# EVALUATION GUIDEBOOK

Program Evaluation in Educational Settings

HAWAII LEARNING RESOURCE

*Building Skills. Cultivating Minds. Transforming Lives.*

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## Introduction

Numerous resources have been developed to provide general guidance to non-evaluators about when, why, and how to conduct program evaluation in educational settings. This resource has been created specifically for Hawaii Learning Resource (HLR). The HLR program focuses on increasing student success through early identification and effective interventions for capable students who struggle in school. At the time of this guide's creation, HLR had two major program components, both of which utilized a framework developed by the All Kinds of Minds Institute. Founded in 1995, All Kinds of Minds has developed a variety of programs targeted to help parents, educators, clinicians, and kids understand and manage learning issues. All are based on a neurodevelopmental approach to learning, a method of identifying the specific brain functions that affect the ways a student learns and performs in school. In the first program component, HLR provides multidisciplinary assessments of students' learning strengths and weaknesses. In the second program component, HLR delivers in-service staff development for educators using the Schools Attuned program. The Schools Attuned program provides educators with an exploration of learning and learning variation based on eight neurodevelopmental constructs (such as memory, attention, and higher order cognition) along with instruction in the use of processes and tools to address the learning variation of students in their classrooms. The purpose of this guidebook is to summarize the major steps and key issues in program evaluation as they relate to the HLR Schools Attuned with Mentoring project.

The approach of this guide follows a collaborative evaluation framework, in which educators are engaged in a dynamic inquiry process through evaluation (Brackett & Hurley, 2004). The ideas behind this process might also be conceptualized as action-reflection-action (Friere, 1970), as participatory evaluation (Cousins & Earl, 1995), or even as action research. All have in common the broad goal of collective action in which the group collaboratively defines the evaluation issues, collects and analyzes data, and takes action as a result of what they learn (Jackson & Kassam, 1998).

This guide is organized to align with the broad steps in a collaborative evaluation process: Build an evaluation team; Design the evaluation; Collect data; Analyze data; and Share and Use the results. It is intended for use by HLR staff in collaboration with school-based personnel for planning and conducting evaluation of HLR Schools Attuned with Mentoring projects for the purposes of (a) program improvement and (b) documentation of value. The assumed level of experience for conducting activities described in this guidebook is basic background knowledge in evaluation, such as knowledge of the difference between formative and summative evaluation. The assumed financial resource for conducting activities described in this guidebook is approximately $25,000 for data collection, analysis, and dissemination. A recent evaluation of the Hawaii Learning Resource program at the Kohala Elementary School involved (1) an on-site Appreciative Inquiry group of administrators and teachers providing general guidance and review of the evaluation work, (2) three independent evaluators, serving as site visitors describing how and how well the program was carried out in spring and fall of 2009, (3) another coordinating evaluator developing assessment methods and integrating quantitative and qualitative findings, and (4) an evaluation consultant providing guidance throughout all phases of the study. The total direct cost for all components was $36,000 for a 12 month study. This approach was selected in order to maximize prior experience with All Kinds of Minds evaluation, while still restricting costs.

The major focus of the guide is directed towards HLR staff and school-based personnel as the primary evaluation practitioners. It is important to note, however, that using the collaborative evaluation approach described in this guide does not preclude engaging the services of an external evaluator. An external evaluator can add deeper evaluation experience as well as the additional perspective of an outside observer. The final section of the guide, contributed by Dr. Lois-ellin Datta, provides suggestions on finding and working with an external evaluator.

This guide does not include: guidelines for conducting scientifically based research with experimental designs and random assignment of students or teachers, comprehensive coverage of research design and methods, comprehensive coverage of instrument development or the testing for reliability and validity of those instruments, comprehensive coverage of quantitative or qualitative data analysis, or formal guidelines for reporting on an evaluation (as requirements will vary by funder, accountability requirements, etc.). Where relevant, background information on these topics is provided and additional, more detailed resources on these topics are referenced.

In the creation of this guide, many documents served as valuable resources. In particular, much was drawn from the prior work of the Northeast and the Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium, SRI International and the Sierra Health Foundation, and The Center for the Advancement of Community Based Public Health. In addition, resources specific to the Schools Attuned program were drawn primarily from the prior work of the All Kinds of Minds Research Department and Compass Evaluation and Research. Thank you to Beth Custer, former Program Director at Hawaii Learning Resource for her collaboration throughout this process and to Dr. Lois-ellin Datta, evaluation consultant, for her generosity and insightful suggestions along the way. Funding for the development of this guide was provided by the Cooke Foundation as well as individual donors.

Section 1

# Creating an Evaluation Team

## Building a Partnership

## Sharing an Understanding of Evaluation

## Building a Partnership

Harnessing and focusing the efforts of a collaborative group is a powerful approach to conducting an evaluation. A team approach can succeed best when small groups of carefully selected persons decide what the evaluation must accomplish and pool together resources to implement the plan. One method may be to gather together a group of 5-7 interested people, including administrators, teachers, and other constituents such as parents, or school partnership representatives, to begin a collaborative approach to the evaluation.

A leader or co-leaders should be designated to coordinate the team and maintain continuity throughout the process. Particular stakeholders might have varying levels of involvement on the evaluation team to correspond to their own perspectives, skills, and concerns. Stakeholders are people who care about what will be learned from the evaluation and about what will be done with the knowledge gained. Stakeholders might include anyone who makes decisions or desires information about a program, such as funders, project staff, project participants, family of students impacted by the program, educational administrators, community advocates, and policymakers. They can include those involved in implementing the program (e.g., Schools Attuned trained teachers) as well as those served or affected by the program (e.g., parents of students in a Schools Attuned school). The amount and type of stakeholder involvement will be different depending on roles. In some cases, stakeholders will be directly involved in designing and conducting the evaluation. In others, they might be kept informed about progress of the evaluation through periodic meetings, reports, and other means of communication.

Although it can be challenging, a collaborative approach to evaluation brings many practical benefits, such as increasing awareness and commitment, reducing suspicion and fear, broadening the knowledge base through differing perspectives, and increasing the potential that objectives will be achieved and findings will be used.

In deciding upon the most beneficial members of your evaluation team, consider the following questions in Activity 1:

| Activity 1: Forming an Evaluation Team |
| --- |
| (1) What points of view do we need represented? |
| (2) What roles and responsibilities need to be filled? |
| (3) Who brings the interest, skill, and enthusiasm to this project that we need?<br><br>For example:<br><br>A. Who can engage other stakeholders and maintain involvement?<br><br>B. Who understands the program's history, purpose, and practical operation in the field?<br><br>C. Who has strong meeting facilitation skills, e.g., to help the group collaboratively create a logic model that describes the program, help bring to light expectations regarding the program, and help identify the values that team members bring to the table?<br><br>D. Who can help focus the evaluation and set parameters for the evaluation's scope, time line, and deliverables?<br><br>E. Who are the important advocates or decision makers that will help ensure that the lessons learned from the evaluation will influence future decision-making? |

## Sharing an Understanding of Evaluation

When you have assembled your evaluation team, it will be important to "get on the same page" with each other about the purposes and boundaries of your upcoming evaluation activities. Program evaluation involves the **systematic** collection, analysis, and reporting of information for **decision making**. Systematic, meaning the information for the evaluation is collected and analyzed according to a set of procedures; and decision making, meaning, the point of doing the evaluation is to learn, and then to do something based on what you learned.

Evaluation can (a) reveal when you are successful, why you're successful, and what went wrong when you're not; (b) promote a learning community where people try to improve activities based on information and reflection; (c) allow you to communicate about what has been accomplished to other members of your organization or school and to the community at large; (d) create authentic and relevant documentation that you can use with a variety of audiences, including present and future funders; (e) provide data available for the future when the organization might choose to apply to an outside funding source for additional evaluation; and (f) make an important contribution to what is known more broadly about educational solutions for improving the lives of children.

Considering these potential benefits of evaluation, we can assume that everyone will be lining up to take part, right? Not exactly. For many people, including both members of your evaluation team as well as potential participants in your project, evaluation can have negative connotations. As you begin your evaluation, it will be helpful to acknowledge these concerns together.

- Evaluations are often perceived of as being a costly add-on to the important work of implementing a program. But, the cost of an evaluation depends on the questions being asked and the level of certainty desired for the answers. A low-cost evaluation can deliver valuable results. Also, evaluation doesn't have to be, and shouldn't be, detached from the broader program implementation itself. Tying together the plan for evaluation with a strategic implementation plan ensures that planning, implementing, and evaluating are integrally connected.

- Team members may be concerned about the technical demands of designing and conducting the evaluation. It will be important to discuss where the evaluation fits into the broader context of accountability and scientifically-based research. The current US Department of Education standards for scientifically based evidence require experimental, randomized designs or quasi-experimental approaches with matched comparison groups (e.g., regression-based designs). Although circumstances exist where controlled environments and elaborate analytic techniques are needed, your project will be a school- or district-based program evaluation. Your evaluation will strive to be practical and feasible, focusing on questions that will improve the program by using context-sensitive methods and analytic techniques appropriate to the kind of information you want to gather. This would meet current American Evaluation Association standards, which require appropriate designs for the context and purposes.

- *Causality*, *attribution*, and *influence* may be terms that you and your team have heard in relation to evaluation. Causality means that it has been established that there are no other variables that could account for the changes you observe other than the program. When every other reasonable possibility is ruled out, then what remains is the cause, like Sherlock Holmes deducing the identity of the criminal from the group gathered in the drawing room. In reality, this kind of 'subtractive causality' is very difficult to claim, particularly when you are not conducting an experiment with randomized control groups. Your evaluation will be oriented towards attribution and influence, not establishing causality. Attribution and influence seek to support the case that your program, not some other factors in the program environment, caused the outcomes you observe. To do this, you will (a) use reports of those involved, (b) establish very specific outcomes unlikely to come from other interventions, and (c) establish connections between implementation and changes observed where possible. This approach establishes influence by adding in probable causal factors. It is less like Sherlock Holmes and more like Seurat building a painting by thousands of carefully placed dots of color.

- Finally, the prospect of evaluation troubles some program or school staff because they perceive evaluation methods as punitive, exclusionary, or adversarial. It will be important to approach your evaluation in a way that engages all interested stakeholders and welcomes their participation. It will also be crucial to determine and communicate the boundaries of the evaluation, that is, what the evaluation will not do. For example, teachers who are beginning to use Schools Attuned strategies may feel overwhelmed if they sense that they are being assessed. It will be important to clarify the intent of the evaluation to all involved.

To help set the stage for a good evaluation it will be important for your evaluation team to have a sense of what has been done before. Familiarity with other evaluations or research on the same intervention can help you develop criteria for judging your own program. Here is an activity you can do as a group to get to know the types of evaluation designs that are possible in relation to Schools Attuned. Share copies of the document *Research Base of the Schools Attuned Program: Executive Summary*. The back of the booklet has a 3-page chart which outlines numerous research studies that have been conducted on the program, summarizing the methods that were used and the types of participants that were involved in each study. *If your group members have not seen this booklet, you may want to give them some time to glance through the entire booklet for context first before starting the activity.

| **Activity 2: Looking at past research related to Schools Attuned** |
|---|
| **Distribute copies of the 3-page chart, explaining that it outlines numerous research studies related to Schools Attuned conducted over the past several years. As a group, take a few minutes to read through the chart, noticing the methods that were used and the types of participants that were involved in each study.** |
| Ask the group what they notice, for example, the variety of different methods used.<br>(1) Are there methods that seem to be used frequently (e.g., surveys); why might that be?<br>(2) What about the types of participants and the relative size of the studies? |
| Your team members may be surprised to see that high quality, valuable evaluations can take many forms. |

**For more information related to creating an evaluation team, see:**

- *Collaborative evaluation led by local educators: A practical, print- and web-based guide* (2004) by Brackett and Hurley. Available from www.neirtec.org (http://www.neirtec.org/evaluation).

- *Evaluating for success* (1999) by Cicchinelli and Barley. Available from www.mcrel.org (http://www.mcrel.org/topics/SchoolImprovement/).
- *Basic guide to program evaluation* (2002) by McNamara. Available from www.managementhelp.org (http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/evaluatn.htm).
- *We did it ourselves: An evaluation guidebook* (2000) by van Leuwen, Hebbeler, Cherner , Newman and Cameto. Available from www.sierralhealth.org (http://www.sierrahealth.org/doc.aspx?57).

# Planning the Evaluation

## Developing a Program Framework

## Defining the Evaluation Purpose

## Identifying Indicators of Success

## Choosing Evaluation Methods and Tools

## Developing an Evaluation Work Plan

Section 2

## Developing a Program Framework (aka logic model)

The first step in planning your project is to link the evaluation to the HLR program framework. This framework will show how program components are expected to work together toward the ultimate goal of improved student outcomes. To make these connections explicit, you can develop a *logic model.*

A logic model is a graphic representation of how your program activities are intended to lead to the expected short-term— and long-term— outcomes. Often displayed in a flow chart, map, or table, the logic model portrays what your program is expected to achieve and how it is expected to work, based on an expected chain of events.

Logic models:

- Show the relationship between what we put in, what we do, and outcomes we hope to achieve
- Describe the sequence of events thought to bring about benefits or change

You may have already created or started a logic model for your program at this particular school, either in isolation or with the administrator. You can use what you have created as a starting point to bring in the rest of the group. By involving the evaluation team members in the making of the logic model, you will help create a sense of ownership over the project and will help team members have a better understanding of the program itself. Doing the logic model as a group will also help bring to the surface the underlying assumptions that team members hold about the program, for example, beliefs you all hold about (a) the way the program will operate, (b) expectations of participants, and (c) how resources will be used.

The general components of a logic model are:

- Resources and Inputs: What we invest and the setting it occurs in. Resources/Inputs: the time, talent, technology, information, money, and other assets available to conduct program activities.
- Context: setting in which the program is situated and external conditions which influence the success of the program, such as, politics, policies, demographics, economics, culture. These can be barriers or facilitators. Understanding these environmental influences is important in order to design a context-sensitive evaluation that will aid users in interpreting findings accurately and assessing the generalizability of the findings.

