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The Effects of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in a Middle School AVID Class

An Action Research Report

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The Effects of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in a Middle School AVID Class

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in fulfillment of final requirements for the MAED degree

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to measure the effects of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) on academic engagement and behavior. Participants included eighth grade AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) students from a Midwestern suburban middle school. The study took place over six weeks in the fall of students' second year in the AVID Program. During four weeks of focused intervention, the teacher implemented CRP strategies, including dramatically increasing opportunities for peer collaboration and improving student-teacher relationships through brief but individualized interactions. At the end of the implementation period, data indicated an increase in grades, teacher assessment, and student perception for almost every subgroup when compared to the previous academic year, and particularly substantial growth for black males. Results indicate that CRP positively affects both academic engagement and behavioral success for all learners, and most notably for those with the most to gain from its implementation. Further application and measurement will continue to gauge the value of additional strategies.

As a middle school AVID elective teacher and coordinator, I work closely with many highly qualified students whose academic performance does not match their abilities. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a college preparatory system that identifies academically capable students who should have access to post-secondary opportunities, but may need additional support to achieve their college goals. My role in the AVID Program allows me to work closely with my students, serving not only as their teacher, but also as a kind of case manager and counselor. When I speak with AVID students who are struggling in their classes, they often exhibit attitudes toward school ranging from lassitude to resentment. With further prompting, students give me a variety of reasons for these feelings, from weariness with curriculum to disagreements with teachers. Ultimately, their experiences in the classroom are leading to apathy, demotivation, and withdrawal.

The setting for this research is a sixth through eighth grade middle school in an outer suburb of a metropolitan area in the Midwest. The site, which houses approximately 1200 students, is one of four middle schools serving one of the largest districts in the state. The school district has experienced population growth, including an increasing level of racial and socioeconomic diversity, for many years. The participants of the study include eighth grade AVID students who are beginning their second year in the AVID Program with the same AVID teacher. Because the AVID Program focuses on closing the achievement gap, the students should be representative of the school community while emphasizing populations that are currently or historically underrepresented in four-year colleges. As such, the 47% of the participants self-

identified as students of color while 53% self-identified as white; 55% of participants are female and 45% are male; and 20% receive free or reduced lunch.

The school administration and classroom teachers provide the AVID coordinator with both official records and anecdotal reports regarding student grades and behavior. During the 2013-2014 school year, the majority of reports regarding negative behaviors, low engagement, and poor work completion among seventh grade AVID students pertained to male students, and particularly males of color. These trends are not unique to this school environment, as research regularly suggests that traditional models of education are no longer effectively serving many students, especially males and children of color (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Based on this evidence, it is clear that educators must make changes that will help all students be successful. The goals of this study are to improve academic engagement among males of color in the AVID Elective class by reducing negative behaviors, such as disruptions and late or missing work, and increasing positive ones, such as student engagement and work completion, as demonstrated through student feedback, teacher reports and administrative records.

Literature Review

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) often begins with self-reflective practices on the part of the educator. According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), cultural competency takes into account the identity, as a cultural construct, of the students as well as the teacher. Teachers must be aware of their own identities, students' identities, and the ways each of them perceives themselves and others. They must show recognition and respect for differences and appreciate them as assets instead of deficiencies. Indeed, when creating culturally responsive classroom management, teachers must acknowledge

that they interact with the world through their own cultural lens and recognize that cultural differences exist among all people (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). Richards, Brown, and Forde (2007) suggest that in order to promote this mental and psychological development, teachers should engage in reflective journaling, identifying and investigating individual membership of various cultural groups, and working toward a greater understanding of other cultural groups.

Culturally relevant curriculum and instruction that connects to students' identities is often associated with students' academic and behavioral success. For instance, in their study, Sampson and Garrison-Wade (2011) determined that African American students felt empowered by culturally relevant lessons and experience-based learning. Similarly, the research of Schellenberg and Grothaus (2011) led the authors to assert that lending content standards with counseling objectives in a culturally responsive way improves both academic achievement and behavior, especially among African American and Latino/a students. In their study of behavior management techniques for culturally diverse students, Cartledge, Singh, and Gibson (2008) discovered that using culturally relevant resources to engage students in instruction reduced behaviors that lead to removal from general education settings into restrictive learning environments. In terms of culturally diverse students at risk of disabilities, Cartledge and Kourea (2008) suggest that culturally responsive classrooms implement structured interventions, academic monitoring, and active student voice in order to meet the needs of diverse learners, which in turn reduces the misdiagnoses and effects of disabilities.

Strong student-teacher relationships play a significant role in improving academic and behavioral performance within diverse classrooms. African American adolescent

boys, who are over-identified with emotional and behavior disorders, benefit strongly from improved student-teacher interactions, especially when the teacher comes from a different racial background (Serpell, Heyling, Stevenson, & Kern, 2009). Culturally Responsive Classroom Management strategies include recognizing that communication styles differ by culture and modifying approaches as necessary for successful interactions, creating inclusive environments through personal interactions, and anticipating cultural conflicts and preparing resolutions (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). Other research found that students respond best to teachers' efforts at creating relationships when it occurs in stages. It begins with an initial period of low engagement, when students observe teachers through instruction and interactions with others. Then, students begin to interact more with teachers on academic and cursory social levels, during which time they determine the teachers' trustworthiness and relational capacity. These stages of development establish a students' openness to more personal inquiries and interventions (Phillippo, 2012).

