

Hispanic Males and AVID:

WHO Are They?

by

Kathleen Glenn

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Josephine Marsh, Chair
Sanford Cohn
Thomas Barone

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Many educators believe that the path to a better future is a college education. Initiatives that promote college-going cultures are quite commonplace in many public high schools with some offering elective college-prep support programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). Yet, certain groups of students are not taking advantage of these opportunities. In the initial AVID sections at a metropolitan high school in the American Southwest, the girls out-numbered the boys 2:1, and the Hispanic girls outnumbered the Hispanic boys by almost 3:1. The purpose of this study was to uncover some of the factors that influenced five Hispanic males' participation, or lack thereof, in AVID, and the ways in which those factors connected to their masculine identities. What the participants say about what influenced them to be involved, or not, in the program is reported. Some themes revealed in the interviews include how the participants' scholar identity is connected to their masculine identity, how they balance their "coolness" quotient with their desires to achieve academic success, how they depend on personal relationships and collaboration, and how their families and communities have influenced them. This information may lead to the development of strategies that will increase future representation of Hispanic males in similar programs.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially...

- to my parents, Jack and Pat, who initiated my attitudes of wonder and awe of our universe and always encouraged my academic pursuits;
- to my children, Mary-Kate, Ian, and Margie, for their encouragement and support of my academic goals – may you always remember you're smart;
- to my wonderful husband Bruce, my biggest champion, my wise and thoughtful encourager, without whose love, confidence-building, and consummate tea-making, this work would not be possible.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I have reservations about putting Alberto in honors.

- *When listening to him read aloud I notice that he struggles frequently.*
- *Also his spelling, grammar, and handwriting need work.*
- *His behavior in class tends to be on the negative side. He frequently needs to be redirected and monitored. This could be because he is ready for more advanced work and wants to be challenged or it could be because he lacks the self discipline needed to be focused and on task or in his seat.*
- *He also has trouble being respectful to authority and not challenging my methods in the class.*
- *However he continues to excel with his grades. He always has a B+ or an A.*
- *He is involved athletically and very social with other students.*
- *He seems to grasp concepts quickly and can work independently to understand an assignment.*

It might be beneficial to put him in Honors and see what he can do. Perhaps my class is not challenging him enough and that is why he is acting out. Maybe if the bar was higher he would feel the need to work harder to achieve it. I would recommend that if he is put in honors that he also be in AVID to get the organizational skills and additional support that he needs to not be overwhelmed.... (A. Blisston (a pseudonym for a high school Freshman English teacher), personal communication, February 7, 2011.)

...

Many educators believe that the path to a better future is a college education. To help students achieve that goal, initiatives that promote college-going cultures have become quite commonplace in many public schools across the country. One way that schools promote this idea is to encourage more students, especially minority students and those who would be the first in their families to go to college, to take rigorous courses like International Baccalaureate (IB) or Advanced Placement (AP). However, students who have never been in

honors-level courses before struggle with the rigor of the college-prep course work and would fail without some intentional and systematic support. Therefore, many schools turn to elective support programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). AVID is a college-prep curricular program that provides a support system to minority and low-income students in the academic middle, preparing them for four-year college eligibility (AVID Center, 2010a). During the AVID class, the non-traditional honors students get targeted support designed to help them not only pass the honors level courses, but to navigate the scholarship and college-entrance application process.

Yet, certain groups of students are not taking advantage of these opportunities. A two-year study of Texas high school AP enrollment and success rates found that more females took AP courses than males and that white students far outnumbered students of color in AP enrollment (Moore & Slate, 2008). The College Board recently released a report called *The Educational Crisis Facing Young Men of Color*, that examines the decline of minority male participation and success in secondary and postsecondary education (College Board, 2010). Prior to the release of the College Board report, AVID itself examined its national student participation demographics and found that students are predominately female, outnumbering boys by a ratio of 3:2. Moreover, of the boys enrolled, very few are Hispanic or Black. For example, in Arizona where Hispanics make up almost 60 percent of the AVID student population, only 24 percent are Hispanic males (AVID Center, 2009).

At the public high school where I work, the demographics of a new AVID program begun in the 2008-2009 school year were similar. Vale High (a pseudonym for a large urban high school in the American Southwest) has a student body that is about 63 percent Hispanic and evenly split by gender. While the enrollment in the AVID classes there had similar ethnic demographics to the whole high school, with about 68 percent of the students Hispanic, Hispanic boys made up only 11 percent of the overall class and just 25 percent of the class' Hispanic population (AVID Center, 2010b). This discrepancy led me to wonder about why a voluntary program would attract so few male Hispanic students.

AVID Program

AVID is used in many American middle and high schools in order to encourage and support students from ethnic or social economic statuses traditionally underrepresented in four-year universities. Students from the academic middle, or those who score in the average range on nationally standardized tests, are recruited to apply to the program. In many programs, the students are required to get teacher recommendations (Contreras, Cota, Furgerson, Gira, & Swanson, 2009), not unlike the e-mail about Alberto from Mrs. Blisston quoted at the beginning of this article. AVID coordinators often look for students who, with some support, have the potential to be successful in rigorous coursework, but who are not currently performing at that level, and therefore are underachieving.

At the high school level, the AVID elective class helps students uncover the hidden curriculum of honors-level high school courses and university courses. For example, the students are explicitly taught to take Cornell notes, and are then assigned to take notes in several of their other classes, whether note-taking is assigned by this content teacher to the rest of the class or not (Contreras et al., 2009). In addition, the curriculum of the AVID elective class includes reading and analyzing rigorous text, writing research-based analyses, and drafting personal statements used later for college applications and scholarships. The students also complete inquiry-based assignments in which they must solve problems, often in collaborative groups.

A final component of the AVID elective curriculum is tutorials. During the tutorials that are held twice each week, students ask higher order questions generated from the content they are learning in their honors classes. The tutorials are conducted in small groups with the students divided according to the content area of their questions, like math, English, science, or social studies. In the tutorial groups, the students take turns asking their questions, and helping each other discover the answers to those questions, often using the Socratic method (Contreras et al., 2009).

Research Questions

In this article, I analyze the responses of five Hispanic male participants to explore the reasons for the gender discrepancy that appeared in Vale High School's new AVID program. In particular, I was interested in discovering the

factors that influenced Hispanic male participation, or lack thereof, in the college-prep program. My research questions included:

- What are some influences the participants say contributed to their involvement in the AVID program?
- What are some influences the participants say contributed to their lack of involvement in the AVID program?
- How are these influences connected to the boys' construction of their masculine identity?

Theoretical Background of the Study

The social construction of masculinity provided a theoretical frame for my study. Masculinity is an arrangement of social practices that males live out to signify themselves as masculine and usually as part of a dominant gender group (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009). It is an ideology, or a set of beliefs held by a group of people, not created by any one individual or group or institution, and yet its discourse, images, myths, and practices influence how the individuals in the group live their lives (Reeser, 2009).

The lived experiences of real men include multiple masculinities, and how men perform masculinity depends on their relationship with others, men and women, in social contexts. It also depends on the amount of physical, cultural, social and/or economic capital (resources) they have (Reeser, 2009; Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Coles, 2007; Liu, 2006). In addition, many influences help construct masculine identities, some of which are society, family, school, and peer

group (Connell, 2000). According to Connell, family, workplace, or sexual relationships are probably the most influential factors in a man's construction of his masculine identity, but schooling is the next most powerful influence (2000).

Competitive academic curriculum combined with tracking, streaming, or selective entry into certain school courses is a strong influence in boys' construction of their identities, especially in terms of who is successful and who fails. It is the indirect, often invisible, but sometimes conspicuous practices of schooling that teach boys how to be masculine. For example, in many schools at least one Physical Education class is required for graduation. Most often, the students are separated by gender in these classes, and the curriculum can be designed with differences that appeal to or cater to hegemonic ideas connected to the physical activity of male and female students. To be more specific, at Vale High, both dance and weight training courses are open to students of both genders. Yet the dance class enrollments are 98 percent female, and the weight training classes are 98 percent male. Certain policies and curriculum, seemingly the result of common sense, promote dominant performances of femininity and masculinity which can limit how some students participate in their education (Davison and Frank, 2006; Connell 2000, 2006; Liu, 2006). Connell (2000) lists at least three areas where schools influence boys' identity including classes that a majority of males take, school-sponsored athletic teams especially in contact sports, and power relations that are played out through disciplinary incidents. In addition, the practice of separating high-achieving students from lower-achieving

students in honors or remedial classes creates hierarchies that can also influence students' masculine identities. But, it is each boy himself who determines, through the dynamic interplay of all of the influences, how he will take up his own masculine identity (Connell, 2000). For example, most boys learn how to easily and uneventfully navigate the disciplinary procedures of school, but some boys will repeatedly and deliberately challenge authority and school rules in order to acquire prestige and gain pleasure (Connell, 2000).

Males can construct and present themselves as men in a variety of ways. They learn to act masculine by adjusting to audiences and situations, and they learn from experience how socially accepted each performance might be (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009). The social situation of school is a primary place for males to try out and perform their developing masculinities, acting in ways that are similar to, or duplicating of other social and gendered performances. Through the example of teachers and fellow students, gender identities are actively negotiated and reproduced for themselves and for others. (Coles, 2007; Davison and Frank, 2006; Liu, 2006). For example, there have been several studies (Ferguson 2000, Fordham & Ogbu 1986, Mac an Ghail 1994, Willis 1977) which conclude that some boys learn to impress their fellow males by disrupting classrooms, talking back to teachers, and having contempt for traditional academic learning.

