, every time I go up to him, he's like, "It's not your native language. You should take ESL classes first to get to this level." I was like, "I know it's not my native language, but I'm here because I want to learn." Yeah. I was like, okay, I'm just going to retake it. But it goes well now. I'm good in it now.
- Christie P.: Obviously. Who do you have now?
- Houda Mansour: Robinson Matthew.
- Christie P.: Okay, all right. That's great. And when you're in the other classes that are not the learning communities, you mentioned before that you don't talk to many people, you don't ...
- Houda Mansour: I told you, I'm not that person who asks or talk to people, so now with Writing 121, I don't talk to. But my instructor wants us to work, he will do the workshop every week, so I'm like, I have to do it.

- Christie P.: Okay. What's the workshop?
- Houda Mansour: The workshop, it's like if we write an essay, we have to bring of my essay four pages of four papers, and four person's going to read mine, and I'm going to read four for each one.
- Christie P.: Okay, so you kind of do it in group?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, like that. I just remembered, when I was in the AVID, and this program, we used to do that.
- Christie P.: Yes. Yeah, the group work, which really helps. Other people see it, and you get feedback.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: What would you say is the biggest challenge for you to stay in college?
- Houda Mansour: The only one in my family that has a degree, because no one, they finishes college and get his degree. I just want them to be proud of me.
- Christie P.: Absolutely, and I bet they are. So that just leads me to another question. Your family, you graduated from high school, and you're the first one. Your family doesn't speak English, you're pretty much ... little, tiny bits here and there, but you're the only one that decided to go to college. What motivated you to go to college?
- Houda Mansour: First, I wanted my little brother to do that, because I wanted him to study, see, and that, because I didn't have anyone. I didn't see anyone that went to college before me. And I love to study.
- Christie P.: Okay. How did you know you wanted to go into the dental hygiene?
- Houda Mansour: I just heard it's a good job, and to be honest it didn't take a lot of time, only two years, and that's what I want. I feel it's hard to study dentist or something, take more than eight years.

- Christie P.: Yeah. This is a first step, and it is a well-paying job, and it's a career that can sustain you. If you choose to go on and get more education later, you can. You've learned. You've made it. You've accomplished that, and your credits will transfer. Good for you.
- So tell me now about your study strategies and time management. You learned some skills while you were in the AVID Center. Tell me how that's going for you now. Do you still use those?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, I make my schedule every term. The study time, which is Dee's, she's the one that taught this.
- Christie P.: She's good. I like her.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah. So my study time, my fun time, my work. That's what I do, I just have my schedule in my room everywhere.
- Christie P.: Yeah, so you can always see it.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: And does it keep you focused?
- Houda Mansour: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie P.: Okay. And I know that AVID teaches note taking strategies. Do you remember that?
- Houda Mansour: Like, you mean we take notes?
- Christie P.: Yeah. I think they called them Cornell notes? Maybe not.
- Houda Mansour: We did take notes, but I would say I'm not that ... I didn't take. I don't do it.
- Christie P.: That's fine. But you learned some strategies that really helped you?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: Okay. Certainly connecting with others and managing your time and keeping yourself organized was very important to you. If you

could talk to a student like you who has only been here for a couple of years and is learning English and wants to come to college, what would you recommend?

Houda Mansour: I have friends, it's her first year here, her first term. I told her about the AVID Center.

Christie P.: You did?

Houda Mansour: Yeah, I was like, "Go there. They're going to help you. I'm not going to help you that much, because they know more, and they will help you for sure." So she went to them, and they were so helpful with her. She didn't know even how to register for classes or what she should do.

Christie P.: And they helped her do those?

Houda Mansour: I think she's okay now. She doesn't need me anymore.

Christie P.: How nice though. Do you think that the other classes that you take, any of the other classes that you take would be more satisfying and more helpful to you if they were AVID classes like a learning community?

Houda Mansour: Yeah.

Christie P.: Yeah?

Houda Mansour: Yeah, I'm sure.

Christie P.: Why do you think so? What would be different?

Houda Mansour: They're so helpful, I told you. I asked them if there's Writing 121 there, too. They said no, you have to ...

Christie P.: Yeah, be on your own, which is really unfortunate. If you could tell Mt. Hood Community College anything about helping students get through college and increase the graduation rate, what would you tell them?

Houda Mansour: We really need things like AVID Center, more like this program, because the student being success, and they're doing good.

- Christie P.: That's really good. Is there anything else that you want to tell me, Houda?
- Houda Mansour: About college?
- Christie P.: About college, about AVID Center, about your support, your family?
- Houda Mansour: There's another thing. You asked me why I attend college. I just want to show the girls in my country that we can.
- Christie P.: Good for you. You're an inspiration, do you know that?
- Houda Mansour: Thank you.
- Christie P.: No, you truly are. I'm not just saying that. There's a lot of people, girls, guys, older people, who just give up.
- Houda Mansour: Yeah, especially girls there, they just like, get married. It's not their fault. I mean, their families [crosstalk 00:22:44].
- Christie P.: It's the culture, right?
- Houda Mansour: Yeah.
- Christie P.: But you somehow pulled yourself in a different direction, and you have the kind of strength of character that just doesn't stop. Someday, I bet I'm going to be reading about you. I think that's terrific. I really do, and I appreciate that.
- All right. Thank you, tremendously. It has been wonderful meeting you and talking with you. You just kind of gave me chills throughout the entire interview, you know that?
- Houda Mansour: Thank you so much.
- Christie P.: It's so true. I'm just really impressed at how you've done, and the AVID Center will continue to be here.
- Houda Mansour: Really? That's good to hear.
- Christie P.: The college, part of my-



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## Order

Client	Christie Plinski
Ref #	Christie Plinski
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Christie: Okay. Um, so I've introduced myself, Christie Plinski and I'm finishing a doctorate on the impact of higher education on students' persistence, progression, and um, feeling connected and, and cohesive to the college. So, I'm gonna, the interview is really kind of, um, low key, and I don't ask any super personal questions. I just want you guys to feel free to tell me whatever experiences you have had, um, what brought you to the college, et cetera. So, I have a set of questions, kind of a semi structured interview. I use those to guide us. Um, you guys are free to tell me whatever comes up as well. Is that okay?

Jessica: Yep.

Christie: Alright. So, we've got the tape recorder going. The first question is, um, each of you tell me a little bit about yourself, start with your, your first name only. Um, what, uh, what brought you to college, um, what your goals are, what you're hoping to accomplish, um, who you are as a human being. And by the way I also have to take notes. Years and years ago I used to be a paralegal, too. I've lived long life. (laughs)

Jessica: (laughs)

Christie: Okay. Which one?

Jessica: I'll go first.

Christie: Okay.

Jessica: So, my name is Jessica, um, I decided to come to Mt. Hood because I kind of wanted to experience something new. I kind of didn't want to stay home. I wanted- (laughs) like I said, I wanted to get some adventure. And I was either gonna go here, PCC or go to, I forgot what's the community college down there in Corvallis?

Christie: Oh, um, um, oh gosh. Uh-

Jessica: Linn Benton?

Christie: Linn Benton. Yes, yes.

Jessica: Something like that?

Christie: Yes.

Jessica: Because my best friend was down there.

Christie: Okay.

Jessica: And I weighed out my options, I knew I didn't want to stay home. (laughs) And then I figured Corvallis was too far, PCC was in the middle of downtown and I didn't want that, so I kind of narrowed it back down to Mt. Hood. I came last year to new student welcome day with my dad. And I kind of got the feel of what Mt. Hood had to offer. And I liked it, so I was like, okay this is something, like, something I want to do. And so I decided to make the big move down to Gresham. And it was life changing, just in general. Um, I, when I got, when I took my college placement test I didn't, first of all I don't test good. And I got placed into reading and writing 90 and it said, like, LC, LSC and AVID. And I was like, AVID sounded familiar 'cause they had it at my high school but I-

Christie: Which high school did you go to?

Jessica: Hood River Valley High School.

- Christie: Okay, okay.
- Jessica: Yeah. And um, but the, the learning community was new to me.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jessica: And I was fortunate to have Sean McGinty and Sarah as, 'cause I also had to take an HD 100 C class. And I kind of, I honestly, that was probably my (laughs) full year after I completed my year here at Mt. Hood I was like, I like it. I was like, the, the AVID and the learning community opened, like, opened so many doors. And I'm still very close with Matt Frena, Sarah, um, not really like Sean McGinty 'cause he was like, obviously just a teacher. Um, but Sarah and Matt, like, I, I still keep in contact with Matt. I'm gonna be actually talking about, he, he and this other student that goes here are gonna be going to like a, learn- I think we're gonna try to push more learning communities for um, like, writing 121, 122, try to get a math. And I, I personally 'cause, I kind of have a soft spot for that, so he kind of, Matt, I think saw that in me. And I was like, I've always told him, always since last year, I was like, there needs to be a writing 121 learning community.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jessica: 'Cause I told him, you will probably see more success in those than an actual classroom.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jessica: And he's like, okay and I got approached with that, so, like I said, the learning community and AVID has opened several doors from me.
- Christie: That's great.
- Jessica: And I do miss is a lot, (laughs) because it's like, I go into my regular classes and I'm like, this is not like the learning communities. (laughs)
- Christie: So, so, before we get into, into Juan, tell me what is different then? When feels different about the other classes than the AVID learning community that you were in?
- Jessica: The AVID learning community you felt closer to the instructors because you're in there, for writing 90 I was from 12 to 4:30. (laughs) It was long,

but I remember that. And Sean was super nice, Sarah was super nice, they were willing to get to know you persona- like person to person, not just instructor to a student. And I pretty much said like, being out of the learning community, you know your teacher, but they don't want to go beyond that extra milestone, that learning communities and the AVID center does.