- Activities: What we do (i.e., specific steps, strategies, or actions the program does to effect change).

- Outputs: Who we reach (participants, community members, students). Outputs are activity driven and are usually easily quantifiable, e.g., the number of teachers that participate in a training, the number of parents that attend a workshop.

- Expected Outcomes: Descriptions of expected effects convey what the program must accomplish to be considered successful. These are the results that the program hopes to achieve, often benefits for students or the community.

Activity 3 provides guidance to help your team create a program framework together.

### Activity 3: Developing the logic model

*Recall that in extending invitation to the evaluation team you considered persons who had strong meeting facilitation skills. If you have such a person on the team that is familiar with logic models, you may want to give them a special role as meeting facilitator during this process so that you can participate as a "regular" member of the discussion.

**Here's a sample flowchart design you might use for your logic model:**

***Start Here***

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Our Planned Work</td><td colspan="2">Our Intended Results</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources/Inputs</td><td>Activities</td><td>Outputs</td><td>Expected Outcomes<br>Short-term Long-term</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Important Context Issues/Assumptions:</td></tr>
</table>

(1) **Expected Outcomes**: Start with the All Kinds of Minds framework and standards of high-level implementation/outcomes. You may use the very high level *All Kinds of Minds Impact Model* as a starting place, or you may use the *Schools Attuned Research Summary Booklet* to identify the outcomes that have been documented through past evaluations. Talk about what each of those outcomes means to the group and consider any changes you anticipate to adapt to your situation.

***A few tips:***

- Different team members may have different ideas about what the program is supposed to achieve and why. To get these expectations "out in the open", have a brainstorming session or open discussion on "What are the pointers to progress?", "If the project was working well what would we notice?"

- Establish expectations for teacher change and implementation as well as expectations for longer term outcomes related to the school, students, etc.

- Try to phrase outcomes as statements of the results you are seeking. The statement should communicate exactly what you intend to achieve. It should be clear enough that others could readily understand what you mean.

- How many outcomes? There is no right or wrong answer to this question. A few things to consider: Do you choose to state all of the outcomes you would ever wish to achieve, or do you prefer to narrow your focus at first? How many outcomes do you want to be held accountable for – to yourselves, to funders, to the community? Would you, your funders, your community be satisfied if you achieved these changes and nothing more?

(2) **Resources and Inputs:** Outline the staff, volunteers, time, money, materials, equipment, partners, facilities, etc. that will be used throughout the project.

(3) **Context:** Identify factors that are unique to the environment in which the project is taking place and that may influence the successful implementation of the project, such as politics, policies, demographics, economics, and culture**.** An inventory of what else is happening in the school or community, such as special efforts to meet AYP ratings, can help identify these barriers or facilitators to program success.

(4) **Activities and Outputs:** List the Activities that will be a part of the project (e.g., training, recruitment, workshops, products, etc.) and the Outputs that directly result from the activities (e.g., number of trainings held, number of participants attending follow-up, etc.).

(5) **Revisit Expected Outcomes:** Look back at your expected outcomes and split them into short-term and long-term. Are the outcomes realistic given the planned activities?

This logic model was developed by Dr. Sharon Vitousek and her colleagues at Hawaii Learning Resource for the Schools Attuned with Mentoring program at Kohala Elementary School:

| **HLR Activities** | **Short-term Outcomes (1st year)** | **Intermediate Outcomes (2nd year)** | **Impact (3rd year and beyond)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community Awareness Meetings<br><br>Schools Attuned Training (initial Model School team)<br><br>Agreement with Model School<br><br>Strategic Implementation plan for Model School<br><br>Schools Attuned Training for Model School staff<br><br>On-line tools capacity at Model School<br><br>Teacher Mentoring and Workshops<br><br>Building Communities of Practice at Model School<br><br>Understand facilitating forces and barriers at Model School<br><br>Parent Awareness Fairs<br><br>Document process and impact<br><br>Develop evaluation plan and contract independent evaluator | Teacher Knowledge of:<br>▪ ND variation in learning<br>▪ ND constructs<br>▪ Identifying student strengths, challenges, affinities<br>▪ Customizing learning strategies<br>▪ Assessing effectiveness of instruction and adjust<br><br>Parent Knowledge of:<br>▪ ND variation in learning<br>▪ ND constructs<br>▪ Identifying student strengths, challenges, affinities<br>▪ Specific strategies<br><br>School supports staff for:<br>• Communities of practice<br>• Time for implementation<br>• Revised processes for supporting struggling students | Teacher Attitudes:<br>▪ Expect ND variation<br>▪ Increased self efficacy to support struggling students<br>▪ High expectations of students<br><br>Teacher Behavior:<br>▪ Plan lessons with ND variation model<br>▪ Give individual help<br>▪ Greater focus on student strengths, including interactions with parents and student reports<br>▪ Design strategies to help struggling students using strengths, affinities, challenges<br>▪ Give accommodations<br>▪ Recommend specific remediation<br>▪ Allow demonstration of mastery<br>▪ Engage students in class<br>▪ Manage behavior<br>▪ Decrease referrals to special education<br><br>School:<br>▪ Decreased special education referrals<br>▪ Revised content of child study teams<br><br>Parent:<br>▪ Increased satisfaction<br>▪ Improved communication with teachers | Student Knowledge of:<br>▪ How they learn<br>▪ How to identify own strengths, challenges, affinities<br>▪ Specific strategies for improvement<br><br>Student Attitude:<br>▪ Increased self efficacy<br>▪ Increased self expectations<br><br>Student Behavior:<br>▪ Increased attendance<br>▪ More engaged in class<br>▪ Better peer to peer<br>• relations<br>▪ Increased achievement, including reading and math proficiency<br><br>School:<br>▪ Use of common language<br>▪ Focus on student strengths |

**For more information related to developing a program framework or logic model, see:**

- *Developing a logic model: Teaching and training guide* (2008) by Taylor-Powell and Henert. Available from www.uwex.edu (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande).
- *Measuring program outcomes: a practical approach* (1996) by the United Way of America. Available from www.national.unitedway.org.
- *Logic model development guide: Using logic models to bring together planning, evaluation, and action* (2000) by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Available from www.wkkf.org.

## Defining the Evaluation Purpose

Purpose refers to the general intent of the evaluation. A clear purpose serves as the basis for the evaluation questions, design, and methods. Organizations and schools might become involved in evaluation to: gain new knowledge about program activities, improve or fine-tune existing program operations (e.g., program processes or strategies), and/or determine the effects of a program by providing evidence concerning about its contributions to a long-term goal (such as student achievement).

Review the project goals, intended outcomes, and activities from your logic model. From these you can begin to identify evaluation questions. Questions may fall into different categories or types. For example,

- Are we doing the right things the best way? (providing direction)
- Are we clear about what we are doing? (gaining clarity)
- Do we know what's happening? (monitoring process)
- Can we improve what we are doing? (focusing on improvement)
- Are we making a difference? (examining impact)

Of course, you may have multiple reasons for doing your evaluation and components of the evaluation may serve multiple purposes. For example, collecting information on how teachers are implementing the program, through survey or observation, can be used to document the overall level of program implementation in order to better understand student outcomes that are, or are not, occurring. These same surveys and observations can also be used by the teachers themselves as a professional growth tool, helping them target areas they want to improve upon, etc. But, it will be very important to establish clarity about these objectives among all involved.

Once you are clear about the goals and objectives of your project, both formative and summative evaluation questions can be developed. Formative evaluation questions generally measure the implementation of a project and provide ongoing information that helps the project improve along the way. They are typically considered short-term outcomes, although it's important to remember that some implementation activities require a long time to develop. Summative evaluation questions address the longer-term outcomes, or impact, of the project work. You might use the following guiding questions in Activity 4 to help in the generation of evaluation questions.

| Activity 4: Defining the Evaluation Purpose |
| --- |
| **(1) Generate a list of potential evaluation questions. Let this be an open brainstorm. Some guiding questions to get the discussion going might include:**<br><br>• What is important to know about your project?<br><br>• What do you and the people in your school want to learn from this evaluation work?<br><br>• Who are the users of the evaluation? What are their questions? What will they find useful?<br><br>• If you are working with grant funds, what do the funders want to learn? |
| **(2) Look back at your list and fine-tune your questions, perhaps narrowing the list. Will the evaluation question…**<br><br>✓ be of interest to primary intended user(s)?<br>✓ provide information that addresses the intended use for the evaluation results?<br>✓ contribute information that is not already known?<br>✓ be of ongoing interest?<br>✓ be feasible, in terms of time, money, and skill? |

## Identifying Indicators of Success

Thinking ahead about what success will look like will prepare you to be able to look for evidence during the evaluation.

An ***indicator*** is the piece of information that measures whether outcomes are being achieved. Indicators translate general concepts about a program and its expected effects into specific, measureable parts. They should reflect the aspects of the program that are most meaningful to monitor.

How many indicators do you need? Several indicators are usually needed to track the implementation and effects of a complex outcome. Look at each outcome statement you have written and brainstorm what would constitute evidence that the program has made a difference in this outcome. The indicators should be the most direct evidence you can get for the outcome. Indicators can be both qualitative (based on words, pictures, objects) and quantitative (based on numbers and statistics). A change in students' behavior, as reported through teacher interviews, is an example of a qualitative indicator. The number of teachers who engage in weekly peer collaboration activities is an example of a quantitative indicator.

Be sure it is feasible for you to get the data related to the indicators you have developed. You may not have access to some data, and some data may require more resources to collect than are feasible. If you have lots of indicators, you will likely need to prioritize which indicators you will focus on based on your resources. Activity 5 provides an introduction to identifying indicators.

**Activity 5: Identifying Indicators of Success**

**(1) Choose the outcomes that you want to examine based on agreed upon evaluation purposes/questions.**

**(2) Prioritize the outcomes and, if your time and resources are limited, pick the top two to four most important outcomes to examine for now.**

**(3) Break the broad outcome into a more measureable, objective (perhaps several objectives) by saying "What will it look like if……"**

| **Sample Schools Attuned Outcome** → | **Sample Indicators** |
|---|---|
| *What will it look like if…* | *We would see….* |
| Teachers make instructional decisions based on a neurodevelopmental understanding of the curriculum and of students as learners. | • Teachers take into account how the ND demands of certain tasks or assignments may impact the student's performance.<br>• Teachers analyze the student's work samples based on the ND constructs.<br>• Teachers implement strategies that target the student's weaknesses and leverage the student's strengths. |

## Choosing Evaluation Methods and Tools

How will you collect information to help answer the questions you've developed? As a group, think back to the various methods noted in the *Schools Attuned Research Booklet.* Next, revisit and think carefully about your overall evaluation questions. Different evaluation questions require different kinds of data that, in turn, require different types of methods and tools. What will best provide the answers to your questions?

When choosing evaluation methods, also consider how the results of the evaluation data will be used. For example, if you are measuring implementation, you may want to combine classroom observations with follow-up interviews. Without the observations you don't really know *what* teachers are doing, without the interview you don't really know *why* they are doing what they do- both are important elements to evaluating implementation.

Also, consider the school context, the people power at your disposal, and the timeframe you must use the evaluation results in order to help you choose the best methods. In some situations, you may want to ask an evaluation specialist for advice on the most appropriate method(s) to use, given data restrictions, resource constraints, requirements of stakeholders, etc.

### Methods and Tools Overview

***Surveys/Questionnaires***: Questionnaires, paper or electronic, consist of a set of questions or items that are designed for a selected group of people, such as teachers, administrators, parents, or students. Questionnaires vary in length, focus, and types of items, such as checklists, likert-scale items, or open-ended questions. They can provide both quantitative data (closed-ended items, numeric information) and qualitative data (open-ended questions, text).Questionnaires are often used to gather data from large groups of people about perceptions, attitudes, intended actions, or application of learning. For an example of a questionnaire related to the Schools Attuned program, see the last section Worksheets and Samples Instruments.

***Interviews***: An interview consists of a one-on-one interaction between the data gatherer (interviewer) and a respondent (interviewee). Interviews can be conducted with teachers, administrators, parents, or students, and can be conducted face to face or by telephone. They can last from a few minutes to an hour or longer, depending on the depth of information needed. Interviews generally remain confidential, with interviewees not identified in reports. Interviews are useful for gathering information about perceptions, attitudes, intended actions, and application of learning. For an example of an interview protocol related to the Schools Attuned program, see the last section Worksheets and Samples Instruments.

***Focus Groups****:* Focus groups are useful for gathering information about perceptions, attitudes, intended actions, and application of learning, as well, but in a manner that allows for a group of people to respond at the same time. Focus groups can be used to gather data from any group of stakeholders, e.g., teachers, administrators, parents, or students. They are particularly effective in determining underlying issues and concerns that can later be addressed in broader data gathering efforts such as questionnaires. They provide useful qualitative data gathered from small numbers of people that serve to elaborate or explain less detailed responses received on questionnaires from a broader sample of people. They provide an opportunity to gather in-depth data from 10 or so people in the same time that it takes to conduct one or two individual interviews. For an example of a focus group protocol related to the Schools Attuned program, see the last section Worksheets and Samples Instruments.

***Observations****:* Observation as an evaluation method provides another level of information, reaching beyond the self-report of questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Observation means that evaluators are actually seeing and documenting important activities, such as classroom teaching, student learning, professional development sessions, etc. Observations can be designed to yield both quantitative and qualitative data. They can be very focused, such as counting the number of students who respond to a teacher's questions or the specific type of questions asked by the teacher. Observations can also be more open-ended, for example, examining the type and quality of teacher collaboration in small groups during professional development. For an example of an observational protocol related to the Schools Attuned program, see the last section Worksheets and Samples Instruments.