As these studies suggest, adopting some aspects of hegemonic masculinity (or a culturally predominant ideal of male behavior), can lead to male students being perceived of as cool or as is often expressed in the United Kingdom, as one

of the lads. Laddism is a term used in the UK to refer to the ways that certain working class or middle class males behave in school by disrupting class through group attention-getting and competitive performances, by valorizing sport and professional athletes, by rejecting overt academic work, and by showing a lack of respect for authority (Jackson, 2010). However, adopting the attitudes and actions that lead to being accepted by other males, can also have negative effects on many males' abilities to succeed first in school and later in high-paying careers. (Hodgetts, 2008; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; Jackson & Dempster, 2009).

An aspect of hegemonic masculinity that has a long history in secondary school culture, especially with working class and middle class males, is now being seen in higher education. This is the concept of "effortless achievement" (Jackson & Dempster, 2009). In this construct, a hegemonic male may be accepted by other males if he is seen as having attained his academic (or even athletic or social) achievement through natural ability, and not through overt hard work (Francis, Skelton, & Read, 2010; Jackson & Dempster, 2009; Hodgetts, 2008; Jackson, 2006).

Some researchers (Jackson, 2010; Francis, 2006; Kerr & Cohn, 2001) suggest that boys' achievement is affected by how they perceive socially acceptable ways to act as males. For some gifted Hispanic boys, the cultural idea of machismo in which men prove their manliness through feats of physical strength and courage may discourage some boys from performing well academically. Since manhood cannot be demonstrated through feats of

knowledge or intellect, many Hispanic males believe they risk their gender identity unless they can also prove strength through physical means (Kerr & Cohn, 2001).

Within the Hispanic culture, other researchers have found there are multiple masculinities that affect how boys think of themselves which could help explain how they perform in traditional academic settings. Machismo tends to have negative connotations and is associated with Hispanic males who are less educated. However, another Hispanic masculinity known as Caballerismo has positive connotations that are related to social responsibility and problem-solving coping (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008).

Nola Alloway asks teachers to “understand how masculinity is implicated in boys’ engagement with school-based learning, (and) how curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices are deeply implicated in boys’ responses to learning” (Alloway, 2007, p. 600). Alloway also rejects an essentialist (Martino & Kehler, 2007) definition of masculinity and reminds readers that boys do not make up a homogenous group. As a result, educators need to be mindful that no one instructional strategy, especially one related to literacy, will work with all boys. In assessing the effectiveness of educational programs for male students, Martino recommends that education decision makers listen to student voices and that comments from these students should be included as a “legitimate form” of program evaluation (2006, para. 34). Many of these perspectives influenced how

the interviews of the five Hispanic males were developed, and how the data was analyzed.

Data Collection and Analysis

The purpose of my study was to discover some of the influences the participants say contributed to their involvement, or lack of involvement, in the AVID program. In addition, I wanted to find out how these influences connected to the boys' construction of their masculine identity. I conducted semi-structured interviews of a purposeful sampling of five representative (Merriam, 1998)

Hispanic males:

- Felix, a student who completed a high school AVID program at a public high school in the Southwest, and is currently enrolled in a four-year university.
- Juan and Isaiah, two students who are currently enrolled in the AVID program at Vale High School.
- Alex, who was dropped from the AVID program at Vale.
- Omar, who was invited, but declined to enroll in the AVID program at Vale.

Questions for my semi-structured interviews were developed in advance (Appendix B). While I asked prepared questions, I also engaged the students with other questions in order to clarify and elicit more fully their real perspectives about the AVID program, their masculinities, and school. This made my exchanges with each student what Dexter (1970, p. 136) and others call

“conversations with a purpose” (Merriam, 1998, p. 71; Tisdell, 2002, p. 69; Freedman, 2003, p. 5). I introduced myself to the students as an administrator at Vale High who was interested in improving the school’s AVID program. During the interview, there were opportunities to explore with the students their experiences, attitudes, and perceptions about people who go to four-year colleges or universities, other high-achieving students, AVID students, Hispanic male students, and the AVID program itself. I also asked them to recommend ways of making the AVID program more appealing to students, especially for boys like them. The interviews, which were videotaped, and later transcribed, lasted 30 to 90 minutes.

To protect the students’ identities, each boy chose a pseudonym for purposes of this study. I transcribed each interview, verbatim. Then I assigned category codes to each student’s responses to the questions, answer by answer. Next, I recorded my observations, reflections, and/or preliminary properties and hypotheses for each response (Appendix C). I read and re-read the transcripts, “constantly comparing” (Merriam, 1998, p. 159) students’ responses to similar questions, and responses with similar categories. Using grounded theory, I compared and contrasted my initial categories to each other, looking for recurring properties that described each category, and generating hypotheses or themes for the links between the categories and the properties (Merriam, 1998). For example, many of the questions elicited responses in which the boys would reveal something about their own identity. Self Identity became a category. Included in

these comments about self-identity, several of the boys expressed confidence in their abilities to be successful in rigorous high school courses and in future college courses. I labeled this as a property of confidence under the category of self-identity. Finally, I linked the category of self-identity and its descriptive property of confidence, in an hypothesis or theme that AVID helps nurture a scholar identity (Whiting, 2006) building confidence in the students who participate in this particular program.

Chapter 2

FINDINGS

Several themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews, including developing a scholar identity, practicing effortless achievement, depending on personal relationships and collaboration, and negotiating family and community influences. I will first introduce each participant in a brief profile and then discuss each theme in terms of how the participants related their attitudes, reflections, and observations regarding each of the themes. I will also suggest how their responses interacted with their construction of their masculinities.

The Participants

Felix is an energetic, affable college sophomore, currently attending an honors program at a large Southwestern university. He is majoring in political science and justice studies. He completed four years in an AVID program at an urban high school in southern California, and attributes much of his academic success to his AVID teacher and to the AVID curricular program. Felix has plans to attend graduate school in order to earn a law degree, but he would also like to teach in the *Teach For America* program.

Juan is a happy, positive, and friendly senior in his third year of the Vale High AVID program. After completing one year in college, he plans to complete a two-year mission for his church, then return to college in order to complete a degree in forensic science. Prior to his freshman year in high school, Juan was considered a Title 1 kid, a designation for students who scored in the bottom

quartile on standardized tests and therefore qualified for supplemental courses in reading, writing, and math. Juan attended a summer program designed to strengthen those skills. During his freshman year in all regular classes with no Title 1 support, teachers identified him as an underachiever because even though his test scores were low, he exhibited motivation, and hard work in completing assignments. In addition to AVID, Juan took honors-level courses his final three years at Vale. At the end of the first semester of his senior year, he had earned his highest GPA ever, a 3.1, and had been accepted for enrollment at a nearby large state university.

Isaiah is a self-described hard working, very organized, and creative senior in his second year of AVID. He took all regular courses his freshman and sophomore years, earning almost all A's. He was considered underachieving because the A grades seemed to come easily to him, and he had not attempted any honors courses. He joined the AVID program his junior year, also enrolling in three honors courses. During his senior year, he enrolled in two honors-level courses plus two upper division math and science classes and maintained a 3.2 GPA during the first semester. He also was accepted by a nearby large state university. Isaiah's plans include graduate school; he would like to earn a Ph.D., probably in arts education.

Alex is a sociable, athletic student who was in the AVID program at Vale High for a year and a half, but because of failing grades was dropped from the program. Teachers initially saw potential in Alex during his freshman year,

believing he was underachieving because he seemed brighter in class than his usual C to D grades reflected. In addition to AVID, Alex took honors courses his sophomore and junior years, but failed one during the fall semester of his junior year. Alex loves to play soccer and in order to maintain eligibility, usually passed all of his classes, especially during soccer season. But when the season ends, Alex has struggled to maintain his grades. After being dropped from the AVID program mid way through his junior year, Alex's grades plummeted second semester, and he failed three classes. However, by first quarter of his senior year, no longer taking any honors-level courses, and with the hope of making the soccer team again, he had passed all six of his regular courses.

Omar is a quiet, unassuming sophomore at Vale High, who sees himself going to college, and then becoming a professional chef. Omar is not enrolled in the AVID program, but is currently taking what is considered a college-prep curriculum, with five honors classes and an orchestra class. He struggles to pass them. His first semester grades for his sophomore year included one A, one B, three Ds, and an F. Omar said he did not remember receiving an invitation letter to join the Vale AVID program in the summer of 2009, just prior to his freshman year, even though his name was on the school's list of eligible AVID students invited to apply and to attend an informational meeting. Given the opportunity again to join AVID both at the end of his freshman year and during his sophomore year, he declined. He said he felt that the high school honors classes

he was taking were enough to prepare him to be successful in a university, and that he did not need any additional help.

Developing a Scholar Identity

One of the first themes that became evident in analyzing the participants' responses is that developing a scholar identity (Whiting, 2006) became an important part of the students' masculine identity. According to Gilman Whiting (2006), a scholar identity is one in which individuals view themselves as "academicians, as studious, as competent and capable, and as intelligent or talented in school settings" (p. 48). Like the boys described by Whiting, most of the boys in this study also had self confidence, were optimistic about their futures, set realistic goals, and did not think that being a strong student diminished their masculinity. All of the boys described themselves using adjectives that related to being scholars: hard working, talented, honest, successful, and passionate. The activities, the curricular expectations, and the support in the AVID class all seemed to help develop and solidify this scholar identity in the participants who were AVID students. For the one student, Omar, who was never in AVID, he seemed already to have a scholar identity, and because of his confidence in his academic abilities, believed he did not need, nor would he consider enrolling in the AVID program. He maintained this confidence, even with failing grades.

