

THE SCHOOLS ATTUNED[®] PROGRAM PRACTICUM

2005-2006 PARTICIPANT EVALUATION
SUMMARY REPORT

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Research, Program Evaluation and Information Department
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UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING

BACKGROUND

The Schools Attuned Program is a professional development and service delivery program designed to help educators acquire the knowledge and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of K-12 students. The curriculum is based on the focused study and application of eight neurodevelopmental constructs that affect learning. Delivery of the Schools Attuned Program involves 35 instructional hours (Core Course) plus 10 contact hours of follow-up experiences (Practicum). Participants are given the option of registering for one of two “paths,” Generalist or Subject Specialist. The different paths are designed to address educators’ areas of interest or expertise based on the grade levels and/or subject areas they teach.

This summary report presents program evaluation outcomes for the Practicum component of the Schools Attuned Program. Practicum Sessions build upon the knowledge and skills gained from the Core Course. The three key elements of Practicum include:

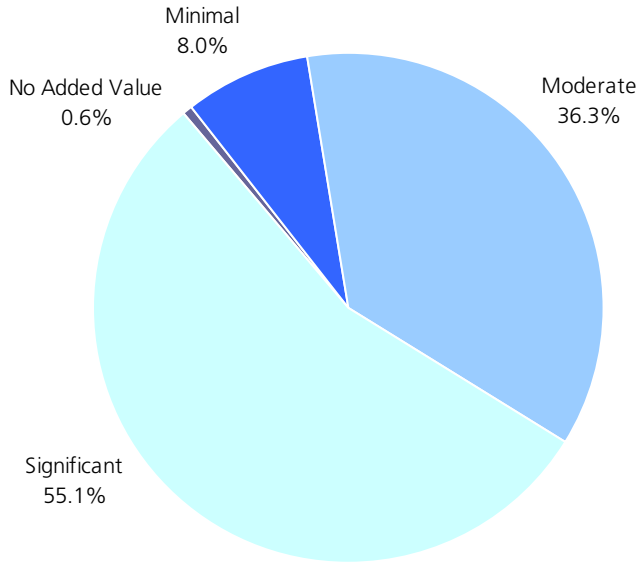
- Building Community – offering participants an opportunity to develop a local and national network of Schools Attuned educators
- Skill Development – supporting participants in developing strategies to apply in the classroom
- Extended Learning – providing participants with resources to further their learning about Schools Attuned strategies and concepts

The analyses included in this report are based on information from the *End-of-Practicum Participant Survey*, administered during the final Practicum session. In addition to eliciting participant’s feedback about Practicum, evaluation questions focused on learning about participants’ experiences with the program in its entirety (Core Course and Practicum). Questions also focused on participants’ initial use of Schools Attuned concepts and strategies and their need for future support as they looked ahead to more fully implementing the program.

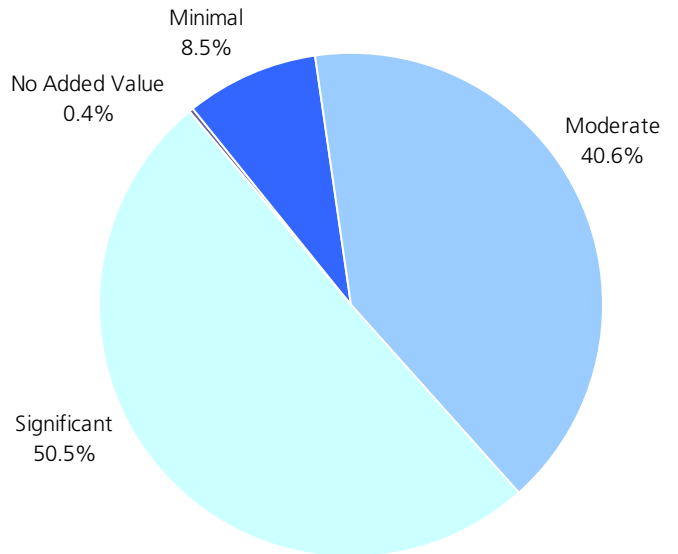
Results are presented for participants whose final Practicum sessions occurred between January and June 2006. A total of 1,940 participants completed program evaluation surveys during 135 Practicum events in sites across the United States and Canada. Responses were received from 1,433 participants in the Generalist Path and 507 in the Subject Specialist Path.

ADDED VALUE OF PRACTICUM TO CORE COURSE

Participants were asked to rate the added value of Practicum to the Core Course. The majority of respondents in both program paths indicated that Practicum provided added value to their experience. Approximately one-half of the participants rated the added value of Practicum as significant, while an additional one-third rated the added value as moderate.