***Document Review****:* Document reviews involve analyzing existing program records and other documents not developed specifically for the evaluation, such as school policy documents, meeting minutes, program implementation plans, etc. Analyzing teacher products such as reflective journal entries focused professional portfolios, videotapes, lesson or unit plans, or student project designs, for example, can shed light on the progress or impact of a school initiative. For example, in Schools Attuned, you may choose to gather documents related to the *Student Learning Partnership* or *Attuning a Student* processes. Moreover, you can embed document collection in the actual work of the educators, e.g., within follow-up sessions, as part of their implementation of Schools Attuned.

***Secondary Data Sources****:* You may use "secondary" data sources to obtain information that was gathered for another purpose and already exists somewhere else. Secondary data can come from within your organization, within the school, from the state, etc. For example, analysis of student achievement scores is a strategy used more and more by educators with the federal and state accountability systems. For evaluation purposes this strategy most often involves identifying available and future student achievement data that actually reflect student learning *that can be linked to the program you are examining*. If existing tests do not adequately reflect the content and structure of what you are trying to achieve with students, it may be necessary to devise new tests or other student assessments. It's important to have multiple measures of achievement when possible.

In Hawaii, the Department of Education maintains the Accountability Resource Center Hawaii (ARCH). This data site is readily accessible, and archives quantitative data for all individual public schools in Hawaii describing the school, students, local communities as well as test scores over about ten years. Most school districts have similar archives which can be used to trace changes in student outcomes over time and to provide some context information, such as parent education and community income levels. These data were used in the Kohala Elementary School evaluation.

**Methods At-A-Glance**

| Method and Purpose | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| **Surveys/ questionnaires-** used to get lots of information from people quickly and easily | • can be done anonymously<br>• are relatively inexpensive to administer<br>• results can be easy to compare and analyze<br>• can get lots of data from many people<br>• many well designed surveys already exist<br>• can provide a learning experience for respondents as they reflect on their experiences in order to answer questions<br>• allow respondents a window of time in which they can respond | • might not always get the most careful feedback<br>• wording of questions can bias responses<br>• may feel impersonal to respondents<br>• may provide a general picture but lack depth<br>• limited to self-report |

| Method and Purpose | Advantages | Disadvantages |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Interviews-** used to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences | • get in-depth and detailed information<br>• yield useful anecdotes and quotes<br>• helps evaluator develop a relationship with respondent<br>• are flexible, can be modified for particular individuals or in particular circumstances on the spot<br>• allow the respondent to ask questions for clarification | • can be time-consuming and thus expensive<br>• can be hard to analyze and compare the volume of information<br>• interviewer can bias responses<br>• cannot be done anonymously<br>• interviewer must be able to establish rapport<br>• limited to self-report |
| **Focus groups-** used to explore a topic in depth through group discussion | • get in-depth and detailed information<br>• yield useful anecdotes and quotes<br>• can be efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time<br>• allow participants to build on each others' ideas and experiences<br>• allow participants to ask questions for clarification | • can be hard to analyze responses from a dynamic discussion<br>• difficult to schedule people together<br>• some participants can "dominate" the conversation making it challenging for all voices to be heard<br>• cannot be done anonymously<br>• need a good facilitator for maintaining focus and participant safety<br>• limited to self-report |
| **Observations-** used to gather information about what is actually occurring, how a program actually operates, etc. | • captures a program as it is actually occurring<br>• allows observer to enter into and understand the situation/context being evaluated<br>• can be flexible and adapt to events as they occur<br>• provide data that reach beyond self-report, thus may be considered by certain stakeholders as providing more "rigorous" evidence | • can be time consuming and thus expensive<br>• can be complex to analyze observations<br>• can be difficult to interpret behaviors that are observed<br>• can influence behaviors of participants to be observed<br>• those being observed can feel threatened or "personally evaluated" if clarity is not provided up front |

| Method and Purpose | Advantages | Disadvantages |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document review-** used to understand how a program operates without interrupting the program | • can provide comprehensive and historical information (memos, meeting minutes, etc.)<br>• doesn't interrupt the routine of participants<br>• information already exists so is generally inexpensive<br>• provide data that reach beyond self-report<br>• reveals applications of learning from the program in actual practice | • can be time-consuming to sift through documentation<br>• need to be clear about what you are looking for so it does not become a "needle in a hay stack" search<br>• data are restricted to what already exists, thus may still not yield enough information about what is actually occurring in the program |
| **Secondary data sources-** used to collect information that already exists somewhere else | • can provide information on historical trends or sequences<br>• can be useful for making comparisons<br>• doesn't interrupt the routine of participants<br>• information already exists so is generally inexpensive<br>• can provide data that reach beyond self-report, thus may be considered by certain stakeholders as providing more "rigorous" evidence<br>• often provide measures of student learning and achievement | • access to relevant data may be limited<br>• need to be clear about what you are looking for so it does not become a "needle in a hay stack" search<br>• data are restricted to what already exists, thus may still not yield enough information about what is actually occurring in the program<br>• available data are frequently several years old so may not be timely enough for analysis<br>• broad information, such as student achievement scores, may not adequately address student learning targeted through the program<br>• may be very difficult to track individual cohorts of students over time using secondary data, such as standardized test scores |

### Using pre-existing instruments or developing your own?

As you decide what methods you will use to gather the evidence you need, you will also come across the question of whether you should use instruments, such as surveys, interview protocols, observation checklists, etc., that already exist or whether you will create your own for your project's purposes. Some tips to remember when choosing to use an existing instrument: Be sure that you are using the instrument for its intended purpose, that you are using the intended data collection method, and that those collecting the data are trained appropriately. Also, be sure you will get the specific answers you are looking for with the existing instrument. If you decide to develop a new instrument or adapting an existing one: Be concerned about (a) reliability – you want everyone who reads a question to understand it the same way, and (b) validity –you want each question to provide you with the intended information.

With instruments you develop you will still want to train those who are collecting the data to ensure all are collecting data in a systematic way. Also, let people review a newly developed instrument and test the instrument out. This will help you identify confusing questions or questions that don't measure what was intended.

### Triangulation

When possible, use multiple data collection strategies to answer a given evaluation question. This is one way to apply a technique called ***triangulation***. Triangulation is the combination of at least two or more data sources, investigators, theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, or data analysis methods. Triangulation can involve (a) collecting data over time, across settings, and across persons; (b) using multiple, rather than single investigators; (c) applying more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the data; and (d) employing more than one method. The idea behind using triangulation is to attempt to decrease, negate, or counterbalance the deficiency of a single strategy, thereby increasing your ability to confidently interpret your findings. By combining multiple investigators, theories, and/or methods, one can hope to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases that come from the single method, single-observer, or single-theory approach. For an overview of triangulation, see *The point of triangulation* (2001) by Thurmond, available from www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au.

At the beginning of this section, we noted that different evaluation questions require different kinds of data that, in turn, require different types of methods and tools. The guiding questions that follow in Activity 6 may be useful in helping you determine what methods and tools will provide the best answers to your evaluation questions.

| Activity 6: Guiding Questions for Choosing Methods and Tools |
| --- |
| 1. What kind of information is needed to make decisions about the program?<br><br>2. How much information can be collected and analyzed in a low-cost and practical manner, e.g., using questionnaires, surveys and checklists?<br><br>3. Which data-gathering strategies would be best received and most productive, given the school culture?<br><br>4. Will the information appear as credible to decision makers, e.g., to funders or policy makers?<br><br>5. Who are our sources of information (e.g., participants, non-participants, parents, program staff, administrators)? How can we maximize their buy-in?<br><br>6. Will respondents conform to the methods, e.g., will they fill out questionnaires carefully, engage in interviews or focus groups, allow observations to be done, etc.?<br><br>7. What about other sources of information, such as program documents (logs, records, minutes of meetings)?<br><br>8. Given the data-gathering strategies we have chosen, w hat evaluation tools could be used?<br><br>9. Are there already-developed instruments that fit our needs? If so, what steps need to be taken to obtain permission to use the instruments? Are there adjustments to make to them?<br><br>10. What instruments need to be developed? What value might there be in developing our own tools?<br><br>11. Who can administer the data collection tools? Is training required? |

**For more information related to evaluation methods and tools, see:**

- *Program evaluation and performance measurement: An introduction to practice* (2006) by McDavid and Hawthorn. Available from Sage Publications.

- *Collaborative evaluation led by local educators: A practical, print- and web-based guide* (2004) by Brackett and Hurley. Available from www.neirtec.org (http://www.neirtec.org/evaluation).

- *The 2002 user friendly handbook for project evaluation* (2002) by Frechtling for The National Science Foundation, Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication. Available from www.nsf.gov (http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm).

- *Basic guide to program evaluation* (2002) by McNamara. Available from www.managementhelp.org (http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/evaluatn.htm).

- *W.K. Kellogg Foundation evaluation handbook* (1998) by the W. K. Kellogg Evaluation Unit. Available from www.wkkf.org.

## Developing an Evaluation Work Plan

With the questions and related data needs identified, you are now ready to establish what will be done, by whom, and when. An evaluation work plan details how the evaluation's questions, methods, and overall processes are constructed. This step involves defining meaningful tasks and realistic time lines; and preparing a written document that summarizes the evaluation procedures and specifies the roles and responsibilities of all involved. You can think of the evaluation plan as a working document that you will continue to use as the evaluation progresses, sometimes returning to it for guidance and a reminder of priorities or focus, sometimes in order to adjust your plans based on a change of course, etc.

### General Guidelines

**1. Plan ahead for dissemination and utilization (how the results will be shared and used)-** When you develop your work plan, think ahead about how you will share the results and how you expect/hope the results to be used. Utilization-focused evaluation (Patton, 2008) places careful attention on how people apply evaluation findings and experience the evaluation process. It is based on the premise that people are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings, and they are more likely to understand and feel ownership if they've been actively involved. What will make the evaluation useful for yourselves and your stakeholders? A similar approach, participatory evaluation (Cousins & Earl, 1995) encourages input, participation, and power-sharing among those persons who have an investment in the evaluation and its findings, especially primary users of the evaluation. Have you included individuals and organizations that will be affected by the evaluation in your evaluation planning group? Organizational support for the evaluation effort is vital. The participation of people with the organizational authority and power to act on data once it is generated is essential. In order to maximize your efficiency and learning, also consider how you, as a team, will communicate along the way. You may want to include a team communication and meeting schedule as part of the evaluation plan.

**2. Consider potential constraints on the evaluation, such as time, budget, and resources-** It is important to understand the availability of resources and technical expertise that will be needed to support the evaluation; and the budget that has been allocated for evaluation. Before designing your evaluation, determine the extent of resources — both financial and personnel — that are available. You may need to think beyond the initial evaluation phase to the need for *ongoing* data collection, analysis, and reporting if the questions you hope to answer require long-term efforts. Writing about lessons learned from participatory evaluations, Cousins and Earl (1995) note that the time required to carry out an evaluation is often severely underestimated, leading evaluation participants to neglect primary responsibilities, which, if unanticipated, can cause stress among an organization's members. Highly technical activities such as in depth qualitative or quantitative data analysis may be best handled by external evaluators or consultants. Training program staff to do these may not be time well spent in light of other demands on their time. Ask yourself if the evaluation will require any external expertise or other resources not yet accounted for. As the plan emerges, make sure it is viable and practical given the time, budget, and resources you have at your disposal.

**3. Consider the unique context in which the program and the evaluation are taking place-** People and organizations have cultural preferences that dictate acceptable ways of asking questions and collecting information, and influence who is perceived as an appropriate person to ask the questions (i.e., someone known within the community versus a stranger from a local health agency). The techniques used to gather evidence in an evaluation must be in keeping with a given community's cultural norms. Data collection procedures should also protect confidentiality. Will the evaluation procedures keep disruption of daily activities to a minimum? What are the optimal techniques for gathering and handling evidence?

**4. Be aware of competing priorities-** There may be conflicting demands between good program delivery practice and good evaluation practice. For example, the use of resources may need to be split between delivery of the program and data collection and analysis. There may also be conflicting demands between keeping the confidentiality of participants and collecting valuable data.

**5. Consider the role/value of sampling participants-** In conducting the evaluation, think about *who* you will gather data from and *how many* data points are needed. A sample is a subgroup of a population. The population is the entire identified group. Given the data-gathering strategies you've selected, what is the population of interest and is sampling needed? If the population is small, you likely will include all its members. However, it may not be feasible or necessary to include the entire population. You may choose a sample for one or both of the following reasons:

- To reduce the number of people or objects to a manageable level. For example, because interviews are time-consuming, if your school is large you would probably not choose to interview every student or every parent or teacher.

- To choose a set of people or objects that will be representative of the overall population that your evaluation addresses. For example, even though you may not want to interview your whole teacher population, you may want to make sure that you interview teachers from each grade level or subject area, or representing each level on a continuum of low program use to high program use.

You may make different sampling decisions for different aspects of the evaluation. For example, you might distribute a questionnaire to all teachers in your school (population) who participated in the Schools Attuned program. You may then want to interview only a small group of teachers (sample) from the population of teachers who participated in the program. There are different ways to choose your sample. You may want to do a random sample selection of students in your school. In this case you might use a table of random numbers or a computer program that generates random samples. You might want to select a random sample of parents of students from each grade level within a school. Again, you would probably use a table of random numbers or a computer program that generates random samples, the difference being that you choose separate random samples from each grade level. Or, you may want to select your sample according to the purpose of the data gathering by identifying the people or objects that will yield the most valid and appropriate data for the evaluation. For example, if you were planning to interview teachers to determine what they found to be the most useful strategies in Schools Attuned, rather than choosing a random sample of teachers, which might include teachers who never worked with certain strategies, you would identify a purposive sample of teachers who have worked with the strategies in question.

The sample that you choose should align with the claims you are intending to make in the evaluation. For example, if you study the first year of a program based on one school site, then claims for the effectiveness of the program are limited to that setting and circumstance. You can speculate to similar settings, or draw on results of prior evaluations. But, the more representative your sample is to the population to which you later want to generalize, the stronger your ability to do so. For your evaluation, getting a generally representative sample will likely be sufficient as chances are the interest in results will be predominantly local—this school, these teachers, these students, etc.