Felix, a current college student, remembered when he was only five years old on his first day of school, his father told him that being a good student was the definition of being a man. He said his father told him:

'If you can't do this, then you're not a man. You represent the family when you're in school. You represent yourself.' He made it a point to say, 'This is what we do, and this is what I need you to do....This is your life.'

This is an example of how early in Felix' life that he began to equate a scholar identity with masculinity. Felix remarked that it was virtually tradition for the males in his family to "be successful," and that getting an education was an important part of that success:

Without education you really can't take charge of your own life....He's (Felix' father) always said that it is integral to being an adult, being a man...My great grandfather...was a major in the Spanish army. He was a very stern man, very old fashioned. But really to him, if you don't go to school, or if you're not owning some kind of business, if you're not trying to do well for yourself, you might as well really not talk to him....I never knew him, but ... from what my dad tells me, that's the feeling I get....You have to do well for yourself. And I guess people recognize, in today's society, you really can't without education....Now a days, in most developed countries, there's free education, and there's the opportunity for higher education. And if you really don't go for that, then what are you doing with your life?

Felix said that college course work was different from what he expected in that it challenged his thinking much more than high school courses did. While Felix seemed to have many characteristics of the scholar identity including being studious, competent and capable, he seemed surprised by the way his college learning affected him as an individual. He said that before entering college, he thought college classes would be more like high school courses in which students attend, complete assignments and acquire information. He compared it to an assembly line: "you put in your time, you get out, you get 10 points." But he said, "That's not what college is like. It really helps your mind grow, a lot." He said

that his experience has been that three or four times each semester, he learns something challenging in each college course that “changes my perception...or... a paradigm in my life, fundamentally.”

He said that he did not realize it at the time, but he believes his high school AVID course prepared him for the challenges he is encountering in college in three unique ways. First, he learned to take thoughtful notes, using the Cornell style and format. He said his college note-taking skills now really define each class experience that he has. Taking the notes, reflecting on the significance of certain points, and generating questions he wants to know more about – all aspects of Cornell notes—help him get the most out of each class. Felix said that if he doesn’t take Cornell notes in a particular class, he doesn’t learn as much as when he does take notes. Second, he learned how to talk with his professors, and is not afraid to ask questions. Finally, he knows how to work collaboratively with fellow students, setting up tutorial groups, and completing group projects. He concluded:

...those aren't things you really think about, and they're not things you do all the time, but when you need them, they're there, and that's almost always the difference between an A and a B, between a B and a C. It might be one time you do a (tutorial) group, and that might be the difference. And because you did it well, you get a great grade.

What Felix seemed to be describing as differences between college and high school courses might be categorized as engagement in learning. Prior to going to college, Felix thought his learning process would be more passive, like many of his high school courses, but found that his college courses were more

intellectually engaging, and actually changed the way he thought and perceived the world. According to Felix, without some of the skills and strategies he learned in AVID, he may not have been able to experience the intellectual engagement he has thus far.

Felix seems very comfortable as a university student. The skills he learned in his high school AVID program – taking thoughtful notes, asking his professors questions, and collaborating with peers to understand the concepts in his courses and complete group projects – have given him confidence in his academic abilities and have trained him to set high expectations for himself. His ultimate goal is to be a lawyer for small businesses, and he knows that the path toward that goal includes being involved even now as a college student in community affairs, volunteering for Teach for America, applying to both his current university's and Stanford's Colleges of Law, and earning a law degree. He attributed his very detailed life's plan to his high school experience: "I guess it's something I learned in AVID, which is you set a goal, and you have smaller goals set in between."

Juan, a Vale high school senior, has also set goals for himself, and seemed very secure in his scholar identity in the AVID class—he even saw himself as a leader and as an achiever. When asked about how he felt about being in an AVID class where two-thirds of the students were female, he said, "Actually, it makes me feel unique, proud of myself. There aren't... a lot of guys in the program, but I'm ... one of those few guys who was chosen to be in it and it makes me feel

proud.” Juan described himself and those who go to college as people who have questions and are not afraid to ask them. Of the males currently in AVID, Juan said, “we’re the guys who want to ask questions (and) do more with our lives than just one thing.” He also indicated that male AVID students are motivated to achieve their goals and confident in their abilities. He said, “It shows us guys (those in the AVID class) know what we want to do in life.” In addition, Juan sees himself as a role model:

People ask me what classes I’m in, and I say AVID and tell them about it. And some of them are Hispanic and so they see that anybody can make it, no matter who they are or where they’re from and that they, too, can accomplish anything.

Juan also indicated that his peers often look up to him. “People are always entrusting me with things, and I always come through with results. When people come to me with life issues, I’m honest and don’t tell them what they want to hear.”

Juan exhibits a scholar identity by being serious about school and believing that earning a college degree is a required step to accomplish his goal of becoming a forensic scientist. He thinks his high school honors courses are challenging and difficult, but he recognizes that the rigor will help him later in college courses: “...since I’m already experiencing some of the challenges right now, I’ll be able to handle them in college.... So, I think it’s preparing me for it.”

Isaiah is another Vale High School senior who exhibits the scholar identity by having specific goals for his future. After graduating from high school, he intends to go to college, and his plans include graduate school; he would like to

earn a Ph.D., probably in arts education. He has taken dance classes at Vale High all four years. Isaiah said that he wants to go to college for the same reason that most people go to college—because they know what they want in life: “...not necessarily know *what* they want to do, but they have an idea that they want a better future. They want to be successful.”

Isaiah named several activities completed during the AVID class that he thought helped him be successful in the honors-level classes he took for the first time his junior year including learning to take Cornell-style notes, working collaboratively with other students to complete projects and/or to study, participating in tutorials, and getting involved in extracurricular activities. He also said that he went back to reading outside of school, something he had done when much younger, because of being exposed to a variety of authors in the AVID class:

I noticed like a lot of my friends didn't read ...I guess you could say I didn't think it was cool to read (anymore). Only because you kind of grow up thinking only nerds read books....and so, like, I kind of didn't do that, until AVID this year. Especially with certain stories, I would try to look up authors in the library. I would find things like amazing stories by those authors and I just thought, ooh, you know, I could start reading again. It (the AVID class) definitely got me back to reading.... But, I mean, there are a lot of people that read books that really aren't nerds.

Because of the reading, and because of the activities completed in the AVID class, Isaiah said he thinks his friends believe he is a different person now, and he thinks of himself as an intelligent person:

I know when you read, your vocabulary definitely grows a lot. So, a lot of times when I find a word in a book and I use it sometimes in a sentence,

they're (his friends are) like, 'Really? You're using big words?' but it helps me feel smarter, too, because my vocabulary is a lot broader.

Isaiah attributes much of his success in high school and much of the success he is confident he will have later in college to his AVID class. He said it was the AVID class that helped him overcome the difficulty level of all of the honors-level courses he took. He said it was the AVID class that shaped him into what he called "a hard worker" and made him realize that he is willing to work even harder to achieve his goals.

Alex, a Vale High School senior who was dropped from the AVID program during his junior year, was asked if AVID helped him develop his identity as a young man, if it supported or encouraged him in his growth as a young man. He said that it did, but that he didn't realize the lessons until after he had been dropped. Alex said the kinds of boys who take AVID are "smart students" and those who "want to improve," and that was the reason he initially joined AVID. He said, "I actually wanted to, like, get better grades, and it helped me out." He said that while he was in the AVID class, his teacher would talk to him about how he as a young man would need to be responsible, even for small things, in order to be successful. However, Alex said that at the time, he would think to himself, "Whatever." Now, he says:

But now looking back on it, I see he was right. Most seniors only need to take two classes in order to graduate, but I have to take everything in my schedule--I have to take six classes this year in order to graduate.

Alex intimated that if he'd been more responsible with earlier classes, classes he considered "little things," he would have an easier class schedule now. Alex admitted rejecting overt academic work. He described himself as having a "lack of work ethic... because I don't really do my work. Like when it gets hard and difficult, I just, like, I give up. I don't really try anymore."

Alex realized after being dropped from the AVID program that the assignments and activities were ones that helped him be a better student. He admitted that while he was in the AVID class, he did not like any of the writing or reading activities, but later he thought:

You don't like it, but it's actually good practice. Because that's the whole purpose: for you to practice and get better, because if you never practice, you're just going to see it the same way every time... Long readings, but at the end it was worth it because you learned something new.

Alex came to understand the purpose of the AVID activities by comparing them to his soccer training. It was natural to him to practice those athletic skills in after school team practices, but it was not until after he was dropped from AVID that Alex realized that practicing academic skills could help him become a better student, which was a goal he wanted to achieve.

A few months after being dropped from AVID, Alex began exhibiting some characteristics of the scholar identity in several of his classes by independently practicing some of those academic skills he had learned while in AVID. He said he does not use the format of Cornell notes anymore, but he still takes notes in class, even when no teacher directions require him to do so. "Not

just when a teacher tells us to, but when I hear stuff I haven't heard before, and I think it's interesting, I just write it down in my planner or in my notebook," he said. This shows that Alex is developing a scholar identity because he is choosing to intellectually engage in his learning.