Christie: Okay. Okay. (silence) Okay, perfect. Alright, thank you. Um, and Juan do you want to tell me a little bit about you?

Juan: Yeah. So, my name is Juan. Um, and the reason why I chose Mt. Hood, um, or I came here is because I was a, back in high school I was doing this program called Cal, where we would, or it stands for Center for Advanced Learning.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: And basically it was an area for students that would wanted to go into nursing, dental hygiene-

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: Or uh-

Christie: Career fields.

Juan: Yeah, career fields, different types of career fields. And uh, I was taking classes there that were, um, core chords with, uh, Mt. Hood so I was like, why not come to Mt. Hood, my credits are already going there. And then, going to community college, it's cheaper than going to university, 'cause I didn't want to start off with debt and all that, so I came to Mt. Hood because it was, um, it was very diverse. It's relatively really close to where I live, so I don't have to worry about like, driving, or leaving really early to get to class, or getting to a parking spot. And-

Christie: Well it still is a challenge getting a parking spot.

Juan: Yeah, it's still a challenge to get a parking spot but-

Christie: (laughs)

Juan: I mean, I don't drive, I get dropped off. So it'd be more easier for me.

Christie: Yeah.

Juan: But once I drive, yeah a spot's gonna be a problem.

Christie: Yeah.

Juan: But yeah, um, I chose to, 'cause it's really close, um, I really love it here. I've been here for three years now.

Christie: Okay.

Juan: I'm still loving it. Um, also with AVID, um, I didn't know about, too much about AVID when I came into college because, I've seen it, 'cause I first learned about it in middle school. And I didn't really pay attention much to it. Um, high school I was also kind of a part of AVID around high school, um, and it kind of got me more interested in coming into, uh, seeing if college had one.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: And Mt. Hood had one and I know not many, very, like, universities have them but usually community colleges will.

Christie: Not yet, but I'm pushing. (laughs)

Juan: (laughs) But yeah, I was glad that they have an AVID here, 'cause once I got here, um, it really opened up my, um, it was really, like I didn't expect to pick as, when I came to college, I heard all about like, it's gonna be hard. Uh, you're not gonna have any friends, or more like, um, more like, it's gonna be like, you're gonna be on your own and everything. But once you come to AVID, it really like, uh, better, like, myself coming to school. Like, I would be always, um, like I would be like, the one person that, that like, would be kind of like, shy to talk to people. And when I got to AVID, it opened up, it pretty much like, invaded my space bubble and I just opened up to talk to a lot of people, become friends. 'Cause especially with that whole, like, you have three classes with the same instructor, well not the same instructor, same students.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- Juan: Same students, but different instructors, it really felt, made me felt closer like, doing study groups with people in that class 'cause you would know them throughout the whole, uh, term.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: Um, and also, um, with AVID it really helped me with my grades, because the teachers really care about you, like, I had this one instructor named Dave and he was really like-
- Christie: Dave Pontese?
- Juan: Yeah, he was amazing. I'm like-
- Christie: He's terrific.
- Juan: Like, I even told him like, I was um, called up for a whole speech here that they did a while back. And I mentioned him that he was one of my inspirations to be here because he really cared about his students. And he really like, got you to think about deeper meaning and keeping an open mind in life, and he really helped me out a lot and I really appreciated everything he's done for me. Um, but, te- instructors like him make me, like, love Mt. Hood and just make me love like, the AVID community. 'Cause he really made a huge impact in my, uh, coming here to Mt. Hood.
- Christie: Okay. That's great. Thank you. Okay, super. Um, alright. So, um, you guys talked a little bit about, um, what motivated you to come here to Mt. Hood. Tell me a little bit about your career goals. You talked a little bit about it, Jessica, maybe mentioned it a little bit. But tell me a little, go a little deeper.
- Jessica: Um, for my career goals, I, (laughs) I wanted to be a teacher originally, but it was something I, I still have a passion for. I, my, like I say I have a soft spot for, the help kids.
- Christie: Yeah.
- Jessica: And I, one thing that Matt told me the other day, he's like, you, you speak for what you, what you want. And I was like, oh thanks. (laughs) Um, but recently I actually just switched my, um, my major to business management with marketing and, it's, not gonna lie, the classes seem

hard and I'm (laughs) probably gonna have a couple meltdowns, but, um, one thing that I, I know Mt. Hood has a good relationship with Eastern Oregon.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica: And I know it's teaching and business that they offer here.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica: And I was like, that's kind of cool. I wanted to do teaching, and now I want to do business. So I was like, can't remember who told me but I think it's half the price if you're actually gonna go something around there.

Christie: Yeah. Well, and, and so you know, going into a community college first, your first two years, your, the credits are aligned so you can transfer your credits and be working towards your, your bachelor's degree kind of simultaneously. So, we're trying, we had been, when I was here trying to establish partnerships with PSU. We've got some kind of in the works as well. So I would, it's really beneficial for students, makes a lot of sense. So, sorry, go ahead.

Jessica: Um, and then, I just kind of, 'cause I kind of figured with my previous jobs that I've had, I'd kind of like to, like to sell stuff. (laughs) And I worked at a shoe company and it kind of opened up my eyes, I was like, do I really want to sit in a desk for eight plus hours doing paperwork, and obviously you have to do paperwork for a job. But I kind of told myself, I was like, I like talking to people, I like, I don't know. Just, it goes well with me and I did really good at selling shoes for example. And um, I just got a different job and I, people keep telling me like, it comes natural to you. And I'm like, thank you. (laughs)

Christie: That's good. That's nice to hear.

Jessica: Yeah, and um, so that's one thing that, that's my, as of right now, hopefully it does not change. That's my career goals.

Christie: Okay. Okay, and Juan?

Juan: Um, so for me, I wanted to start off with um, doing dental.



- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: [inaudible 00:12:03] it really opened up my eyes a little bit of like, um, could I have someone that was a [inaudible 00:12:08] for dental and I kind of like, oh that's a pretty cool career.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: Um, I got into it, um, but what kind of, I felt like I kind of got out of the dental, the whole dentistry thing because, um, for us when we were doing it, we, some of the like, the people in the class wouldn't get their work done and we were kind of falling behind. And we missed opportunity to go to like, job shadow people or go out to actually see how they do it. And it kind of made me lose kind of a little bit of interest of it.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: So, I just, at the moment I'm still kind of opened up to like, looking for a career. Like, I still kind of want to do something with like, maybe in the medical field.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: Or if not, maybe in education. Like, I've always wanted to, uh, either teach history 'cause I'm, I love history. And then also, since I'm a sports person, I also like soccer, so maybe coaching or being a PE teacher. So, I'm still kind of open, but something to do with like, teaching would be something I'd probably want to do.
- Christie: Okay. Excellent. Alright. Thank you guys. Okay, so um, tell me a little bit about how friends and family supported you, um, about getting into college. You and I have talked before haven't we Jessica?
- Jessica: You look familiar.
- Christie: Yes.
- Jessica: (laughs)

- Christie: Yes, 'cause I remember a little bit. Okay. Anyway, so tell me a little about how your friends and family supported you on um, entering college financially, support systems, that sort of thing.
- Jessica: Oh, okay. Um, well I'm the youngest, there's, I have an older sister. And she decided to stay home for a good two years there and not pay rent. (laughs) And just get school done there, and I, I was fortunate to get the Oregon promise, thank god I still have it. But um, that's one thing that really helped me come here. Um, was able to have my school paid for and the only thing I had to worry about was paying rent. And I'm not gonna lie, I did have a lot of people say, Jessica, you're the youngest one, you're not gonna succeed. And um, just because of like, my previous, my past in the high, in high school, like, like, what they say, from the hair of your skinny chin, chin or something like that.
- Christie: (laughs)
- Jessica: I barely graduated high school.
- Christie: Okay, okay.
- Jessica: Um, but they're like, Jessica, like you just need to stay home, focus on school, don't pay rent, go to, get a job. And uh, just stay home. And I'm one of those that, if you tell me not to do something I'll do the opposite and I'll do it. (laughs) And um, my parents were very supportive, they still are. Last year I was here for ten months, under my lease. Now I'm here for a year. So I'm doing that extra two months. (laughs) Um, they're still very supportive. They, um, even though it's just an hour difference - hour away from home, being a college student does get expensive.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jessica: And they've always told me, if you want to come home, but don't have enough gas money, like, just don't worry about it. We'll fill up your car when you get home. Um, super supportive when it comes to, like, the simplest things, but like, groceries, those things are expensive. (laughs)
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative). (laughs)
- Jessica: Last year was an eye opener for me, and it's still very expensive.
- Christie: Yeah.

