As we Educate our Youth, Tutors Play an Essential Role
In this article, Executive Director Jim Nelson describes the role of the AVID tutor and the importance they have in the classroom, both academically and socially.

Ask the Authors: Creating Rigorous Tutorials to Increase Student Achievement in Academic Classes
The lead writers for AVID’s new Tutorial Support Curriculum Resource Guide explain the purpose for creating it and what AVID teachers can expect to gain from this new curriculum.

From the Field: Tutorials Give Students a Voice
AVID teacher Stacey Johnson details the role tutors play in her classroom and how the training of tutors affects the overall atmosphere of the tutorial activity.

A Day in the Life of an AVID Tutor
Travel alongside Jayson Lewis and see what a typical day entails for this AVID tutor and university student.

The Proving Ground
The latest educational data in a user-friendly format.
Tutors are essential for success

Tutors and tutorials play a vital role in the AVID elective program and can also benefit other classes in a school. In this issue of ACCESS, we’ll look at the role tutors play; learn about the new Tutorial curriculum; see a day in the life of a tutor; and learn how one school is using tutorials for English learner students. We’ll see why tutors are essential for college success.
As we educate our youth

Tutors Play an Essential Role

By Jim Nelson
AVID Executive Director

Tutors are a key component to the collaboration portion of the AVID program. A large part of a successful tutorial session comes from the inclusion of trained tutors. A tutor's tasks can vary from school to school, but the role of the tutor is the same. Using their knowledge and experience, tutors are able to conduct collaborative tutorials that lead to increased student participation and success.

With a seven-to-one ratio, tutors offer more individualized help to students. This setup fosters deeper discussions that students might not get in a regular sized classroom setting. A tutor's role is not one of an “answer giver,” but instead is one of a guide, using probing questions to lead their students to the answer. Through this process, students are taught analytical and critical thinking, a skill that they can apply to the rest of their classes. Trained tutors are able to create an environment where their students feel comfortable asking the questions that they might be embarrassed to ask in their content-area classroom.

Most tutors are local college students and are a resource for AVID students both academically and socially. They become mentors, sharing their college experiences and survival tips. Tutors bring a dynamic to the classroom that invokes a drive to succeed. Students see firsthand how hard work and determination can lead to college success. Many tutors are AVID graduates who return to schools to continue their involvement with the AVID family. These returning AVID students have an even deeper meaning in the classroom. They share similar experiences with their students and understand the journey an AVID student takes to prepare for their dream of attending college. Students can look at these AVID grads and see themselves achieving their own goals. AVID grads come back as tutors already equipped with the understanding of the program and ready to use the tools they have learned from years of participation as an AVID student.

Many tutors are new to the AVID scene and must learn the strategies used by the program.

The training of tutors is an important piece to effective tutorials. AVID Center offers many opportunities for site team members to learn the proper techniques for training their own tutors, including the Tutorology strand at Summer Institute. As a part of the certification process, AVID tutors are required to have at least 16 hours of tutor training in AVID methodologies and they must demonstrate the AVID methodologies in their work with students.

Those who join the AVID world as college tutors can also benefit from their exposure to the program. Through the training process, those tutors are able to take with them the organizational skills taught and the Cornell note-taking style and apply the strategies to their own studies. The absorption of methodologies by tutors allows AVID to expand its reach beyond the students in the AVID classroom.

It is imperative that both teachers and tutors understand the importance of having trained tutors in the classroom, as they can have a major impact on the lives of students. We are thankful for those who take the opportunity to become an AVID tutor and help support a program that positively affects so many students across the country. 🌍
Ask the Authors

Creating Rigorous Tutorials to Increase Student Achievement in Academic Classes

Tracy Daws and Paolina Schiro are the lead writers for AVID’s new Tutorial Support Curriculum Resource Guide.

What’s the goal of the new Tutorial curriculum?

Our first hope in creating the Tutorial Support Curriculum Resource Guide is to provide a resource for AVID teachers to use in the classroom to train tutors with students in implementing effective, collaborative tutorials. Secondly, we would like to support AVID elective teachers’ efforts in creating and maintaining effective tutorials that increase student achievement in rigorous content classes.