The development of an evaluation work plan is a process. Take an initial stab at documenting the data gathering strategies, sources, and instruments you might use to answer a few of the evaluation questions you have posed using the sample evaluation planning sheet which follows in Activity 7. In it, you will also consider when the data collection will occur and who might be responsible for what. As you read more about data collection, data analysis, and disseminating results, you can flesh out your plan using a 3-part planning sheet with sections for Collecting Data, Analyzing Data, and Planning ahead for Dissemination and Utilization (see the last section Worksheets and Samples Instruments).

**Activity 7: Developing an Evaluation Planning Sheet**

| EVALUATION QUESTIONS<br><br>What do you want to know? | DATA GATHERING STRATEGIES<br><br>How will you know it? What will you use to gather the info? | DATA SOURCES<br><br>Who can provide the info? From whom and when will info be gathered? | INSTRUMENTS TO BE SELECTED OR DEVELOPED | TIME PERIOD/ PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Question 1: E.g., Question about project activities and outputs | | | | |
| Question 2: Question about teacher change or implementation | | | | |
| Question 3: Question about school-wide, student, or parent outcomes | | | | |

## Conducting the Evaluation: Collecting Data

### Data Collection Overview

### Measuring Outcomes:

- Teacher Change and Implementation
- School, Student, and Parent Outcomes

### Considering Costs and Benefits

Section 3

## Data Collection Overview

Though much of the hard "think work" happens before a single piece of data is collected, the evaluation will feel like it has really gotten underway once you begin collecting the data that will inform your program work and influence the decisions you make for future improvements. Depending on the plan you devise, you might begin conducting interviews and focus groups, distributing questionnaires, observing classroom or professional development activities, or collecting student work to be analyzed. Regardless of the techniques you choose, it is essential that the data-gathering activities be perceived as respectful, non-intrusive, and non-threatening to those involved. Communication with participants in your study must be clear, consistent, and frequent. To the extent possible, these activities should be respectful of your colleagues' time and should provide opportunities for them to reflect on their work and extend their learning.

**Some guidelines for collecting data:**

**1. Revisit your evaluation plan-** Review your program framework (logic model) and your evaluation work plan along the way to ensure that you are on target with the data you collect. Being clear on the purpose of your evaluation can help keep data collection more manageable.

**2. Stick to a realistic timeline and know when 'enough is enough' in data**- Obtaining quality data involves trade-offs (i.e., breadth vs. depth). Sometimes you have to decide at the beginning of the evaluation what is most important. A practical evaluation should strive for a level of quality that will match stakeholders' standards for credibility. Consider the amount of evidence that will be gathered in the evaluation and estimate in advance the amount of information that will be required in order to establish criteria for deciding when to stop collecting data. Consider the level of confidence or precision that will be required. At what point in data collection will you be confident enough with what you've learned?

**3. Maintain necessary levels of confidentiality and anonymity-** As you collect data, you will need to maintain the participant confidentiality or anonymity that you planned to protect. Anonymity means that the identity of participants is unknown to anyone, including those conducting the evaluation. For example, questionnaires may be anonymous, that is, names are not provided and questions that might make individuals identifiable are not asked. Confidentiality means that evaluators do not reveal the identity of study participants to others, even though they themselves know these identities. For example, you may keep confidential the identity of people you interview or observe, or whose products, such as lesson plans, you study.

Tips for establishing and maintaining participant confidentiality and anonymity:

- Plan ahead for the steps you need to take to obtain permission *before* you even begin collecting data from staff, parents, or students. Participants should understand what you're doing with them in the evaluation and how any information associated with them will be reported. You should clearly convey terms of confidentiality regarding access to evaluation results. They should have the right to participate or not. If you plan to include in your evaluation personal information about evaluation participants, then you should first gain their consent to do so. Have participants review and sign an informed consent form. For a sample consent form, see the last section Worksheets and Samples Instruments.
- Remind questionnaire, interview, and focus group respondents during those data collection activities that they will not be personally identifiable in any evaluation reports (if that is indeed the case).
- In focus groups, encourage all participants to maintain confidentiality for others and to use their own discretion in what they share with the group if they have concerns. In the case of delicate situations, you may want to offer the opportunity for an individual interview at a later time.
- Follow through on your promises of anonymity and confidentiality as the evaluation progresses. This does not mean that you shouldn't discuss important issues being raised, for example, but that you should not mention the identities of those who raised the issues.
- For guidance use standards established by The American Evaluation Association and the American Educational Research Association, and required by many funding agencies, to (a) assure that no harm will come to participants in a research or evaluation study and (b) demonstrate that participants gave their informed consent.

**4. Communicate with evaluation participants along the way-** Communication is important at every stage of your evaluation project. In the early stages, you will inform key stakeholders and likely participants about the project's purpose, intended outcomes, and possible data gathering methods. For example, teachers will know in advance that you may be asking them to complete questionnaires, attend a focus group, or participate in an interview. A letter from your group or your school representative that mentions why the evaluation is important to the school or district and provides information on some details of the evaluation will help build buy-in as well as set expectations of participants. Throughout your evaluation you will have frequent communication opportunities-the cover letter to a questionnaire, an invitation to a focus group, a request for an interview, etc. During these communications, it will be helpful to clearly communicate with participants about (a) the purpose of the evaluation, e.g., learning how the project can be improved, learning about the impact of the project—not evaluation of individuals; (b) how participants were selected; (c) how the data will be used;(d) how you will maintain confidentiality or anonymity; and (e) clear expectations around time constraints, e.g., when completed surveys are needed, etc.

In addition, structure your communication as a dialog. Be prepared to listen to what the participants and stakeholders tell you, and expect some episodes of resistance. Not everyone will agree with purposes, data to be collected, and data usage of almost any evaluation. Sometimes these concerns can be cleared up with respectful listening and flexibility. Sometimes they cannot. Sometimes, resistance is active in discussions; while sometimes, resistance is shown in surveys that are not returned, appointments not kept, observations that can't be made, etc. An evaluator has to anticipate these as much as possible and think ahead about what to do if they occur in ways that could seriously affect the timing, costs, and value of the study.

**5. Balance quantitative and qualitative data**- It's usually a good idea to strive for a balance of quantitative and qualitative data within your evaluation, aiming for a well rounded study that communicates well to a variety of audiences. Quantitative and qualitative data often complement or enhance each other. For example, the number or percent of teachers observed using a particular strategy (quantitative) can be enhanced by interviews with the teachers about what they choose to use or not use a particular strategy (qualitative). Some people will undoubtedly prefer numerical data, while others prefer narratives that describe findings of a qualitative nature. The integration of qualitative and quantitative information can yield evidence that is more complete and useful, meeting the needs and expectations of a wider range of stakeholders.

**6. Collect baseline data**- Evaluation helps you determine if you achieved what you set out to do. To understand what your program has achieved, however, you have to know where you began. This is why it helps to collect baseline data before, or very soon after, a program begins. Baseline data provide a way to tell where you are in relation to the outcomes you intend to accomplish before you take any actions or implement your strategies. For example, if you want to know how school processes to address the needs of struggling students have improved, tracking those processes before, during, and after the program will show just how successful you were at achieving your desired outcomes. Data may already exist that could serve as a baseline from information already collected. You may be able to go back several years to illustrate your baseline. This is called trend data because it allows you to see how the indicator has changed in the most recent past. You might find that you want or need to start collecting new data in order to establish baselines. An important issue is when to collect baseline data. In some cases (e.g., student test scores), data can be collected any time during the project because they already exist; in other cases, however, data must be collected when the project begins in order to provide a basis for later comparisons (e.g. teacher attitudes, implementation of strategies, etc). The amount of baseline data you collect will depend on your level of resources, the timing of when you actually initiate the evaluation (that is, before or after the program has already begun), and the specific questions you are planning to answer. A good rule of thumb is that if you are planning to evaluate the *change* in someone or something, you'll want baseline data to compare to. Collecting data only during or after a program does not permit claims such as *improved* teacher knowledge or *increased* student learning. Without baseline data, evaluators and funders must rely on retrospective reports of what things were like before the program and how people believe they have changed.

**For more information related to data collection, see:**

- *Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association* (2000) by the American Educational Research Association. Available from www.aera.net (http://www.aera.net/AboutAERA/Default.aspx?menu_id=90&id=222).

- *Guiding principles for evaluators* (2004) by the American Evaluation Association. Available from www.eval.org (http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciples.asp).

- *The 2002 user friendly handbook for project evaluation* (2002) by Frechtling for The National Science Foundation, Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication. Available from www.nsf.gov (http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm).

- *W.K. Kellogg Foundation evaluation handbook* (1998) by the W. K. Kellogg Evaluation Unit. Available from www.wkkf.org.

- *We did it ourselves: An evaluation guidebook* (2000) by van Leuwen, Hebbeler, Cherner , Newman and Cameto. Available from www.sierralhealth.org (http://www.sierrahealth.org/doc.aspx?57).

- *Program evaluation and performance measurement: An introduction to practice* (2006) by McDavid and Hawthorn. Available from Sage Publications.

# Measuring Outcomes

## Teacher Implementation and Change

Often, evaluation stakeholders are focused only on long-term outcomes of a professional development program, such as student improvement. But without data on program implementation, it is difficult to link those long-term results to the program in question or to make timely adjustments to the program in order to enhance its effectiveness for achieving those outcomes in the future. Collecting data on project implementation is vital if you are to be confident of what you are evaluating. Assessing the impact of a new strategy or program is useless without data on the implementation of that strategy or program. Data on teacher implementation of a professional development program can be collected through a variety of ways:

- Survey questionnaires
- Direct observation of teaching
- Interviews/focus groups
- Journals or planning books
- Videotaped lessons
- Minutes or notes of team meetings

When using teacher products, such as journals, planning books, lesson plans, etc., to assess change and implementation, try to embed them within their daily activities, so that teachers are not being asked to create something additional for the evaluation.

Several instruments have been developed to measure teacher change and implementation specific to the Schools Attuned program. These include the *Schools Attuned Teacher Survey: Implementation and Reported Outcomes* (developed by the All Kinds of Minds Research and Evaluation department), the *Schools Attuned Teacher Focus Group Protocol* and *Schools Attuned Administrator Interview Protocol* (developed by Tamara Nimkoff in collaboration with Lois-ellin Datta and Beth Custer), and the *Schools Attuned Classroom Observation Protocol* and *Follow-Up Interview Protocol* (developed by Compass Evaluation and Research). Copies of these instruments are found in the last section of this guidebook.

In addition, there are many useful instruments that have been designed to measure the attitudes, beliefs and instructional practices of teachers that are more broadly related to the intended goals of the Schools

Attuned program. Dr. Anita Woolfolk Hoy and colleagues, for example, have developed a number of instruments related to teacher self-efficacy. She has made many of these instruments, including the *Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale*, the *Teaching Confidence Scale*, and the *Teacher Efficacy Scale*, easily accessible online from her Ohio State University website. Developers of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (Hall, Hord, Dirkson, George, & Stiegelbauer) have a group of instruments focused on measuring teacher change and implementation that may be useful in an evaluation of Schools Attuned. These include the *Stages of Concern Questionnaire, Levels of Use Interview,* and *Innovation Configurations Rubric*. These instruments can be used in isolation or in combination to measure change and implementation in a school setting. They are available online from SEDL.

Regardless of the methods of data collection you use, remember to communicate with teachers about the purpose of the evaluation at the very beginning (for example that it is intended to evaluate the program and is not a performance assessment). And remember to maintain the confidentiality or anonymity of the teachers whose products or whose students' products are being used in the evaluation. Finally, while you will be focused on those aspects of teacher change and implementation that you anticipate will occur, be open to noticing and documenting unintended outcomes that you hadn't anticipated. Some may be positive; however, others may be negative. Like the effect of importing mongeese in Hawaii in order to kill rats which also resulted in the unanticipated destruction of the eggs of native ground-nesting birds.

**Documenting Program Activities and Outputs**

Just as it will be important to document the level of teacher implementation that is occurring with the program, it will also be important to document the degree to which program activities themselves actually occurred as intended. Many intended outcomes (both short-term teacher outcomes and longer-term school and student outcomes) rest upon the assumption that certain program activities will have occurred as planned; this is the "logic" of the logic model- one thing leads to the next. Outputs, such as the number of participants who attended an event, the number of courses conducted, the quality controls met, etc. link the activities that occurred with the later desired effects. Begin documenting program activities as soon as you begin implementing them. Having systematic information available about your activities will help with your decision-making and your ability to link the outcomes you observe to the activities of your program.

## School-wide, Student, and Parent Outcomes

In addition to measuring how teachers are implementing Schools Attuned within their individual classrooms, you will likely want to gather data on how the program is being applied school wide and the subsequent outcomes that have occurred at the school level. As a professional development program that is not highly prescriptive, Schools Attuned can be applied in a number of different ways within a school. You will want to establish the ways and degree to which a neurodevelopmental approach has been integrated into the policies and practices across the school when looking for evidence related to changes in school culture or climate. For example, are elements of the program being discussed among teachers during staff meetings, has the program been explicitly integrated into the school improvement plan, etc.

The ultimate goal of the Schools Attuned Program is that students who once struggled due to learning differences are understood and supported, and able to experience success in school. Undoubtedly, an effort towards a similar goal is what has brought the Schools Attuned program to the particular school in which your evaluation is taking place. Thus, you will likely have some measures of student outcomes in your evaluation plan, including perhaps changes in students' attitudes, learning behaviors, or academic performance. It will be important that you measure outcomes for students in light of observed implementation by teachers. In an examination of how teacher professional development affects student achievement, Yoon and colleagues (2007) summarize:

> Professional development affects student achievement through three steps. First, professional development enhances teacher knowledge and skills. Second, better knowledge and skills improve classroom teaching. Third, improved teaching raises student achievement. If one link is weak or missing, better student learning cannot be expected. If a teacher fails to apply new ideas from professional development to classroom instruction, for example, students will not benefit from the teacher's professional development.