- Jessica: And my mom, to this day she tells me, there's one thing you have to worry about is your school. She's like, the rest is pretty much history. My dad says, everything, the rest is history but um, they've been always supportive. My sister's, um, we're only 18 months apart and we're super close. I pretty much go for her, like for anything 'cause she just actually finished her associate's of science, and she's going to Concordia University for the 16 month nursing program.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jessica: So, she kind of gets me more than my parents do but my parents never went to college. My mom graduated high school, my dad didn't go past the sixth grade. (laughs) Um, so they don't really have much knowledge in the educational background. But um, it's just, my dad has always told me something, try to be better than us, but in a good way. So, like, they've al- to this day, they're very supportive. But there's also those people that tell me, Jessica you're still crazy. I'm like, I know. (Laughs)
- Christie: (laughs) Yeah. I get the same thing sometimes. (laughs)
- Jessica: (laughs)
- Christie: Okay, Juan, tell me about you.
- Juan: Well um, my inspiration or love, support from friends and family, well we'll start off, um, my family like, cousin wise, like, they have all gone to college. Uh, they've gone to like, PSU, University of Portland, Concordia. Uh, I even have one that's gonna be going to Columbia University too, so it's-
- Christie: Wow.
- Juan: Yeah, so I've got all that inspiration from them going to college because it's, it seems like it was like, it's a family thing, we're all going to college.
- Christie: Okay.
- Juan: And that really opened up my eyes, like, like, yeah we need to be well educated. Um, for me, my parents, they never got the opportunity to go to college. They, they were born in Mexico, um, they came here, my mom came here when she was young. But my dad came here later on, but uh, my mom, as far as she got into high school, but she didn't completed high

school. My dad, uh, kind of the same story he didn't like, go farther than the, than middle school, just, elementary school 'cause he would have to work with my, with my grandpa who, rest in peace.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: Is gone. Um, but, uh, basically they gave me, they sacrificed their life to come over here to bring me, me and my brother a better life. And coming to college is the, like one of the things I'm, I'm doing, uh, to like, get a better career, get better educated so that way I can repay them back for everything they've done for me. And also, um, my brother, it's also another eye opener for him so that he shows that, if I'm going to college, I want him to do it too because he-

Christie: So he's younger?

Juan: Yes, he's younger. I have a younger brother so I am the oldest one.

Christie: Okay.

Juan: But I want him to, to know that college is possible. Like, no matter how much, no matter how much hard work, no matter how long it takes, it's possible. You can get it done as long as you can put the work into it, you can do it. And I did it all for them, for my family, for my friends, for, and everyone. I did it for everyone. I did it for people that, uh, don't get the opportunity to do it and I, just showing them that it's possible to come to college. And with me, with learning disability it becomes a harder thing. And I also show that it is possible with a learning disability that you can go to college. You can achieve anything.

Christie: That's very true. Anybody, anybody, everybody needs to. Okay. Thank you. Okay, um, so, how much do both of you work outside at your jobs?

Jessica: Oh.

Christie: Or if you have jobs.

Jessica: Well, being, being a full time student, in student government, having to put at least 12 hours a week in office or they'll say-

Christie: Right.

- Jessica: Get your hours in. (laughs) Um, I work about, it ranges from like 18 to 24 hours a week.
- Christie: Okay, which is still a stretch with all that you have on your plate.
- Jessica: It is. Yeah, it's, um, there's, I actually recently had to call in from uh, from work. I was like, I can't. I told them, I was like, I have mid- I have two big midterms coming up, I can't afford to not study. And they kind of were like, okay 'cause nobody really goes to school where I work, 'cause they're like, 20s, 30s, um, and so it's kind of like, I don't know. They kind of, I don't know. I get like a weird feeling when I tell them I can't go to work because of school. They kind of look at me weird. Um, but I'm like, I don't care. (laughs) Yeah, it's a lot on my plate.
- Christie: Yeah. Yeah, it is. It's a lot of balancing. Okay. Juan, what about you?
- Juan: I would say the same, like, anywhere from my time range from working in student government plus school, like, with homework, it'll range anywhere from like, 16 to 18 hours. I don't have a job after- I mean I'm sorry-
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: After the student government because I feel like, student government is my job and I don't want to have anything else taken away from, or like, kind of like mess me up a little bit. Because I feel like school, then, then work and school, and then also family is a lot of manage.
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: And getting another job is gonna be completely just like, you're just basically killing yourself. Uh, in a sense of like, 'cause it's been, it's been, there's been, there's a saying like, jobs can kill you 'cause you're working yourself too much.
- Christie: (laughs)
- Juan: So, I didn't want to work myself too much. I'd rather, I just want to balance everything so that way it wouldn't be too much overload for me.
- Christie: Okay, great. Smart. (laughs)

- Juan: (laughs)
- Christie: Um, okay.
- Jessica: Very smart.
- Christie: Yeah, sometimes it's not always possible, but it's, you know, certainly saves you a lot of headache. Okay, um, so if you had to identify one person out of the college who is your greatest support for college? What, who would you identify?
- Jessica: Juan? (laughs)
- Christie: Yeah, I mean if you can. If not it's okay.
- Jessica: Um, gosh.
- Christie: (laughs)
- Jessica: Is it, can I do two?
- Christie: Sure, yeah you can.
- Jessica: I, I mean, like my main person that has been like, in college - that's a faculty member?
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative), anyone. Anyone. I mean, this question is primarily anyone outside of the college who has been-
- Jessica: Outside.
- Christie: Your primary support, or primary supports. And then we'll get into the college question.
- Jessica: Um, I'm just gonna go with my, I can't do one, my mom, my dad, and my sister.
- Christie: Okay.
- Jessica: Um, just because, like I said, moving out when I was, like, 18, it was like, my dad was like not, 'cause like, the total of four of us, like we're very close. Like super close.

- Christie: Yeah.
- Jessica: And my dad was, to like, to this day he won't really eat dinners because he sees an empty chair. Um, but, definitely my family. Like, words will never describe how grateful I am to have those three.
- Christie: That's really good. Okay, and Juan?
- Juan: I'm gonna have to piggy back, um, that one-
- Christie: Okay.
- Juan: Because I feel like family is the biggest support. Um, like, even though my parents have not gone to college, even my brother [inaudible 00:23:13] even though they haven't gone to college, they still are willing to offer to help me with either, homework, even to look at it and still like give me some moral support. Um, like, with my dad, like, he's good at math and sometimes I need help with math, even though he's not gone to like, college or high school or middle school-
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: He's still good at math. And he still helps me out. My brother even, even though he's not even at my level, but like, sometimes he'll like forget stuff, he even helps me with some math as well, which is, like I say, kind of embarrassing, but I mean-
- Jessica: (laughs)
- Juan: Hey, you might need those.
- Christie: Yeah.
- Juan: Like, they're still supportive, they're always there for me no matter what. Um, and I really appreciate them for that.
- Christie: Okay, great. Okay. Thank you. Alright, so, who do you, who do you feel within the college, and you guys have kind of mentioned this a little bit, who's your biggest support or supporters within college?
- Jessica: Definitely Matt, Matt Forena and Sarah.

- Christie: Okay.
- Jessica: Um, it was Audrey Fischer when she was here. Uh, but definitely Matt because now that I've been in student government I see his face a lot more often because like, I, I have to sit in like, council meetings for access and diversity. And I have to sit in those, um, I was also part of the commencement speech?
- Christie: Oh, were you?
- Juan: The con- convocation?
- Jessica: Convocation.
- Christie: Convocation?
- Jessica: Okay.
- Christie: (laughs)
- Jessica: Um, convocation, I was part of that, and then um, I think Matt liked what I said. And like, he, um, another student here also, like I said, he uh, he told me, he was like, I want you to speak for the students, and I was like, okay. I have no problem doing that. (laughs) And, like, I've known him ever since I was that little 18 year old that was wandering in Mt. Hood Community College.
- Christie: Yeah.
- Jessica: Had no friends, had nobody here. Um, Matt has definitely been a big supporter. And then Sarah, she's in general just like, an awesome person.
- Christie: Yeah.
- Jessica: Um, when I was in the learning communities I was a lot closer to her, but now unfortunately, like, student government, like I saw her the other day and I was like, whoa haven't seen you in a while, Sarah. And we just talked and caught up and then she emailed me about this one and I was like, oh I'll do it. Like, I don't, I'm always willing to talk. (laughs)
- Christie: (laughs)



- Jessica: Um, definitely those two within the faculty.
- Christie: Yeah. That's terrific. And Juan?
- Juan: Um, just that I'm not gonna piggy back off.
- Jessica: (laughs)
- Christie: (laughs)
- Juan: Totally different person. Um, I haven't mentioned her, but the person that's really, uh, had an impact on me here at Mt. Hood for like, the last two years I've been here, is uh, Jessica Reese.
- Christie: Oh yeah.
- Juan: 'Cause I worked with, and saw her, given the tours. Um, she has really been a go- really well inspiration on me because she would always uh, would like, check on me how I'm doing. Um, I would call her like, my second mom 'cause she was literally like a mom figure to me 'cause she was always there to support me no matter what. And um, she was basically my big, big supporter. That's all I have to say, 'cause I don't think there's words that can describe how amazing she is.
- Christie: She's pretty good.
- Juan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie: She really is. Okay, alright. So, um, tell me a little bit, both of you, each of you, about your AVID experience, the learning communities, the AVID experience, how that, um, impacted your learning, how it was different perhaps than what you had experienced before or not.
- Jessica: Um, first off, I think every community college and university should have an AVID and a learning communities, um, just because college is not, not easy. And I also feel like it's not meant to be easy. It's higher education. But going from writing 90, writing 115, um, and then going to writing 121, I'd rather, in a heartbeat, I'd rather prefer my writing 90 and my writing 115 than my writing 121.
- Christie: Okay.