Why is it important?

It is essential that elective teachers work collaboratively with students, content class teachers, and families to monitor student progress and provide support by having AVID students focus on their areas of need during the tutorials. Our hope is that using this curriculum will facilitate collaboration between the teacher, tutors, and students. Lastly, we would like to assist school sites in meeting the Essential 8 certification requirements.

What brought on the new guide?

This curriculum was created in response to an emerging need for AVID programs to change their tutor training practices. One contributing factor was the adoption of national certification standards for AVID programs. To meet these objective standards, schools have had to address difficult tutor recruitment and training issues. This curriculum is intended to support the efforts of dealing with these issues of fulfilling the minimum certification requirements.

Another contributing factor has been the unprecedented growth in number and size of AVID programs throughout the country. Due to their growth, many of the divisions, regions or districts that have trained tutors in the past no longer have the capacity to do so and have, therefore, shifted responsibility for tutor training to their school sites, i.e., the AVID coordinator and teachers. To support the sites’ efforts to train their tutors is another important role of this curriculum.

A third contributing factor has been the increased infusion of rigor in AVID students’ course selection this past decade. Increased enrollment in Advanced Placement® classes in high school and movement of Algebra to middle school have increased demand for higher-level tutorials, thus requiring a higher level tutor training curriculum. The curriculum has been developed in order to help sites meet this demand.

Dr. Paolina Schiro has been involved with AVID for the past thirteen years as a site AVID coordinator/ elective teacher and, since 2003, as AVID Regional Coordinator for Los Angeles County Office of Education supporting districts/schools. She is also an AVID curriculum writer and staff developer.

Before coming to AVID seven years ago, Tracy Daws taught for 14 years at the elementary and middle school levels in Albuquerque and Santa Monica public schools. She is currently an AVID Regional Coordinator for Los Angeles County Office of Education. Tracy has also served AVID as a teacher, site coordinator, writer, staff developer and presenter at AVID Summer Institutes.

What can users expect from the curriculum?

This curriculum is designed to provide AVID teachers, tutors and students with the ability to create and develop effective tutorials. This interactive curriculum serves primarily as a training guide for tutors and students. It also serves as a resource for AVID teachers to implement a successful tutorial program and support the tutors’ learning activities. In addition, this curriculum provides strategies and materials for AVID teachers to refine their tutorials with ongoing coaching and debriefing tools that can be used at both new and experienced sites for both tutors and students. Lastly, this curriculum provides strategies for AVID teachers and tutors to elevate tutorials to a level that supports student success in the most rigorous courses, i.e., Algebra I in the middle grades and Advanced Placement in high school.
From the Field

Tutorials Give Students a Voice

By Stacey Johnson
Teacher, Walton Intermediate

If I could have any super power I would choose the power of invisibility. As a teacher, many an attempt to listen in on the group collaborations of my students has failed because once students realize I’m listening, the discourse changes. Despite being on task, students change their manner of discussion for the simple reason that the teacher is near.

Tutorials with the College Success Path (CSP) students and our four amazing tutors, however, have granted me small allowances of my super power of choice. Tutorials allow me to walk around the room, invisibly listen to the discourse at hand, and take in the beauty of the ever-increasing language development and willingness of the students to push beyond their comfort levels one shy step at a time. This is a gift that all teachers wish for; the ability to see students leading each other and being thoroughly engaged in academic discourse about content, to see if students use all that we have taught them, even when we are not present. This gift is only made possible by the strength and dedication of our CSP tutors.

Our four tutors, Jose Barriga, Denise Lizarraga, Joseph Jeffrey and Angela Vasquez, are concurrently AVID and CSP tutors. Not only do they have the AVID tutor training, but they have also completed the CSP EL tutor training modules. The main differences for these tutors in CSP is the constant dedication to language development, the implementation of EL strategies, and the understanding to realize when students may not be completely clear on a concept—even if the students do not vocalize it.

