

THE SCHOOLS ATTUNED® COURSE

2007 PARTICIPANT EVALUATION SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY REPORT

GENERATED BY ALL KINDS OF MINDS®
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
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All Kinds of Minds®

A NON-PROFIT INSTITUTE FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING

BACKGROUND

The Schools Attuned Program is a professional development program designed to improve educators' ability to help students with differences in learning find success in school. The specific goals of the program are to (1) support educators in developing and demonstrating expertise regarding differences in learning, (2) strengthen educators' understanding of students' strengths and interests and value how those strengths and interests can serve as pathways to school success, (3) provide educators with clear, specific, actionable strategies to manage differences in learning, and (4) provide school faculty with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to enact changes in policy, practices, and culture that address learning variation in the school.

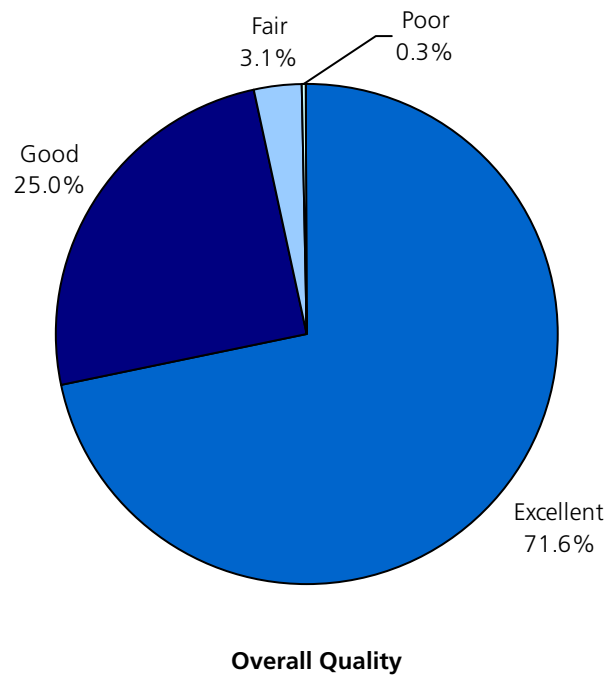
The Schools Attuned Program provides a minimum of 35 hours of core instruction (Course) and 10 hours for follow-up experiences (Schools Attuned in Practice). The Program contains the following elements: (1) Developing Minds Video Library, (2) readings from books and articles by Dr. Levine and others, (3) small group work to provide for active assimilation of content and practice of skills, (4) case studies/vignettes to help participants understand the constructs, (5) demonstration and practice sessions to provide opportunities to use complex information and processes simultaneously and fluidly, (6) preparation for implementing the Schools Attuned Program in the school setting, including management strategies, and (7) On-Site and E-Learning modules offered during the school year to help support implementation of the Schools Attuned Program. Participants register for one of two "paths", Generalist or Subject Specialist. Each path is designed to address participants' areas of interest and expertise based on the grade levels and/or subject areas they teach. Elementary or middle school educators focusing on multiple subject areas typically enroll in the Generalist Path. Middle or high school educators focusing on one or two subject areas typically enroll in the Subject Specialist Path. Educators who share characteristics of both paths, such as an elementary school Art teacher, have the option of enrolling in either path.

All Kinds of Minds uses evaluation of the Schools Attuned Program to continuously improve its impact upon educators and the students they serve. Feedback from Schools Attuned participants provides documentation of educators' reactions to the Course and its facilitators. Through the Course survey, participants assess the new knowledge and skills they have gained, as well as how their beliefs have changed as a result of participating in the Course. To read more about the research and evaluation behind our programs, visit the All Kinds of Minds web site at WWW.ALLKINDSOFMINDS.ORG.

This summary report presents program evaluation results for the Schools Attuned Courses that occurred in sites across the United States, Canada, and Switzerland between April 2007 and March 2008. Analyses are based on information from the Schools Attuned Course Participant Survey, an online survey available to participants through the Schools Attuned website following the last session of the Course. In 2007, a total of 2,938 participants completed program evaluation surveys following 243 Course events: 72% of participants through the Generalist Path, and 28% through the Subject Specialist Path. Survey results are presented in the following sections.

OVERALL COURSE QUALITY RATINGS

The majority of participants rated the overall value of the Course as good or excellent. In 2007, over 96 percent of participants rated the overall quality of the Course as good or excellent. These results are consistent with participant ratings of course quality in 2006, when 97 percent of participants rated the overall value of the Course as good or excellent.



"I feel empowered to reach students that I previously felt ill-equipped to teach. I can empower challenged students with methods that would level the playing field in academics."