Alex also showed other scholar characteristics of responsibility and willingness to sacrifice, when he told me about how he planned and helped pay for a trip to Mexico that his mother wanted him to go on during the fall semester of his senior year. One of Alex's grandmothers had passed away earlier in the spring, and because no one but Alex and his younger sister have documentation to prove their legal US citizenship, none of Alex's family could go to Mexico for the funeral, and return legally to the US. Alex's mother wanted 17-year-old Alex to take care of family business regarding the deceased grandmother, and to help his other grandmother:

My mom wanted me to go in December and miss two weeks of school (including final exams), but I told her that I'd rather go in October during our fall break and miss just one week of school (the week after fall break) than in December when it would affect my final grades. I didn't want to miss finals. And I could make up the work from the first week of second quarter.

Alex even helped pay for some of the expenses incurred for his trip to Mexico with his earnings from a part time job at a fast-food restaurant. Alex also used these earnings to help support his family since his father recently lost his job. This shows that Alex has family pressures and responsibilities, and yet he wanted to make sure he did not miss his finals. Alex demonstrates his growing scholar identity. His education is now important to him.

Omar is another Vale High School student who exhibits scholar identity characteristics, but he has chosen not to be in the AVID program. Omar, a sophomore, has goals that include going to college, and one day owning his own restaurant. However, while Omar claims that he wants to attend college, he does not seem to know very much about what it will take to get accepted by a university or college. He did not seem to know that getting good grades in challenging, rigorous courses would help him earn scholarships to pay for his education. The idea of connecting college scholarships and performance in high school courses may be a foreign concept to Omar because he referred to his uncle several times during the interview as an example of a person who graduated from college, but who did not fit the description of a typically smart person. Omar said his uncle failed a particular course several times, and had to re-take it, and yet he earned a college degree and became a successful architect in Mexico.

Omar thinks of himself as a good student, as one who knows that he is college bound, and who has little patience for other males who he regards as less serious about their education. At the end of one interview, I asked Omar if there was anything he thought could be done to improve the honors curriculum or honors program at Vale. Omar focused on two other students in one of his classes and asked me to kick them out of Vale High School: “Two pretty obnoxious guys...they’re loud and they really don’t know when to shut up....Well, actually ... kick them out because they don’t really seem like they want to be there.....They’re distracting for the most part.” Omar’s disparaging comments

about these two male students seem to suggest that Omar sees himself as the serious, academic-minded one, because he is quiet, and because he wants to be in all of his classes.

While Omar is not in the AVID program, he exhibits many of the same characteristics of a scholar identity like the other male AVID students. He has goals of achieving a college education, and is confident that the high school courses he is in now will help him prepare to be a successful college student. When asked about how he was preparing himself for college, and if he would be interested in support like that offered in the AVID class, Omar said, “The IB courses I'm taking are doing that, and I'm planning to do a lot of volunteering....I already feel like I have enough with all the things honors classes give me....I feel like I can do that by myself.”

One of the differences between Omar and other successful AVID males is that the other successful AVID males say that they have learned to collaborate with peers in completing significant projects, and they learned study and organizational skills that helped them pass their classes. When asked about various AVID strategies, Omar did not say he used any of these techniques and regarding organization he said, “Having an organized bag is important, I guess, but sometimes when I'm in a rush, I just throw things in my back pack.” This comment reveals Omar's misunderstanding of real academic organization, characterized by a systematic approach to the learning process.

Four of the boys in this study referred to themselves or other male AVID students as hard workers in school, a common characteristic of the scholar identity. Felix said he would achieve his goals of being accepted into Stanford Law School by “a lot of studying, a lot of being involved in the community.” Juan said that he would accomplish his goals of starting college, going on a mission for his church and then completing a degree in forensic science by “working hard....studying more than I am now.” Isaiah said that he pictures himself earning a Ph.D. in art education by “working hard, studying, making sure I get things done.” Alex literally works hard by maintaining a part time job at a fast food restaurant, going to high school full time, and playing on Vale High School’s varsity soccer team.

All of the participants in this study showed characteristics of the scholar identity with varying degrees of success in their academics. Those in the AVID program earned better grades and were more successful in their honors-level classes than those not participating in AVID.

Practicing Effortless Achievement

Practicing effortless achievement was another common theme that emerged from the interview responses. Effortless achievement is getting good grades in classes seemingly through natural ability, and not through overt hard work. According to Carolyn Jackson, being accepted as hegemonically male, especially among middle class and working class males, often means rejecting overt academic work, as schoolwork is regarded as “uncool” (2006). The boys in

this study also related how they had to balance their “coolness” quotient with their desires to achieve academic success. Several of the participants related feeling conflict about completing homework outside of school time, or about being surprised about the difficulty of class assignments. In addition, the participants who were AVID students saw their ability to complete homework or other assignments during the AVID class as a benefit.

Isaiah admitted that he sometimes avoided completing the hard work of homework that some of his honors and IB classes had assigned, and that he appreciated being able to complete these assignments during his AVID class. He expressed frustration when he was not able to complete homework or study for tests during the AVID class:

Some Wednesdays we'd have a test and we'd need to study and he (the AVID elective teacher) would take the whole class period to explain something. And it was kind of frustrating when I had to work on an essay or had to read something for a(n honors or IB) class or do homework.

Instead of studying for a test, writing an essay or reading an assignment at home, after school hours, Isaiah indicated that he preferred to do other things during those hours, and preferred to complete this work during his AVID elective class. This may indicate that Isaiah recognized the AVID elective classroom was a safe environment for completing this type of activity without jeopardizing his masculinity because other students, especially other male students, in the class had the same desire.

Juan said initially he thought the AVID course just helped him get his homework done, something he also was not doing after school hours on his own, because he preferred to do other activities. But now he said that he sees that AVID has helped him with much more: from learning how to run a Socratic-style tutorial to getting help writing scholarship applications, to experiencing the accomplishment of working collaboratively with fellow students on a large, significant project. The activities Juan listed are ones that were completed during his elective class that he claims gave him confidence and helped him be successful in his honors-level courses. They also helped Juan appear in those honors-level classes to attain success without the same amount of effort as the other male students in the honors courses because he completed assignments and acquired strategies that led to success outside the purview of his fellow male peers who are not in AVID.

Juan also recognized that the work that he completed during the AVID class was work the average male student did not complete. However, Juan did not equate that effort and hard work with uncoolness, but rather with a masculine elitism. When asked why there were not more males in AVID classes, Juan said:

I guess (the reason more boys don't take AVID is because) the work that they have to put in. The effort, patience, time that it takes. I guess the guys who are in AVID now, we're the guys who want to ask questions, do more with our lives than just one thing.

Omar related the most obvious attitude about maintaining the perception of achieving academic success without putting forth much effort:

Sometimes I'm doing well in a class, earning a B, and then I kind of ignore the class (quit doing the work) and I go down to a D and I have to work my way back up. I've done it before--ever since middle school. I was almost failing or failing a class, but by the end of the quarter I'm always doing fine.

Omar indicates that he is such a strong student that he can let his grade slide to a dangerous level, and without much effort, pull it back up by the end of the grading period to what he considers an acceptable grade. Because he has always been able to maintain acceptable grades, and because he expects he always will be able to, Omar does not see the need nor the benefit of an AVID class for his success.

Felix also implied that he was successful in high school without much effort when he said he was surprised about the way his college courses challenged his thinking. When he said that he thought college classes would be more like high school courses in which students attend, complete assignments and acquire information, he suggested that his high school success was accomplished with little effort, compared to the effort he was putting into his college studies.

Alex also indicated that he maintained a perception that his success was earned through little effort when he related how his friends reacted to his initial enrollment in AVID:

They were kind of shocked because, they were like, 'You're in that class?' 'Yeah.' 'But you're not even smart.' And I'm like, 'I guess I got in there because they saw something in me; I don't know.' And then they would tell me, 'I'm still shocked because you don't do your work.' And I'm like, 'Well, I don't know. I can probably try in this class.'

Alex also indicated that he regretted not working harder and wishing that he could continue in the AVID class because he recognized after being dropped, how valuable the lessons were in that class. He said that initially he got in the class because he wanted to improve his grades. The advice that he would give to other Hispanic male students considering joining AVID included,

First of all, don't be lazy. Second of all, pay attention in class. Don't slack off, and try to do your best. Try to reach new goals that you never thought you could reach. It's a great class. It really helps you out with school and it really helps pick up your grades if you're behind. And you shouldn't really take it for granted because then the same thing will happen to them that happened to me.

The participants in this study showed varying degrees of embracing overt academic work. The AVID students all preferred completing homework assignments during their AVID elective class, instead of at home. However, it should be noted that for Felix, Juan, and Isaiah to be as successful as they have been in their honors and college courses, some homework must have been completed independently, because there are not enough hours in an AVID elective class to get all of the outside assigned work completed. These students have shown through their grades that they have acquired the skills of balancing the demands of their social lives with their desires to achieve academic success.

Depending on Personal Relationships and Collaboration

While many studies recommend that minority boys should have the opportunity to form strong personal relationships with male teachers in order to encourage success and participation in academic activities, most of the

participants in this study said that the gender of their AVID elective teacher had little or no effect on their success. Most of them said that they would have performed the same in their AVID class and in any of their honors classes, if their AVID elective teacher had been female. Isaiah's response sums up the attitudes of most of the others: "I don't think it mattered. He's a good teacher." What mattered to Isaiah and to the other participants was the effectiveness of the instructor. In Isaiah's and the others' views, the instructor's maleness had nothing to do with that effectiveness. Felix remarked that if he had had a female instructor, he may have worked even harder than he did while in high school. "My mother is usually the one who does the pushing....she's kind of the enforcer...I think in my mind, that might have triggered a little more," he said.