Successful educators often rely on culturally appropriate social and behavioral development to increase student success. According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), teachers should not only take into account age factors but also cultural considerations when determining what is developmentally appropriate. This process should allow for social, emotional and psychological needs, and well as learning styles and motivations, when developing curriculum and instruction. Teachers should also be aware of the role systemic racism plays in student readiness. Culturally appropriate behavior management techniques include practicing early identification and intervention for problem behaviors while using structure and organizations to create an orderly classroom environment that

clearly defines the expectations for behavior (Cartledge et al., 2008). Culturally competent teachers also consider the possibility that problematic behaviors are accepted or expected by a student's home culture, and respond constructively, knowing that punitive reactions leave no room for the development of adaptive behaviors (Weinstein et al., 2003).

High expectations grounded in equity also play an important role in supporting the academic achievement and behaviors of diverse students. In a mentoring program for black male middle school students, researchers found that students were more likely to succeed in an environment that expected and celebrated their academic success, and actively connected it to their identity (Gordon, Iwamoto, Ward, Potts, & Boyd, 2009). The research of Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) supports “equity and excellence” in their conceptual framework for CRP. According to their framework, the concept of equity embodies the belief that difference is advantageous, differentiation is essential, and CRP enhances education. Equitable classrooms and content go beyond surface level demonstrations of multiculturalism to embrace diversity among students and faculty while maintaining high expectations for both parties.

Research also relates the importance of support for and of families when sustaining positive academic and behavioral patterns. As part of a successful mentoring program for black middle school males, families received additional support to help them navigate the educational system while the students’ home communities reinforces academic expectations and support structures (Gordon et al., 2009). Additionally, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management requires teachers to interact with families

in ways that recognize and respect that different levels and types of involvement may reflect cultural perspectives (Weinstein et al., 2003).

Current research indicates that the academic and behavioral outcomes for students of color are closely tied to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Researchers agree that common aspects of CRP include the development of culturally reflective teachers, culturally relevant curriculum and instruction, strong student-teacher relationships, culturally appropriate social and behavioral development, high expectations grounded in equity, and family support. Each of these elements has been shown support learner engagement and achievement in a variety of diverse academic settings.

These findings call for a multidimensional approach to improving the engagement of the males of color in the AVID Elective class. In order to improve the academic growth, work completion, and positive behaviors exhibited by this group of students, curricular interventions that incorporate culturally relevant resources and social development and foster student-teacher interactions and family support must be implemented.

Methodology

The effort to answer my question regarding the academic and behavioral effects of culturally responsive pedagogy began with the identification and creation of data collection methods. In order to collect a series of quantitative and qualitative data points, I decided to elicit feedback from students and teachers, utilize academic and behavioral records, and reflect on my own observations. Before implementing the measures of data collection, I gained permission of the participants and their parents by distributing and

discussing a passive consent letter on the first day of school, giving families ten school days to return the letter if they did not wish to participate in the study.

Combining my own questions with the results of other CRP studies, I crafted a series of prompts for my students in order to assess their perspective of previous and new instructional practices (Appendix A). I have regularly asked my students for their feedback in the past; however those circumstances collected generic feedback regarding overall satisfaction and effectiveness of lessons. These new prompts were grounded in CRP and placed deliberate focus on the five categories of classroom environment and resources, student-teacher relationships, behavioral expectations, attitude toward success, and family involvement. The feedback consisted of three parts: general demographic information, including gender and ethnicity, fifteen multiple-choice questions, three per category; and ten optional short answer questions.

Students completed the feedback at the beginning and end of the study timeline via a Google Form to preserve privacy and encourage candidness. The results of students' baseline data may have been affected by the length of time since their last experience in the AVID classroom, as their final data may have been affected by the relatively short interim since the initial feedback; however, student responses offered fruitful information regarding both subgroup variance and changes in perspective. Students were taken to a computer lab for the class period, they were assured that their responses were completely anonymous, and were asked to be as thoughtful and honest as they could be. I stayed in front of the classroom, with the exception of answering students' questions, at which time I made it clear to students that I was avoiding looking

at their monitors. Students finished giving their feedback in ten minutes to forty minutes, and their responses were automatically inputted to a spreadsheet.

My second source for data concerning my research question consisted of teacher feedback. Using my literature review as a foundation, I created a series of prompts for the participants' former and current teachers to obtain feedback regarding student participation, motivation, and success in class (Appendix B). Teachers were given an electronic or paper copy of a table with student names and behaviors; they were asked to rate the frequency they observed each student demonstrating each behavior. The ten behaviors demonstrated students' ability to engage in class, interact with others, follow norms, participate in lessons, and feel ownership over their learning.

During the first week of school, I recruited the assistance of the participants' seventh grade teachers by email, asking them to complete feedback regarding their recollections of their former students. Because this feedback related to past academic and behavioral performance and would not be affected by implementing new strategies, I gave the volunteer teachers two weeks to return the feedback. The results of data in this area may be affected by the length of time that has elapsed since last year's teachers worked with the participants; however, the most remarkable contrasts occurred across subgroups, not school years, making it a viable source of data. After four weeks of full implementation, I asked the participants' current eighth grade teachers to complete the same prompts in order to ascertain any difference in student behavior and academics. The results of the feedback were manually inputted into a spreadsheet.

