**Case Study/Ethnography Part 1**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this case study is to evaluate the results of the 2013 California State Test (CST) at Vista High School to determine the school’s current student achievement gaps by socioeconomic status. The analysis will highlight the level of proficient and advance performance between socioeconomically disadvantaged students and non-socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The study will also analyze student socioeconomic status with Hispanic or Latino decent. The CST results included in this case study will include English language arts, algebra I, geometry, and life science. The comparative analysis of this cohort of students will be the basis for a best practices action plan that will serve the needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged Hispanic or Latino students at Vista High School.

**Demographics**

Vista High School is the oldest of three high schools in Vista Unified School District. It has a current enrollment of 2,564 students. For the past decade, there has been a steady decline in the percentage of Caucasian students and an increase in the percentage of Hispanic or Latino students (Figure 1). Currently, at Vista High School 62.2% of the students are of Hispanic or Latino origin and 27.6% of the students are Caucasian. 59.7% of all of the students are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Of the students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged at Vista High School, 84% of those students are also of Hispanic or Latino decent. Students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and are of Hispanic or Latino decent make up 50% of the student population at Vista High School.

**Figure 1: VHS percent demographics from 2002-2013**

**Data Analysis**

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act established in 2001 was established to measure accountability in our nation’s schools. In California, the Academic Performance Index (API) is California’s indicator that determines the achievement of a school. Vista High School’s API score for 2012-2013 was 739. This was a decrease from the previous year by 15 points. While participation rates for the 2013 CST were high (98%), Vista High School did not meet the goals for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as mandated by the federal government by satisfying only 13 of 26 AYP criteria. The API scores for socioeconomically disadvantaged students deceased 3 points from 692 in 2012 to 683 in 2013. The following figures compare the 2013 CST 9th, 10th, and 11th grade proficient and advanced results for economically disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged Hispanic or Latino, not economically disadvantaged, and not economically disadvantaged Hispanic or Latino groups in the subjects of English language arts, algebra I, geometry, and life science.

Figure 2 shows that the not economically disadvantaged cohort performed at a proficient or advanced achievement of 79% for 9th grade, 71% for 10th grade, and 66% for 11th grade while the economically disadvantaged group dropped by almost half by achieving 54% for 9th, 39% for 10th grade, and 36% for 11th grade. When accounting for ethnicity, the Hispanic or Latino population student’s achievement plummeted. Students who were not economically disadvantaged performed at 9% for 9th grade, and 0% for 10th grade while economically disadvantaged Hispanic or Latino students achieved 4% in 9th, and 2% for both 10th and 11th grades.

**Figure 2: 2013 VHS STAR results – English Language Arts, proficient and advanced**

Figure 3 depicts the percentage of students who achieved proficient or advanced in algebra I. This graph shows that 9th grade students who are not economically disadvantaged achieved a performance of 10% and the not economically disadvantaged Hispanic or Latino achieved 9%. While the economically disadvantaged 10th grade achieved a higher percentage of achievement of 2% versus their 10th grade counterpart, the overall number of 2% is extremely low.

**Figure 3: 2013 VHS STAR results – Algebra I, proficient and advanced**

Figure 4 tells a different story about math at Vista High School. Non-economically disadvantaged students achieved a 47% in 9th, 10% in 10th, and 9% in 11th grades. When factoring in Hispanic or Latino students, the numbers for 9th grade drops more than half to 20% and the 10th grade result is similar to the not economically disadvantaged at 9%.

**Figure 4: 2013 VHS STAR Results - Geometry, proficient and advanced**

Economically disadvantaged student performance numbers drop with the most success occurring in 9th grade at 19% for economically disadvantaged and 18% for economically disadvantaged Hispanic or Latino students. 11th graders who had taken the geometry CST at Vista High School had 0% of the students at proficient or advanced.

Even though a majority of CST tests will be omitted this year because of the new Common Core State Standards, the results from the 10th grade life science CST is included in this case study because it will still be a measurement used by Vista High School for the 2013-2014 school year. The results from Figure 5 show that non-economically disadvantaged students performed at 62% while the Hispanics or Latinos within that group performed at 56%. Economically disadvantaged students performed at 36% while the Hispanic or Latino population within this group performed at 33%. While the performance of these groups was higher than the mathematics scores, the economically disadvantaged group performed at levels that are almost half of that as students who are not economically disadvantaged.

**Figure 5: 2013 VHS STAR results – 10th grade Life Science, proficient and advanced**

**Conclusion**

The results from the data analysis show that economically disadvantaged groups at Vista High School perform at a level that is almost half of that of groups that are not economically disadvantaged and Hispanic or Latino students perform at extremely low levels in English language arts when compared to their peers. This data also shows that 10th grade and 11th grade students who take algebra I or geometry are less likely to achieve when compared to students who take these classes as 9th graders. The school is in the process of developing comprehensive professional learning communities (PLC) that aim to create common formative assessments that will analyze student data for understanding to benefit all students. The district is also in the process of instituting instructional rounds, a peer based observational method based on the practice of medicine, that will provide Vista High School feedback on their problem of practice. As schools move to the nationally adopted common core standards that will require students to use critical thinking and higher order skills on state exams, teachers will have to adapt their formative assessments to align with the new computer based tests. The analysis of CST data will be used to create an action plan that will address the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged Hispanic or Latino students by implementing research based best practices.