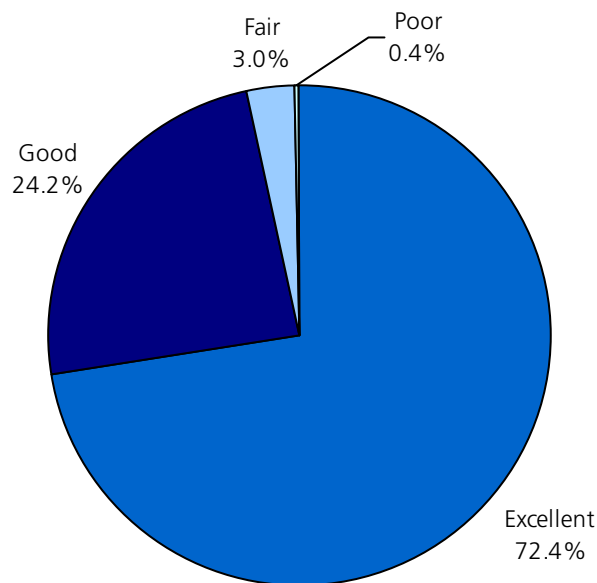
"This was truly an inspiring course that has changed the way that I practice and work with students."

-2007 Schools Attuned Participants

RATINGS OF FACILITATOR SKILL

Key to the success of the Schools Attuned Program is the quality of the facilitators. Facilitators must possess a strong knowledge base about the content, have experience implementing the Schools Attuned Program, and exhibit high level facilitation skills.

When asked to rate the skill of course facilitation, participants provided positive responses. In 2007, more than 96 percent of participants rated the overall facilitation quality as good or excellent. These results are consistent with participant ratings of facilitation quality in 2006, when 97 percent of participants rated the overall facilitation quality of the Course as good or excellent.



Overall Facilitator Skill

“The facilitators were wonderful. They worked so well together, and were very flexible. Their work ethic is excellent, and they were committed to covering the material in a way that was meaningful to us all.”

-2007 Schools Attuned Participant

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Knowledge Gained Through the Course

Participants rated the *knowledge* they gained by participating in the Course. More than 98 percent of participants agreed that the Course supported their ability to understand and use each of the Schools Attuned concepts listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

| This Course has provided me with an understanding of... | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| The range of differences in learning and why some students struggle with learning. | 72.4 | 26.7 | 0.8 | 0.1 |
| Developing and refining hypotheses about student learning based on Neurodevelopmental (ND) observations/information. | 60.3 | 38.1 | 1.4 | 0.1 |
| How student profiles are made up of ND strengths and weaknesses. | 64.2 | 34.6 | 1.2 | 0.1 |
| How student profiles and affinities are linked to learning and motivation. | 63.7 | 34.3 | 1.8 | 0.2 |

Beliefs Impacted by the Course

Participants rated how their *thinking* was impacted by the Course. More than 98 percent of participants agreed that by participating in the Course, they experienced an increase in the beliefs listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2

| This Course has increased my belief that... | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Students with learning challenges can succeed. | 69.5 | 28.5 | 1.7 | 0.3 |
| I can take steps to improve the performance of students with learning differences. | 73.8 | 24.8 | 1.3 | 0.2 |
| Leveraging the strengths and affinities of students with learning challenges is as important as the remediation of weaknesses. | 73.8 | 24.6 | 1.4 | 0.2 |

Skills Developed in the Course

Participants rated the *skills* that the Course provided them. More than 97 percent of participants agreed that the Course helped them develop the skills listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3

| This Course has provided me with skills to... | Strongly Agree (%) | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) | Strongly Disagree (%) |
|--|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Examine and describe specific student learning behaviors using the neurodevelopmental (ND) framework. | 53.3 | 45.1 | 1.5 | 0.1 |
| Develop and refine hypotheses about student learning based on ND observations/information. | 48.3 | 49.5 | 2.2 | 0.1 |
| Begin to identify and address the special learning needs of students. | 59.6 | 38.7 | 1.5 | 0.2 |
| Begin engaging students in opportunities for them to strengthen and leverage their strengths and affinities. | 55.8 | 41.9 | 2.1 | 0.1 |
| Use the ND approach to collaborate with colleagues around student learning. | 49.8 | 47.1 | 2.9 | 0.2 |
| Identify the ND demands of my curriculum and instruction. | 48.5 | 48.2 | 3.1 | 0.2 |
| Begin to base instructional decisions on a ND understanding of both curriculum and students' performance. | 51.3 | 46.2 | 2.4 | 0.2 |
| Begin to talk with students about their ND strengths and weaknesses and how they affect school performance. | 54.6 | 41.9 | 3.3 | 0.2 |
| Identify accommodations and interventions for students in my classroom. | 56.0 | 41.9 | 1.8 | 0.3 |

"This will be my 25th year in the classroom. I now have some real answers for parents, other teachers, and myself when we see a child is having problems with learning."

-2007 Schools Attuned Participant

ACTIVITIES WHICH WOULD SUPPORT USE OF SCHOOLS ATTUNED

Participants selected *activities* in which they would like to engage to support their use of Schools Attuned. Participants were able to select multiple response choices. The activities selected by participants are listed below in Table 4 in rank order.