- Jessica: Um, just because the teacher wasn't, she wasn't willing to do that extra milestone-
- Christie: The one in 121?
- Jessica: Yeah.
- Christie: Okay.
- Jessica: Um, because she was, I called her the off the wall teacher because she would, she was just something else. Um, and I just, I mean, obviously I have to take the class but I didn't care for the teacher. But my writing 115 and my writing 90 teachers, like, I actually, like, I knew the people in my class, they, I got really close with them. I'm actually, my roommate is a, I met her through writing 90 and we had classes the whole year last year. And she's now my roommate. And then I'm also really close with a girl, she left to Western, and I still keep in contact with her. So, I think that, just in general, the teach- the teaching style in a learning community in a the AVID, is much more better than a regular.
- Christie: Okay. Okay, and Juan?
- Juan: I would say if, if um, the AVID community would be teaching every class I would prefer that. Like, if it was possible, I would love for AVID community to be teaching, um, or having all the classes together. Because it felt like, with the AVID community they really made sure that you want to feel comfortable with everyone around your surroundings and make sure that the teachers will actually have a close connection with you rather than other instructors. Um, uh, I have had the privilege to have teachers that do care, without the AVID community, I did have teachers that do care about their students. And some didn't, but if, if it were to be possible that AVID would like, have the whole school be part of it, I would so take it because-
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: Um, without their help and support, like, um, I wouldn't, like, I feel like without them it would, college would have been a little bit more difficult. But thanks to them, they really opened up my eyes and got me ready for what, what after AVID was gonna be. Like, they, uh, after taking the whole AVID I've gotten all straight As from their program. Um, and it's really helped me, um, and got my GPA really high and it really opened up,

uh, being on the dean's list and everything. And it really like made, just made me really like, excited about college and like, really opened up my eyes and, and thinking like, like I can make it far because AVID helped me with all this.

Christie: Okay. Do you know there are two other community colleges and the state of Oregon now that are becoming AVID schools?

Jessica: Which ones?

Juan: PCC is one of them?

Christie: No.

Juan: No? CCC?

Christie: No. (laughs)

Juan: I'll keep throwing stuff out there.

Christie: Good guesses. Uh, Linn Benton, and um, Chemeketa in Salem.

Juan: Oh.

Christie: Yeah. And they are, uh, in fact I'm working with Linn Benton to kind of establish their AVID program, which is, um, yeah.

Juan: So, if you would have went to Linn Benton you probably would have gotten some AVID over there.

Christie: Well, not yet.

Juan: Oh, not-

Christie: They're just now unfolding it and they're only starting it in the tutoring center, so it hasn't even, they're looking-

Jessica: Expanded.

Christie: Yeah, but they're looking at developing, um, guided pathways, which we had been doing here when I was here, and then they kind of, it kind of got lost. Um, but they're looking at getting guided pathways and AVID just fits perfectly into that. So, and then integrating AVID into the guided

pathways model so that every student has a clear pathway, and doesn't have to look at the schedule every term and say, what do I take? You know, I mean, it just becomes a little easier. But, and University of Oregon is actually looking at developing a learning community with AVID.

Juan: Wow.

Christie: Yeah, so, that's, that's a good thing. We're hopeful. Um, okay, so what were, um, the biggest challenges for each of you in staying in college? 'Cause that's always a challenge as well.

Jessica: Um, biggest challenges for staying in college? Definitely money.

Christie: Okay.

Jessica: Um, like I said I was fortunate to have the Oregon promise my first year. But if, personally, if like, Oregon promise would have had that option, like, pretend like that was the base of going, like your first two years. Having almost like a branch of like, it's Oregon promise to pay for your school, but it also will pay for like, say your books, that are, I don't know why they're so expensive.

Christie: Right.

Jessica: Uh, and then like, have like, a little funding money towards, if you're moving out, like, have that little, like, cushion I like to say with, um, say rent.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica: 'Cause rent's also really expensive here in Gresham, Troutdale area.

Christie: Yeah.

Jessica: And definitely money and having that, like, having that, how do I say it? Not having my parents there.

Christie: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Jessica: Uh, because, like I moved out and I was kind of like, I like to say testing the waters. And there was like, several times where I was like, oh my god I cannot handle this. I just want to go home, like, there was several times

actually, I called my mom and I was like, mom I want to go home. And she's like, no. You're gonna be staying down there, Jessica. And I was like, okay. Tough love, got it. (laughs) Um, but definitely not having my parents there was a big one because I was so used to them having them, like, for example - little simple things, like, every time I would come home from school, or every time I came home from work, like, my mom always had cooked meals for us. And like, I have to go to my apartment, cook my own meals, clean my own apartment, clean my own room, do my own laundry - I did my own laundry, but just like, little simple things.

Christie: Yeah, yeah. It's balancing a bigger world.

Jessica: Yeah.

Christie: On your own.

Jessica: Like, I like to say adulting.

Christie: Yes. (laughs)

Jessica: At a very young age.

Christie: That's, that's a good, good adjective.

Jessica: (laughs)

Christie: (laughs) Okay, and Juan?

Juan: I'd have to say the same thing, money would be the one thing because, um, for me it was not really a big issue when I came because, um, I would soar as one of the opportunities that would help you pay your college for the whole year and that really got me intrigued and get into it. 'Cause I didn't get the, the opportunity to get the Oregon promise 'cause I enlisted happened after the year I graduated, so.

Christie: Yeah, that's right. That was pre-

Juan: But I feel like thanks to programs like soar and student government, those really opened up my, um, my doors to coming here to school. And having, having them pay for it so that way I don't have to really worry about the money issue. But if anything, if I didn't have any of those opportunities, money would be one of the things that would be, uh, the

issue. 'Cause like she, like Jessica said, like, rent, and all that is really expensive here. Um, for me I have the, I am very privileged to, to be living at home 'cause um, in the house we live, we live, we actually got a big house for a reason. We have like, a 12 bedroom house.

Christie: Wow.

Jessica: Jeez.

Juan: Yeah.

Christie: (laughs)

Juan: 'Cause we live with my grandparents-

Christie: Yeah.

Juan: 'cause we actually were kind of homeless from our house 'cause we couldn't pay it off so we sold it and moved in with my grandparents.

Christie: Yeah.

Juan: And we bought a whole house together so now we live in a big house with the ranch in the back, so, um, I'm very privileged-

Christie: Yeah.

Juan: And glad to be living at home 'cause, uh, 'cause I help around, so it's kind of like my repaying, like help around, uh, help feed animals in the back and all that.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: So, um, yeah.

Christie: Okay, so that's a bit of your job too.

Juan: Yep.

Christie: Yeah.

Juan: Farming isn't [inaudible 00:35:23]

- Christie: (laughs) Okay. Alright. Thank you guys. Um, okay. I think you guys have talked a little bit about prior school experiences. Um, high school, how you did it. And you mentioned that you barely graduated and-
- Jessica: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie: You had some struggles, you went to Cal. Um, but, and you knew a little bit about AVID, but it was really when you got here you found the supports? Okay. Okay, so talk a little bit about your study strategies and time management.
- Jessica: (laughs)
- Christie: (laughs) Okay.
- Juan: We actually had to write a paper about stuff like this.
- Christie: Oh.
- Jessica: (laughs)
- Christie: Okay. So-
- Juan: Do you want us to-
- Christie: Right off the top of your head. (laughs)
- Jessica: Um, time management, I'm horrible at it. (laughs) I try to be better but I get distracted very easily. Uh, studying habits aren't the best. (laughs) I, say like my friends invite me to go somewhere and I'm like, okay. And then midway through it's like nine o'clock at night and I'm like, uh oh. I have homework due tomorrow at eight AM. It's gonna be a long night. (laughs)
- Christie: (laughs)
- Jessica: Um, so time management, studying skills, not the best.
- Christie: Okay, so did AVID help you with those?
- Jessica: Yes. They, I remember, I thought it was the most tedious thing, I still remember this. Sarah, she made us do like this, uh, Sunday through Saturday chart of like, putting what time you're doing this, what time

you're doing this, putting in at least however many credits you were, you had. Make sure you had at least two hours. And I'm like, this is the most tedious thing in the whole entire world. But it helps.

Christie: (laughs)

Jessica: Yeah.

Christie: Okay. (laughs) Okay, and Juan?