Only Juan said that he felt he benefitted from having a male AVID elective teacher. "Actually, I'm glad Mr. B's my teacher, because since he's... I have nothing against women, but since he's a male, he understands my views as a male, what I go through, the challenges that us males go through every day." When I asked Juan to elaborate on how Mr. B's being male helped him, he said, "I don't know. He's a guy, so he just knows the way we think. He understands us."

Many of the participants in this study also related how important it was to be in an AVID elective class where they could collaborate with other male students in the class. Felix related how that collaboration led to forming strong personal friendships with the other males in his AVID class. Felix was on his

high school's baseball team all four years, and he was active in many community service organizations all through those years, providing many opportunities to form strong relationships with a variety of students. He said that while he and the other few male students in his high school AVID class often interacted with the female students in the class and worked with them to complete projects in heterogeneous groups, he felt that the best friendships he formed were with the other male AVID students:

We formed like a special kind of thing, because we understood each other a little bit more than I feel like other people did, especially men that weren't in those kinds of programs. They didn't always understand us, where as me (and the other boys)...and even now, we always seem to 'get' each other, more so than other people seem to get us.

When asked about how he felt being in an AVID class where the majority of students were female, Isaiah said that because most of them were a year younger than he was, he did not associate or work with them very much. While he said more females than males in his class didn't affect him at all, he admitted that he tended to study more and complete more projects with the other males in his class.

The identification with a male AVID elective teacher varied by participant in this study. While only Juan said he was glad his instructor was male, the other participants all spoke very positively about their relationships with their teachers. Felix remarked that his relationship with his elective teacher was still strong, two years after graduating, bragging that he still had his elective teacher's personal cell phone number. Because the boys admired their elective teachers, these men

likely played a role in the boys' development of their masculine identities, even if they were not aware of it. Also, all of the participants in the study who were AVID students noted how important it was to them to be able to work with and develop relationships with other male students in their class. Only Omar, who is not in the AVID program, suggested that he prefers to work alone.

Negotiating Family and Community Influences

The students in this study seemed to emphasize relationships with family, community, and other groups as part of their definition of manhood. Family influence played a large role in several of the students' formation of their identity. Several of the boys said that what drove them to be successful students was the desire to make parents proud or to live up to a family's expectation. In addition, they often identified with other individual males who took ethical stands in life and who valued such character traits as respect, being truthful, respecting oneself enough to have confidence in one's own decisions, and pursuing education to become a better person (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008).

Both of Juan's parents are Hispanic, with his father from California, his mother from Mexico, and neither having graduated from college. Juan's parents have encouraged him to pursue a college education, and he says that much of his motivation to do well in school comes from his desire to make his parents proud. He remarked:

They pushed me by always talking to me about, 'Keep going to school, be successful, be more successful' than they are. They told me to do better

than what they did. They just inspire me to do, to do good in my life. Yeah, I really do want to make them proud.

When it comes to the theme of community influence, Juan said that he sees himself as a real man who will serve the community because real men have jobs that help people, and that is what he hopes to do one day. He said that real men “think of others than themselves.” As an example of a powerful man within the community, Juan referred to Bill Gates and his philanthropic work. Juan said, “I don't really know much about him, but what I've heard ... is he donates money to college scholarships and things like those. I want to be, I hope to be (like that one day.)” In order to be able to help people like Bill Gates has, Juan said that he knows an important step toward that goal would be to complete his education.

Isaiah's parents are Hispanic, both have graduated from high school, but neither earned college degrees, although Isaiah's father is currently attending a large university in the Southwest while working for the same university as a financial aid advisor. Isaiah said that he got his hard-working characteristics from his stepmother. “I wasn't always like that, but I am now,” he said. He explained that he had lived with his biological mother when he was younger and that there had not been a lot of structure, nor expectations for success in school there. When he moved and began living with his father and stepmother, expectations were different: “They had rules and structures.... My stepmom explained to me and my brother that doing those things (like chores) creates responsibility and independence.” Isaiah went on to say that his identity as a hard-working student comes from his desire to be like his stepmother. “I feel like I'm emulating her. I

feel like I'm more happy now; nothing's difficult for me now.” Isaiah’s comments show that his stepmother has had a significant influence on his identity, helping him to be not just comfortable with, but proud of the identity of a hard-working student.

Alex’s parents are both from Mexico and never attended either college or high school. Alex’s dad dropped out of school in fourth grade because his father died and he had to go to work to help support his family. Alex’s mother completed eighth grade. Alex said his parents have set very high expectations for him, with his mother saying that he should earn straight A’s and go to college:

Well, my parents always tell me, you know, ‘Stay in school.’ ‘Cause they want me to have the education that they didn't have.... And my mom was like, she told me, she knows that I'm supposed to be in there (the AVID class) because she thinks I can have straight A's in school. She says that I have the potential to be a straight A student. I just don't want to be one.... I've tried and, no, I'm not a straight A student. The most I've gotten is pretty much like B's, but not straight A's.

When Alex was dropped from the AVID program, he said his mother was very disappointed in him, and that made him want to change his performance in school:

...this year I was doing really bad which was one of the reasons I got dropped out of AVID, and I slacked off, and I didn't care about school anymore. I just, I wanted to drop out of school, too. And my mom saw my grades, and she was like, ‘What's wrong with you?! This isn't you.’ And I'm like, ‘I just don't want to be in school anymore.’ And she just gave me this long lecture, telling me that, ‘so you're telling me that everything I've done, all the work we've done to have you in school, it was meant for nothing?’ And I actually thought about it, like, being from her point of view, and I was thinking, ‘If I were her, I'd be mad at myself. I would be like, “I'm working for nothing!”’ So that got me motivated to start picking up my grades again, which I did at the end of the semester. And I really felt like, really bad because I disappointed my mom. And

now that it's not that much soccer that's my motivation, like now it's actually my mom. I'd like to actually make her proud.

Alex also indicated that his masculine identity was influenced during his experience of travelling by himself to Mexico. He said that being away from his immediate family and having the opportunity to be of service to his living grandmother was one that helped him grow in responsibility:

I was able to help my grandma take care of two of my cousins--two of her grandchildren. I bought them shoes and just relieved some stress for my grandmother. ... Usually I just go along with what everyone else I'm around is doing. But when I was in Mexico, and my parents weren't there, I had to be responsible for myself.

Alex's maturing and growth in responsibility for himself and for his family members translated to more responsible attitudes about school. Because his entire family, especially his mother, expects Alex to do well in school, this has motivated him to get more assignments done, to pay better attention in class, and ultimately to get better grades.

Omar said that his attending college is something his family expects him to do. "I would get in trouble if I didn't go. (Not going) would disappoint them." Omar said that he plans to own his own restaurant one day, and he thought knowing how the economy works would be helpful in running a business, so he hopes to major in economics when he gets to college. "Getting an economics degree will help me run a business," he said. "My dad was an accountant in Mexico and he told me you could make a good living as an accountant, and so I just thought of economics."

Felix's parents are both Hispanic and both have earned Associates degrees. In addition to meeting their expectation of earning a college degree, Felix also feels that to be a real man he needs to be able to support himself and develop into an adult who can support and help others. He said,

I hope people will rely on me some day, because, I feel that's the kind of a life that's worth living, where people do rely on you. For example, in my opinion, the most important things a person can do are raise a child, teach...register voters. Those are the most important things a person will do, in my opinion. Somebody basically relies on you. Or not even relies on you, but you help someone with their life. That's the most important thing, in my opinion.

Felix said that it was the AVID class he took in high school that also helped shape his desire to want to help others. During high school, Felix's AVID instructor encouraged him to be involved in a variety of community service projects including the Teen Advisory Commission, which reported to the Community Services Commission for a southern California city. His AVID instructor also nominated him to attend Boys' State. He said,

And now I'm on PIRG (Public Interest Research Group – a university student organization that works on social issues) and I believe that one, it will help me stay refreshed and it will help me stay in the community, kind of keep the spirit alive, while I'm doing my studies. But at the same time, I can't deny that it looks really good on a resume.

While Felix's family made it obvious that getting an education was very important, probably contributing to his strong work habits in school, he did admit that when he was younger he showed disrespect to some of his teachers, but later learned to keep quiet, even when he disagreed with a teacher, as a strategy for academic success. "I like to talk back. And that's something I don't do (anymore). I do that in here (pointing to his temple)... And that's one thing you

have to learn: you have to be patient to be a good student.” Felix also found it important in his high school experience to play baseball all four years, and he wished he had been able to go to college on an athletic scholarship:

(Our AVID elective teacher) would always encourage the women who are in sports in his classes to try to go for the athletic scholarships because there were a lot of them available. Well, there were a lot of them available as opposed to the males because a lot more young men try to go that route. That's the sexy route. The standard route. It looks good. But it's not the one that everyone can go to....I mean personally, that's the way that I wish...I would have gone to college on a baseball scholarship. I love baseball.... because I really wanted to be that guy who hit home runs, and drove a Mustang, or something.

The participants in this study reported that a number of outside influences helped shape their masculine and scholar identities. From parental and family expectations, to examples set by male cultural icons, to attitudes about male leadership promoted by community service organizations, to models of maleness through athletics, all were factors in the boys' construction of their identities.

