

San Diego State University

Program in Educational Leadership Dissertation Defense Announcement

Student Name: Yvette Roman

Committee Chair: Vicki Park, Department of Educational Leadership

Committee Member: Vincent Pompei, Department of Educational Leadership

Committee Member: Tina Petersen, Colton Joint Unified School District

Title of Dissertation: How AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Tutor Experience Shapes Educator Identity: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study

Date of Defense: July 22, 2026

Time of Defense: 10am

Location of Defense: "Virtual via Zoom" <https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/88661892120>

Abstract

Schools across the state of California struggle to retain high-quality teachers beyond the first five years. New teachers often feel overwhelmed and unprepared for the position. Research shows that when teachers have a strong professional identity, they are more likely to remain in the profession despite various challenges. Literature indicates that identity is complex and evolves over time through symbolic interactions, social context, relationships, knowledge and understanding of the role and self. Scholars suggest that participating in roles like tutoring produced a change in attitudes, self-perception, and professional identity that aligns to the role. This phenomenological study aimed to explore how experiences as an AVID tutor shaped identity, their decision to enter the profession, and remain in the profession. 10 participants participated in two semi-structured interviews and answered a total of 16

open ended questions regarding their experience as an AVID tutor. Using thematic coding and analysis three themes emerged as central to the phenomenon: (1) educator identity was shaped through workplace relationships and mentorship experiences between veteran tutors, new tutors and the assigned teacher, (2) tutors were able to integrate teaching expertise, understand social dynamics in the classroom and consider their own styles in shaping their identity, and (3) identity was socially constructed and shaped their beliefs, values, teacher personality and interactions with others. In analyzing how the experience influenced their decision to enter and remain in the profession, three themes emerged: (1) the AVID tutor experiences helped to establish professional boundaries, build confidence and understanding around teaching and learning, (2) the AVID tutor experience gave educators an opportunity to recognize their own intrinsic enjoyment in the classroom, allowing them to confirm their career path and strengthen their career aspirations as educators, and (3) several participants expressed their commitment to giving back to the AVID program and their communities while serving as advocates and representatives for diversity. The data collected indicates that pre-service and hands-on experiences such as the AVID tutor experience may provide opportunities for participants to gain an understanding of the role, professional expectations, and responsibilities of the teacher.