

Constructing School Success, Cambridge University Press (1999).
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Study Description and Research Questions

This effort was designed to address two research questions: 1) Does untracking work? and 2) How does untracking work? The research was conducted consistent with the methodological principles of triangulation, namely, the use of data and materials from various sources. Data were obtained from official school records, surveys of students, teachers, parents and school officials, and lastly, classroom observations. To address the first research question 1,053 student records of AVID students graduating from the San Diego Unified School District in the 1990, 1991, and 1992 classes were used. These data provided information on AVID classes taken, test scores, college prep classes taken and completed and other academic experiences. To address the second research question, case studies of 8 of the 17 high schools participating in the untracking experiment in the San Diego Unified School District were conducted.

Key Findings

- Students from underrepresented ethnic and linguistic backgrounds who participated in AVID enrolled in college in numbers exceeding the local and national averages
- Latino AVID graduates are going on to four-colleges at two times the national average
- African American graduates are going on at 1.5 times the national average
- AVID students are staying in college once enrolling; 89% are enrolled after 2 years
- Among the most visible social supports in AVID classrooms is the teaching of test-taking strategies, note-taking, and studying strategies.