My final source of data included student records from the fall of participants' seventh grade school year, compared to the same time frame in their current eighth grade

school year. As the middle school does not configure grade point averages, I converted letter grades to grade points for all participants. I measured student performance in the core content areas of math, science, social studies and language arts, as these are the courses that all participants have in common. I explored the results by student average as well as class average. During this time, I also collected and analyzed disciplinary and attendance records, but the lack of significant findings limited this data source to grades alone.

Once students considered their experience in the AVID classroom environment during the previous school year, I was free to begin the intervention process. While my personal interactions with students during the first two weeks of school certainly reflected the strategies that I learned during my research process, I refrained from implementing official measures until students provided baseline data. After the initial feedback was completed, I applied a series of CRP strategies based on my research findings. These strategies included culturally responsive activities, academic meetings, and positive communication to parents.

The first CRP strategy consisted of integrating culturally relevant resources and activities into the AVID curriculum. A cornerstone of AVID is collaboration, so it has always been prevalent in my classroom. However, as part of the research process, I increased the scope of collaborative activities. I also prioritized student choice in lessons when academically appropriate, such as offering a range of products with which students could demonstrate mastery. I also selected text and other media that connected to students culturally while meeting the curricular objective; for example, students worked with spoken word poetry and street art during Socratic Seminars.

The series of interventions also included interacting with students individually to establish academic and behavioral expectations, assess students' attitudes toward class and school, and intervene when necessary. While "case managing" students is a part of AVID, my new strategy emphasized student input and positive feedback. Sometimes, I pulled a student out of class to discuss their progress. More often, I pulled students aside during work time, or found them in the halls during passing period. These conversations were brief, consisting of a question or two about a certain class or afterschool activity, and ending with an affirmation for the student.

I also altered the pattern of parent communication as a means of intervention during the research process. In an effort to open the lines of communication and change the lens with which both parents and I regarded our interactions, I contacted home to communicate positive behaviors and academic successes, particularly among students who struggled in my class or other classes. Of course, I still communicated with families when students exhibited disruptive behaviors or academic challenges. Whenever possible, however, I called and spoke directly with a student's parent or guardian to give a comprehensive explanation, negate misunderstandings, welcome their input.

Data was collected before, during, and after implementation of the CRP strategies. As baseline data, students provided feedback regarding last year's classroom environment and their former teachers provided feedback regarding last year's performance before the strategies were applied. The implementation period took place from the third week of the school year through the sixth week of the school year. At this time, I gathered data through formal and informal observations of students. Following

the fourth week of implementation, students and current teachers provided feedback using the same prompts. The results were then tabulated and compared.

Data Analysis

To shed light on my research question regarding the academic engagement and behavior of all students, I gathered three sources of data before implementation of my intervention strategies and I gathered the same three sources of data after three weeks of implementation. At both intervals, I collected data pertaining to students' grades, content teachers' assessments of student performance, and students' opinions of the AVID class and teacher.

I used school records to compare student performance during the first six weeks of the 2013-2014 school year to the first six weeks of the 2014-2015 school year. My decision regarding the time frame was based on the typical pattern of student conduct I have observed in previous years: records from a very beginning of a year often reflect higher levels of performance until the novelty of school wears off and fatigue sets in. As I could only collect evidence from the first term of this school year, I elected to compare it to the same time period last year. Initially, I planned to collect data pertaining to grades, attendance, and disciplinary actions. However, after examining attendance and disciplinary records, I found there were no significant disparities to report among subgroups and no significant changes from 2013 to 2014. Grade reports did reveal notable differences in both areas, and was therefore used as evidence.

Teachers were solicited for their assessment of student engagement, behavior, motivation, and performance. During the first weeks of the 2014-2015 year, I asked students' 2013-2014 content teachers to recollect their former students' conduct toward

the beginning of last school year. At the end of the first term, I asked the students' current content teachers to answer the same prompts regarding student conduct, based on the first weeks of the school year. I then compared the average measures by year and by subgroup.

I also asked students to assess their experience in the AVID classroom. Students provided baseline data by offering feedback in the second week of school, based on their experiences during the 2013-2014 school year. They offered feedback using the same prompts at the end of the first term, which afforded the opportunity to compare their feelings after three weeks of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) implementation. The prompts that students received fell into the following five categories:

1. Connection to the learning environment;
2. Student-teacher relationship;
3. Clear and consistent expectations;
4. Perception of teacher's belief in student's success;
5. Connection to student's family.

The average grades of students in the first term of the 2013-2014 school year offered solid baseline data, as well as significant evidence for the need to implement CRP strategies across the school environment. Figure 1 illustrates grades in the core content classes, averaged by gender and ethnicity. In language arts and math, as well as on average, male students received significantly lower grades than their female counterparts. Additionally in every class with the exception of social studies, black males received substantially lower grades than every other subgroup. Status as an AVID student depends upon students' academic capability, indicating that students' grades should be

relatively comparable; however, this data indicates that there are noteworthy discrepancies among gender and ethnicity.