**Generalist Path
Added Value of Practicum**



**Subject Specialist Path
Added Value of Practicum**

“The Practicum is crucial to internalizing understanding and use of the Core Course.”

2005 Schools Attuned participant

IMPACT ON PARTICIPANT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

When asked about the impact of the Schools Attuned Program as a whole, the majority of participants in both program paths indicated they experienced an increase in knowledge and skills related to helping students with learning differences. Results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Impact of Core Course and Practicum		
	Generalist Path	Subject Specialist Path
<i>Respondents agreed that through the program they....</i>	(%)	(%)
Gained a new perspective on how students learn	99.0	96.6
Gained new tools for working with students	99.6	99.2
Feel more confident in their ability to help students with learning differences	98.2	95.4
Feel there will be a group of people to call upon with questions or ideas	97.6	95.5

"I have a new perspective not only on how to work with my students, but also on how to document and assess my students' performance level."

- 2005 Schools Attuned participant

BEGINNING USE OF SCHOOLS ATTUNED

A special focus for the Generalist Path Core Course is to provide opportunities for participants to examine the unique learning profile of individual students. In Practicum, Generalist Path participants are introduced to techniques for examining the neurodevelopmental demands of the reading and writing curricula and are provided opportunities to develop strategies for using Schools Attuned with parents and colleagues.

As shown in Table 2 below, a majority of Generalist Path participants had begun to use Schools Attuned to create a safe classroom environment and observe student learning, while comparatively fewer participants had begun using Schools Attuned in collaboration with parents.

Table 2

Beginning Use of Schools Attuned – Generalist Path	
<i>Participants reported beginning to use Schools Attuned to:</i>	(%)
Create a safe classroom environment based on a respect for neurodevelopmental diversity	86.1
Observe student learning	84.9
Promote students' use of learning strategies (e.g., self-monitoring, organizers, etc.)	78.2
Differentiate instruction	76.3
Provide opportunities for students to strengthen their strengths	75.3
Support hypotheses about student learning	71.0
Discuss student learning with colleagues	69.6
Use a variety of indicators to measure academic progress	65.6
Use demystification to help students understand their own learning	57.1
Engage students in learning about learning	52.3
Discuss issues and strategies with students	50.6
Discuss student learning with parents	46.6
Create and alliance between school and home	40.0

A special focus for the Subject Specialist Path Core Course is to provide opportunities for participants to examine the neurodevelopmental demands of their curriculum and instructional methods. In Practicum, Subject Specialist Path participants are introduced to techniques for examining the unique learning profiles of individual students and are provided opportunities to develop strategies for using Schools Attuned with parents and colleagues.

Similar to results for participants in the Generalist Path, a majority of Subject Specialist participants had begun to use Schools Attuned to create a safe classroom environment and observe student learning, while comparatively fewer participants had yet to use Schools Attuned in collaboration with parents. Results are presented for participants in the Subject Specialist Path in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Beginning Use of Schools Attuned –Subject Specialist Path	
<i>Participants reported beginning to use Schools Attuned to:</i>	(%)
Create a safe classroom environment based on a respect for neurodevelopmental diversity	84.3
Observe student learning	83.3
Differentiate instruction	70.0
Provide opportunities for students to strengthen their strengths	68.4
Discuss student learning with colleagues	67.4
Promote students’ use of learning strategies (e.g., self-monitoring, organizers, etc.)	65.3
Support hypotheses about student learning	60.4
Use a variety of indicators to measure academic progress	55.2
Engage students in learning about learning	47.5
Discuss issues and strategies with students	43.7
Use demystification to help students understand their own learning	40.4
Discuss student learning with parents	33.1
Create and alliance between school and home	30.9

SUPPORT FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOLS ATTUNED

Participants were asked to indicate their interest in services that would support their ongoing implementation of the Schools Attuned Program. Responses, in order of greatest interest to least, were as follows:

- Ongoing access to materials
- Peer study groups
- Facilitated sessions on a particular topic
- Personal contact with a coach or mentor
- Online contact with a coach or mentor

Participants also responded to an open-ended question seeking their interest in topics for future implementation support. Frequently mentioned topics included:

- Additional strategies for working with students
- Further instruction on the neurodevelopmental framework
- Specific instruction on the constructs of memory and attention
- Involving parents with Schools Attuned

“There is so much to learn. As I develop my understanding, I expect to use this information more fluently.”

- 2005 Schools Attuned participant

All Kinds of Minds uses ongoing evaluation of the Schools Attuned Program to continuously improve its impact upon educators and the students they serve. Results of this evaluation report provide information on educators’ reactions to the Practicum and their assessment of the knowledge and skills they have gained as a result of the program. To read more about the research and evaluation behind our programs, visit the All Kinds of Minds web site at www.allkindsofminds.org.