Chapter 3

DISCUSSION

Scholar Identity

As Connell suggests, boys develop their masculine identities from a number of different influences including family, peers, and school (2000). The boys in this study were no different. What AVID seems to do is reinforce the masculine identity that fosters academic success, while indirectly downplaying the machismo, laddism, or other identities that devalue education. Felix, Juan, Isaiah, and Alex all testified to this.

As Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) and Coles (2007) say about the dominant identity associated with masculinity, all of the participants in this study who were in AVID seemed to indicate that they felt part of a dominant group, not left out of one, by being one of the few males in AVID. Juan felt “unique and proud.” Isaiah said the boys in AVID are ones who are driven “to be successful.... they have an idea that they want a better future.” Alex said the kinds of boys who take AVID are “smart students” and those who “want to improve.” He said that “was the reason I joined AVID....I actually wanted to, like, get better grades, and it helped me out.” Their scholar identity was directly tied to their masculine identity and it gave them a sense of prestige.

Like the boys with a scholar identity described by Whiting (2006), Felix had self-confidence, optimism about his future, and had set realistic goals of earning a bachelor’s degree in political science and justice studies and succeeding

in law school. In addition, he did not think that being a strong student diminished his masculinity. In fact, Felix's family influences made him equate being a strong student with masculinity, beginning at an early age. "If you can't do this, then you're not a man," he remembers his father telling him on his first day of kindergarten. Also, Felix said that his involvement with AVID helped him become an engaged learner in his college courses, and contributed to his desire to volunteer in organizations focused on social and political issues.

Like the males described by Reeser (2009), Schrock and Schwalbe (2009), Coles (2007), and Liu (2006), Juan is able to perform his masculinity in his AVID class and in his other classes in a way that is constructed out of his relationships with other students in those classes. Juan said several times that being part of the AVID program made him feel "unique" as one of the few males involved in the program. He was proud of being in the minority, and indicated that this gave him some social status with his peers. He said, "It shows us guys (those in the AVID class) know what we want to do in life." He also indicated that his peers often look up to him. "People are always entrusting me with things, and I always come through with results." These comments show that Juan believes he has significant social capital (Reeser, 2009; Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Coles, 2007; Liu, 2006) in his masculine performances both in his AVID class and in other classes at school.

Isaiah rediscovered reading through his participation in the AVID class and indicated that this part of his scholar identity did not jeopardize his

masculinity or his “cool” quotient with his peers: “there are a lot of people that read books that really aren't nerds.” In other words, within AVID, Isaiah has the social capital (Reeser, 2009; Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Coles, 2007; Liu, 2006) to be a reader and not risk any of his “cool” quotient or his masculinity. His relationship as an accepted member of the AVID males makes this attitude possible. Re-embracing this attitude also helped Isaiah acquire a broader vocabulary that he said helped him feel smarter, an aspect of his scholar identity.

Alex realized after being dropped from the AVID program that the assignments and activities were ones that helped him be a better student. He admitted that while he was in the AVID class, he did not like any of the writing or reading activities, and like the boys in Jackson’s (2006, 2009, & 2010) studies, often rejected overt academic work. However, later he recognized that they were good practice for the kinds of rigorous activities he would be expected to complete in future honors and college courses. He said, “Because that’s the whole purpose: for you to practice and get better, because if you never practice, you’re just going to see it the same way every time.” Also, like the boys in Jackson’s studies, Alex valorized sports, especially soccer, but he came to understand the purpose of the AVID activities by comparing them to his soccer training. It was natural to him to practice those athletic skills in after school team practices, but it was not until after he was dropped from AVID that Alex realized that practicing academic skills could help him become a better student, which was a goal he wanted to achieve.

While Omar was not part of the AVID program and not as successful as boys who were in AVID, he exhibited some of the same characteristics of goal-setting, confidence in abilities, and maintaining a serious attitude about learning, characteristics of the scholar identity described by Whiting (2006). When asked about how he was preparing himself for college, and if he would be interested in support like that offered in the AVID class he said, “I already feel like I have enough with all the things honors classes give me....I feel like I can do that by myself.” Omar seemed to intimate that to be his own man meant that he should give some resistance to the rules or to authority, and display some orneriness about doing things independently, his own way.

Effortless achievement:

Like the students in Jackson’s studies (2006, 2009 & 2010), the boys in this study had to figure out how to balance their “coolness” quotient with their desires to achieve academic success. According to Jackson, being accepted as hegemonic male, especially among middle and working class males, often means rejecting overt academic work, as schoolwork is regarded as “uncool.” Four of the boys in this study referred to themselves or other male AVID students as “hard workers.” Like the boys described by Whiting (2006), they all seemed to have a strong work ethic, and were confident in their future success because of their ability to study longer, complete assignments, and stay focused on achieving their goals. Felix said he would achieve his goals of being accepted into Stanford Law School by “a lot of studying, a lot of being involved in the community.”

Both Juan and Isaiah said that they would accomplish their goals of earning college degrees by “working hard” and “studying more.” Alex literally works hard by maintaining a part time job at a fast food restaurant, going to high school full time, and playing on Vale High School’s varsity soccer team.

But all four of these males also admitted to other behaviors that Jackson & Dempster (2009) identified as ways that boys who want to be accepted as hegemonic males use. Juan, Isaiah, and Alex all said that they appreciated how the AVID class allowed them to catch up on homework or other assignments or studying for tests. These responses indicated that they were not doing these activities at home, or in situations that might be observed by other students in their honors classes. The AVID classroom became a safe place where the overt actions of working hard were accepted by other students, while it may not have been accepted or expected in the honors classes or in social situations outside of school.

In contrast, Omar doesn’t complete hard work in hiding. He brags about his natural ability to succeed in his classes. He exemplified effortless achievement discussed in Jackson’s research by taking pride in his ability to raise his grades at the last moment: “I was almost failing or failing a class but by the end of the quarter I’m always doing fine.”

Personal Relationships and Collaboration

As Davison and Frank (2006) and Liu (2006) point out, students will construct an identity by duplicating other social and gendered performances they

observe. The boys in this study were all asked about how having a male AVID elective instructor affected their academic success. Felix thought that if he had had a female instructor, he may have worked harder. “My mother is usually the one who does the pushing...she’s kind of the enforcer....I think in my mind, that might have triggered a little more,” he said. Isaiah did not think his experience would be different if his AVID elective teacher had been female, but he also remarked that he felt that his new attitudes about school that were acquired while in the AVID program were related to his desire to emulate his step mother, using the words responsible and independent.

Juan said that he felt he benefitted from having a male AVID elective teacher. “Actually, I’m glad Mr. B’s my teacher ...since he’s a male, he understands my views as a male.... he just knows the way we think. He understands us.” This reflects that Juan has adopted the common sense idea of maleness (Davison and Frank, 2006; Connell 2000, 2006; Liu, 2006). Juan cannot explain it to me, a female researcher and school administrator, but he knows that Mr. B’s maleness is an academic advantage to him.

Felix said that while he participated in many different activities in high school including being on the baseball team and being involved in community service organizations –all opportunities to interact with a variety of different peers—he felt that the best friendships he formed were with the other male students in his AVID class. He said, “We formed like a special, kind of thing, because we understood each other a little bit more than I feel like other people

did, especially men that weren't in those kinds of programs." Felix's comments indicate that he valued the relationships that he formed with other males in his class and that associating with them made him feel more comfortable and more understood (Pluiose, 2007).

Family and Community Influences

Connell (2000) has suggested that family is one of several influential factors in a man's construction of his masculine identity, along with society and schooling following close behind. All of the participants in this study indicated that their families' support, encouragement, and expectations affected them. Their responses indicated that the development of their masculine identity was also tied to their identity as scholars.

Felix's family had a generational expectation that males must be successful, including earning an education, or they were not accepted. Even though Felix had never met his great grandfather, he knew that that relative's values had been passed down through the family and that not earning a college education would be deemed shameful. He summarized his family's views by asking, "if you really don't go for that (a higher education), then what are you doing with your life?" Felix's words and especially his story about his Spanish great-grandfather seem to reveal a strong influence of the "caballerismo" masculinity as described by Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey (2008).

Juan, Isaiah, Alex and Omar all felt their families' influence in their goal setting and especially their desires to pursue a college education. Juan's parents

told him to “be more successful than they are.” Isaiah said that his stepmother taught him “responsibility and independence,” characteristics he said helped him develop into a “hard worker.” Alex’s parents want him to “have the education that they didn't have,” and his mother was extremely disappointed when Alex flunked out of the AVID program, asking in desperation, “all the work we've done to have you in school, it was meant for nothing?” Finally, Omar said that the expectation of going to college was so high in his family, he would get in trouble with his parents, if he did not go.

Caballerismo with its positive connotations related to social responsibility and problem-solving coping (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008) was an identity that seemed to be described and illustrated in both Felix’s and Alex’s interviews. Felix related how he belonged to a Public Interest Research Group, a group of students who work on social issues, because “I believe that ... it will help me stay refreshed and it will help me stay in the community.” Alex described his problem-solving coping and how proud he was of himself when he traveled by himself to Mexico to take care of family business. He described in great detail how he helped a grandmother take care of two of his cousins when he took them to shop for and he paid for new pairs of shoes. Juan also hinted at identifying with caballerismo, especially the social responsibility aspect, when he described real men as “ones who help people. They think of others than themselves.” He also said that he identified with Bill Gates because “he donates

money to college scholarships and things like those. I want to be, I hope to be (like that one day.)”