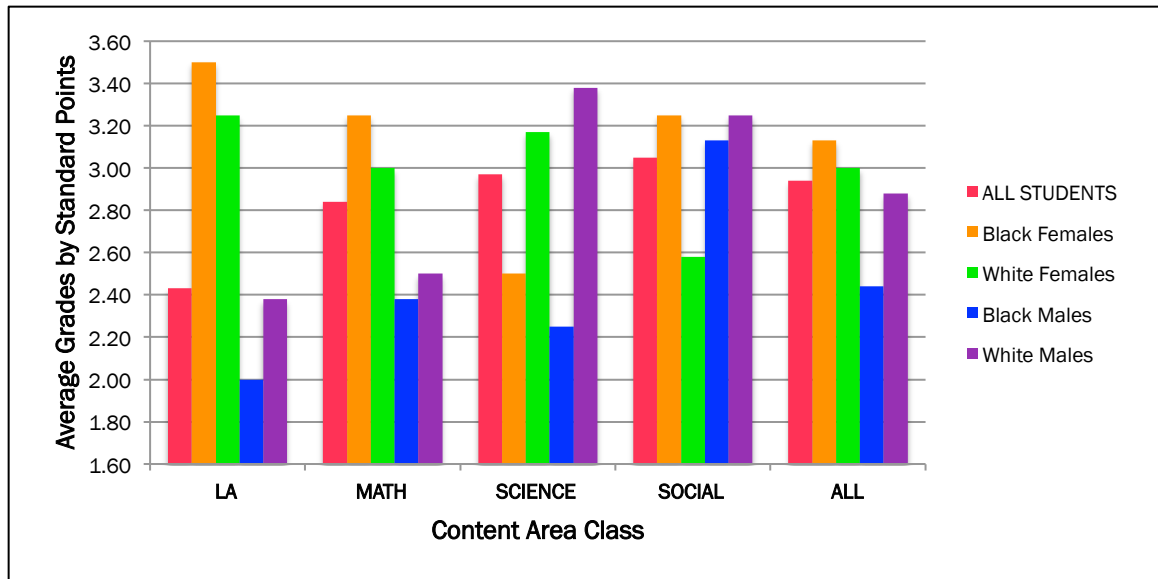


Figure 1. Average grades of students by class and subgroup, fall 2013. This figure shows the average grades of students in core content areas by gender and ethnicity during the first term of the 2013-2014 school year.

Teachers' 2013-2014 assessment of student conduct reflected the evidence provided by grade data and further revealed gender- and ethnicity-based deviations. Figure 2 illustrates teachers' valuation of student engagement and behavior, averaged by gender, ethnicity, and both gender and ethnicity. Once again, it demonstrates significant statistical differences between female students and male students. It also highlights an even more dramatic difference between black males and all other subgroups. This data suggests that the participating teachers believe that black males adhere less to standard academic norms than their white or female counterparts.

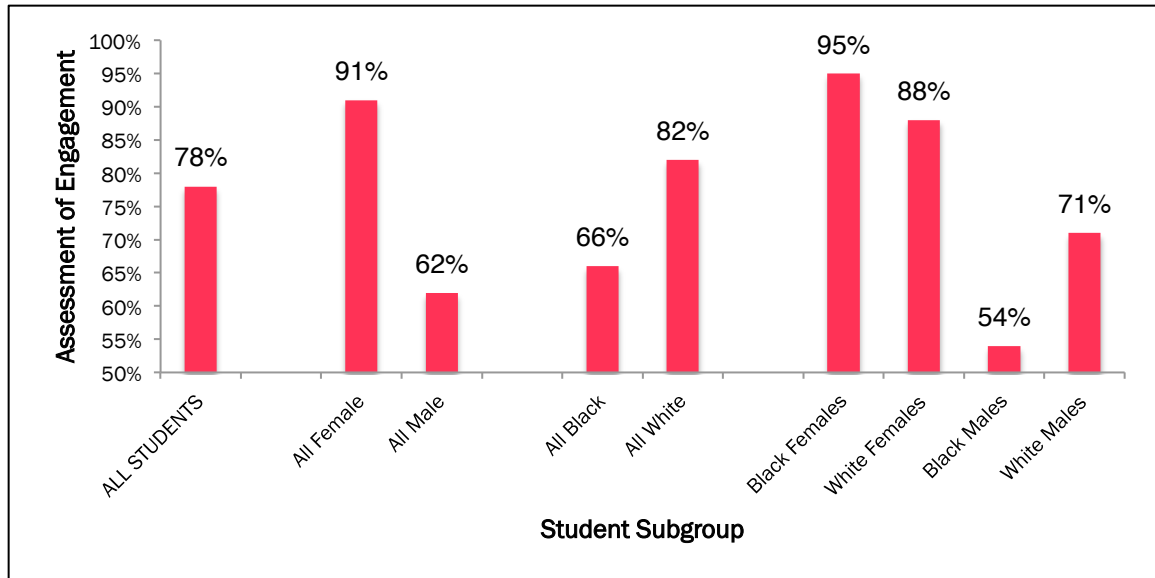


Figure 2. 2013-2014 teacher evaluation of students by subgroup. This figure shows content teachers' average measure of students' academic engagement and behavior during the 2013-2014 school year.

Initial student feedback demonstrates that teachers' perceptions of the relationship between students' actions and expected conduct is both supported and negated by students' personal impressions. Figure 3 indicates the levels of satisfaction students experience with the AVID classroom environment and teacher, reported by category and averaged by gender and ethnicity. Black males reported the lowest levels of satisfaction across all five categories; however, white males indicated the highest levels of satisfaction in every category. These findings indicate that grades and teacher observations correlate with student disengagement based on gender and ethnicity, but not necessarily based on gender alone.