As you plan for student outcome data to be collected, consider what implementation related variables may also need to be collected. If, for example, you are interested in the impact of the program on students receiving special education services, you may want to know the degree to which the program is being applied systematically at the pre-referral stage, if students with diagnosed special needs are being provided intensive support at the individual student level targeted to their specific learning strengths and weaknesses, etc. On a more individual student level, you may choose to use the *Management By Profile* documentation specific to the Schools Attuned program in order to serve as both (a) indicators of student progress towards particular behavioral or academic goals as well as (b) documentation of teacher program implementation.

For many schools, improving relationships with parents is a primary concern. It may be that as part of your program implementation of Schools Attuned, you are striving to improve home-school collaboration. Indeed, it is a goal of the developers of Schools Attuned that teachers use the program in order to build stronger alliances with families to support student learning. However, the program itself does not include more specific intended goals related to parents' beliefs, knowledge, or behaviors. If, as part of your broader program framework, you have specific intended outcomes related to influencing parents' beliefs, increasing their knowledge, or changing their behaviors, you will certainly want to measure whether these outcomes are occurring. But, as with student and school-level outcomes, be sure to consider what related program *implementation* outcomes you will also want to measure. Returning to your logic model should provide you with a reminder of the program activities and shorter-term outcomes that you have identified as "leading to" longer-term outcomes related to parents.

Select instruments have been developed to measure school-wide, student, and parent outcomes related to the Schools Attuned program. These include the *Schools Attuned Teacher Survey: Implementation and Reported Outcomes* (developed by the All Kinds of Minds Research and Evaluation department) which includes the sections *Schools Attuned at my School* and *Student Impact and Outcomes*, and the *Schools Attuned Parent Focus Group Protocol* (developed by Tamara Nimkoff in collaboration with Lois-ellin Datta and Beth Custer). Copies of these instruments are found in the last section of this guidebook.

You will also want to consider the use of pre-existing instruments that align closely with both the (a) overall intended outcomes of Schools Attuned and (b) specific outcomes you are most interested in examining. For example, the *Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire* (developed by Pintrich and DeGroot) assesses several dimensions of motivation related to student learning, such as goal orientation and self-efficacy and has been used with a range of subjects and ages. The *Student Motivation and Engagement Scale* (developed by Martin) includes assessment of positive thoughts and behaviors, such as planning and learning focus, and negative thoughts and behaviors, such as failure avoidance and disengagement. It is appropriate for use with upper elementary students and older. For an overview of many instruments measuring positive psychological outcomes, such as hope, optimism, self-efficacy, problem solving, locus of control, and creativity, see *Positive psychological assessment: A handbook of models and measures* by Lopez and Snyder, available from the American Psychological Association.

To capture school-level climate impact over time, you might use a questionnaire with both a teacher and student scale, such as Katsuyama and Kimble's *School Climate Questionnaire*. This is just one example, many school climate measures have been developed and tested. Brief descriptions of several school climate surveys is provided through the Character Education Partnership website at http://www.character.org/schoolassessments.

Sometimes, "everyday" events can be gold-mines for useful qualitative outcome measures. Almost every school has parent-teacher conferences at least once a year, often more frequently. Parents could be asked by the teachers if they had noticed any changes in their children relevant to the goals of All Kinds of Minds, such as greater self confidence or interest in school. A parent may report, for example, that his child used to plead to stay home, and in the last semester, has wanted eagerly to go to school. Finally, while you will be focused on school-wide, student, and parent outcomes that you anticipate will occur, be open to noticing and documenting unintended outcomes that you hadn't anticipated. Activity 8 provides some sample long-term outcomes and implementation questions that might be explored in relation to those outcomes.

**Activity 8: Measuring Outcomes: Relating Long-term Outcomes to Implementation**

(1) *Long-term student outcome:* Students build confidence in their abilities and achieve success as learners.

*Related implementation questions:* In what ways are teachers leveraging students' strengths and interests as pathways to school success? What evidence do we need to gather to document the instructional decisions teachers are making?

(2) *Long-term school outcome:* The school strengthens its culture and climate through a respect for neurodevelopmental diversity.

*Related implementation questions:* Are teachers collaborating around student learning using a neurodevelopmental approach? In what ways has the school incorporated the neurodevelopmental approach into their policies and practices?

## Considering Costs and Benefits

An additional way to examine the value of a program is through cost analysis. Cost analysis is the broad term for several types of economic evaluation techniques in which the benefits and costs of a program are measured in monetary terms. Cost analysis can help improve your understanding of how the program operates and, when benefits are measured in relation to costs, can help you decide if the value of the program's positive consequences (benefits) exceeds the value of resources required to implement the program (costs).

Cost allocation, cost-benefit analysis, and cost-effectiveness analysis represent a continuum of types of cost analysis which might have a place in the evaluation. Cost allocation is a simpler concept than either cost-benefit analysis or cost-effectiveness analysis. Cost allocation is the idea behind the basic question "How much will it cost?" Usually, when this question is posed, those asking it are referring to (a) direct costs such as coaches, consultants, training plus; (b) indirect costs such as teacher time, substitute expenses; and sometimes; (c) opportunity costs, such as being so committed to a particular innovation that they can't take advantage of another opportunity. These are elements that could be calculated as part of your program evaluation process. At the program or agency level, it basically means setting up budgeting and accounting systems in a way that allows program managers to determine a unit cost or cost per unit of service. This information is often used as a program management tool. However, if the units measured are related to outcomes of interest, than cost allocation can provide some of the basic information needed to conduct more ambitious cost analyses such as cost-benefit analysis or cost-effectiveness analysis.

A question you may have heard from funders and policy makers is "Is the program worth doing"? Another way to phrase it would be "What's the benefit/cost ratio?" or "Do the economic benefits of providing this service outweigh the economic costs?" This is the crux of cost-benefit analysis. Benefits, in addition to the costs, have to be quantified in some way to get a cost-benefit analysis. An example is the assessment of whether an innovation reduces the number of children requiring special education (a benefit that can be quantified in monetary terms). A fairly famous ratio reported by Schweinhart and Weikart (1997) found that: $1 of early childhood education saved $7 (in 1970 dollars) of special education and follow-up showed much more in avoided jail, welfare, and such. Cost-benefit analysis utilizes specific techniques, such as the benefit-to-costs ratio (total monetary cost of the benefits or outcomes divided by the total monetary costs of obtaining them) and the net rate of return (the total costs minus the total value of benefits).

Cost-effectiveness analysis is another type of cost analysis. It assumes that a certain benefit or outcome is desired, and that there are several alternative ways to achieve it. The basic question asked is, "Which of these alternatives is the cheapest or most efficient way to get this benefit?" By definition, cost-effectiveness analysis is comparative, while cost-benefit analysis usually considers only one program at a time. In addition, while cost-benefit analysis always compares the monetary costs and benefits of a program, cost-effectiveness studies often compare programs on the basis of some other common scale for measuring outcomes (e.g., number of students who graduate from high school, test scores that meet a certain criteria). Cost-effectiveness studies address whether the unit cost is greater for one program than another, which for some outcomes may be easier to do, and may be more informative for decision making.

While the idea behind reducing inputs and outcomes of a program to a monetary value seems fairly straightforward, true cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analyses require grounding in economic theory and techniques, which is likely beyond the training of your evaluation team and perhaps the scope of your evaluation. It may be necessary to hire a consultant if this type of analysis is desired. In addition, it may not always be appropriate to convert certain qualitative outcomes, such as increased self-esteem, to a monetary value.

If cost analysis techniques are used as part of your evaluation, they should be integrated with other evaluation techniques. Cost analysis, by itself, cannot tell you whether or not the program is having a significant net effect on the desired outcomes. Further, unless you know for sure that the program is producing a benefit, it may not even make sense to talk about the cost of producing that benefit. Cost analysis may be an extension of an impact or outcome evaluation, but it cannot take the place of one. For the purposes of your evaluation, you may find it useful to document select costs and benefits in order to supplement the overall picture regarding the value and importance of program outcomes relative to the cost of program implementation. Activity 9 provides typical costs you might want to calculate, including direct and indirect costs, as well as some example benefits you might want to estimate.

| Activity 9: Considering Costs and Benefits |
| --- |
| **Calculate Direct Costs for program:**<br>• Training expenses (total cost of the Schools Attuned program)<br>• Additional goods provided to the school (e.g., resource materials)<br>• Additional costs/services provided to the school (e.g., substitute teachers)<br>• Additional expenses related to providing services (e.g., mileage, meeting expenses, supplies for events) |
| **Calculate Indirect Costs for program:**<br>• Percentage of project staff time |
| **Record the subtotal reflecting total costs for project** |
| **Add in other costs (e.g., Schools Attuned site coordinator funded by the school)** |
| **Total the project costs for the year** |
| **Consider Benefits**<br>• Student level effects- The average ratio of costs of regular to special education is about 1:2. That is, special education (across all kinds of concerns, age groups, etc.) nationally costs about twice as much as regular education. To the extent Schools Attuned can reduce the intensity or duration of special education services required, a monetary benefit could be calculated.<br>• School level effects- Teacher turnover is a cost factor for many schools due to expenses for recruitment and training, and potentially, less effective teaching until the new teacher gets up-to-speed. High staff turnover in principals and teachers has been well-established as an indicator of a school with problems. To the extent Schools Attuned could increase the retention of high-quality teachers, a monetary benefit could be calculated.<br>• Community level effects- Housing values are known to be related to school quality. Though the relation is non-linear and complex, one could use as a conservative figure between 5% and 10% as the value-added to housing in a district with outstanding schools. As school quality improves, one could expect a quantifiable increase in housing property values, which can cascade for employers in greater ease of locating qualified employees. |

**For more information related to cost analysis, see:**

- *The economic evaluation of home visiting programs* (1993) by Barnett in *The Future of Children*. Available from www.futureofchildren.org.

- *Program evaluation and performance measurement: An introduction to practice* (2006) by McDavid and Hawthorn. Available from Sage Publications.

- *Evaluation: A systematic approach* 5th ed., (1993) by Rossi and Freeman. Available from Sage Publications.

- *Using Cost Analysis in Evaluation* (accessed November 2009) by Sewell and Marczak. Available from http://ag.arizona.edu/sfcs/cyfernet/cyfar/Costben2.htm.

# Conducting the Evaluation: Analyzing Data

## Data Analysis Overview

## Making Sense of Outcomes:

- Teacher Change and Implementation Data
- School, Student, and Parent Outcome Data
- Accounting for Context

Section 4

## Data Analysis Overview

During analysis, you will be discovering and summarizing your evaluation findings. This is a time when you identify themes, patterns, and trends in your data; when your evaluation team starts making sense of your findings and turning that into learning. It's when you ask yourselves if the changes you see match your program goals, if the desired outcomes are being achieved, if the program is a "success". If you have used multiple methods to collect your data, you will look for patterns in the evidence by isolating important findings (analysis) and combining different sources of information to reach a larger understanding (synthesis). Analysis and synthesis also involve deciding how to organize, classify, compare, and (later report) information. Don't wait until all data are collected to start analyzing; get a sense of the data as it's coming in to gauge how things are going and determine if adjustments are needed, additional data need to be collected, etc.

**Some guidelines for collecting data:**

**1. Start with your evaluation goals and program framework-** When analyzing data (whether from questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or whatever), always start from a review of your evaluation goals, i.e., the reason you undertook the evaluation in the first place. This will help you organize your data and focus your analysis. For example, if you wanted to improve your program by identifying its strengths and weaknesses, you can organize data into program strengths, weaknesses and suggestions to improve the program. If you wanted to fully understand how your program works, you could organize data in the chronological order in which participants go through the program. If you are conducting an outcomes-based evaluation, you can categorize data according to the indicators you've identified for each outcome. Revisit your program framework (aka logic model). As you have learned, a program logic model lays out the interim and the more measurable outcomes on the way to long-term and intangible outcomes. As a result, it provides an effective way to chart the progress of more complex initiatives and make improvements along the way based on new information. The most important things to remember when analyzing your data are the intended program outcomes that you defined at the beginning. Framing your thinking and your results in terms of these can help you to understand (and later present) your data clearly.

**2. Keep it simple-** Sometimes the most basic analysis is the very best, considering your efforts to communicate the findings of your evaluation to a broad base of constituencies. Percentages and numerical averages probably mean more to most of your stakeholders than do the statistical techniques of analysis of variance or multiple regression. Choose the most practical tool for analyzing your data, given the amount of data and the skills of your team members. Although analyzing quantitative and qualitative data is often the topic of advanced research and evaluation methods, there are certain basics which are used to make sense of data:

***Basic Steps to Analyze Quantitative Data-*** There are simple ways that your evaluation team can analyze collected data even without statistical backgrounds. For example, you can begin by converting quantitative findings (e.g., numbers from records, answers on questionnaires) into percentages or averages.

1. Organize your data into a spreadsheet. Statistical software is not necessarily required; a simple spreadsheet program like Excel can serve to store and organize your data nicely. Make a copy of your data file and use the copy for making your calculations, keeping your master copy for backup.
2. Compute the information, i.e., add up the number of ratings, rankings, yes's, no's for each question, etc.

   For ratings and rankings, compute a mean, or average, for each question. For example, "For question #1, the average response was 2.4". Also look at the median ("middle") value as well as the mode (response that occurs most frequently), as these will also give you important information about responses. Because arithmetic averages (means) can be skewed or pulled to one side by just a few extreme scores, they often don't represent what is happening most of the time unless the number of instances is quite large. The median often is the best indicator of what is typical…and it's easy to compute! Also, avoid misrepresenting the precision of your data. Computers can run out an average to many decimal points but you may actually only need whole numbers.
3. Convey the range of responses, e.g., 20 teachers indicated "1", 30 indicated "2", and 20 indicated "3".
4. Convert these responses into percentages, e.g. 25% of teachers indicated "yes", while 75% percent responded "no".