Table 4

| | |
|--|--------|
| Using resources from the Schools Attuned Website | 82.0 % |
| On-site/In-Person sessions on topics that support application of Schools Attuned | 62.7 % |
| Peer study groups at my school or in my community | 62.0 % |
| On-site/In-person contact with a coach to support application of Schools Attuned | 53.5 % |
| A local/regional network to connect with other educators using Schools Attuned | 53.1 % |
| Online sessions on topics that support application of Schools Attuned | 48.6 % |
| Online contact with a coach to support application of Schools Attuned | 41.6 % |
| A national network to connect with other educators using Schools Attuned | 24.7 % |
| A national symposium to meet with other educators using Schools Attuned | 21.4 % |

"I know that without additional support, practice and encouragement, what I learned will not be implemented. This is an on-going learning process that takes time, energy, and support to implement well and to bring an entire school on board."

-2007 Schools Attuned Participant

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Participants were asked to provide additional comments on numerous aspects of the Schools Attuned Course. Comments were analyzed for content, and several themes emerged, including the quality and value of the Course, the impact of the Course on professional practice, participant feedback about the way the Course was facilitated, and participant interest in opportunities to network with other Schools Attuned educators. A sampling of participant comments, illustrative of these particular themes, is presented below:

Quality and Value of the Course

"This course was truly an eye-opener. It was informative, interesting and taught in a very structured way."

"The course was well worth the time, investment and energy. I highly recommend it to all levels of faculty."

"A very important key concept we learned this week was to use strengths in the remediation of weaknesses. How important it is to make a child shine while caring for his/her difficulties!"

"The Course was an enjoyable experience. I learned new strategies, as well as reinforced and gained a new perspective on some strategies I already use."

"What a huge learning experience! I wish that teachers knew and applied what we now know in the classroom years ago. I am pleased to now make an even bigger difference in the lives of children with learning differences."

"It is exciting to know that, through the partnership of the student and teacher, the student will be heavily involved in the decision making process to help foster strengths and improve weaknesses."

"I found the philosophy and specific tools provided in the Schools Attuned program to really encourage the 'heart of the teacher' who wants to meet the needs of various students. The program is exceptional and powerful."

"Thank you so much. I always thought that most kids want desperately to succeed and to please the adults in their lives. Now I have a more complete understanding of how neurodevelopment enhances and/or inhibits learning in my classroom and what I can do to reach more students."

"I feel like I have a whole new language to use when describing a student. I also love that I have an abundance of resources now to help me with specific strategies and interventions."

Impact of the Course on Professional Practice

"This is an excellent training for schools looking to find additional resources for using data to inform instruction for individual student needs."

"While overwhelming, the information was relevant and very useful."

"This course has given me so much more confidence and hope with students that I previously would have been struggling to know how I can improve their experience of learning."

"It's a surgical kit for me. I am demystified now in teaching my most challenging students. As a whole, it's a great course that gives me ready to use strategies in troubleshooting the breakdowns in my students and empowering their strengths as well. The knowledge of these neurodevelopmental constructs will help me to make informed decisions in my teaching."

"Not all of the information covered in the Course was new, but the way the information was presented from a neurodevelopmental perspective was important to changing my point of view."

"I am so glad that I have the tools and language to engage in professional discussions with colleagues, parents, and other significant adults. Also, the language has helped prepare me for conversations with students."

"The amount of material was enormous. It will take time to review, digest and organize all of the material for implementation."

"The course was wonderful and enlightening. I can not wait to really put it into practice and begin watching my struggling students succeed. I am looking forward to the practice sessions in the fall. Thank you so much!"

"The course will help to strengthen my teaching skills and to more closely identify the demands of my instruction and curriculum on individual students."

"The framework provided by Schools Attuned for me to look at my own teaching and understand the needs of my students is an excellent tool to add to my practice and I believe that it will make me a better teacher."

"These skills will help me better understand how all my students learn – not just those with significant learning challenges, and how I can improve learning by being more aware of what I'm asking of my students."

Course Facilitation

"The course is invaluable and the facilitators were excellent in presentation and knowledge!"

"Our facilitators were wonderful and made the course come alive for me."

"Thank you to the instructors for their expertise and enthusiasm! I learned a great deal and am looking forward to progressing further with this new knowledge."

"The course gave me a good foundation and the tools necessary to address the needs of all kinds of learners. The facilitators demonstrated confidence and depth of knowledge due to their own experiences in attuning children."

"The facilitators were terrific in modeling excellent teaching practices and varied their instructional methodologies so that they made a long day enjoyable. I am very excited about implementing SA in my classroom in September."

Opportunities to Network with other Schools Attuned Educators

"It would be great to know that there is someone I could email if I had a question. I think networking is a great avenue to explore."

"It would be valuable to connect with other individuals teaching in our specific grade level. It would allow teachers to share how they utilize Schools Attuned and what has and has not worked in the specific grade level with regards to specific constructs. It would also be beneficial to share actual case studies of students on our specific grade level."

"I would like to meet with other educators who have been implementing the Schools Attuned program in their classrooms. As a new participant, it would be helpful to talk with veteran participants about their experiences with the program."

"After implementing Schools Attuned in my classroom, I would appreciate a network or symposium to speak with teachers who have experience using Schools Attuned."

All Kinds of Minds uses the results included in this report to inform subsequent Schools Attuned Course development, guide Schools Attuned in Practice sessions, and enhance the professional development of facilitators. In this way, the Schools Attuned Program functions as a professional development program shaped by practicing educators who implement its philosophy and methods.