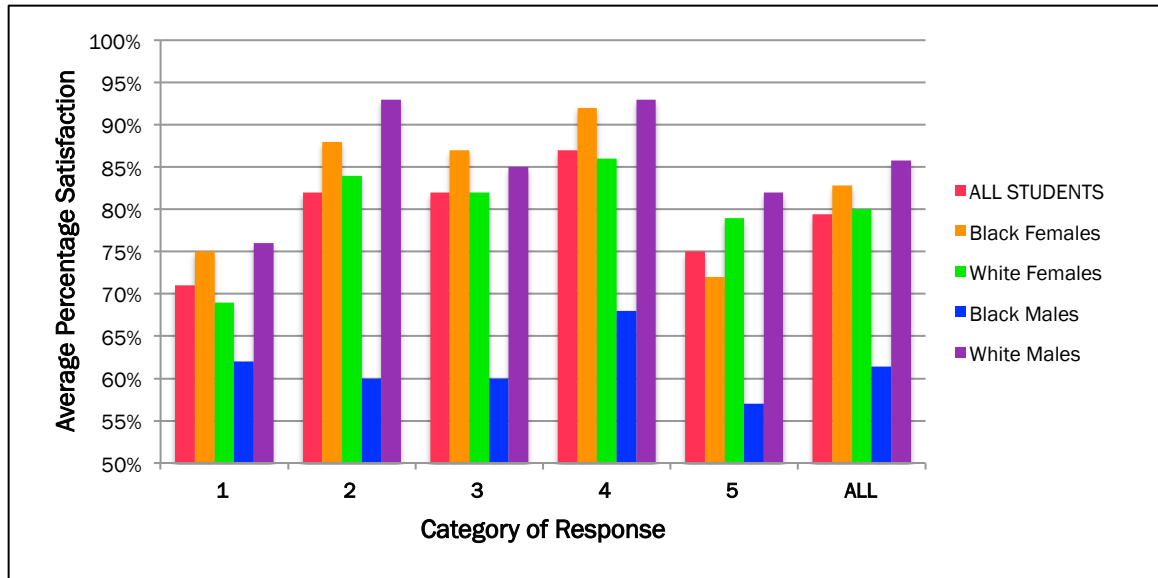


Figure 3. Student evaluation of AVID class and teacher, September 2014. This figure shows students' initial measure of the AVID content and teacher in five categories by gender and ethnicity.

Initial data regarding student grades, teacher assessments, and student feedback corroborate to demonstrate a significant difference in the performance and experience of students, based both on gender and on ethnicity. The baseline data establishes a distinct need for the exploration and implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, both within the AVID Elective class and across the school community as a whole. The assessment and feedback results indicate room for growth among all students, but especially males and black males in particular.

The average grades of students in the first term of the 2014-2015 school year indicate that all student groups improved on average, with black males making the most gains. Student grades improved in language arts, math, and science for every subgroup between the first terms of seventh and eighth grade. Black males made particularly strong advances in language arts and science. Social studies is the only exception to this pattern, both for every subgroup except white females, who improved, and for the degree of

change for black males, who declined the most. While grade improvements can be attributed to different teachers, curricula, and levels of maturity, the fact that the averaged grades of black males increased more than any other subgroup shows promise.

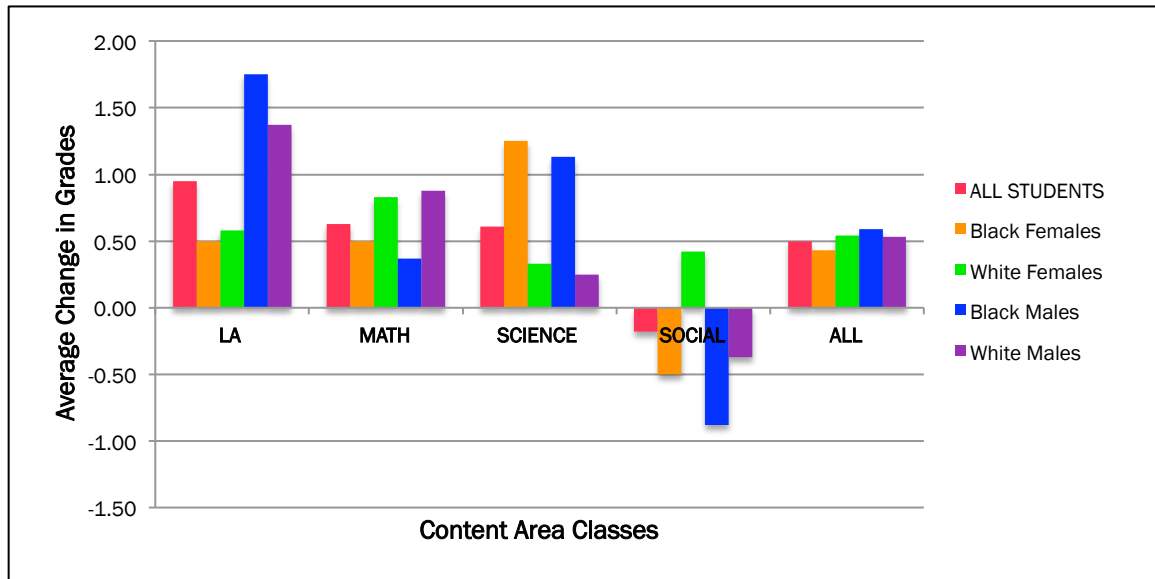


Figure 4. Average changes in student grades from fall 2013 to fall 2014, by class and subgroup. This figure shows the average differences in student grades in core content areas by gender and ethnicity between the first term of 2013 and the first term of 2014.

