

THE SCHOOLS ATTUNED® PROGRAM

HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATOR IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Conducted by All Kinds of Minds®
Research, Program Evaluation and Information Department
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The goals of the Schools Attuned® Program are to strengthen educators' understanding and management of differences in learning, help educators to help students become aware of their learning profiles and improve their academic and social achievement, and create schools that respect differences in learning and nurture strengths in students. To achieve these goals, the program is designed using principles that reflect standards of professional development from the National Staff Development Council and current research on adult learning (Borasi & Fonzi (National Science Foundation), 2002; Laine & Otto (NCREL), 2000; Little, 1993; Rogers, 2002; Bransford, et al. (National Research Council), 2000).

**PROGRAM
BACKGROUND**

The Schools Attuned® Program provides a minimum of 35 instructional hours (Core Course) plus a minimum of 10 contact hours for follow-up experiences (Practicum). The program includes: (1) readings from books and articles by Dr. Levine and others, (2) content delivered through the *Developing Minds Video Library*, (3) case studies/vignettes and small group work to provide for active assimilation of content and practice of skills, (4) demonstration and practice sessions to provide opportunities to use complex information and processes simultaneously and fluidly, (5) application of these processes to participants' own case student or to a complex case student provided to them, (6) preparation for implementing the Schools Attuned® Program in the school setting, including management strategies, and (7) practicum experiences to help support implementation of the program.

METHODS

Program Evaluation is an important component of a professional development program. The purpose of the present evaluation was to examine the student outcomes that teachers report as a result of their initial use of the Schools Attuned® Program. This report is based on results of a cross-sectional survey study.

INSTRUMENT

The **Educator Implementation Survey** was used to gather data for this study. The survey was designed to collect information on (1) how teachers have begun implementing Schools Attuned strategies and concepts in their classrooms and (2) the outcomes of that initial implementation on individual students and whole classrooms. Therefore, the Educator Implementation Survey gathers detailed information on implementation with individual students (and outcomes of that use), as well as implementation and outcomes of use with the whole classroom.

**DATA
COLLECTION
AND SAMPLE
DESCRIPTION**

In October-December 2005, the Educator Implementation Survey was used to gather data from K-12 educators in Hickory, North Carolina that had participated in the Schools Attuned Program from 2003 to 2005. A total of 64 out of 121 possible surveys were returned for a response rate of 53%.

Select demographic characteristics were collected with the survey. Respondents represented 19 different schools. Of the 64 respondents:

- 75% were classroom teachers, 12.5% were administrators, 6% were counselors, 2% were psychologists, and 5% were other specialists and support personnel;
- 95% were female;
- 88% identified themselves as Caucasian, 11% as African-American, and 2% as being of Hispanic Origin;
- 56% had more than 10 years experience in education, 17% had between 6 – 10 years experience, 16% had between 3 - 5 years experience and 11% had fewer than 3 years of experience; and
- 88% worked in K-5 settings, 8% worked in 6-12 settings.
- 86% of respondents reported that they worked with general/regular education students, 50% work with special education students, 42% with English Language Learners, and 22% with students mainstreamed in an inclusion setting.
- Regarding participation in Schools Attuned, 21% of the respondents had attended the Core Course in 2003, 30% had attended in 2004, and 49% of respondents attended the Core Course in 2005.

RESULTS

Because we were interested in the implementation of the Schools Attuned Program by educators in direct contact with individual students and whole classrooms, we isolated the survey responses of those identified themselves as teachers for detailed investigation. The results of this investigation follow.

TEACHER IMPLEMENTATION

Attuning a Student

Of the 48 teachers surveyed about their implementation, 40 (85%) indicated they were using the Attuning a Student process with an individual student. The following table provides information on the specific stages of Attuning a Student which teachers had completed or were planning to begin.

Implementation of Attuning a Student Steps

	Completed	Planning to Begin
Noticing a Student	85 %	3 %
Collection of Teacher's View	93 %	3 %
Collection of Student's View	88 %	3 %
Collection of Parent's View	85 %	5 %
Data Analysis	83 %	10 %
Profile Building	68 %	20 %
Linking Profile with School Performance	55 %	32 %
Development of Management Plan	49 %	41 %
Implementation of Management Plan	41 %	44 %

In addition to examining teachers' use of Attuning a Student in summary, we also examined responses across the three different training years (2003, 2004, and 2005, respectively). The results shown below indicate that teacher responses varied by training year.

