

Cultural Diversity Capstone Paper

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### **Introduction**

This semester I had the privilege of completing my diversity practicum. Most of my experience was as an AVID tutor in the Bismarck Public School system. Specifically, I was an AVID tutor at Simle Middle School in Ms. Furaus's classroom assisting with eighth graders. Here I performed the duties of guiding students to deeper understanding and helped in the development of critical thinking skills. I was a tutor from the last week in January to the middle of March when Bismarck Public Schools and the University of Mary shut down in-person classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, cutting short tutoring. Even though it was a shortened time due to circumstances, I still learned a lot in my experience as an AVID tutor. I also attended the Bloody Sunday Forum, and though it was only a few hours of my experience, it still held a large impact on my ideas of diversity.

### **Demographics**

The Bismarck Public Schools district itself is quite diverse, a large percentage of students are Caucasian but with a wide range of socioeconomic groupings and a variety of family structure. The students at Simle mostly fit the description of a statistically typical Bismarck student. In the class of eighth graders I tutored, the students mostly were Caucasian and in a middle to lower socioeconomic group. There was an even mix of male to female students. All the students in the AVID program are recruited into the program for various reasons. AVID is a program which targets students who are either the first of their family to plan to attend college, students who are more "middle-of-the-pack" achievers who tend to get lost in the typical classroom, or students who do not qualify for special services, but who do not perform well enough to be in advanced or honors classes.

The Bloody Sunday Forum took place at the University of Mary and this is where I completed five hours of my practicum. The University of Mary is quite diverse. Yes, the majority of the students are Caucasian, and come from the mid-west, but students come from all over the United States as well as other countries. I would say that there is a range of students from different socioeconomic statuses. The University of Mary also has slightly more female to male students, though that ratio gap is slowly shrinking. Students are also from different backgrounds. One of the differences in background is in religious affiliation or upbringing. While many students are Catholic, there are also students who are of different denominations, of other faiths, or even non-religious. This is important for the Bloody Sunday Forum because the discussions revolved around religious differences.

### **Environmental Adaptations**

The classroom as a whole is an interesting environment for students as there are many factors that can affect the students. One of these is physical adaptations to the environment. Ms. Furaus's classroom is set up unlike many other typical classrooms. Her classroom has six long tables and on tutorial days when the tutors would come in the classroom would be arranged into four big tables which would be near a white board. This setup allowed the students to easily interact with their other group members as well as support the presenting student who was up presenting at the white board (see Appendix A for a more in-depth look at the tutorial process and its personal affects).

More on the metaphysical side of the classroom, AVID is structured as an elective for students who's parents have given permission in order for them to be in the AVID class. It is not only a decision on the student's part, but also their parents/guardians'. This can cause some students to have less than positive attitudes, since their parents or guardians want them to be in

this class which they are invited to join. By eighth grade, though there were a few of these students, these students had the benefits of already being in the program a year and knowing the system and the other students. Knowing how it works helps the classroom to run smoothly and for students to rely more on their relationships with each other rather than relying on the tutors or the teacher to run their groups. For success within these groups, it was crucial for the tutors to group a mix of outspoken and quiet students. My very first group for tutorials was comprised of all quiet students and it was a lot more difficult for them to ask each other questions. The next group I had for tutorials had more of a mix of students who would speak up and ask questions. Though it is very important for the tutor to give every student an opportunity to speak and ask questions, it is also important for a tutor to recognize that there are some students who ask fewer questions than others and to correct this problem, many times it is due to the environment in the group of students. They need to feel safe enough to question and help their peer presenter with their questions as well as feel safe enough to present their questions and receive feedback and field questions from the group.

For the Bloody Sunday Forum, most of the events were presented in a large auditorium. This affected some of the events because large auditoriums have more distance between the presenter and the audience and so it is harder to ask questions or have discussion. In the two smaller settings I participated in for the Bloody Sunday Forum, the environment in the classrooms were such that the students participated more in the discussion and it made the experience more personal.

### **Instructional Adaptations**

As tutors, our job is to help students to learn critical thinking skills which can be applied to their other academic classes. In a sense, the class as a whole is engineered to help students

interact with instruction differently. The instruction in the AVID classroom, especially during tutorial days, is student led. Students therefore are leading and assisting their peers in order to help them think critically through the questions that they have in one of their other classes.

The Bloody Sunday Forum events had to adapt the instruction to its different contexts. Johnny Clark had a story that he told, and he had to tell it at almost every event, but he had to change it up a bit each time in order to both help listeners who had not been to an event before and also satisfy those who have been to all the other events. This event showed me how events and teaching must be organized and able to scaffold on each other for learners who have not had the same experiences.