Felix and Alex also described typical machismo behaviors described in Kerr & Cohn’s, research (2001). These behaviors include proving manliness through feats of physical strength often displayed through athletics, by valorizing sport and professional athletes, by rejecting overt academic work, and by showing a lack of respect for authority. While Felix’s family made it obvious that getting an education was very important, probably contributing to his strong work habits in school, he did admit that when he was younger he showed disrespect to some of his teachers, but later learned to keep quiet, even when he disagreed with a teacher, as a strategy for academic success. Felix also found it important in his high school experience to play baseball all four years, and he wished he had been able to go to college on an athletic scholarship. “That’s the sexy route. The standard route. It looks good,” he said. Felix indicated that going to college on an athletic scholarship would have made him even more masculine; it would have helped him achieve what Todd Reeser (2010) calls the culturally promoted ideal of hegemonic male identity.

Alex is also an athlete, playing on the Vale soccer team all four years of his high school career, an opportunity to prove his masculinity through physical means. He also admitted to rejecting overt academic work like the boys described in Kerr and Cohn’s research (2001) and in Jackson’s studies (2006). He said, “I don’t really do my work. Like when it gets hard and difficult, I just, like, I give

up.” However, he did not seem to be proud of these behaviors, and wished he could return to the AVID program. When asked what advice he would give to an Hispanic male freshman considering joining the AVID program, Alex reflected on what he believed were the mistakes he made that led to his being dropped from AVID: “First of all, don't be lazy. Second of all, pay attention in class. Don't slack off, and try to do your best.”

While the participants in this study seemed to display aspects of machismo and/or caballerismo, character traits often linked to an Hispanic ethnicity, none of the males in this study seemed to think their ethnic identity as Hispanics had anything to do with their academic achievement. Especially for the students who are still in high school, Juan, Isaiah, Alex, and Omar, there seemed to be a lack of conscious awareness of their Hispanic identity. When Isaiah was asked about how AVID might have helped develop his ethnic identity, he deflected the question by saying, “I think it's important for all races to know you can do anything, no matter who you are.” Alex’ comments were similar to the other students’ outlook when he said, “It (Hispanic identity) didn't really matter. It just mattered that you were a student. Everyone was the same in that class.”

Suggestions: What Schools Can Do

According to Gilman Whiting (2006), a scholar identity includes students viewing themselves “as academicians, as studious, as competent and capable and as intelligent or talented in school settings.” There are a number of strategies that schools can implement to encourage the construction of this aspect of masculine

identity in male students, especially those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and from working or middle classes.

It is important for teachers, especially AVID elective teachers, to form strong personal relationships with their students. Just as educational leaders at a higher education summit for Black and Hispanic male college students encouraged attendees “to try to see the world as a young man does” and “to connect with somebody's son” (Pluviose, 2006), it would be beneficial for secondary teachers to do the same. When students form strong personal relationships with their teachers, they are more apt to be academically successful (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Johnson, 2008; Strayhorn & Terrel, 2007). In this study, Juan attributed at least some of his academic success to his male teacher being able to understand Juan’s maleness.

High school counselors should also make deliberate efforts to increase the number of conversations they have with Hispanic males about attending college. As Riegle-Crumb (2010), discovered in her study, social capital is gained through these conversations that help especially Hispanic students matriculate to four-year universities more successfully.

It is also very helpful if the Hispanic males in the AVID program can form strong personal relationships with other young men of color. Like the Hispanic male college students who testified at the Black, Brown and College-Bound higher education summit (Pluviose, 2007), it is very helpful for young Hispanic males to surround themselves with other like-minded peers who can motivate,

encourage, and validate in each other a desire to excel in academics. Felix described this phenomenon in his relationship with the other male students in his AVID class when he said, “we always seem to ‘get’ each other, more so than other people seem to get us.” AVID elective teachers would be wise to orchestrate activities that help the Hispanic males in their classes form such bonds.

Because studies have shown that Hispanic males who experience discrimination also struggle with being motivated to succeed in academic settings (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, Bámaca, & Zeiders, 2009), it would be helpful for AVID programs to include strategies that emphasize coping with discrimination. One study (Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008) with Latino adolescents suggested that these students found it easier to cope with discrimination when they had strong positive attitudes toward their ethnic identities. Many AVID programs require students to participate in extracurricular activities, and these studies suggest that it might be helpful for Hispanic male students to be active in such ethnic organizations as Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlan (MEChA), in order to support their abilities to cope with stressors such as discrimination.

Jackson’s studies (2006 & 2009) have shown that males risk being ostracized and labeled as ‘geeks’ or ‘nerds’ if they are viewed by their peers as having to work hard in order to achieve their academic success. But her studies have also shown that many students have figured out a number of strategies that

have helped them be academically successful (with little apparent effort) and be socially successful. According to Jackson and Dempster (2009), “these strategies and the balancing acts they entail are not easy ones, and pupils with more resources and capital at their disposal (generally middle-class students) are more likely to be able to manage the balancing” (p. 352). Some of these strategies include pretending not to pay attention in class but really listening and completing class work quickly. Another strategy included staying up late after socializing with friends to secretly complete work at home. Other students socialize with friends online while simultaneously working on homework.

AVID teachers would be wise to watch for signs of these strategies in their Hispanic male students, and build opportunities in their classes for students not only to discuss openly their strategies, but to offer support for alternative strategies (Watson, Kehler, & Martino, 2010). For example, since displaying hard work like completing homework at home instead of socializing is considered demasculinizing, AVID teachers might set aside class time for students to complete homework during the elective class. At least in this setting, where everyone else is completing homework, the activity may not be perceived as “uncool.” In this study, Juan, Isaiah, and Alex all expressed appreciation for the times when they could complete homework and other honors class assignments during their AVID elective class period.

Also, in order to change the accepted cultural perception that working hard is uncool, AVID teachers should praise and reward effort and process, rather than

the final product. In other words, teachers should reward and reinforce the “hard work” completed by the Hispanic males, instead of the final product (Jackson & Dempster, 2009).

AVID programs across the country usually include a component that encourages parents to become involved in their children’s education. With Vale High having such a large Hispanic population, it would be helpful for the administration and AVID coordinator at this school as in other Southwestern schools with large Hispanic populations to study the values, beliefs and family dynamics that are unique to Hispanic families. As Hill and Torres (2010) suggest, successfully involving Hispanic parents means making sure that the program’s goals are sensitive to these families’ values. Many of these values include a willingness to get along with others, and to respect and relate to people as individuals (as opposed to institutions), respecting each individual’s dignity regardless of social status, and helping their children adopt attitudes of diligent study to bring about success (Hill & Torres, 2010).

In selecting males for college prep support programs like AVID, it is helpful if the boys have family support for the going-to-college expectation, but that in and of itself is no guarantee that the boy will be successful. All five boys interviewed in this study said that their families expected them to go to college. Three of them were successful in their college-prep, honors-level classes; one was not; and one was struggling to maintain a 2.0 GPA, a grade point average much lower than any state university usually accepts.

While college-prep support programs like AVID will have success stories like Felix, Juan, and Isaiah; and failures like Alex, some of the failing students may later come to accept some of the concepts and ideologies they resisted while in the AVID program, just like Alex did. While Alex did not want to do the “hard work” that was required of him while he was in the AVID class, after he was dropped, he independently started using some of the “hard work” AVID strategies such as taking Cornell notes, in order to attain success in his classes. AVID elective teachers should take heart that their work with these students is not all wasted. Alex is an example of a student who during his time in the AVID class, never understood that his immediate actions could affect his future. He did not understand that working hard now on “little things” like courses would pay off later with an easier senior high school schedule and college opportunities. After he was dropped, he recognized value in some of his previously rejected experiences, and began to independently adopt them.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

As my study suggests, there were many influences the participants say contributed to their involvement or lack of involvement in the AVID program. The most important of these for those who continued their involvement in AVID was experiencing academic success through the use of many AVID strategies like taking Cornell notes, collaborating with peers, and being able to ask questions of instructors. Another influence was the new-found status they enjoyed among their peers. Family expectations and seeing themselves as men who will someday serve their communities influenced them to persevere through academic challenges. Factors that discouraged participation in AVID, especially for Alex, included experiencing academic failure and not recognizing the value of the AVID curriculum. For Omar, maintaining an overly confident attitude that he could accomplish his goals without any outside assistance, and relating to an uncle who earned a college degree even after failing a course, influenced his lack of involvement in AVID.

These influences connected to the boys' construction of their masculine identity by helping them see themselves as confident, capable, and intelligent men. The family expectations helped them see themselves as leaders in their families and communities. For those who stayed in the AVID program, they were able to form strong bonds with other male AVID students, reinforcing their masculine identity as scholars. For Alex and Omar, their rejection of AVID's

lessons led to masculine identities of misguided self sufficiency and over-confidence.

Because the participants in this study seemed to lack a conscious awareness of their Hispanic identity, my research did not uncover how the participants' ethnic identity contributed as a factor in their involvement or lack of involvement in AVID. This will be a topic to explore in future research. Questions that might be asked in follow-up interviews or in a follow-up study with new participants could include: What are the characteristics of an Hispanic student? What makes an Hispanic student different from any other student in the AVID class or in an honors class?