Juan: Um, for me time management would be one of the things that, like, like I did the same thing in AVID. Like, uh, but not with Sarah it was with, uh, Don Forrester.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: Um, she would have us do the same thing with, uh, having the calendar of Sunday through Monday. And it's really opened up my eyes because once I filled up the schedule it said, this is how much time I have, like, free time out of like, homework.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: And, but when it comes to homework, and you know, school and stuff, um, I try to balance everything. Like, when I'm like, feel like it's too much for me I like to take quick 15 minute breaks and just really like, walk around, get a drink of water, kind of like, get myself not thinking about it because I don't want to stress out too much with it and it really helps.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Juan: And for me, I also play video games, sometimes video games is a de-stressor for me. So, with that, or even, farming too is another, another way that's also a de-stressor because it just, you're not really doing work, it's just more thinking of like, the nature of it. And just feeling the wind. Um, but when it rains it's bad. You know.

Christie: (laughs)

Juan: But um, yeah I feel like, taking breaks is one way that really helps me with um, managing time and just-



- Christie: And managing stress.
- Juan: Getting things, yeah.
- Christie: Okay. Good. Alright, thank you. Um, and so AVID helped you with that?
- Juan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie: And the study strategy is part of it, so you talked about time management. Um, did AVID help you with the study strategies? Jessica you talked about the, that, um, you identified yourself saying you're not very good with your study strategies.
- Jessica: Uh-uh (negative). (laughs)
- Christie: Okay. (laughs) Okay, so tell me a little bit about, you know, study strategies, and AVID and what they taught you and how it's helped in some ways or not.
- Jessica: Um, (laughs) it's, for studying in general for me it's either, I have to table or just simply laying on my bed, sometimes also not a good idea 'cause I accidentally fall asleep. (laughs)
- Christie: (laughs)
- Jessica: Um, but I also put music, um, it distracts me. But at the same time it helps me because it's, like when I was trying to study this chemistry thing and the song came up and it had like, almost like the same rhythm, like I kind of like, would sub in the chemistry stuff in.
- Christie: Uh-huh.
- Jessica: For like the, the song lyrics. And I also do that sometimes and it helps.
- Christie: Yeah.
- Jessica: It's rea- I don't know.
- Christie: That's good. That's, that's a study strategy.
- Jessica: Yeah, and uh, I do that and like I said I can either put music or it has to be dead quiet.

- Christie: Okay.
- Jessica: Um, TV can't be on because I will literally sit there like this for about three hours and like I say, 10 o'clock at night and you're like down and you're like, uh oh. Didn't get anything done today.
- Christie: (laughs) Okay. Alright, and Juan, what about you?
- Juan: I feel like, the whole thing with AVID as they make you really close with people in the class that really, like, made me feel comfortable like, doing study groups with, uh, friend in that class. Like, we would sometimes go to each other's houses and-
- Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Juan: We would like, you know, sit in a group, sit in a table, we'd have some snacks, kind of go over the materials, study them, ask each other questions and then it would really help us out on the test.
- Christie: Okay.
- Juan: So just with, studying with friends, um, and with AVID really making us feel really comfortable with each other really helped out with, um, making study groups.
- Christie: Really created kind of a community of learners.
- Juan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie: Which is, that's good. Okay. Alright. Um, well I think that, that's, we've covered most of the questions. So I want to just kind of, if there's anything that either one of you want to say to kind of end this, um, about AVID and where you're at with it and how you feel about college, and your progress.
- Jessica: I'd like, like I mentioned before, I think Matt saw, like, the little fire in me that wanted, like, wants to have more learning communities-
- Christie: Yeah.
- Jessica: because personally I think that you'd have a lot more success in the commu- in the rate of the college. You wouldn't have as much dropouts,

you wouldn't have a lot, lot of people being, um, on academic probation, having to pay their school back when they're underneath a grant because they, they go through like, first warning, pro- some-

Christie: Right, yeah. They do. Yep.

Jessica: And I feel like, with more learning communities and having that ex- I think more faculty should be involved in the AVID, how more like, simply here at Mt. Hood I feel like that should be extend- expanded 'cause it's so small and when you get, when it's finals, it's literally the worst trying to get in there 'cause it's so busy. So, like I said, now that Matt said that he wants to see me in that, I feel like, I also have that responsibility on my shoulders to push it and have more, more success here at the college, honestly.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica: It starts with, as I see it, I see it as, it starts with the students, because if it's just faculty talking, they're not really gonna listen to each other in my personal opinion. But if you have those two or three students in a meeting with faculty-

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica: It opens their eyes up because they teach, they don't have to ... And, yeah. It's, I, like I said I'm gonna be pushing with, along with a student here.

Christie: Good, good.

Jessica: And hopefully, he's very passionate about it too.

Christie: Yeah, that's good.

Jessica: Very passionate and hopefully, like I like to say, hopefully we can get some stuff done.

Christie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica: And just really push the faculty to be more involved and be like, I personally would love to see, like, some like, a survey done with like, how

many people pass their classes in a learning community versus how many people don't, or do, don't whatever, pass-

Christie: We actually, that's part of my data collection.

Jessica: Oh.

Christie: And we have-

Jessica: Please let me know.

Christie: Yeah, I will. No I was just, I just thinking, um, because-

Jessica: Please let me know-

Christie: I'm doing what they call like, a mixed methods study, so I'm doing both data analysis and quality of the interviews and that sort of thing. And so far the data, not surprisingly, is showing us that students, um, progress, persist more, progress more to, term to term, acquire more credits, have that social capital that make them feel connected to a community of learners, um, so yeah. You're right on track.

Jessica: Please let me know how that goes.

Christie: I, yes. I will. I'm gonna send it to Matt and Lauren, um, when I'm done with it. So it'll take a little while, it's a big project, but we'll get there. Okay, Juan?

Juan: We need AVID.

Jessica: (laughs)

Christie: (laughs)

Juan: It's the structure, of, of making students successful here. And I feel like without AVID, um, like she said we would have, we wouldn't have, probably all these disasters with students not doing good and stuff. And with AVID we will have a lot of potential students in being successful here.

Christie: Okay. That's great. Um, thank you guys so much.

Jessica: Yeah.

Juan: Thank you for having us.

Christie: This, this has been very interesting and very informative and I have to say that, um, the things that you guys have said in here-

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## Order

Client	Christie Plinski
Ref #	Christie Plinski
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Christie Plinski: Okay, so uh Kay, my name is Christie Plinski and I am a um, Doctoral Student at Portland State University and I used to be Vice President here at the college. So, I introduced Abbott Higher Ed to Mt. Hood, um, I'm a strong supporter of it 'cause I was a high school principal for years as well.

So, this study is actually looking at um, how Abbott impacts students term-to-term progression, students who place into Developmental Ed classes, and it also looks at how, uh for students who are maybe first in their family to go to college. How it helps them become accustomed to the campus college. Okay?

So I have several questions, and we'll get through them, I have to take notes as well, 'cause I'm kind of that sort of person.

Kenia: All right.

Christie Plinski: So, if you have questions just let me know.

- Kenia: Okay.
- Christie Plinski: So, the first question is, tell me a little bit about yourself, um, your background, like age, you don't have to tell me age, gender, prior school experience, job and family.
- Kenia: Um, well I'm Hispanic, I'm 26 years old. I come of a, from a family of three. I'm the oldest one, um, I've been here for quite a while. I have three kids, I've been out of, I was out of school for ... since I was 15. So it was a pretty big change, leaving and then coming back all over again.
- Christie Plinski: Where did you go to high school?
- Kenia: Uh, Reynolds High School.
- Christie Plinski: Reynolds, okay.
- Kenia: Um, I work um a couple places. I work uh the Critical Care Unit at Providence and also um, Kaiser.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: As a CNA.
- Christie Plinski: Okay, great thank you. So, that kind of leads me to the next question, tell me about your decision to enter college, how did you come to this decision and what motivated you? What are your goals?
- Kenia: Um, the first thing was actually, I got into, oh, into this program. Like, because I'm not um-
- Christie Plinski: The Abbott program?
- Kenia: No uh, to-
- Christie Plinski: The nursing program then?
- Kenia: It's like the program with Human Solutions-
- Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- Kenia: -or WorkSource.
- Christie Plinski: Okay, WorkSource mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kenia: Um, and um, they ... I don't apply for financial aid, I don't qualify for it. So, when they told me that I, I was able to apply for a grant-
- Christie Plinski: Mm.
- Kenia: I wasn't actually um, so happy, but um, 'cause I didn't have the time. I have the kids, I need to take care of them. Um, so, but then, I started working at those, at the hospitals and it kind of um, made me feel like I wanted to do more than just be a CNA.
- Christie Plinski: So your goals then are?
- Kenia: For now, it's to, um maybe get into the nursing program, become an RN, hopefully, I don't know, something later.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah. Great, good for you. It's a good goal. So, tell me how your friends ... Are you the first in your family to go to college?
- Kenia: Uh, I ha- no, I have a sister that, she's in college.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. Your parents did not go though?
- Kenia: No.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: No, none of my parents.
- Christie Plinski: Okay, okay. Um, so tell me how your friends and family support you um, in your college goals, like financially, emotionally, socially, child care, all of that.
- Kenia: Um, well, I have a nanny that watches over my kids. And she's been there, she actually said that you know, if it was for a school matter, she will watch the kids, she will be there.
- My husband um, he is, the um, he doesn't work right now, so he actually helps me a lot by staying with the kids even though he can't really because he had a couple surgeries.



Christie Plinski: Okay.