### **Parameters Beyond the Classroom**

AVID is engineered to help students beyond the classroom. It helps students prepare for college or the workforce. AVID students, according to the statistics AVID has on their website, are almost 4 times as likely to graduate with a four-year degree than the national average. Which means that this program really helps students beyond the classroom (see Appendix B). On the days where we do not have tutorials, the lead teacher has around two to three other days of instruction and sometimes one day where a guest speaker comes in (see Appendix C). Typically, the lead teacher has quite a few guest speakers come in to talk to the students about life, especially in the context of college, but sometimes just about a field of profession. There are also instruction days with actual curriculum. They used a whole week on direct instruction on how best to write a college level essay. This sort of instruction helps them understand the hidden curriculum that colleges and universities have in place for students so that AVID students are better able to succeed.

Since AVID is a class, parents are able to meet with the lead teacher, in this case Ms. Furaus, either in a conference or just a regular meeting. Parents are able to talk about their student and the steps that they can take to help in their student's development to become who they want to be, whether that be a college student or attending a trade school or going into the workforce.

The Bloody Sunday Forum was meant to go beyond the week of learning to look inward into our own country and internal struggles with dealing with people who are unlike ourselves.

### **Information Connection**

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has a standard for this course which applies to my own experience: Standard III: Diversity: Accomplished teachers of students with exceptional needs create an environment in which equitable treatment, fairness, and respect for diversity are modeled, taught, and practiced by all, and they take steps to ensure access to quality learning opportunities for all students. I observed and helped to create an environment where students with different levels and needs were treated with fairness and respect by all.

AVID as a whole, helps to lower the achievement gap, by assisting students who do not have the same privileges as other students by taking the time to teach the hidden curriculum colleges and universities expect of students. To boost the confidence and critical thinking skills of students who are always just doing well-enough in order to push them to do their best. This standard is evident in the Bloody Sunday Forum as well, in learning to treat people with respect and kindness; to treat people with the same dignity that we all have instead of focusing on the differences we have as individuals.

### **Conclusion**

In my Diversity Practicum experience, I learned more about how to treat all people and students equally. I learned to value the input of the outspoken student the same as the quiet student. I know even more now due to this experience to embrace the same qualities and dignity that we all have as human beings and to also celebrate the differences.


**Appendix A**

This is a video made by the Spokane Public Schools District on what AVID is as described by the teachers, tutors and students who are involved in AVID. They give an brief overview of tutorials as well as general comments on the program.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OLGILd8Mhs>



Appendix B




# SNAPSHOT


**AVID** (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is an educational nonprofit that was established in 1980. It is implemented in approximately 7,000+ schools in 47 states across the U.S., plus schools in Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Canada, and Australia.

**Today...**

**85,000+**  
EDUCATORS  
TRAINED  
ANNUALLY



**2 Million+**  
STUDENTS  
IMPACTED  
ANNUALLY




**In 2018-19, AVID served...**

**7,000+**  
K-12 SCHOOLS

**54**  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS


**AVID STUDENTS (GRADES K-12)**

**66%**  
LOW-INCOME  
(free or reduced-price lunch)  
AVID (2019), AVID secondary and elementary data collection; N = 1,300,172 (Electronic Database).



- 50% Hispanic
- 23% White
- 14% Black
- 7% Other
- 5% Asian

**AVID Class of 2019: 93% completed four-year college entrance requirements**



IMPRESSIVE RESULTS FOR EVERY SUBGROUP OF STUDENTS	95%	95%	93%	94%	92%
Asian n = 3,106	Black or African American n = 7,250	Hispanic or Latino n = 29,729	White (non-Hispanic) n = 6,722	Other* n = 3,658	

\*Other includes American Indian or Alaska Native, two or more races, and students who declined to state. AVID (2019), AVID senior data collection; N = 50,439 (Electronic Database).

**AVID Class of 2019 Elective Seniors' Impressive Results**

**89%** reported plans to attend a postsecondary institution.



**85%** reported taking at least one rigorous course (e.g., AP®, IB®, and/or Cambridge®).

**PROVEN RESULTS**

AVID alumni who go to college are **four times more likely** to graduate than **their national peers**.