Year teacher attended the Core Course	Percentage of teachers implementing any aspect of Attuning a Student with individual student
2003 (n=11)	73 %
2004 (n=15)	79 %
2005 (n=27)	95 %

These results suggest that teachers who recently completed the Core Course were more likely to be in the process of implementing aspects of Attuning a Student than were teachers who completed the program in previous years. However, we examined these results more closely. Specifically, we isolated the percentage of teachers that reported having completed the implementation of a management plan within the last 12 months. Overall, 41% of respondents had completed a management plan with an individual student, while an additional 44% were planning on implementing a management plan.

Examining responses across training years, teachers that completed the course in 2003 and 2004 had higher percentages of management plan completion than teachers who completed the course in 2005. Among the 2005 teachers, only 1 out of the 20 (5%) who indicated that they had implemented Schools Attuned with an individual student, had completed implementation of a management plan at the time of this survey. This is compared to 82% of 2004 teachers and 63% of the 2003 teachers who indicated that they had completed implementation of a management plan in the last 12 months.

However, it is important to note that because the survey was distributed only 3-4 months after teachers had completed the Core Course in July 2005; it is likely that these 2005 trained teachers were still in the midst of the Attuning a Student process, and can be expected to progress into the management plan phase in time. Indeed, 14 of the 19 (70%) 2005 respondents who had not yet implemented a management plan indicated that they were planning to begin the management plan phase.

Student Outcomes related to Attuning a Student

Teachers identified outcomes for individual students due to their use of the Attuning a Student process. Results indicate that a majority of teachers reported improvements for individual students across affective, behavioral, and academic outcomes. The following table provides information on the specific student improvements that teachers observed. Outcomes are organized by highest percentage of prevalence.

"N" indicates the number of teachers that indicated the item was an area in need of improvement for the individual student.

Individual Student Outcomes	Observed	Did not Observe
Improved Student-Teacher Interactions (n = 32)	100 %	0 %
Increased Engagement in Learning Process (n = 30)	97 %	3 %
Improved Attitude Toward School (n = 23)	96 %	4 %
Improved Motivation (n = 26)	92 %	8 %
Improved Student Social Interactions (n = 24)	92 %	8 %
Improved Parent-Teacher Interactions (n = 22)	91 %	9 %
Improved Student Grades (n = 31)	90 %	10 %
Improved Behavior (n = 19)	89 %	11 %
Improved Self-Concept (n = 28)	89 %	11 %
Improved Awareness of Own Learning Profile (n = 32)	84 %	16 %

Whole Classroom Use of Schools Attuned

Teachers were surveyed about their use of Schools Attuned with their whole classrooms. 33 out of 47 teachers (70%) reported that they were currently implementing Schools Attuned strategies at the whole class level. The following table provides information on the specific strategies in which teachers were engaging as a result of their Schools Attuned preparation. Strategies are organized by the highest percentage of teachers reporting use of that strategy.

Use of Whole Classroom Strategies as a Result of Schools Attuned	Percentage of teachers using this strategy (n=33)
Differentiating class work or homework when appropriate	94 %
Differentiating Instruction	85 %
Differentiating methods of assessment	64 %
Promoting students' use of learning strategies	58 %
Linking students' work to their affinity areas	42 %
Leveraging students' strengths to support their weaknesses	42 %
Involving parents in the implementation of management strategies at home	42 %
Incorporating strengths and affinities in discussions of struggling students	42 %
Encouraging students to leverage their own strengths and affinities	36 %
Linking classroom activities to neurodevelopmental content	27 %
Describing neurodevelopmental profiles as opposed to labeling	27 %
Engaging students in learning about learning	24 %
Incorporating Schools Attuned as a pre-referral procedure	24 %

Promoting a shared neurodevelopmental perspective on student learning among colleagues	21 %
Utilizing Schools Attuned as a framework for parent meetings	18 %
Conducting demystification with students	12 %
Involving parent/caretaker in demystification sessions	3 %

In addition to examining responses in summary, we also examined teachers' use of Schools Attuned whole classroom strategies across the three different training years (2003, 2004, and 2005, respectively). The results shown below indicate that teacher responses varied by training year.

Year teacher attended the Core Course	Percentage of teachers implementing any aspects of Schools Attuned with whole classroom
2003 (n=11)	90 %
2004 (n=15)	80 %
2005 (n=27)	57 %

These results suggest that teachers who recently completed the Core Course were less likely to report using aspects of Schools Attuned with their whole classroom than were teachers who completed the program in previous years. Again, it is important to note that because the survey was distributed only 3-4 months after teachers had completed the Core Course in July 2005, it is likely that some 2005 trained teachers had not yet had time to apply Schools Attuned as a classroom wide application. With the necessary implementation support provided, it is likely that this percentage will increase in time.