Assessments provided by students' 2014-2015 teachers demonstrate an improvement in teachers' perceptions of students across all subgroups. White males increased in the estimation of their teachers by the most significant amount, with black males following closely; on average, male students showed 28% improvement in their engagement and behavior, according to their teachers. Teachers' perceptions of female students also improved from seventh grade to eighth grade, though not as dramatically as those of their male counterparts. Some of this change can be attributed to the growth and development of students and the difference in temperament of the teachers. However, when it is combined with student and grade data, the results bode well for the chosen interventions.

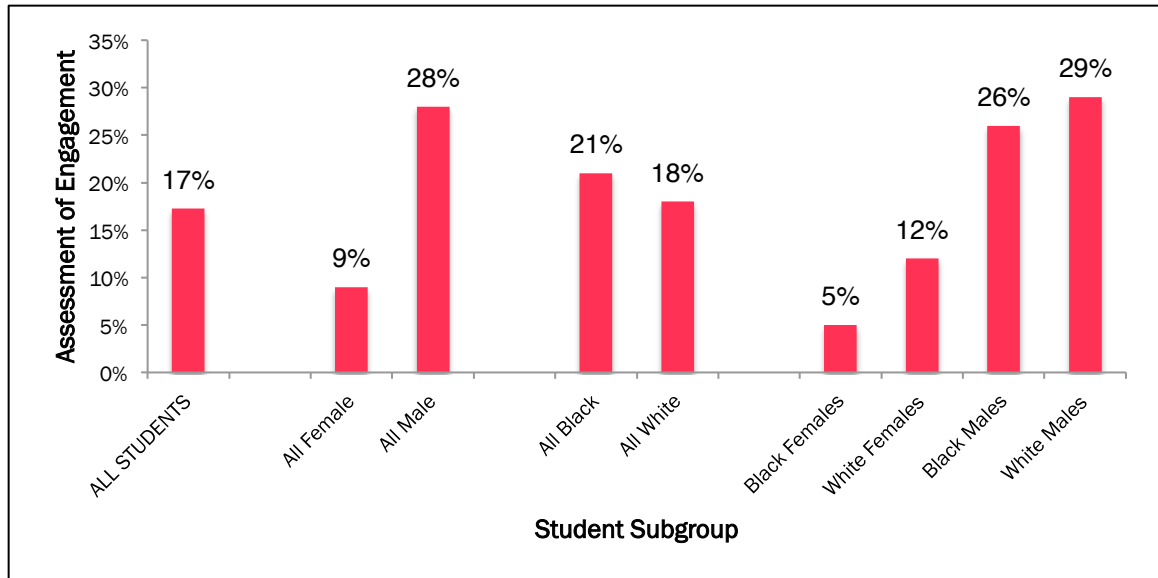


Figure 5. Average changes in teacher assessments from 2013 to 2014, by class and subgroup. This figure shows the average differences in teachers' average measure of students' academic engagement and behavior between 2013 and 2014.

The feedback provided by students after three weeks of CRP implementation shows increased levels of satisfaction and engagement for all groups except black females and, in turn, all females. The increase in the engagement of black males was the most significant by far: on average, students in the subgroup expressed 16% more satisfaction with the class and teacher after implementation of CRP strategies. Because of the substantial gains made by black males, the categories of all male students and all black students also showed significant gains. White students, both female and male, also showed small increases in satisfaction. The major exception to this trend is black females, whose engagement level fell over 2% during the intervention process. A logical account of the data trends may be that black females originally scored very high, while black males scored extremely low, indicating the groups had the most to lose and the most to gain, respectively. However, the momentous improvement in the perspective of black males notes encouraging if preliminary support for CRP implementation.

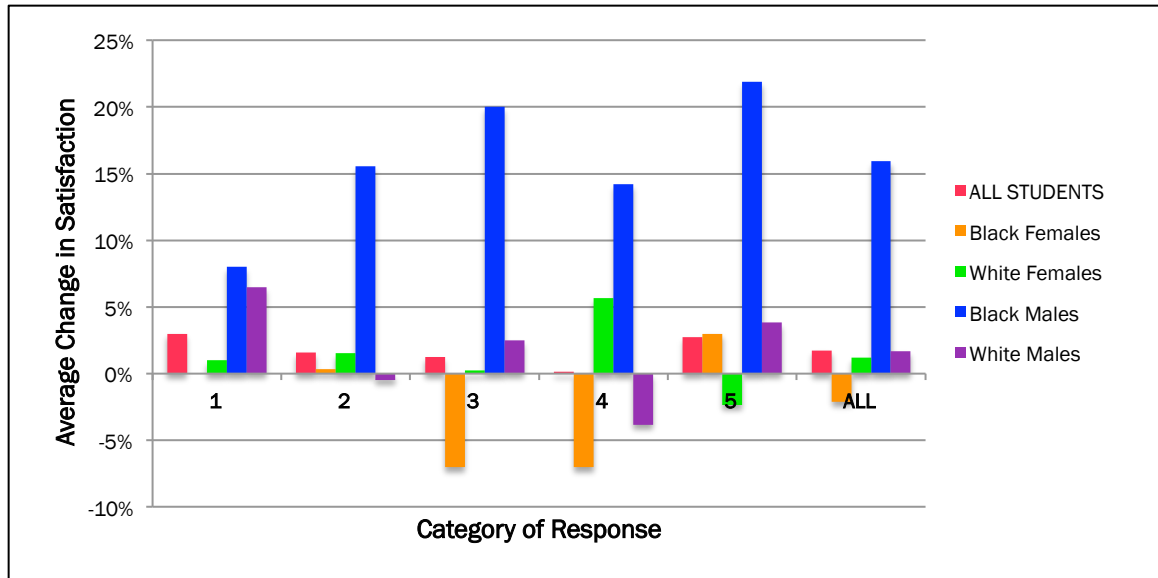


Figure 6. Average changes in student evaluation of AVID class and teacher, by class and subgroup. This figure shows the average differences in students' initial and final measure of the AVID content and teacher in five categories by gender and ethnicity.