Kenia: But um, he actually, he's helping a lot.

Christie Plinski: Good, good. That's great.

Kenia: Yeah.

Christie Plinski: So, you do have some help and support.

Kenia: Yeah.

Christie Plinski: Okay. Does your family still live around here?

Kenia: Um, I have a step-dad I don't see often, and my mom is back in Mexico. She went back to Mexico.

Christie Plinski: Okay. And your step-dad lives here, but you don't see him much?

Kenia: No.

Christie Plinski: Okay. Okay. All right, so financially you're pretty much on your own, and you've got, you were able to apply for a grant.

Kenia: Yes, correct.

Christie Plinski: All right.

Kenia: Um, like last term, I was, I had to pay, because um, it depends, which term I want to play, want to pay and, which terms they're going to pay.

Christie Plinski: Yeah.

Kenia: So, it's kind of uh-

Christie Plinski: It's hard.

Kenia: Yeah, it's either I pay for school, or I pay for my bills. I uh, yeah-

Christie Plinski: I know, I know.

Kenia: So, it's kind of-

Christie Plinski: Stressful.

Kenia: Yes. Pretty.

Christie Plinski: Is your husband pretty supportive of you?

Kenia: Yeah. Financially he can't right now because he's not working-

Christie Plinski: Yeah.

Kenia: But, yeah-

Christie Plinski: But, emotionally?

Kenia: -yeah, he is pretty supportive.

Christie Plinski: That's helpful.

Kenia: Yeah, yeah. He helps me a lot if I need to come do my homework or whatever and he needs to stay with the kids. He will do that.

Christie Plinski: Okay. Great, okay. All right, um so, you'd mentioned a little bit earlier about um, other family members in college so it's, your sister?

Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative). My sister, yes.

Christie Plinski: Okay. And how old is she?

Kenia: She's turning 21 today.

Christie Plinski: Okay, and where is she in college?

Kenia: She's down in Mexico.

Christie Plinski: Okay. Did you um, did you um, get encouraged to go to college when you were growing up? Or?

Kenia: No.

Christie Plinski: Okay.

- Kenia: Um, well, when I was, maybe 'til I was 14 I did. I was living with my grandparents, and they were both teachers.
- Christie Plinski: Oh, okay.
- Kenia: So, they were the ones that were always said, you need to keep going, don't get stuck and just you know, drop off or whatever.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: But then um, my mom brought me here when I was 14, so um, she wasn't as big of a encouragement. Then I became pregnant when I was 15, so she practically said, that as, after you become a mother, um, you have no place to go back to school.
- So, there was no encouragement on her side.
- Christie Plinski: So, you felt, sort of-
- Kenia: No, you know, it wasn't making me feel bad or sad because, my mom wasn't around my life, so I was kind of like, okay, like an opinion, it didn't matter.
- Christie Plinski: You're a strong woman.
- Kenia: (laughs)
- Christie Plinski: I admire that. Okay, um, so, your, your life growing up, you lived with your grandparents.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: In Mexico, 'til you were 14.
- Kenia: Yes, yes. Correct.
- Christie Plinski: And then your mom moved up here?
- Kenia: My mom moved up here when I was nine.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.

- Kenia: Uh, nine or six, I'm, I can't recall. Um, but she brought my siblings with her and she left me down there because I was, I was in school according to her. She said I couldn't leave school. So that's when, years later she decided to bring me up here.
- Christie Plinski: How'd you feel about that?
- Kenia: Uh, not so great. Uh, my opinion wasn't you know, taken or anything, they just decided to say, okay, you have to go get ready, practically. So, they didn't give me an option. Um, but, I guess, I was 14, I needed to do what my parents said.
- Christie Plinski: You are a strong woman. (laughs)
- Kenia: (laughs)
- Christie Plinski: All right, so, about how much, you mentioned your two jobs, about how much do you work outside of school?
- Kenia: Well, right now I work only part-time. I mean, I left one of them because it was 12-hour shifts, and it was full-time. So the one I'm working right now is only part-time like, Thursday, Friday, every other weekend, so 24 hours a week. Um, but yeah, it's practically what I know.
- Christie Plinski: Working, studying, taking care of kids.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Not easy.
- Christie Plinski: [crosstalk 00:09:25] no, it's not. Um, okay, so, so talking about your three children, how old are they?
- Kenia: They are 10, 5, and 2.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: All boys.
- Christie Plinski: (laughs) And you work about 24 hours a week.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: Um, so, when did you start back at college?

- Kenia: Uh, um, four terms ago?
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: Last year.
- Christie Plinski: So, you started back in fall term of last year?
- Kenia: I think so.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. And, how did you feel about that? Were you nervous? Scared? Excited?
- Kenia: I wasn't nervous, 'cause you know, I wasn't 15-16 anymore, and I wasn't sure what was going to happen or what was you know, I was expecting more of a population of a, you know, high schoolers, boys/girls just getting out of high school.
- And um, then um, it made me feel so proud that you know, I was coming back, like, later in my life and I was like older, so, I was kind of nervous, excited and scared maybe. Yeah.
- Christie Plinski: You're not alone. A lot of people who do that. Okay. Um, so, when you started um, back into, into college here, you were in the learning community?
- Kenia: Yes.
- Christie Plinski: How did you feel about that?
- Kenia: Pretty comfortable.
- Christie Plinski: Okay, and what, what did you feel comfortable about?
- Kenia: I think everything, I was, at first when I came in, you know, I was scared of what I was going to do, but I feel comfortable with the fact that as a learning community, it was like all the classes in the same classroom, I didn't have to worry about you know, running around looking for another classrooms. Uh, I didn't have to meet, meet new people every time I moved around um, kind of feel like we made a good connection with all of us friends that were there.

And the teachers were really helpful uh, they give you the feeling of, like you say, you're not alone.

Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kenia: That they are here for you, they're always going to help you and if you needed them, they could help you in everything you needed. And if not, at least they will try to help.

Christie Plinski: Yeah. And, and, and did you feel like they did?

Kenia: Yeah, like that's why I keep telling um, Sarah, oh man, please what's going on with the rest of the teachers, why can't I have teachers like the ones, I had in the first term. Like you know, they're completely different.

Christie Plinski: Yeah.

Kenia: And um-

Christie Plinski: Can you tal- talk a little bit more about that, because the teachers in the learning community use different strategies?

Kenia: Yeah, I think that I had different, like I don't know if it's the, you know, depending the class or what, but it's like the ... they don't ... The community, they don't actually treat you like just a student. Like Ashley tried to teach you or show you stuff as an individual. Like, like a family, they'll help you like, feel comfortable with what you're doing, not just hey, this what you're do and here, you can go ahead and do it. They're actually there with you step-by-step and trying to help you.

Um, I just, I don't know, it just feels like they were having more patients with the students I guess. Or maybe 'cause I was so nervous and I needed kind of help feeling like hey, I don't know if I was just keeping their attention more, trying to you know, bothering them every them I needed, and they were always there or something. But it's not the same. Like, I tried to do the same with different teachers.

Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- Kenia: And it's like your asking, going ask for a question and instead of helping to draw it out, well like that's what I'm asking you to figure it out so. I don't know, that's why I'm asking you like, give me a hint, something, but uh, theirs, it's way different from that many teachers and now there are ones that are outside of it. Like, they just go do their thing, teach you and that's it. Make sure you get what you get, so you can pass, that's that.
- Christie Plinski: So, so, if I'm hearing you correctly, the teachers in the learning community really support you, really help you, really reach out, are there all the time, you feel really comfortable asking them for help.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: Um, some teachers in your other classes expect you to ... They're the teacher, you're the student, you're on your own.
- Kenia: Yes.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: Exactly like that until now. I think, I think, I found one teacher that, she's actually, she's actually pretty (laughs) pretty okay. She understands you know? There's some teachers that um, I have little ones-
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: And it's like sometimes I can't time the, you know, make the timing for them to get sick.
- Christie Plinski: (laughs)
- Kenia: Or you know, for them to do something.
- Christie Plinski: Right.
- Kenia: Or my nanny called in, and I don't have nobody to watch them.
- Christie Plinski: Right, right.