We also examined reported use of specific classroom strategies across training years. Results indicated that the use of strategies was similar across years; that is, regardless of training year, those teachers that used Schools Attuned with the whole classroom were most likely to differentiate work, instruction and assessment, and were less likely to use Schools Attuned with colleagues, parents, or through demystification. Specific implementation support may need to be provided in order to encourage participants to use Schools Attuned strategies beyond differentiation.

Finally, examining differences among the use of Schools Attuned with individual students versus whole classroom strategies, more 2003 respondents reported they were currently using whole classroom Schools Attuned strategies (90%) than were attuning individual students (73%). This slight drop off in use of the attuning process over time may indicate a need for implementation support.

Whole Classroom Outcomes related to Schools Attuned

Teachers identified outcomes that they had observed within their whole classrooms as a result of their use of Schools Attuned strategies. Results indicated that a majority of teachers observed a variety of whole classroom improvements linked to their use of Schools Attuned. The following table provides information on specific outcomes that teachers observed within their classrooms. Outcomes are organized by highest percentage of prevalence.

Whole Classroom Outcomes	Observed	Did not Observe
Improved Motivation (n = 31)	94 %	6 %
Improved Student-Teacher Interactions (n = 29)	93 %	7 %
Improved Parent-Teacher Interactions (n = 30)	92 %	8 %
Increased Engagement in Learning Process (n = 32)	91 %	9 %
Improved Student Grades (n = 26)	90 %	10 %
Improved Student Social Interactions (n = 28)	86 %	14 %
Improved Behavior (n = 33)	86 %	14 %
Improved Awareness of Own Learning Profiles (n = 30)	71 %	29 %

Teacher Outcomes related to Schools Attuned

Teachers were also surveyed about the impact of the Schools Attuned training on their knowledge and skills. Results indicated that a majority of teachers agreed that their experience in Schools Attuned supported their abilities in a variety of skill areas. The following table provides information on these specific skills, organized by highest percentage of agreement.

Schools Attuned Support of Specific Teacher Skills	Agreed	Did not Agree
Identify students' strengths and areas in need of improvement (n = 47)	100 %	0 %
Development of strategies to enhance student learning (n = 46)	100 %	0 %
Communicate with parents about their child's learning (n = 46)	100 %	0 %
Make instructional decisions based on neurodevelopmental knowledge (n = 46)	96 %	4 %
Create a climate that protects students from humiliation (n = 46)	93 %	7 %
Infuse optimism in students regarding their ability to learn (n = 46)	93 %	7 %
Collaborate with colleagues about students' learning (n = 46)	93 %	7 %
Help students understand their own learning (n = 46)	93 %	7 %

School Wide Outcomes related to Schools Attuned

Finally, all respondents were surveyed about the impact that the Schools Attuned Program has had within their schools. Respondents to these items included classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, school psychologists, and other support personnel. The following table provides information on specific outcomes that respondents observed in relation to the Schools Attuned Program, organized by highest percentage of agreement.

School Wide Outcomes

	Agreed	Did not Agree
The Schools Attuned Program promotes a respect for differences and a nurturing of strengths within my school. (n = 60)	93 %	7 %
The Schools Attuned Program is a critical resource in helping my students meet academic standards. (n = 61)	87 %	13 %
The Schools Attuned Program is easily integrated with the use of other programs in my school. (n = 62)	85 %	15 %
The Schools Attuned Program has contributed to the accuracy of special education referrals in my school. (n = 54)	70 %	30 %

In addition to examining responses in summary, we also examined school level outcomes across differing schools, as well as across specific items. Results indicated that the general pattern of observed outcomes was similar across different schools, that is, participants generally agreed most that Schools Attuned promoted respect for differences, and generally agreed least that Schools Attuned contributed to the accuracy of special education referrals. Isolating those respondents who expressed non-agreement with specific school outcomes:

4 participants disagreed that Schools Attuned promotes a respect for differences and a nurturing of strengths within their school. Of these, 3 were from Southwest (out of 28 Southwest respondents), and 1 was from Oakwood (out of 4 Oakwood respondents).

8 participants disagreed that Schools Attuned is a critical resource in helping their students meet academic standards. Of these, 5 (out of 28) were from Southwest, 1 (out of 6) was from Jenkins, 1 (out of 5) was from Viewmont, and 1 (out of 4) was from Oakwood.