This last point is key because our CSP students are masters in hiding the fact that they are English language learners. Interestingly, many teachers are not aware that the students in this program have not yet demonstrated English proficiency because their oral language gives the pretense that these students are comfortable manipulating the English language. Teachers often say something in passing and assume that because the words are clear and not difficult, students understand the many different meanings because they do not voice a question.

Our CSP students made this clear during a recent tutorial when one student posed a question about the achievements of the Japanese government during the 1500s to his tutorial group. After working with the group to help the student correct the syntax of his tutorial question on the board, the tutor asked the students to respond to the question. The group suggested that bringing education to the classes was an achievement. The student dutifully wrote the suggestion down and was ready to move on to the next point when the tutor noticed a few of the students in the group looking at the board without writing anything down. The tutor paused and asked, “What is meant by ‘bringing education to the classes’. Can anyone explain?”

The students were stumped. Finally a brave soul ventured forth the guess that “all the classes in the school had education brought to them.” In his mind, classes were the equivalent to grade levels, classrooms, or different content areas. The other students glanced at each other, let out the breaths they were holding, and began to add comments of their own. As it happened, more than a few were unsure about the meaning of the phrase. With a gentle nudge from the tutor, the students realized they should reference their notes again and began to discuss in earnest the multiple meanings of “classes.”

The tutor praised the collaborative efforts and solicited a volunteer to summarize the conclusion of their discussion. As a result, the students were able to rephrase “bringing education to the classes” to “bringing education to the classes means having education available to everyone—rich nobles

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A Day in the Life
Of an AVID Tutor

By Jayson Lewis
AVID Tutor, and Student at the University of Arlington

College and university students are ideal for classroom tutors. They not only bring their knowledge, but share their college experience. We know it’s a large commitment. They are busy with their own classes, activities and work. We asked one college student to provide a snapshot into his day to give us a little more appreciation for what tutors do.

6:30 AM: “BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!” Ughhh, I hate that alarm. Wait, did I finish reading that chapter or did I fall asleep? I’m so tired… sigh… Roll over or roll out? Roll over or roll out? Roll over or roll out? Come on Jay, you have to roll out… you promised Anthony you’d be there in the morning to help him with his Algebra from last night. I haven’t even done my own work though; but I made the promise. Now commit. Get up. Well, maybe just a few more minutes… NO! You and snooze are too fond of each other. Roll out. Roll out. Why are you still lying here? Right, roll out.

7:50 AM: Where the heck is Anthony?! I told him to be here at 7:30. I could have stayed in bed… another hour would have done me some good. At least I got the chapter read that I fell asleep on last night. Oh, now he shows up… “Anthony, what the heck?...you’re tired?...you’re complaining about being tired? Don’t even get me started. All right, let’s go.”

8:30 AM: “You got it now? Good… I’m glad you understand it better. We made some good progress today and you got your homework done. Next time though, please at least attempt to do the ones you can at home. I’m not going to sit and go through the whole assignment like I’m getting credit for it next time!” (laughing out loud) “But no, seriously, I’m not.” Glad we got through that.

6:30 AM: It’s only 10:00!! I know I’ve been in class for longer than an hour. This professor is so monotonous… wow, I sound like the kids now. I have to be sure that I adapt my teaching style to keep the attention and interest of the kids. They get so easily distracted and off task. Wow, again, look at what I’m doing… ha, I’m just as distracted as they get right now. Alright. Focus, Jay.

11:00 AM: Sigh, today’s a tutorial day. I hate tutorials. No you don’t… you love tutorials, you just don’t like the way some of the students act during them and you’re letting their attitudes and actions impact on yours. You know better… lead by example. Let’s go Jay. You’re here for a reason and it’s a positive one. Lead by example.

12:00 PM: I made it through to lunch. Let’s grade these tutorial request forms. Let’s see… Level 2 or 3… check. Did she have her notes and other resources with her? Check. How much did Reyna participate when others were at the front of the group? Eh, she actually asked some great questions… that’s worth full points there. I took the C-notes for her question so I know they’re great, ha, but what about her other notes for the group? We need to reinforce the formatting of C-notes next chance we get… I see some areas that need it. I’ll write that on the comments. Wow, this reflection is really interesting. I like her insight on how the tutorial process went today.