- Kenia: And they do understand, you know, some of them, they don't. Some of them, they're like, "Well, life happens."
- Christie Plinski: So, too bad?
- Kenia: Yeah. Like I had a real bad experience on one of my classes, I didn't pass my class, my Writing 121.
- Christie Plinski: Ah.
- Kenia: 'Cause of uh teacher, uh my husband had those three surgeries, during that and that was the transition between one job to the other. So, I was kind of trying to be at the hospital with my husband-
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: -and trying to do the orientation at the new job, but also be here, and I did everything she asked for, the only thing was that because I wasn't present at the classroom, it didn't count. So, I got an F, so she didn't pass me, or a D in that class even though I did every single thing she asked me for. Um, you know, I reach out, actually after that I reach out to the ones that were my teachers-
- Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kenia: -in the community. Um 'cause, I was like, um, I don't know what I did wrong.
- Christie Plinski: Right.
- Kenia: You know? I was like, "Why?" And they kind of explained to me, and they're like, "You're not the first one." This teacher is like that.
- Christie Plinski: Can you tell me who that was? Do you remember?
- Kenia: It's Carlot Supedra, Carly Supedra?
- Christie Plinski: Okay, okay. Um-



- Kenia: Yeah, it was, it was kind of, you know, 'cause I know I might not be the best writer, you know, English is my second language.
- Christie Plinski: Sure.
- Kenia: I'm not going to say that I'm perfect on it, but I took mm, I took it again, last term, I pass it with no problem. You know? It was-
- Christie Plinski: Different teacher.
- Kenia: -different teacher and it was more difficult and then what she wanted me to do in the term before. And I still pass it. So it's like-
- Christie Plinski: So, what do you think the difference was?
- Kenia: You know what, I don't know. She ... I, one time I had an issue with her too, she called me selfish in front of the classroom and um, I, 'cause I was going to ask her a question and um, honestly, that's when you come up and start again like, why don't I have teachers that I had before.
- Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kenia: Why can't I have teachers like the ones I had in first term?
- Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kenia: The ones that it didn't matter, you emailed them, and you know, they will answer you or they will call you and say okay, what's what you don't need ... What's, what you don't understand. Or you know, I understand you don't like this, but, we can make it better like this.
- Christie Plinski: Right.
- Kenia: So, um, it's been quite a, quite a balancing roller coaster of a year, but I think, uh, my bad experience with that teacher, if you know, it's like, I even have the emails. It's like, life happens.
- Christie Plinski: Really?
- Kenia: And I'm like, oh, okay, well thank you.

Christie Plinski: Oh my heavens, I'm sorry.

Kenia: That's one-

Christie Plinski: (laughs) That's just, that's amazing.

Kenia: That's one of them, that's one of the classes that I had to pay out of my pocket.

Christie Plinski: So, that almost made it harder.

Kenia: Yeah.

Christie Plinski: I mean, knowing that you had failed it and you had paid for it.

Kenia: Yeah and plus, you know, it's like, I know I did it right.

Christie Plinski: Yeah.

Kenia: I know I might not get an A, but I couldn't get a C?

Christie Plinski: Right.

Kenia: You know, I'm passing?

Christie Plinski: You turned in all of the assignments?

Kenia: Yeah.

Christie Plinski: Okay.

Kenia: Everything. The only thing was that I wasn't there. Well, I'm sorry-

Christie Plinski: Yeah, the attendance.

Kenia: -you know, my husband can't actually drive after having back surgery, neck surgery.

Christie Plinski: No. No. Wow.

Kenia: And I wasn't able to do the review on the teacher 'cause I kind of went past the timing, so I was like, okay, well I guess I won't do it. And they tell me, just like fight your grade or whatever. I was like,

no, I was like for what? But then I notice, 'cause I actually use my essays that I used on the last term to the new teacher, and they were okay.

Christie Plinski: (laughs).

Kenia: Just to prove myself they were okay.

Christie Plinski: (laughs).

Kenia: (laughs) So, it's like mm, I don't see what was wrong then.

Christie Plinski: That's really unfortunate.

Kenia: Yeah. It, it's just, it's just something that um, if you think about it, and it's like wow.

Christie Plinski: Well, 'cause you know, I mean, when you get into college, the, the courses can be tough but if you have a teacher who helps, and this is what I'm hearing you say-

Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Christie Plinski: -in the Learning Community it just makes a difference.

Kenia: Yeah.

Christie Plinski: And then when you got into Writing 121 the first time, teacher was non-involved, non-engaged.

Kenia: Yeah, it's like, I understand you know, I didn't, I couldn't, kind of conversation and I said, "You know, I understand," she's an older lady and there were older students too in there that were passing through moments like that were homeless, or you know, all that stuff, but it's like, if you have sympathy for them-

Christie Plinski: Right.

Kenia: -and trying to help them, what's the difference?

Christie Plinski: Yeah.

Kenia: Um-

- Christie Plinski: Did she have sympathy for them?
- Kenia: Yes.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: Like if they didn't come to class, they were okay you know, that's one of the reasons why she called me selfish in the middle of the classroom 'cause I got actually in line in front of other people and then the person who was waiting at the end, and she's like, "Well, it's her turn, don't be selfish." I say "Well, I've been standing here next to you."
- Christie Plinski: Ugh.
- Kenia: So and then, it's like I'm not asking, like you're trying to ask for help and not getting it.
- Christie Plinski: Right.
- Kenia: I honestly, I step out, I was like, "I'm selfish? I'm waiting for you to look at my paper, but if you can't, I'm just going to go." I'm one of the persons that does not have patience for people like that.
- Christie Plinski: Can't say that I blame you. I don't either. (laughs)
- Kenia: And honestly, like if I would've stayed, I might have done something that I will, might have regret later.
- Christie Plinski: (laughs) Well-
- Kenia: Yeah.
- Christie Plinski: But, look at you, I mean, 'cause then you got out, and even though you failed that course, you took it again, used the same essays-
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: -passed the course.
- Kenia: Yeah.

- Christie Plinski: Was successful.
- Kenia: Like I said, I don't expect, you know, an A, but ... 'Cause I know, English is not my best strength, you know, sometimes I speak Spanglish. So, it's like, sometimes I write the words the way I would write them in Spanish.
- Christie Plinski: Sure, sure.
- Kenia: So it's all the way around. But um, yeah, I thought it was something.
- Christie Plinski: So, when you were in the Learning Community, the first term, let me take you back just a minute.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: So, in high school, how were your grades?
- Kenia: My grades were perfect until I got pregnant. (laughs) yeah, I was a straight up A student. Middle school and high school.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. And then you're first term in college when you were in the Learning Community?
- Kenia: Straight A's.
- Christie Plinski: So, with that and with being in the Learning Community and still maintaining your, your straight A grade average, you were feeling like this was possible? Okay?
- Kenia: Yeah, you know, everything was okay until, you know, like I said I hit this lady and like, you know, I'm front of the line, and she even told me, she's like, "You should take, you know, another class again, if not, you know you're never going to make it." Like practically telling me that my goals of trying to be a nurse were crashed because I didn't pass her class. And the [inaudible 00:22:53] how those emails, that even if someone read them, it might not be me, the only one who thinks the way they sound, even though they're just an email. But the ways she says it, it's wow, well thank you.

- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: Like I, like kind of like a teacher trying to crush your dreams telling you no that you can't.
- Christie Plinski: And that's not really why you go into teaching.
- Kenia: Exactly. So, I was like it's okay, you know, I just like, I ... At this point I was trying to look for my teacher, writing teacher [inaudible 00:23:22] I don't think he's like giving that. Uh-
- Christie Plinski: Who did you have the second time?
- Kenia: The second term?
- Christie Plinski: Oh wouldn't, the, the writing teacher the second-
- Kenia: Uh, what was his name? Sean.
- Christie Plinski: Oh, he's terrific.
- Kenia: Yes.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah, okay.
- Kenia: Sean, I, I tell him straight up, I said, "I hate writing, and I hate reading." I was like, he was like, "Just do your best." I try you know, it worked.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah. Okay, good. I'm glad you had Sean, I was hopeful of that.
- Kenia: Yeah. Yeah, I was, you know, that was so good, that's why I'm trying to go, trying to find him back again, but I don't know if he teaches 122, I don't know.
- Christie Plinski: I don't, I don't know any more either but um, he's, he's a really good teacher, so.
- Kenia: Yeah, he is.
- Christie Plinski: Okay, um, so the biggest challenges for you to stay in college?
- Kenia: My kids.

- Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kenia: Financial situation. 'Cause I'm the only one you know, that's taking care of everything. So, if I don't want, if I don't make enough money, because I'm two days in school, and I need to get [inaudible 00:24:33] so, practically I'll be like, okay, then I'm stepping out of school, so I can make the money for my family.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah, I can understand that, that challenge. And yet, um, looking at going into the field of nursing is going to increase your income.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, that's why I'm trying like you know, it's not uh getting paid, but, but at the same time it's like, if you get extra days, you get paid better you know?
- Christie Plinski: Right, right. Right.
- Kenia: But um, I can't. So at this point I can't, so it's kind of like okay, I'm, hopefully losing, but I'm gaining by staying here, but you know? Yeah. And that would have been my, that's my biggest challenge is to stay here.
- Christie Plinski: Okay, um, so when you were in the Learning Communities, um, did they teach you ... You were an A student when you were in high school.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: So, did you have good study habits and um-
- Kenia: No.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. Tell me about that.
- Kenia: I don't study for anything.
- Christie Plinski: (laughs).
- Kenia: I don't. Like if I sit up and study and study and study and study, everything goes somewhere else in my brain.

- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: Long term memory, somewhere, I don't know.
- Christie Plinski: (laughs).
- Kenia: Uh, and, but I do understand when I'm doing the lecture or when I'm taking notes. I cannot study at home. I can barely do homework. Um, it's like I try to do homework the other day, and I'm in the kitchen trying to do it, the kids are in the living room with my husband and then (laughs) um, I'm like oh my god what's going to be for breakfast? So then my brain started going off somewhere, oh well, what should I make? What is easy? What do I have in the fridge? And make breakfast, I have to clean up, then sit down again, okay, let's do a little more and then lunch comes, and my brain start going off again. Well, what is going to be for lunch?
- Um, you know, my day is not easy. It's either that, cleaning, laundry, uh, it's like I have little girls 'cause they change their clothes like many times, and it's, it's just non-stop.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah. It is non-stop.
- Kenia: And so, I'm terrible.
- Christie Plinski: So did, did, did um, the Learning Community, did they teach you different study skills?
- Kenia: They, you know, they teach me a lot, you know, they say you know, time management, how can we do this, you know, schedule your time. Sarah helped me with a really cool, you know calendar and everything else. I barely had like 30 minutes of sleep after I put everything in there.
- Christie Plinski: Oh.
- Kenia: Like, literally everything was filled up.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.



