**Writing**

**Writing** is:
- A learning tool
- A personal and public communication tool
- A record of thinking

**Students who write:**
- Consider audience and purpose
- Engage in various writing processes to address specific situations
- Support their thinking
- Demonstrate understanding

**The AVID curriculum supports writing through the use of:**
- Cornell note-taking
- Learning logs
- Quickwrites and reflections
- Process writing
- Peer evaluation
- Authentic writing

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Inquiry is:

- Uncovering one’s understanding
- Asking critical questions
- Engaging in thinking, learning and discussion

Students who inquire:

- Analyze and synthesize materials or ideas
- Clarify their own thinking
- Probe others’ thinking
- Work through ambiguity

The AVID curriculum supports inquiry through the use of:

- Skilled questioning techniques
- Costa’s Levels of Thinking
- Socratic Seminars
- Tutorials
- Investigations
- Questions that guide research

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Collaboration is:
- Teamwork with shared responsibility
- Sharing of ideas, information and opinions
- Formal and informal discussion

Students who collaborate:
- Work together toward a common goal
- Develop positive interdependence
- Work in focused study groups
- Support the learning of others through inquiry

The AVID curriculum supports collaboration through the use of:
- Socratic Seminars
- Tutorials
- Philosophical Chairs
- Group activities and projects
- Peer editing groups
- Service learning projects

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**Organization** is:
- Managing materials and practicing methodical study habits
- Planning and prioritizing school, work and social tasks
- Engaging in mental preparation and goal-setting
- Strategically and intentionally taking responsibility for one’s own learning

**Students who organize:**
- Develop and use processes, procedures and tools to study effectively
- Manage their time through prioritizing and goal-setting
- Are prepared for courses, participate during instruction and interact with instructors
- Self-direct, self-evaluate, self-monitor and self-advocate

**The AVID curriculum supports organization through the use of:**
- Binders and organizational tools
- Calendars, planners and agendas
- Graphic organizers
- A focused note-taking system
- Tutorials and study groups
- Project planning and SMART goals

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Reading is:
★ Strategically gaining meaning, understanding and knowledge from print and other media
★ Purpose-driven
★ Interactive

Students who read:
★ Understand text structures
★ Apply prior knowledge and make connections to other text, self and world
★ Make predictions and ask questions
★ Create visual images as they read

The AVID curriculum supports reading through the use of:
★ Deep reading strategies
★ Note-taking
★ Graphic organizers
★ Vocabulary building
★ Summarizing
★ Reciprocal teaching

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WICOR: AVID’s Foundation for High-Engagement Teaching and Learning

AVID’s proven learning support structure for middle and high school—and enhanced for postsecondary education—is known as WICOR, which incorporates teaching/learning methodologies in the following critical areas: Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading Critically. WICOR provides a learning model that faculty can use to scaffold learning and guide students to comprehend materials and concepts, and articulate ideas at increasingly complex levels within developmental, general education, and major-specific courses.

Furthermore, the WICOR model reflects and promotes the expertise and attitudes that will serve students well in life beyond college graduation. Surveys of employers indicate that they seek college-educated employees who have strong interpersonal skills, communicate well, and have the ability to develop creative solutions to new problems in collaborative ways. AVID’s scaffold of social and academic structures succeeds in instilling these qualities, while at the same time improving outcomes in academic performance, building critical reading and thinking skills for rigorous fields of study, using writing as a powerful thinking and communication tool, and fostering collaboration among students, teachers, and other professionals within higher education and the “real world” of working and living.

Writing: Competency in writing is basic to thinking, learning, and growth, requiring students to consider issues in new, complex ways, contributing to self-knowledge, and helping them to clarify and order experiences and ideas. Writing consists of an essential, complex set of tools that enhance critical thinking—good writers tend to be good thinkers, and improving cognitive skill enhances one’s writing ability. Based on in-depth personal interviews with college students conducted by Light (2001), students reported that the level of writing required was directly related to their engagement in their academic work. This relationship was stronger than the students’ engagement in any other course characteristic.

Inquiry: “Critical thinking,” is a term commonly used in higher education to refer to a generic set of complex, but ill-defined, cognitive processes. According to the Foundation for Critical Thinking, “thinking is not driven by answers but by questions,” positioning inquiry as foundational to the higher-level cognition required for college success. AVID’s emphasis on inquiry focuses on the application of Costa’s three levels of “intellectual functioning,” whereby learning to ask progressively more complex questions is scaffolded, and students become progressively more metacognitive—aware of their own thinking processes. Using inquiry as an essential foundation for intelligent, productive cognition and discourse is crucial for academic achievement and college completion. Effective use of inquiry is even more important, however, for success in the workplace. Employers, according to Harvey et al. (1997), are “placing greater emphasis on hiring college graduates with inquiring minds and higher-level thinking skills,” in order to meet the challenges of the workplace. This is a position supported by national surveys of employers (Business/Higher Education Round Table, 1991, 1992; Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992; Education Commission of the States, 1995). Teaching and learning strategies that stimulate inquiry are thus necessary to prepare college graduates who can successfully contribute to economic prosperity, as well as to individual quality of life.

Collaboration: Collaborative learning involves intentionally designed student groups engaged in “co-laboring” toward meaningful learning outcomes, using active engagement activities planned to maximize learning, and facilitating the sharing of the workload (Barkley, Cross, and Major, 2005). AVID’s high-engagement learning strategies involve collaborative activities through which
individual students help each other learn, and thereby strengthen their own learning. Students are responsible for their own learning; faculty members serve as facilitators in a learning community, working together for the success of the group.

**Organization**: Because college students face competing priorities that are often overwhelming, organizational skills are critical to success in academic and social situations. According to Cuseo, Fecas, and Thompson (2010), college students “who have difficulty managing their time have difficulty managing college.” Management of time and energy, and learning to set priorities, can make the difference between success and failure for new college students. In addition, students must learn to plan effectively for academic assignments, organizing information and ideas for papers and projects. Consistent with its focus on promoting “individual determination,” AVID provides support for the organization of materials, assignments, assessments, handouts, and notes.

**Reading Critically**: College instructors consider reading to be a basic skill, one that all students should have acquired before entering college. However, students often neither complete assigned readings nor know how to effectively read assigned material—one of the most common challenges reported by college instructors (Gottschalk & Hjortshoj, 2004). AVID’s approach to “critical reading” provides faculty with practical, research-based strategies designed to help students read more effectively. Skills such as "reading with purpose" are scaffolded with more complex activities to ensure that students connect reading material to prior knowledge, understanding the structure of texts, and using text-processing strategies during and after reading to improve comprehension.

**References**


What is AVID? (Retrieved from www.avid.org/dl/gearup/avidindetail.docx.)