***Basic Steps to Analyze Qualitative Data***- Respondents' oral answers in interviews, focus groups, or written comments on surveys can be analyzed and synthesized. It just takes time and careful reading. Qualitative data are often seen as nice anecdotal information that bring the real results (the numbers) to life and put them in context. However, qualitative data can also help explain how a program works and why it has played out in a certain way or why it faced particular stumbling blocks, and may even explain hard to-measure outcomes that cannot be defined quantitatively. To analyze your qualitative data:

1. Read through all the data to get a broad, overall sense.
2. Go back through the data more methodically to group comments into similar categories. Interview responses, for example, can be initially organized logically according to the questions you asked. But you may also see that other themes emerge from participants' responses that can become organizers for you, e.g., concerns, suggestions, strengths, weaknesses, teacher learning, how teachers used new learning to change classroom practice, benefits for students, etc.
3. Label the categories or themes, e.g., concerns, suggestions, etc.
4. Attempt to identify patterns, or associations and relationships in the themes, e.g., in terms of what respondents experience during the program, the practices they report, etc.

**3. Be flexible-** In your review of data, you may discover key issues other than the ones you originally thought to look at when you designed your evaluation. It is important to be flexible enough to explore these unexpected issues, within the limits of your resources. Be sure to note new ideas, different patterns or themes, and questions that need further investigation. Interview or observation guides and surveys can be adjusted over time in response to what you learn through the review and interpretation of your data.

**For more information related to data analysis, see:**

- *The 2002 user friendly handbook for project evaluation* (2002) by Frechtling for The National Science Foundation, Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication. Available from www.nsf.gov (http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm).

- *W.K. Kellogg Foundation evaluation handbook* (1998) by the W. K. Kellogg Evaluation Unit. Available from www.wkkf.org.

- *We did it ourselves: An evaluation guidebook* (2000) by van Leuwen, Hebbeler, Cherner , Newman and Cameto. Available from www.sierralhealth.org (http://www.sierrahealth.org/doc.aspx?57).

## Making Sense of Outcomes

Your overall purpose in data analysis is to look for recurring themes. Reviewing the data periodically as it accumulates is a good idea; it helps you to begin to identify themes, makes the analysis process less intimidating than if you wait until all of the data have been collected, and most importantly, it will allows you to use the results to improve your program. As themes are generated and you begin to get a sense of your results, you will take the next obvious step of drawing conclusions based on your findings. The data gathered for an evaluation will not necessarily speak for itself. You will need to interpret your results. Interpretation involves looking beyond the mounds of raw data to ask questions about what the results mean and whether the findings are meaningful and significant for the program and the school. You likely will have collected data from a variety of sources (students, staff, parents, or others) using a variety of data collection activities (document review, observations, interviews, and surveys). It is important to look at all of these pieces together to get a full picture of your program. Looking at all of this evidence together and considering it in terms of your original objectives will enable you to say with some accuracy whether or not your program has achieved what you intended. When you think about how you will determine if the project is successful, how you will know if progress is being made based on the indicators you collect, think about progress in terms of (a) how the implementation and outcomes you *observe* approximate the implementation and outcomes you *expected*, (b) how improvements you find compare to previous years for that school, and (c) how those improvements compare to other similar schools in the state or district.

### Teacher Change and Implementation Data

Through ongoing monitoring of the data you collect in your evaluation, you and your funders can gain insight into how well your program is performing and what adjustments may be necessary to keep it on track. In the prior section related to data collection, we noted that assessing the impact of a new strategy or program is useless without data on the implementation of that strategy or program. Data on program implementation provide the meaningful links to long-term results (such as student outcomes) and to the program in question, and allow you to make timely adjustments to the program in order to enhance its effectiveness for achieving those outcomes in the future. The importance of documenting program activities and outputs was also noted. Both short-term and long-term outcomes that are observed in the evaluation need to be "made sense of" in terms of documentation of the program activities that actually occurred. When you analyze results of teacher implementation, it may be useful to consider your results in light of an overarching theory of teacher change. In the prior section on data collection, the Concerns Based Adoption Model was identified as a potentially useful framework for gathering data related to Schools Attuned implementation. If you have used this, or a similar, framework, it will be important for you to consider teachers' use of new strategies along a continuum. You will also need to take into account the timing of your evaluation with respect to when teachers have gone through the training program. As Wayne and colleagues noted (2008),

> *Timing is important because moving from providing professional development to obtaining an impact on achievement involves traversing a number of causal links, each which may take time to unfold. How long do teachers need to think about what they have learned in order to effectively put it into practice?*

## School, Student, and Parent Outcome Data

In her 2004 text *Evaluation methodology basics: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation*, Jane Davidson outlines major issues related to causation as well as strategies for establishing causation across many different types of evaluations. As Davidson notes, one of the great challenges with causation is that the further down the "causal chain" one goes (towards long-term school and student outcomes, for example), the more other factors come into play. She suggests several strategies for making meaningful judgments in terms of causation, including:

- check whether the content of the program is reflected in the outcomes;
- look for patterns that suggest a causal chain, identifying what might have caused them; and
- check that the timing of outcomes makes sense- the further down the chain the outcomes, the longer they should take to appear.

When you have analyzed your results related to school-level, student, and parent outcomes, remember to return to the program framework, or logic model, that you created in order to help you make meaning of what you observe and think through these causation judgments. You will want to think about how the outcomes you observe reflect upon specific program elements and how long-term outcomes that you observe, or don't observe, might be informed by the existence (or not) of earlier, shorter-term outcomes.

## Accounting for Context

When you decided to initiate your program in a particular school, you considered the context in which it was going to occur. You likely thought about the contextual factors that would influence levels of participation in the project, for example if the school was starting restructuring under No Child Left Behind, if the local economy was in crisis and many families had lost work, if the school had just received a big grant to try out new technologies, or if teachers were being trained not only for All Kinds of Minds but also for three other initiatives concurrently.

Accounting for context is different than judging that context. It involves describing (rather than assessing) conditions, events, or people to help gain a better understanding of the context in which a program occurs. Thinking about context is also crucial for program evaluation. You should consider the factors that may have influenced program success as you evaluate that success. For example, a lack of funding for substitutes may prevent teachers from being able to attend mentoring sessions, which in turn may influence their ability to integrate new practices into their instruction. Contextual factors can be both expected and unexpected and can have both positive and negative impacts on your program's success. Aspects of politics, policies, demographics, economics, and culture can impact the dynamics of program implementation along the way and subsequently impact results of the program.

Attempt to put the information you learn in your evaluation in perspective. Consider results in the context of the description of the program's implementation, strengths, weaknesses, etc. Also, consider what else is happening in the environment in which the program has taken place. Contextual factors unrelated to project activities may be responsible for changes in participants or in the school. It is usually not possible to isolate impacts to a single cause, and the evaluation should at least acknowledge other factors which may have contributed to change, as well as those factors that may have inhibited change.

The guiding questions that follow in Activity 10 may be useful in helping you think through the meaning of your evaluation results.

**Activity 10: Guiding Questions for Analyzing Data**

- What trends or patterns show up in the quantitative data, e.g., closed items on surveys, observation protocols, student achievement data?
- What are the major themes emerging from the qualitative data, e.g., interviews, focus groups, comments on surveys, meeting minutes?
- What do our findings tell us in relation to the overarching questions?
- How will the themes and results help us decide what actions to take to improve the program?
- How does the implementation and outcomes we have observed approximate the implementation and outcomes we expected? Are there any surprises?
- How do the improvements we see compare to previous years for our school?
- How do the improvements we see compare to similar schools in the state or district?
- Have we accounted for contextual factors (politics, policies, demographics, economics, culture, etc) that have occurred that may have impacted the implementation and results of the program?
- What are the limitations to our data? Where are the gaps?

# Making the Most of the Evaluation

## Sharing Results

## Using Results

Section 5

## Sharing Results

*Dissemination* is the process of sharing evaluation results to relevant audiences. Communications can be enhanced by having an advance discussion of your communication strategy with intended users and other stakeholders. Consider the timing, tone, message, vehicle, and format of your dissemination. Regardless of how communications are structured, the goal for dissemination is to achieve full disclosure and impartial reporting. You will want to share information about your evaluation in a timely, unbiased, and consistent manner. Of course, everyone will be interested in your results (what you found), but it's important to provide information about your procedures (what you did) as well. Here are several things you might include when disseminating information about your evaluation:

- The objectives of your program and your targeted audience
- A description of the context in which your program occurs
- What data you collected for your evaluation and how it was collected
- The evaluation results in terms of program *goals* and *objectives*
- The plan for using the evaluation to improve the program

### Host a Sharing Meeting

One idea for sharing results is to invite stakeholders for your school or district project to discuss the findings of your evaluation work. Two main purposes of such discussions are (a) to work together as a community to make sense of the evaluation findings and the implications for your project work, and (b) to build ownership of the decisions you make based on evaluation findings. A few ideas for this kind of meeting include:

- Arrange for one person to serve as a neutral facilitator of the group discussion.
- Start with the actual findings, rather than implications or recommendations. Let the group come to their own conclusions together.
- Post major findings around the room, fully visible to everyone while the discussions take place.
- Allow for small groups to dig into the data as well as discuss with the larger group.
- Emphasize with all stakeholders that the evaluation has been focused on the school and the project team learning together about the effectiveness of the program, and is not in any way an evaluation of individuals.

## Write an Evaluation Report

Interpreting your evaluation data for in-house use can be done informally, but making it available and useful to others may require a more polished product. Frequently a written report is an expected, and useful, way to communicate results of an evaluation. The level and scope of content depends on to whom the report is intended. Typically, evaluation reports (and presentations) are organized sequentially in a fashion similar to the following:

- Executive Summary- Having an executive summary with bulleted information is always a good idea. Although you want to make available as much detailed data as possible in the full report, many people like to learn the essentials in a short time through an executive summary. The summary is brief (one page), answers the evaluation questions succinctly, and highlights any recommendations. This is not the place to discuss why the program is needed, provide program details, or describe the evaluation methodology.
- Introduction/Background- Provide a brief description of the project or program you are evaluating, its purpose, participants, and funders.
- Evaluation Purpose. The purpose of the evaluation should be clearly stated in this brief section.
- Evaluation Questions. Present the overarching questions on which your evaluation has focused.
- Methods. Present the data gathering strategies used in your evaluation work. Briefly highlight the strengths of your method as well as its limitations. If you looked at a few classes, for example, you can't generalize to all classes. If you are reporting on the year 1 of a three-year project, data from years 2 and 3 may be better (or worse) and final conclusions should be made when the three year results are available.
- Findings/Results. Present the major findings resulting from your data gathering strategies. One way you might organize results is by general themes that have emerged, e.g., professional development activities, changes in teacher instructional practice, impact on student attitudes and achievement, etc. Or, you may organize results according to your evaluation questions. Integrate your findings across methods (triangulation) in order to answer the evaluation questions, rather than organizing by data method, such as surveys or interviews.

- Conclusions/Recommendations- A main reason of conducting the evaluation will certainly be your desire to learn from its results. In your report, may want to reflect upon the findings, addressing implications for future project work, recommendations for your project team and the school, as well as ideas for future evaluation.
- References- Provide references for any documents that you cited in your study, resources that you used to guide you, etc.
- Appendices- Include copies of tools that you used, such as evaluation questionnaires, interview guides, etc.

Through your evaluation report, the reader needs to sense that the evaluation information has been developed and is being presented with adequate objectivity or lack of personal bias. One way to do this in a written report is to clearly distinguish between objectively presented findings and your conclusions or judgments. Be straightforward and clearly state your major findings, and, be honest—your report will be considerably more credible if you note both the strengths and weaknesses of your program. Do not fall into the trap of only reporting favorable results! Credibility can disappear if you have reported only the three items on a 50 item survey that show positive results. Sometimes, pressure to show positive results has led people to examine evaluation results, then tweak the evaluation questions. This can lead to non-reproducible results. Credibility is enhanced when all data are honestly reported.

Formal evaluation reports can provide information to your board members, the community, and your funders about the program's progress and success. Portions of these reports can also be a valuable public relations tool. When distributed to newspapers or other media, this information can increase community awareness and support for your organization's programs.

Here are some guiding questions to help you think through how you may want to disseminate results of your evaluation.

**Activity 11: Guiding Questions for Sharing Your Results**

- Who within your school community needs to learn about your evaluation findings? What difference might this make to how you share results?
- What types of communication strategies might be appropriate for your program and stakeholders?
- How will you communicate the findings to those people who need to use the results from the evaluation?
- How can you organize and present your findings in a way that is clear and useful for others?
- How will you share significant 'mid-stream' findings with users so that the findings can be used in a timely fashion?
- How will you ensure that the evaluation findings (including the limitations) are made accessible to everyone affected by the evaluation and others who have the right to receive the results?
- Are there key time frames for evaluation information, for example, federal and state reporting cycles, community forums, and legislative sessions?

## Using Results

Conducting the evaluation is not just about disseminating results. Once the data are in and analyzed, you will want to use the results to inform your future work. This is the time to make decisions informed by the data- decisions to improve program implementation, decisions about ongoing support for teachers, methods for student assessment, strategies for working with parents and the community, etc. You will likely come up with recommendations for others in your organization or school to consider as well as actions that you plan to take as a result of the evaluation. You can increase the chances that recommendations will be relevant and well received by sharing draft recommendations, soliciting reactions from multiple stakeholders, and presenting options instead of directive advice. It may be helpful to collaboratively translate recommendations into action plans, including who is going to do what and by when.

Actively following-up on evaluation results will remind everyone of the intended uses of what has been learned, can help to prevent misuse of the results by ensuring that evidence is applied to the questions that were the evaluation's focus, and can help prevent lessons learned from becoming lost or ignored in the reality of making complex or political decisions. Here are some questions that may be useful in helping you follow-up on lessons learned.