- Kenia: Uh, so you know, they teach me you know, all their stuff, like flashcard something, all the different things and they, the note taking, all that stuff, that's what helped me the most with all that, 'cause like I said, I'm not a person that will sit down and read a book.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: I'm not, be honest, I don't even know how, like I said, I don't know.
- Christie Plinski: Well, 'cause your interest is in science and nursing and other-
- Kenia: Yeah, like, math, sorry, I don't even know how I pass those classes. To be honest with you-
- Christie Plinski: Trust me, I don't either (laughs).
- Kenia: Like, I pass them, that's like um, if I pass math how come I, this lady didn't pass me for writing, and it's like okay. But um, yeah. Yeah.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. Okay. Well, that, that's frustrating.
- Kenia: Yes.
- Christie Plinski: That's, that's really, really hard. Um, years ago, I, uh, I was a mom, I'm still a mom to four, um, but when my oldest was 10, and my youngest was four, I got a divorce-
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: -and I was a single mom to four kids, and I went back and got my master's degree and then got another Masters. It was hard, so I know exactly what you're talking ... I, uh, you just don't sleep.
- Kenia: Yeah.
- Christie Plinski: And you're frustrated and stressed all the time and-
- Kenia: Yeah.

- Christie Plinski: Okay, so, so, when you first got to college, um, how did you know to sign up for the Learning Community?
- Kenia: I actually got um, got help from um, the people at the WorkSource.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: They come at me with Stephanie and I came with the meeting, and I was kind of looking for those days. Like Tuesday/Thursday, because that was my schedule before and um, then she actually told me, she said, "Well I have a community, and it's like those days, and it's like classes that you need."
- So, that's how I got into it.
- Christie Plinski: Okay, so the, the, the college ... the outstart, outst (laughs) sorry ... The, the, the, the um, WorkSource helped you.
- Kenia: Yeah.
- Christie Plinski: As did um, Stephanie and the Abbott-
- Kenia: Stephanie, yeah mm-hmm (affirmative) for rent.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: Yeah, I wasn't sure what was going on, and you know, I, I picked up couple classes that were the same days, the same classes and everything else, but different teachers, different you know, different places, different classrooms. Um, until I talked with her and she's like well you just have to stay in this classroom, you know, it's going to be all these classes.
- Christie Plinski: Oh, yeah.
- Kenia: So, then I was like yeah, for sure, I'll take it. so um, that's all I say there.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. Okay. So, were you really familiar much with the college environment? About registration office and admission all-

- Kenia: Uh, not at all. Uh, they, I got a message you know, from the teachers, from Stephanie, from Sarah you know, to come along to the Bridge and you know, those stuff to show me.
- Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kenia: I had no time, I didn't do it.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: So, I kind of went blind then when I needed help, I just, I, I either ask Matt, Sarah, or Stephanie. And that was my kind of to go everywhere.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah. And you really felt like a family in the Learning Community.
- Kenia: Yeah. Yeah.
- Christie Plinski: And really felt like Matt or Sarah or Stephanie would help you, anytime you asked.
- Kenia: Yeah. Yeah, they, even 'til now, they, every time they see me, they ask me, they ask me like how's it going?
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: Or, how you doing? Sometimes I like to keep bothering Matt with all my math homework you know. I don't like to go to the-
- Christie Plinski: Tutoring center?
- Kenia: Yeah, I don't, I'm, I'm a person that doesn't go ask for help.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: I'm not like that, but I go with him, and he tries to help me, and he's like okay, now go. I'm like no, I'm not. So, yeah or Stephanie, those are. Sarah, when she has time, she also helps me like still, you know.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.

- Kenia: Even now that I don't have any classes with them, they still help me.
- Christie Plinski: And that's feeling like you have, like you trust someone who actually cares about you made a difference for you?
- Kenia: Yeah. Yes. They did.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. So, when you, when you got out of the Learning Community after that first term, and you went into other classes, how did you do then?
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, I felt more comfortable about myself.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: You know, about what I was doing and everything.
- Christie Plinski: Uh huh.
- Kenia: I felt like everything was okay.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: I feel, feel like I could take the world in one, in one hand and do it you know?
- Christie Plinski: 'Cause you're a tough woman, you know what you need to do.
- Kenia: So, I kind of try you know, but, yeah, I feel much bet, much better like, the feeling of afraid and all that stuff it, was gone after that first term.
- Christie Plinski: Okay. Okay. So, connecting with the people in that Learning Community in the Abbott Center, really helped you feel like you had um, someone you could trust, someone you could go to, um, you didn't feel ashamed when you had to go and ask for help.
- Kenia: Yeah, they're actually the ones that I can go and ask help without feeling embarrassed of not knowing what I'm doing.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.

- Kenia: And that's the feeling I get when I go to ask someone else. With them, I can be clear, and I can say I cannot understand this thing.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: Even though it's a, a simple thing. And they're going to tell me, "You got it." You know, but they won't look at you like why are you come here for help if you know what you're doing. They are actually trying to explain to you, like-
- Christie Plinski: So, think when, when you were in um, the Writing 121 first term, and that teacher was in there. And you know, obviously her um, support for you was completely different than the support that you got from people in the Abbott Center.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes.
- Christie Plinski: And, and how did you feel about that class, how did you feel about her? I know you've talked a little about that.
- Kenia: Well I feel really, you know, she wasn't helpful. I feel really-
- Christie Plinski: I'm so sorry, gosh dang it.
- Kenia: Really uncomfortable being in there um, but my first, actually my first choice was to come up here with Sarah and talk to her about it. Matt, something, I don't know what to do.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah, okay.
- Kenia: You know? That was, that's always my go place to like, if I'm feeling like I need answers, or I'm feeling like my world is closing, or you know, it's crashing me.
- Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kenia: It's like, I need to go talk with someone. So I'd come with them.
- Christie Plinski: But, what I'm hearing then is that, that even though this Writing 121 teacher was really um, not supportive of you or of your learning or willing to help you when you ask questions. You still felt the trust with Sarah and Matt and Stephanie.

- Kenia: Yeah.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: Yeah, yeah. Yeah 'cause you know, that is the ones that are always there. So I always run to them and say, "Hey, what's going on? Why is this happening?"
- Christie Plinski: Yeah.
- Kenia: Like, I have this teacher, and you know, having someone that tells you, you can do this after someone just told you no, you can't. It's, it makes a big difference. 'Cause it's like you're having someone crashing your dreams over here, but you have all these people, that're like, ignore that, you know. You know you can do it, you been doing it, come on, just, you just need to survive, you know, get done with it and there's that.
- So, this is, pretty nice to have them.
- Christie Plinski: Okay.
- Kenia: Even now that after you know, I'm not in the Community.
- Christie Plinski: But you still have that.
- Kenia: But I still have them there.
- Christie Plinski: Yeah. So, if you were to give a student, very much like you, who um, had children, working two part-time jobs um, had done well in high school, but had been out of school for a long time, and wanted to come to college, wanted to you know, have the other goals.
- Kenia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Christie Plinski: What would you advise them about going to college?
- Kenia: Certainly to be part of the Community, to be part of you know, be [inaudible 00:36:12] but, be there. You know, tell them that there's help, they might think there's not in there at all. It's like I said, it was much better even though, you know, they look at us

all weird because we got our break, and then come back to the same classroom. But, it's, it's much better, it makes you feel like you're actually important to someone.

Christie Plinski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kenia: And that uh, someone cares about you.

Christie Plinski: Did you develop strong relationships with the other students in the class?

Kenia: Yeah.

Christie Plinski: Okay.

Kenia: Yeah, I have some classes with them still now.

Christie Plinski: Okay. Okay. Anything else you want to tell me?

Kenia: No, I think, I don't know. This program they should keep, keeping it here you know, for all those-

Christie Plinski: Here's one more question that just popped into my head, so I'm sorry, but, given that, that, that, that the Abbott program, and the Learning Community really helped you to feel like you were connected and to give you the support that you needed and taught you some of the strategies, felt like you could go to them anytime. And then, you got out of the Learning Community, and you still go back to the Abbott Center, would it have helped you if you had, had Learning Communities ongoing for that first year?

Kenia: Yes.

Christie Plinski: Okay.

Kenia: Definitely. I would have love to have it, I even asked, you know, if they still have a, they will still have a community for the next term, but they say no, it's only like for those classes.

Christie Plinski: Yeah. Right.

Kenia: And um, I did ask actually 'cause it would have been so much nicer um, to have someone like them, like the first term to help and be there for the students.

Christie Plinski: Okay. Okay. This has been really helpful, thank you very much I appreciate it.

Kenia: You're welcome.

Christie Plinski: I really do and I, and I admire your tenacity, and I admire your-

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