11 participants disagreed that Schools Attuned is easily integrated with the use of other programs in their school. Of these, 7 (out of 28) were from Southwest, 1 (out of 2) was from Sweetwater, 2 (out of 6) were from Jenkins, and 1 (out of 4) was from Oakwood.

16 participants disagreed that Schools Attuned has contributed to the accuracy of special education referrals in their school; 8 (out of 28) were from Southwest, 1 (out of 2) was from Sweetwater, 1 (out of 6) was from Jenkins, 1 (out of 4) was from Gamewell, 1 (out of 2) was from Grandview, 1 (out of 6) was from Lyle Creek, and 2 (out of 4) were from Oakwood.

As a final note, although Southwest is heavily represented among participants who disagreed on school wide outcomes, they had the largest number of survey respondents from any one school (28 out of 64 total participants) and their general level of agreement was close to the average for all schools.

Barriers to Implementation

Teachers were asked to describe any barriers that had prevented or limited their use of Schools Attuned either with individual students or with their whole classrooms. Teachers identified three factors related to the program itself: the amount of time needed for implementation, applicability of the program to early grades, and the amount or complexity of paperwork related to Attuning a Student. One respondent noted:

"It is a wonderful program. The problem I am running into is time. Teaching alone takes much of my time....Attuning a student, when done correctly, is time consuming. I'm struggling with this program due to this."

Several teachers also indicated that, as Kindergarten or Pre-Kindergarten teachers, they did not feel the program was as applicable to their students:

"Schools Attuned does not adequately address kindergarten needs."

"The rate of learning and abilities begin with many levels in Kindergarten, thus this program will be put to better use the latter half of the year."

Regarding paperwork related to Attuning a Student:

"I believe that effective teachers are doing these interventions and modifications in their classrooms anyway- without the extra paperwork." Interestingly, the respondent added, "I love the resource book, I've even used it on my IEPs!"

In addition to respondents indicating certain program factors that they felt limited their implementation, several of the respondents that had only recently completed the training, indicated that they simply needed more time to integrate strategies into their classrooms:

"I have not completed the process. I anticipate more positive development for my students."

"I have not done everything that I want with regards to integrating the program into my classroom but I plan to."

Additional Comments on the Program

Despite barriers that teachers encountered in their implementation, respondent comments were very positive overall. Many teachers commented on the program's positive impact on students:

"Schools Attuned has made me aware of the reasons behind a student's difficulty in learning. I particularly like different strategies broken down in several different ways- they make it easy to individualize learning within increasingly diverse classrooms. My whole classroom has benefited from strategies I used for a particular student"

"The information gathered on the view has made me aware of the student's lack of self-confidence and strengths in spatial concepts. I have begun to use several strategies to enhance his self-confidence; such as, allowing him to be the "king" for the day...Needless to say this strategy has helped promote his self-confidence and he is also happier."

Other teachers expressed their satisfaction with the Schools Attuned program, but stated that their use of the program would be improved by greater support in their schools and school-wide integration:

"The Schools Attuned Program has not been adequately encouraged and implemented in my school... I very much wish the program was promoted more here so I could have others to work with. I think if it was, we would have fewer referrals, fewer frustrated parents and teachers, higher test scores, and happier, more successful students!"

"We need more teachers trained in order to take full advantage of the SA program. If another team or two could be trained next summer, we would be able to make a bigger impact on our students and our school as a whole."

Several administrators also expressed this desire for greater integration of the Schools Attuned Program throughout the school:

"I want to continue having all my student assistances team trained as well as many teachers as possible..."I'd like our whole school to be trained."

"I strongly believe in the process of attuning a child. We are taking small steps toward implementing Schools Attuned as we work to integrate the process-quality not quantity. SA training is best reflected in our School Assistance team. We use the language, resources, and interventions to help us better identify a students needs."

SUMMARY

This survey examined the implementation of the Schools Attuned Program by 64 educators in Hickory, North Carolina. Data were gathered on the specific ways that teachers are using Schools Attuned with individual students as well as in their whole classrooms, and the outcomes they are observing as a result of the program. Results were also compared across training years, providing a glimpse of teachers with varying years of experience with the Schools Attuned program and indicating how use of the program may change over time. Finally, this report may also reveal specific aspects of the program where teachers require implementation support.

In summary, the results of this survey provide a baseline from which initial conclusions can be drawn about the ways in which these teachers are using Schools Attuned, the outcomes of that use, and the areas in which support for further implementation may need to be provided.

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