I began this dissertation by quoting a recommendation I received for Alberto, an Hispanic male freshman student at my school who is considering joining the AVID program and taking two honors classes next year. The recommendation written by his English teacher describes the very characteristics that the research points out is common among males, especially those middle and working class males who are identifying themselves with hegemonic male behavior including negative behavior in class, lacking self discipline, trouble respecting authority, and being very social with other students. She also indicates that Alberto seems to be able to excel in class with seemingly little effort, "...he continues to excel with his grades. He always has a B+ or an A.... He seems to grasp concepts quickly and can work independently to understand an assignment." In addition, she notes that he is an athlete—he is on the freshman

boys' soccer team. But, she feels he needs "to work harder" in order to achieve academic success. She ends her recommendation by placing a condition on his entrance into honors classes—joining the AVID program—because she thinks this program will be able to 'fix' Alberto and help shape him into her ideal of an honors student.

What she does not seem to realize is that for Alberto to transform into her ideal honors student, he risks his masculine identities among a significant number of his peers. As Alloway (2007) suggests, Alberto's masculinity is implicated in his engagement, or lack of engagement in his learning. His identity as a male helps explain his responses to the learning that Mrs. Blisston expects him to do. Joining AVID likely will be a positive experience for Alberto, and he likely will learn to balance his social position related to his masculine identity with his desire to excel academically and achieve his college-going goals.

Reflection

During the completion of this dissertation, my learning experiences were wide-ranging and fruitful: from understanding the particulars of planning, conducting, and analyzing the data for a qualitative study, to discovering some new practical techniques that may benefit my school. Completing this dissertation has helped me become more thoughtful about determining root causes of perceived problems at my high school and in education in general. It has also taught me how to conduct legitimate research that I hope will contribute to answering perplexing and complex problems.

Because my first degree was in journalism, I was confident that I knew how to interview participants, that I knew how to ask follow-up questions, and how to elicit responses longer than just a few words. But I discovered early on, that my interviewing skills were rusty, and that I was even a little nervous about asking the participants some of the questions I had originally created for my study. For example, I always felt a little uncomfortable asking the question: “What kinds of jobs do “real men” have?” I was afraid that the participants would think that I was promoting stereotypical jobs and positions for them, and that I wouldn’t support whatever their aspirations might be. Eventually, though, as with many activities that improve with experience, I did get better at having more naturally-flowing conversations with the participants. I was able to generate trust between each participant and myself, and I didn’t shy away from asking two or three follow-up questions when I didn’t think the first answer was really deep enough.

I also learned a lot about what research has already been done in the area of trying to understand why males, especially middle-class or working-class males, often behave the way they do in school. One of the more significant ideas I came to understand was that certain behaviors, frequently viewed as negative behaviors by educators, are often behaviors that our male students do to be accepted by their fellow male peers and thereby contribute to or solidify the construction of their gender identity. When armed with that information, teachers at my school will more easily identify the root causes of some behavior problems

in their classes, openly discuss it with their students, and together develop strategies to reduce the negative behaviors. A specific example of this is that one of my AVID elective instructors has already begun to openly discuss with his students, especially the male students, when and where they do “homework,” and what drives their decisions about when, where, and *if* they do “homework.” I have used quotation marks deliberately around the word, “homework,” because we are discovering that many, if not most, of our male AVID students prefer to complete their “homework” for their honors classes, at places other than home. Very often, they appreciate being able to complete these assignments during their AVID elective class. “Homework” rarely gets completed at home, for these students.

I also learned that conducting a qualitative research study like mine takes a significant amount of time. Even though I work full time at the school where four of my participants are students, I still had to schedule the interviews at times that were convenient for the boys, that did not disrupt their classes, and that worked around my other full-time responsibilities. Transcribing and analyzing their 30- to 90-minute video-taped interviews also took a long time and led me to realize that there were a number of follow-up questions I now had, that I had not thought of during the initial interview. I had to schedule times to speak to the boys an additional time, and again manage this around their class schedules.

Finally, I added some specific technology-related skills to my education during this dissertation project. I had never edited video before, and I had never

made a Prezi multi-media presentation before. Both of these tasks were required for the completion of my dissertation project, but in neither of these did I have any training or expertise. I had to teach myself. Fortunately, Windows Movie Maker is rather intuitive to use, and Prezi has a tutorial on-line, and a number of excellent examples from which I “borrowed” some layout and design ideas. Yet even with this help, it was not easy, but time-consuming and at times frustrating. Many of the short video clips included in the Prezi took 30 minutes or longer to upload.

My personal reflection of this dissertation experience is that all aspects of it took longer than I imagined. From searching for and reading relevant research, getting a proposal approved by the IRB, scheduling interviews, transcribing interviews, reading more research, conducting follow-up interviews, reading more research, writing initial analysis and profiles, reading more research, writing multiple drafts of an article, learning how to edit video, editing video, learning how to create a Prezi, writing more drafts of the article, to creating a Prezi, all took many, many hours.

But I do not regret any of those hours because they were all very productive and rich with new learning. As a result of this study, I now have a much broader understanding of why some of the boys on my campus may shy away from an AVID program that promotes itself as a support for helping students accomplish the “hard work” of preparing for college entrance. If academic “hard work” is not equated with masculinity, why would they sign up

for such a course? As a result of the research I've completed, the Vale High School administration is taking a hard look at how we market this particular academic program, how we recruit students, especially Hispanic male students, and how we structure some of the academic expectations for our students. Because many of the students at Vale High School have struggled, or have overtly refused, to complete homework, Vale administration is preparing to add a study period in next year's daily schedule for all students. This 40-minute study period will no doubt also help the Hispanic male students who aspire to earn eventual college degrees.

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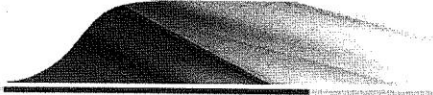
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APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Josephine Marsh
ED

for From: Mark Roosa, ChairSM
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 05/18/2010

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 05/18/2010

IRB Protocol #: 1005005145

Study Title: AVID

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(1) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

For all interviewees:

- For how long have you attended Vale High, if at all?
- For how long were you/have you been in the AVID program?
- When and where were you born?
- What is your parent(s') ethnicity, and what is the highest level of education that they have earned?
- If you had to describe yourself using just three to five descriptive words, what would they be?
- What are your goals/dreams for yourself after high school?
- How do you see yourself accomplishing those goals/dreams?
- What kinds of students/boys go to college?
- What kinds of students/boys take AVID?
- What kinds of jobs do “real men” have?
- Who are the powerful men in this world? Will you have power like them one day? How do you suppose you could get power like that?
- If you had to use just one word to describe each of the different groups of boys at Vale High School, which words would you use? (I may share how there were cowboys, drug-store-cowboys and jocks at the high school that I graduated from in order to prompt the students being interviewed.)
- How would you complete these sentences:
 - Good readers are _____.
 - Good students are _____.
 - People who go to college are _____.

For those who have been or are currently in AVID:

- What did you like/dislike about the reading and writing activities in your AVID class?
- What did you like/dislike about the AVID course requirements of being enrolled in at least one honors-level course, of maintaining at least a 2.0 GPA, and of being involved in at least two extra-curricular activities?
- Do you like having a male/female AVID instructor? Do you think your success in your AVID and other high school IB courses would be different if the gender of your AVID teacher was different?

For those who have been or are currently successful in AVID:

- *(For those attending University):* How much influence did AVID have on your going to XXU, if any?
- Would you say going to college (or being in the AVID class) is different from what you expected? *(If yes):* How so? *(If no):* How did you know in advance—how were you prepared?
- How did you feel being in an AVID class where most of the other students were females?

- To what do you attribute your success in AVID and in your college prep/IB classes?
- What were some obstacles you had to overcome in order to achieve that success?
- Was/is there a social cost for being in AVID? Did/Do you have friends and/or family that did not approve of you being in AVID? How did you handle that?
- Some people would say that the only people who should go to college are the really, really smart students who are in the very top of their class. Do you agree with that? Why or Why not?
- What were some activities you liked in the AVID class? Why?
- What were some activities you didn't like in the AVID class? Why?
- If you could change one thing about AVID to make it a better program, how would you change it? How would that change make the program better?
- Suppose I am an Hispanic freshman boy who is thinking about taking an AVID class, for the first time. What would you tell me about being in that class? What will it be like, especially in the first few weeks? Any advice to help me be successful?

For those who dropped from or never chose to enroll in AVID:

- ***(For those who dropped):*** How did you feel being in an AVID class where most of the other students were females?
- ***(For those who dropped):*** Suppose I am an Hispanic boy who is thinking about taking an AVID class. What would you tell me about being in that class? What will it be like, especially in the first few weeks? Any advice?
- ***(For those who dropped):*** What were some activities you liked in the AVID class? Why?
- ***(For those who dropped):*** What were some activities you didn't like in the AVID class? Why?
- What do you think of students in the AVID program? If you had to choose three to five adjectives to describe them, what words would you choose?
- How are you different from the students in the AVID program?
- Do you think there is a social cost for being in AVID? Did/Do you have friends and/or family that would not approve of you being in AVID?
- Some people would say that the only people who should go to college are the people who aren't smart enough to get real jobs requiring muscles and strength and street-smarts. Do you agree with that? Why or Why not?
- If AVID could change to a program that would help you achieve your goals/dreams, how would you want AVID to change?

APPENDIX C

LINK TO PREZI PRESENTATION

Link to Prezi presentation which summarizes this dissertation:

<http://prezi.com/4d-9w3spf4ax/hispanic-males-and-avid/>

Another way to find this presentation is to go to prezi.com, and then search for “Hispanic Males and AVID.”