**Activity 12: Following Up on Lessons Learned**

- What information can you use to develop recommendations for action?
- How will you share recommendations with other stakeholders?
- How will you make sure that lessons learned are used?
- How will you adjust the work you do through this project based on what you have learned?
- How might you adjust your future information gathering based on what you have learned?
- What are the implications of your findings for your project work, classroom practice, and future project plans?
- What are the implications of your findings for future evaluation?
- How might you use the findings from your initial study to pursue additional grant funds?

**For more information related to sharing and using evaluation results, see:**

- *Participatory evaluation in education: Studies in evaluation use and organizational learning* (1995) edited by Cousins and Earl. Available from Falmer Press.

- *Taking Stock: A Practical Guide to Evaluating Your Own Programs* (1997) by Bond, Boyd, and Rapp. Available from Horizon Research, Inc. Chapel Hill, NC.

- *Work Group Evaluation Handbook: Evaluating and Supporting Community Initiatives for Health and Development* (2007) by the KU Work Group for Community Health and Development. Available from www.ctb.ku.edu.

- *Utilization-focused evaluation: Fourth edition* (2008) by Patton. Available from Sage Publications.

- *W.K. Kellogg Foundation evaluation handbook* (1998) by the W. K. Kellogg Evaluation Unit. Available from www.wkkf.org.

# Finding and Working with an External Evaluator

Section 6

## Introduction

*Note: This section was prepared by Dr. Lois-ellin Datta, evaluation consultant, who thanks Beth Custer, former Hawaii Learning Resource Program Director, for helpful discussions.*

This section is for schools who want to contract with an outside (external) evaluator in order to learn how and how well their All Kinds of Minds program is working. Perhaps the school is required by a funder supporting their program to have an independent, third party make this assessment. Perhaps staff members do not have the skills to carry out an evaluation, even with the help of this Guidebook. Perhaps the school has skills in plenty but the internal evaluators have more work than they can handle already. While schools often do their own evaluations, others seek to work with an external evaluator.

In this section, you will find out how to get started, some possibilities and pitfalls on the way to awarding a contract, what to expect during an external evaluation, and tips for making the partnership successful as data are collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported. You also will learn about some decisions you will need to make that you might not have expected. For example, many evaluators seek what is called "stakeholder participation." You will want to consider early on which stakeholders you want to participate in the evaluation as well as how deeply you want and have time for involvement at every stage of the evaluation journey.

## Getting Started

Two questions are your kuleana in getting started on the evaluation. These are (1) how much money you need for a third party study, and (2) after considering which decision-makers are likely to use the evaluation findings, what essential evaluation questions you want answered. As is encouraged in this guidebook, many external evaluators urge that you also begin a program logic model going from processes to outcomes.

*How much money? What other resources?* The costs of external evaluations depend on factors such as: how many questions you want answered, with what degree of scientific evidence or rigor, whether the outcomes you want are easily measurable or if new measures must be developed, availability of administrative data, and availability of local evaluators.

In general, the more questions you want answered, the more you aspire to a high degree of scientific rigor, the fewer off-the-shelf measures are available for the outcomes important to you, the sparser the availability of administrative data, and the fewer the locally available evaluators, the more your evaluation is going to cost. To bracket costs, consider two possibilities.

*Scenario 1: You only need verification that the program (All Kinds of Minds) has been reasonably well carried out in your school. You and your program funders will take it as a given that if the program is well carried out, you do not need to establish that teachers, children, and families benefited. You and your funders will be satisfied with teacher self-report data and do not require classroom observations. In addition, you and your funders are not interested in how All Kinds of Minds compares with other programs or even attribution of what is happening in your school to All Kinds of Minds (causality). Further, you yourself will help assure that all teachers complete a brief, already available, self-report questionnaire; you can commit to the availability of other staff for interviews; you can include a few simple questions related to All Kinds of Minds during regular teacher-parent meetings at the end of the school year; and you can handle all the logistics of access for a site visitor for three days at the end of the school year. In addition, there is a local evaluator with expertise in assessing All Kinds of Minds available. Your estimated cost, including data analysis and reporting could be between $10,000 and $15,000.*

*Scenario 2: You need to establish that the program was well implemented including the initial stages (awareness), intermediate stages (embracing the concepts), and expert stages (fully carried out as observed in classes). You want to understand during these stages how things are going and have a productive dialog on possible improvements. You and your program funders want to learn whether the program is having important, measurable benefits for the teachers in areas such as their sense of self-efficacy and skills; measurable benefits for the keiki in their sense of self-efficacy, school attachment, and social and academic progress; measurable benefits for the school such as reduced staff turnover and more efficient use of SPED resources; and measurable benefits for the families and communities. In addition, you and your funders want to know whether these benefits are attributable to All Kinds of Minds or due to something else happening in the school and community (causality, taking context into account). You expect to cooperate and participate, but you do not have time to assist in data collection and coordination. You want the evaluators to do all or most of this. You are looking, in essence, at having the evaluators on site BEFORE the program begins to collect baseline data, and assuming a three-year grant, to have them on-site at least once a year. Oh---and there are no local evaluators qualified to do this work, so you will be paying travel and per diem possibly from the mainland. Your estimated total cost for the full four year evaluation is about $500,000 (pre data through reporting).*

You can save everyone's time, including your own, by determining funds you have in hand for the evaluation. There's no sense starting with a pie-in-the-sky vision of what you'd ideally like in an evaluation, and draining your own time and that of an evaluator in developing the scope of work for a $200,000 study when you may only have access to $25,000. If you are planning to contract out and want to include evaluation costs in your proposal, call the funding agency's project officer to find out how much they usually allow for an evaluation. Some agencies may expect 10 to 15% of the total application will go for an evaluation, and the quality of the evaluation will be among the funding criteria. Others will expect you to pay for an evaluation yourself. It may sound cart-before-the-horse to start with money and then fit the evaluation to what you can afford, but buying an evaluation is like buying a house or a car. No sense looking for beachfront with 6 bedrooms and 7 baths if what you can afford is mauka, downwind of the volcano, an unpermitted cottage with 2 bedrooms and 1 bath. Sometimes, you find an evaluator "between jobs" or who can combine your project with another trip to Hawaii, but do not count on it.

*What decision-makers are likely to use the evaluation findings? What are their questions?* Evaluators believe the very process of doing an evaluation is like a good self-study or a well-done credentialing study: helpful information is developed that the school can feasibly use for improvement. This has been the case in many evaluations, and it is fine if your school's primary reason for the external evaluation is having a critical friend review with you how the All Kinds of Minds program is doing. If this is the case, then the school itself is the decision-maker likely to use the findings. More often than not, however, an external evaluation is required by a source external to the school. Federal grants often require third party evaluations that must meet strict requirements for evidence of program effectiveness. Foundations often require similar evaluations, and some, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, may have even stricter requirements for evidence than federal agencies. Local groups, such as the United Way, require evaluations looking at outcomes and impacts of their funding.

In some instances, the requirement is ticket-punching. A report is due June 30th..... Report received? The program officer checks off the requirement as met without anyone reading the report or making a decision based on the report. Sometimes, however, the evaluation report plays a significant role in whether a program ends, is expanded, or is modified. Some program officers read the reports like hawks, use the information in their own annual accountability and results statements, and a first-rate evaluation report builds organizational credibility for future support. You may want different versions of the same report for different decision makers. This is fine, as long as all the data you need have been included in the over-all evaluation. Different decision-makers typically have different questions of importance to them. For example:

- within a school, key questions may be how easy or difficult the program is to carry out;
- in a school district, key questions may be costs and evidence of important results;
- to the media, individual stories of student experiences and benefits carry weight;
- to the community, the central question may be how the program helps my children;
- to the funding agency, rigorous evidence of success may be important;
- to policy-makers: costs, successes, and popularity.

All of these groups are stakeholders in your school, in your program, in the evaluation. Few evaluations can afford to address all these questions equally well for all stakeholders. If you are buying an external evaluation, you yourself will need to think through why you are doing this evaluation, how to prioritize needs for information, and through talk-story, get some information on what questions the top decision-makers most want answered. You also will want to think through how much stakeholder involvement you want at the question formulation, design and measurement selection, data collection, data analysis, report writing, and dissemination phases of an evaluation. This affects what kind of evaluator you want to hire.

There are at least twenty-nine flavors of evaluation. At one extreme, empowerment evaluators turn over all aspects of the evaluator to a hui of stakeholder groups, serving as coaches while the stakeholders make all the decisions. This takes a lot of stakeholder time but is believed to give stakeholders control of decisions that may affect their lives as well as offering great depth of understanding by stakeholders of the evaluation findings. At the other extreme, some evaluators seek stakeholder input on the evaluative questions but avoid other input. This minimizes demands on stakeholder time and is believed to reduce potential biases from self-interest and but may reduce evaluation utilization. In between, are infinite gradations of school, stakeholder, and external evaluator relations. Your job, at the very beginning, is to think this through, and use your choices as part of selecting an external evaluator.

### Drafting Your Scope of Work

You are now ready to draft a scope of work. This scope is a request for a proposal from an evaluator to carry out the evaluation. It forms the basis for evaluator selection, for negotiations, and once signed, is usually not changed. Like contracting for a house, yes, you can decide to use marble instead of linoleum after the builder has been hired, but if the linoleum is already laid down and has to be torn out, the costs for this purchaser change are high. So it is with evaluations.

The scope of work usually begins by stating how much money you have for the evaluation, the time frame for the study, describes your program briefly, then identifies your top priorities among stakeholders and specifies how much stakeholder involvement you want at different evaluation stages. This takes perhaps two or three pages. Be brief. A common scope-of-work mistake is writing an encyclopedia lauding the program, then skimping on other details.

Following this introduction, the scope of work then moves on to stating each evaluation question you want answered. State each question separately, including for each question whatever you can say about measures you prefer, data sources, and data availability. Perhaps three or four pages are needed here. Indicate the degree of rigor you require, particularly with regard to establishing attribution, influence, or causality, and how important it is to you to look at measurable short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes of your program. Specify how much detail you want in the proposal with regard to evaluation design and measures, how much flexibility you give the evaluator to suggest other ideas, what problems the evaluator anticipates, and how the evaluator would propose to deal with these problems. For example, a common issue is that most schools have many initiatives phasing out, starting up, or in mid-stream. A special reading program may be underway. A new grant may just have been received to upgrade technology. The school may be in the last year of restructuring. All Kinds of Minds is being added to this mix. How important is it to you to try to figure out what observed changes in children's learning are due to a new reading program and what are due to All Kinds of Minds? If it is important, how might the evaluator try to solve this problem?

Finally, the scope of work specifies any special conditions. For example, you may want the evaluator to use only on-the-shelf measures so it will be relatively easy to compare your results with those of other schools. You may want ownership of all new measures developed for the evaluation so you could use them elsewhere. You might want particular attention to diversity in the analyses, finding out if the program seems to be helping boys and girls equally well or assuring equal benefits among other subgroups. You might want evidence of evaluator competence with regard to cultural appropriateness of measures, data collection, and analysis.

*Consider, for example, a scenario in which evaluators were selected with great enthusiasm for their low-cost, highly efficient design only to be told the week before the final report was due that the school wanted subgroup analyses. Alas, auwe, and alack: the study had not been designed with large enough numbers of children to permit such analyses and sad was the parting of the ways. In another instance, a contract was signed by one party and about to be signed by another when the purchaser made clear that ownership of all measures was crucial, a condition to which the other party* *could not agree. In another instance, the purchaser had not spelled out that the proposal in response to the scope of work was to detail all costs by (a) year incurred and (b) type such as travel, personnel, overhead. The evaluators submitted a proposal with their usual budget form, which was not disaggregated, then refused to incur the extra costs of what was for them an unusual request. This left the school scrambling for another evaluator and locating one took so much time, baseline information was lost. The issues addressed upfront in this last section of the scope of work can help make or break an evaluation.*

## Finding an Evaluator

You may have worked in the past with an evaluator you like and think can do the job you want. Great! Start there. No such luck? Ask some other school leaders for recommendations based on their experience. Look up these evaluators on Google Scholar to see what kind of work they have published or better yet, ask your friends for copies of evaluations the people they recommend have completed. Go to the website of the American Evaluation Association, and look up evaluators listed for your state. These are self-listings, not vetted for competency or experience, but they can get you started. For All Kinds of Minds specifically, check out the publications summarizing previous evaluations of the program to locate evaluators or organizations with experience in this approach. We at Hawaii Learning Resource have worked very productively with the evaluators at Compass Evaluation and Research and are happy to recommend them. Connect with local evaluation organizations such as Hawaii-Pacific Evaluation Association (H-PEA). At no cost, you can post a Request for Qualifications on the H-PEA, other state evaluation organizations, and American Evaluation Association web sites. This is a mini-scope of work, very briefly describing the study you want and resources available, and asking interested evaluators to send a statement of their qualifications to you. You do not yet want a proposal, but want to learn about their background and experience.

You should have a succinct checklist of what you are looking for in an evaluator. Among the items could be: (1) Willingness to do work as described for funds available; (2) Previous successful experience in related evaluations; (3) Written statements that make sense, are literate, and show knowledge of issues. Select the top two or three responses, and send these evaluators the full scope of work, giving them two to three weeks to respond. In the meantime, invite (beg, plead, entice) two or three people to review promptly the proposals you will receive, get their reviews and select the winner. Promptly select, promptly enter negotiations, and promptly sign a contract when you have reached a meeting of the minds. When examining the proposals you receive, remember: What you will get in the final report is not likely to be better than what you see in these initial documents. A response that is badly written, accentuates the negative, is a sales pitch for spending twice the money you have, and is unresponsive to what you asked for is telling you what kind of problems may be ahead if you go with this evaluator.