12:07 PM: Well, those are graded… now what am I going to eat for… “Mr. Lewis! Mr. Lewis! Can you help us with our science?”… lunch? Well okay then, looks like lunch will have to wait for a bit, haha. “Sure y’all. Both of you have your notes and everything we need?” “Yeeees Mr. Lewis, gosh, you always ask that!” Because I have to sometimes. “Well I do it for
good reason. Let’s get started. First, what are you guys doing in science this week… are y’all in the same class?”

12:35 PM: “Thank you Mr. Lewis.” “Thanks Mr. Lewis!” “No problem at all.” Okay, now what was I going to do? Oh yeah. Lunch-time! Alright, I have time to grab a bite and get back here and start on my paper for class this week. I can get some of the research completed before lunch is over and 7th period starts. Yeah, I should have no problem with that. Why do I sound like I’m convincing myself? Man, I’m tired.

3:55 PM: “BEEEEEEEEEP!” Uggegggh, I hate that bell but I love it at 3:55 in the afternoon!! Thank God, I made it through another day. I sound like I’m complaining… good thing this is in my head, ha. Well, I should grade these last tutorial requests so I can get out of here. Oh yeah, I do the afterschool program, so where do I think I’m going? Hmmph. Okay, Aleyda… great participation today… a little off task with the extra comments that had nothing at all to do with the question on the board, but she still gave some great input… good notes for all members… yeah, this is great. I’ll leave her this comment about staying on task though. I need to be sure I keep myself on task. I don’t do it often but have been known to veer off the subject and chat with the kids. But I do great at getting them back. While I’m reflecting on it, I really have to resist my urge to teach the group instead of using the inquiry method when it comes to helping the student get to the right information. I’m not a teacher yet… that’s not my job to re-teach the lesson they should have received in class. I need to discuss this with Ms. Falls [AVID elective teacher] and get her input on how to get better at that.

4:15 PM: “Bye Ms. Falls! Thanks for the tips. Remind me tomorrow to fix my time sheet to show these training minutes logged, okay?” I never thought about that… next time, if the student’s notes aren’t helping much and I catch myself about to teach a lesson, I can set up a time outside of the tutorial to help the kid where we can have one-on-one time. That way, we won’t break the pace and focus of the tutorial session. Hmmm, that would have saved me a lot of headaches in the past and lessened the unfinished request we sometimes had. Remember that, Jay. Good times, good times.

Jayson Lewis, a college senior due to graduate this summer, has been an AVID tutor for four years. He has tutored both at the middle and high school levels.

From the Field: Tutorials Give Students a Voice

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and poor peasants. Everyone has the chance to learn.” It is this attention to detail that highlights the efficiency of the CSP tutors as they work with English learners to help them elaborate their language. Although the tutor intuitively knew the students now understood, he went beyond this, and provided the crucial opportunity for students to utilize academic language with their peers to further synthesize the tutorial and develop their oral language proficiency.

The seamless orchestration of the tutorials is a marvel to behold and I am now able to witness this beauty without my presence causing students to hesitate. Perhaps my invisibility shield is working well, or perhaps these students—who were never looked to as leaders before, never listened to before, never given the chance to step up and shine before—no longer mind if I listen in and find joy in their evolution as students.

College Success Path (CSP) is an English Learner “pre-AVID” program AVID Center is currently piloting in four middle schools in the Garden Grove Unified School District in California. Stacey Johnson, from Walton Intermediate, is one of the CSP teachers.
“An unexpected bonus is that about half of our AVID tutors who have come to us as non-education majors have now decided to become teachers. That is exciting.”

Dr. Debra Duvall
Superintendent of Arizona’s Mesa Public Schools

“As an AVID Tutor, I have heard the students comment on the benefits of tutorials. They have expressed that they learn more through their discussions with other students. As the year has progressed, their questions reflect higher level thinking. They are using their higher level questions to enhance their discussions during the tutorial sessions.”

Valerie Brown, AVID Tutor, James Blair Middle School, Williamsburg, Virginia