42%



of first-generation, low-income AVID college students graduate with a four-year degree within six years\*

VS

11%

of peers nationally graduate within the same timeframe\*\*

\* Source: These data reflect records received from National Student Clearinghouse, 2016-2018, AVID Senior Data Collection, 2010-2012 (Electronic Database)

\*\*Source: Engle, J & Tinto, V. (2008). Moving Beyond Access. Washington, DC: The Pell Institute

**AVID closes the achievement gap for all students.**

www.avid.org

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a nonprofit that changes lives by helping schools shift to a more equitable, student-centered approach. We train 85,000 educators annually to close the opportunity gap, so they can prepare all students for college, careers, and life.

**Appendix C**

This is a sample week of how many AVID classes work, and our class more or less followed this same format.

**A Sample Week in the AVID Elective**



**Daily or Block Schedule**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AVID Curriculum	Tutorials	AVID Curriculum	Tutorials	Binder Evaluation Field Trips Media Center Speakers Motivational Activities (within block)
Combination for Block Schedule		Combination for block schedule		

**AVID Curriculum Includes:**

- Writing Curriculum
- College and Careers
- Strategies for Success
- Critical Reading

**AVID Tutorials Include:**

- Collaborative Study Groups
- Writing Groups
- Socratic Seminars

**UNIVERSITY OF MARY DIVERSITY PRACTICUM LOG**

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_  
MADELEINE FINK

UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR: **MIKE TAYLOR, PHD.**; ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION

mwtaylor@umary.edu **OFFICE PHONE: (701) 955-8360**

PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR (S): DR. TAYLOR

SITE (S): UNIVERSITY OF MARY, SIMLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

**\*MAKE SURE YOUR JOURNAL (SUBMITTED ON A WORD DOCUMENT) CORRESPONDS WITH ALL EXPERIENCES DENOTED ON THIS LOG. UPLOAD ONTO CANVAS AT MID & END OF THE SEMESTER.**

DATE OF OBSERVATION	NUMBER OF HOURS	DATE OF OBSERVATION	NUMBER OF HOURS
JAN. 28	.75		
JAN. 30	.75		
JAN. 27-31	5		
FEB 4	1		
FEB 6	1		
FEB 11	1		
FEB 13	1		
FEB 20	.75		
FEB 25	1		
FEB 27	1		
MAR 10	1		
MAR 12	1		
	15.25		
<b>TOTAL HOURS (MUST BE <u>AT LEAST</u> 30)</b>			

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**PRACTICUM STUDENT'S SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

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**PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

\*MAKE SURE AT LEAST ONE PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR FILLS OUT THE ONLINE

EVALUATION FORM

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Bloody Sunday Forum: 5 hours. This was a very enlightening experience for me. To see my reflective thoughts on the Bloody Sunday Forum, please see my Bloody Sunday Forum Reflection paper (Fink, 2020).

Jan 28 and 30: An hour and a half in total. We, as the new AVID tutors, introduced ourselves to the students. We were able to start connecting with students through them asking questions of us and playing a game with them. I learned a lot about the students as well as the other tutors who I will be working with for the rest of the semester.

Feb 4: An hour. We went over the chart of tutorial roles. We refreshed the students on what their roles are, what our roles as tutors are, and what role the teacher plays. As well as reviewing the roles, I was able to start learning names of students and I learned more about them and their interests. One student really likes to draw and since our group finished early, he started doodling and we all tried to draw what he was drawing with little success. It was a good bonding moment.

Feb 6: An hour. We helped them write TRFs for tutorials. I learned more names and was able to connect more with those different students.

Feb. 11 and 13: Two hours total. We guided tutorials. I had a small group of four students and we listened and asked questions to help them solve their problem that they presented to the group. Each student participates as well as the tutor, and they help each other learn. We ended early on the second day and I was able to connect with the three girls in my group who came that day. It

was the best day so far. One student asked me for help in studying for a science test and I gave her multiple strategies to use. We also played a few rounds of hangman and I was able to learn what their interests and hobbies are.

Feb 20: 45 minutes. Today we broke into groups and helped students to revise their essays. They all got to pick their own topics, but their writing had to be like writing they might encounter in college and they had to incorporate at least three sources. I used scaffolding and feedback for the different students I helped.

Total hours so far: 11.25

Feb 25-27: 2 hours total. Both days were regular tutorial days. We broke the students into groups and got to work. The first day's groups were very small: groups of 2-3 students each due to students in band being on a trip. It was harder to incorporate the students who had not been there on Tuesday into the Thursday tutorial groups, yet this is a skill all teacher must work on because students miss school for all sorts of events or appointments.

March 10-12: 2 hours total. Regular tutorial days. Dealt with some behavioral issues within the group. Not bad enough to the point where it needed intervention, but enough to distract the group. I tried a few different strategies, but looking back on it, I should have asked the two students to separate themselves sooner rather than later.