In addition to evidence regarding grades, teacher perceptions and quantitative student feedback, I gave students an opportunity to express their opinions regarding the means by which they feel connected to the curriculum, classroom community and teacher. Figure 7 illustrates the most common responses from students relating to the five categories outlined earlier. Students overwhelmingly agreed that collaborative activities help them feel connected to their learning environment. Many also noted that frequently communicated support from the teacher strengthens the student-teacher relationship and affirms the teacher's belief in the student's abilities. Their responses further indicated that individual time and treatment helped establish their connectedness.

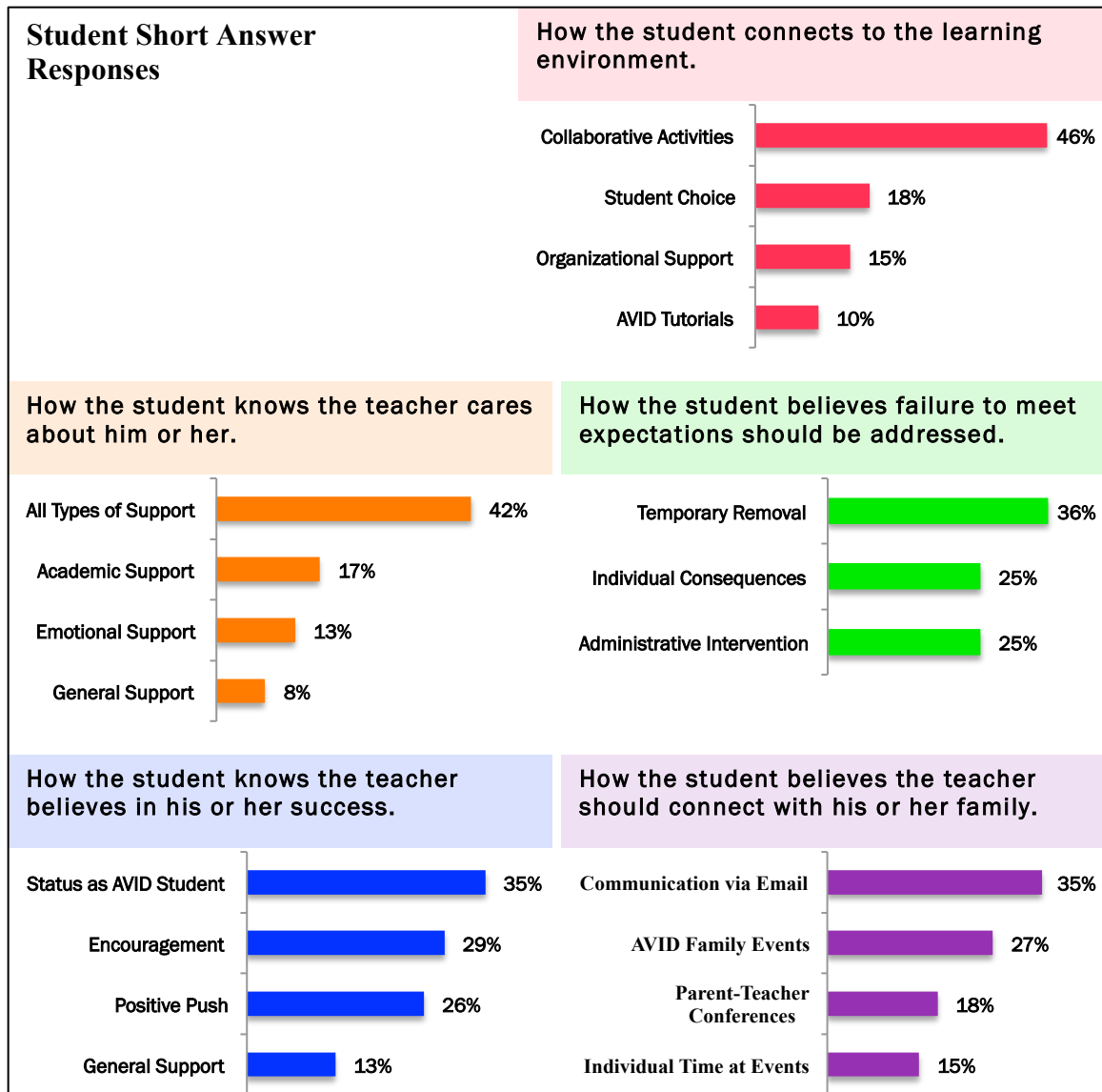


Figure 7. Student-generated methods to increase engagement. This figure shows categorized responses from students to prompts regarding how to support academic and behavioral performance.

While the results of the implementation in this study may be colored by several factors, including the timing of data collection, the diversity of teaching styles and personalities, and the growth and development of students, the triangulation of data sources indicates a positive correlation between CRP practices and student engagement. After a short but intense period of very purposeful, persistent intervention, students

demonstrated a marked change in quality of work, classroom behavior and, perhaps most importantly, personal outlook. In particular, male students and black males, who were markedly lower in all three areas, attained substantial levels of improvement across the data sources, indicating that CRP strategies greatly benefit the students who need it most.

Action Plan

Examining any set of data pertaining to this study regarding the effects of CRP in isolation is enough to warrant action; when the individual pieces are put together, the critical nature of the situation becomes even more evident. In a school community that promotes the goal of reaching all learners, some students are perceived as far less suited to academics. In a program that mandates academic capability as a prerequisite, some students are receiving significantly lower grades. In a class that is designed to support students on all levels, some students feel considerably less connected to the curriculum and teacher. The greatest concern is that the students who fall into these categories can be frequently and accurately predicted based on gender and ethnicity.

The fact that this issue encompasses several aspects of education—from teacher perceptions to grade reports to student perceptions—indicates that student disengagement is a deeply rooted, pervasive problem that must be continually and steadfastly addressed. As an AVID teacher, it is my personal responsibility to ensure that all of my students know they are an integral part of the classroom community. As an educator, it is my professional responsibility to work with stakeholders to realize the same goal in the school community as a whole. And so my investigation into this area is not at its conclusion; on the contrary, it is just beginning.

Previous research, personal experience, and empirical evidence indicate that connecting the curriculum and classroom environment to the student's culture is an essential component in academic engagement and behavioral success. This effort can appear in many different forms, but it is most effective when implemented in several ways simultaneously. According to the results of this research study, it would appear that students' connection to the curriculum and the teacher are two foundational necessities to any effective implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Based on both research and student input, integrating collaboration into any curriculum is of vital importance in the engagement of all learners. Throughout the implementation process of this research study, I searched for ways to incorporate small collaborative activities during every class period as well as larger collaborative tasks in every unit. To be sure, more major curricular shifts, such as identifying texts and other resources that culturally reflect all learners, is an important mission that should not be abandoned. Alongside this effort, however, collaboration is a simple way to increase authentic learning opportunities for all learners because it provides them the freedom to bring their own experiences and perspectives to the table. As I continue to explore the effects of various CRP strategies in my classroom, I will be sure to continue prioritizing the inclusion of purposeful, rigorous collaborative activities.

This research, guided by student input, also offers insight into the positive effect of strengthening student-teacher relationships. According to their feedback, students desired individual attention in which their teacher frequently voiced their belief in and support of the student as a whole person. As a result, I consciously sought opportunities to have very brief but personal exchanges with students, during which I asked about

school as well as extracurricular subjects, and ended with an affirmation for the student. These conversations were usually spontaneous, short, and very informal; they often occurred in a quick moment before or after class or in the hallways. However, these qualities lent safety and authenticity to the interactions, which only served to improve the academic relationship with the student. As I move ahead in my exploration of CRP strategies, I will continue to take advantage of seemingly trivial moments to offer my students emotional and educational support.

Beyond the inclusion of collaborative activities or an increase in positive, personal interactions, I believe the students in this study responded positively because they felt that they were being heard. The initial purpose of including short response prompts when asking for student feedback was to provide qualitative data to include in the study; the unexpected result was that it became an intervention in and of itself. I examined the initial feedback closely and found patterns that indicated students craved connections with other students and adults. I acted on this input and communicated to students that I wanted to work together in partnership. It is my strong belief that students recognized their suggestions in action and realized that their voice was as important as mine in our classroom. They had capital invested in them, a role to fulfill, and a space to be themselves.

As I continue my efforts to eliminate the predictability of academic success based on gender and ethnicity, I will consider student voice when contemplating any interventions. Prompting students for feedback that is specifically targeted to increasing student engagement and behavioral success serves two purposes: it offers insight regarding how best to connect with students; but it also shows students that they are

important partners in the classroom community. I will continue to implement research-based practices and measure their outcomes based on grades and teacher reports. But more importantly, I will continue to listen. I will listen to my students and make sure they know their value not as mere research participants, but as members of our community.

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Appendix A

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

GENDER: FEMALE MALE

RACE/ETHNICITY: AMERICAN INDIAN ASIAN/PACIFIC ISL. BLACK HISPANIC WHITE/CAUCASIAN OTHER

Please read each statement carefully, and circle the appropriate number to express your opinion.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
I feel like the things we learn in class connect to my real life.	1	2	3	4	5
When I look around my classroom, I feel like I belong here.	1	2	3	4	5
I can relate to some of the people and situations we read about.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher really cares about me as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher respects where I am coming from.	1	2	3	4	5
I like how my teacher treats me inside and outside of class.	1	2	3	4	5
I clearly understand how my teacher expects us to behave.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher's classroom rules are fair to everyone.	1	2	3	4	5
I agree how my teacher handles problems in class.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher expects me to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher believes that I can be successful.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher tries to help me do my best in class.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher wants my family to be involved in my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like my teacher tries to communicate with my family.	1	2	3	4	5
My family feels like they can contact my teacher for information.	1	2	3	4	5

These questions are optional, but any information you can give helps make me a better teacher.

In this class, the best thing we do is _____

In this class, I wish we would _____

The best thing my teacher does is _____

One thing I wish my teacher would do differently is _____

One time my teacher dealt with a problem well was _____

One problem my teacher could have handled better was _____

I know my teacher expects me to be a good student because _____

I wish my teacher would show she believes in me by _____

One way my teacher connects with my family is _____

The best way my teacher could connect with my family is _____