*In one instance, a highly touted and world-famous group submitted a proposal that was 80% company boiler-plate and 20% repeating the scope-of-work. No evidence was apparent in their proposal of any real engagement or thought about the specific study. They cost a lot, about twice what was anticipated. Dazzled by their reputation and being pressed for time, a contract was awarded. The evaluator contractor did not return phone calls, showed no interest in the study, enjoyed a nice trip to Hawaii, and disappeared for several months. The study was superficial and the "final report" was nothing but a sales pitch for the company's own ideas for something else. In another instance, two proposals were received but the school had analysis paralysis, and could not really get traction on reviewing the proposals. Six months later, little progress had been made on awarding the evaluation contract, baseline data were irretrievably lost, and eventually, the whole evaluator finding effort went back to square one.*

If you feel unsure of how to review a proposal or select an evaluator, hire an evaluation consultant (<u>who would not do the study</u>) for three or four days to help with the scope of work, qualifications review, and proposal review. A Ph.D. student in evaluation, maybe a faculty member in evaluation, an internal evaluator for the school district, a retired evaluator….all could be cheap and helpful. And trust your feelings about the proposal, evaluators, negotiations. If something does not feel right about the proposal or the evaluators, exit before a contract is signed. In most instances, however, expect good---often very good proposals---with ethical, respectful, knowledgeable evaluators who will be fine members of your overall team providing credible, meaningful, trustworthy data.

## Making It Work

Real estate is said to be about location, location, location. Making it work with an external evaluator is about communication, communication, communication. To establish and maintain communication:

- Add your evaluator to your email list for information about what is happening in your school.
- Set up a biweekly call, even if it is a brief, "Nothing new." Often, concerns, ideas, issues will come up in the call that make for effective decisions, before there's really an issue.
- Keep stakeholders in the evaluation communications loop, particularly teacher groups and parent groups. Bring stakeholders up-to-date on coming events, such as "Jean, our evaluator, will be here in six weeks."

- Alert your evaluator if stakeholders express concerns about the evaluation. Sometimes, as survey or interview or observation time gets closer, these concerns will surface where they were not expressed before. Often but not always, they can be resolved. For example, usually, it makes sense for teachers to see an observation form ahead of time or for a parent group to review a survey.
- Earthquake? Furlough? Big award to your school? These events are part of the huge news context of what is happening that can affect your All Kinds of Minds program. Let your evaluator know about these.
- If administrative and routinely collected data are to be used as part of the evaluation, check on the availability of staff time that might be needed for putting this together. The data on the Hawaii Department of Education website, ARCH, are publicly available and should require no school time. An evaluator should know how to access such data bases. If, however, the evaluation calls for noting whether a special education referral in your school turned out to be necessary or not, the school and evaluator need to know this well ahead, planning for the special education coordinator's time for recording this, while also taking into account privacy and confidentiality. Usually, no individually identifiable data would be involved in the All Kinds of Minds evaluation.

## Analysis, Reporting, Dissemination

Right up front, there is a decision. Then another, then another….

*If the evaluator is going to be on site collecting data, what debriefing or feedback do you, the teachers, and the evaluator want and believe appropriate*? The All Kinds of Minds evaluation is not an assessment of teacher performance and is confidential. Observations are made to understand how and how well the concepts of All Kinds of Minds are put into practice in your school. Generally, no implementation means no benefits, so evaluation usually looks carefully at program implementation. Teachers often want strong assurances of confidentiality and that the evaluation is not an individual assessment before data collection occurs. BUT, they then may want some debriefing, coaching, discussion of what the observer saw. There are pros and cons whatever choices you make. What is crucial is to make them well ahead of time, including in the scope of work! If no individual debriefings are given, decide well ahead of time what information you want and in what form after site visits. In many instances, an oral debriefing with school leadership including teacher and parent representatives is appropriate and mutually valuable.

*How often do you want written reports, when, and in what format?* Most evaluations for decision-makers are timed for specific points in the year. A Superintendent of Schools, for example, may plan next year's budget almost the day after this year's budget begins and will need to decide if funds should be allocated to All Kinds of Minds continuation or expansion. If so, then a decision-oriented report addressing the Superintendent's key questions needs to be submitted no later than a month before new budget time. Decide whether you want to review a draft review before a final arrives, and build all this into the contractual schedule for reporting. Be sure there is a ONE PAGE attention-grabber Executive Summary of the results.

*What other methods will you want evaluators to use for sharing results beyond written reports?* A very well-organized 15 minute briefing on the results of the evaluation can be extremely helpful. Forget about 10 minutes talking about the need, 4 minutes talking about the program, and 1 minute for the findings. You and the evaluator should identify the key questions and succinctly give the answers. "Was the program well-implemented?" "Yes, in 90% of all classes." "Was it easy to implement?" "Yes, as perceived by 80% of the teachers but it took 2 hours every other week of coaching and continued training." "What is the cost?" "$10 per student." For the school, teachers, parents, and community, you probably will want to specify in the contract a meeting with the evaluator for an oral presentation of the findings, in addition to the written report. Invite the media, too. Let your light shine forth. All Kinds of Minds may prove to be a valuable, effective program in your school. This is worth a good press release, writing an article in your professional journal, reporting on your experience in your state professional association meeting, sending word to your city, county, state, and national legislatures. You may wish, in your contract, to specify that the evaluator provide a draft press release, and assure that the credibility of a third party evaluation is part of the robust evidence of value.

## A Final Thought

How to get started sometimes can be a puzzlement for a school working for the first-time with an external evaluator. The ideas in this section can help you organize your thoughts and put your actions in a workable sequence. If possible, have your external evaluator participate in drafting your program evaluation proposal so that the evaluation questions you promise to answer will be matched to priority questions, evaluation resources and data availability. One of the nightmares on Evaluation Street is losing baseline data because an evaluator is not hired until almost a year into a three-year effort. Another is finding out that the 97 questions and sub-questions presented to the funder are great conceptually but in practice, unanswerable.

The central message is that evaluations work best when the evaluator, internal or external, journeys with the school from helping write the proposal through reaching the program's destination, as well-planned, well-carried out program initiatives and program evaluations should and usually do.

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# Worksheets and Sample Instruments

## Sample Logic Model Worksheet

| Our Planned Work | | Our Intended Results | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resources/Inputs → | Activities → | Outputs → | Expected Outcomes<br>Short-term → Long-term |
| | | | |
| Important Context Issues/Assumptions: | | | |

## Sample Evaluation Planning Sheet

**Collecting Data**

| EVALUATION QUESTIONS<br><br>What do you want to know? | DATA GATHERING STRATEGIES<br><br>How will you know it? What will you use to gather the info? | PARTICIPANTS-INFORMATION SOURCES<br><br>Who can provide the info? From whom and when will info be gathered? | INSTRUMENTS TO BE SELECTED OR DEVELOPED | TIME PERIOD/ PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| E.g., Questions about project activities and outputs | | | | |
| E.g., Questions about teacher change and implementation | | | | |
| E.g., Questions about outcomes (school-wide, student, parent) | | | | |

**Analyzing Data**

| EVALUATION QUESTIONS | DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS PLAN | TIME PERIOD/ PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|---|
| E.g., Questions about project activities and outputs | | |
| E.g., Questions about teacher change and implementation | | |
| E.g., Questions about outcomes (school-wide, student, parent) | | |

**Planning ahead for Sharing and Using Data**

| | Who? | What? | How? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communicating with school, district, and community stakeholders about evaluation plans before anything has begun | | | |
| Presenting the findings of your evaluation | | | |

## Sample Schools Attuned Educator Informed Consent Form

***Schools Attuned with Mentoring Project Evaluation***
**Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study**

You are being asked to participate in an evaluation of the *Schools Attuned Teacher Training plus Mentoring* program at Pono Elementary School. **Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in this study.**

**Purpose of the Study**
I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine the *Schools Attuned Teacher Training plus Mentoring* project at Pono Elementary School. Information gathered during this study will help Hawaii Resources for School Success make decisions about the possible expansion and replication of the program to other Hawaii public schools.

**Description of Procedures**
This study will have two parts:

1. This spring an education consultant will visit Pono to conduct focus groups, interviews and observations.
2. Later this fall, evaluators will visit Pono to collect surveys, observe some teachers in their classrooms, and collect student achievement data.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to participate in one 90 minute discussion group with other Pono staff in the next week. In addition, we may ask to talk with you individually and/or to observe in your classroom at a convenient time to you. Later this fall, we will ask you to complete a survey and may also ask to observe in your classroom at a convenient time to you.

**Compensation**
No payment will be provided for this study. However, all participants in the focus group discussion will be entered into a drawing for a $50 gift card to Borders.

**Voluntary Participation**
Participating in this research study is voluntary. You do not have to say anything you don't want to. If you feel too uncomfortable to continue participating, you are free to leave the research study at any time.

**Confidentiality**
Witten notes will be taken during the focus group discussion and interviews. However, everything you say and any information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used in any report or shared with any person, agency or organization not connected with this project. Because this study is confidential, we ask that you keep private anything anyone else says in the discussion also. The research staff will do everything possible to keep all of the information you provide completely confidential.

**Contacts and Questions**
For more information concerning this research you may contact XXXX at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

**Statement of Consent**
I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had my questions answered. I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form. I give my consent to participate in this research study.

______________________________ ______________________________
Print Name Signature

## Sample Schools Attuned Parent Informed Consent Form

***Schools Attuned with Mentoring Project Evaluation***
**Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study**

You are being asked to participate in a discussion group about a program being used at your child's school. **Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in this discussion group.**

**Purpose of the Group**
This discussion group is one part of an evaluation study that is looking at the *Schools Attuned Teacher Training plus Mentoring* project at Pono Elementary School. Information gathered during this study will help Hawaii Resources for School Success make decisions about the possible expansion and replication of the program to other Hawaii public schools.

**Description of Procedures**
If you agree to be in this discussion group, we will ask you to fill out a short form that asks questions about you and your family and to participate in a 90 minute discussion with other parents.

**Compensation**
No payment will be provided. However, participants in today's discussion will be entered into a drawing for a $50 gift card to Borders.

**Voluntary Participation**
Participating in this discussion group is voluntary. You do not have to say anything you don't want to. If you feel too uncomfortable to continue participating, you are free to leave the group at any time.

**Confidentiality**
Witten notes will be taken about what is said during the discussion. However, everything you say in this discussion and any information you provide on the registration form will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used in any report or shared with any person, agency or organization not connected with this project. Because this discussion is confidential, we ask that you keep private anything anyone else says here today also. The research staff will do everything possible to keep all of the information provided completely confidential.

**Contacts and Questions**
For more information concerning this research you may contact XXXX at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

**Statement of Consent**
I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had my questions answered. I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form. I give my consent to participate in this discussion group.

______________________________
Print Name

______________________________
Signature

## Sample Schools Attuned Student Informed Assent Form

***Schools Attuned with Mentoring Project Evaluation***
**Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study**

**Why am I here?**
We are doing an evaluation of the *Schools Attuned Teacher Training plus Mentoring* program at Pono Elementary School. You are being asked to participate in this evaluation because your teacher uses this program in his/her instruction with you. There is much we can learn from you and your classmates. We believe you can also provide good ideas for us to consider and maybe add to the program to make it stronger. **Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in this study.**

**What will happen during this study?**
--Insert user friendly description of procedures here--

**Will the study help me?**
We cannot promise that answering our questions will help you directly, but the information you provide may help other students like you in the future.

**Do my parents know about this?**
We will explain the study to your parents (or guardian) in an agreement they will have to sign. For you to participate in the study, your parents must agree (consent) to your participation. You must also agree, independent of your parents, if you want to participate. It is OK if you do not want to participate.

**What about privacy?**
We will keep your information private and no one will know how you respond. To ensure anonymity, we won't be asking your name, so no one will know what you say.

**What if I have any questions?**
For questions about the study you can contact XXXX at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, they will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Do I have to be in the study?** You do not have to be in the study if you prefer not to participate. You can also stop the questionnaire at any time. Also, you don't have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. You will not get in trouble with your teacher or parents if you do not agree to be in this study.

**AGREEMENT TO BE IN THE STUDY** Your signature below means that you have read the above information about the study and have had a chance to ask questions to help you understand what you will do in the study. Your signature also means that you have been told that you can change your mind later and withdraw when you want. You will be given a copy of this form.

______________________________________ ________________

Signature of Student Participant (10 yrs & older) Date

______________________________________

Printed name of Student Participant (10 yrs & older)

**For researcher use only**

ID #: ______________________

# Schools Attuned Teacher Survey

The purpose of this survey is to learn more about how teachers at <school name> use the knowledge and skills acquired from Schools Attuned training in your educational practice. There are a variety of questions and items addressing the many possible ways to use Schools Attuned, both with individual students and with a whole classroom, to help us better understand the specific ways in which you have chosen to implement the program during the past school year.

**Thank you for helping us by completing this survey!!**

**SECTION I. WORKING WITH <u>INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS</u>**

**Consider the current school year so far, as well as the last school year**. How many ***individual students who struggled with learning*** have you used the following with?

| **I have used what I learned in Schools Attuned to...** | **Have Not Used** | **Use or Have Used with 1-2 Students** | **Use or Have Used with 3-4 Students** | **Use or Have Used with 5 or More Students** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) observe and analyze the student's neurodevelop-mental (ND) strengths and weaknesses | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) consider how the ND demands of certain tasks or assignments may impact the student's performance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) analyze the student's work samples based on the ND constructs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) seek input from <u>other teachers</u> about the student's ND strengths and weaknesses, and affinities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) seek input from <u>parents</u> about the student's ND strengths and weaknesses, and affinities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (f) seek input from the <u>student</u> about his or her ND strengths and weaknesses, and affinities. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (g) identify accommodations and interventions to help the student | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (h) implement strategies that target the student's weaknesses | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (i) provide specific opportunities for the student to strengthen his or her strengths. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (j) implement strategies that leverage the student's affinities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (k) monitor the impact of strategies I implement and modify them accordingly | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (l) differentiate my instruction based on the student's ND strengths and weaknesses, and affinities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (m) talk with the student about his or her ND strengths and weaknesses, and how they affect school performance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (n) help parents understand the student's learning and school performance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (o) provide parents with resources or strategies to try at home | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (p) help other educators understand the student's learning and school performance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**SECTION II. USE OF SCHOOLS ATTUNED PROCESSES WITH INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS**

**Consider the current school year so far, as well as the last school year**. How many ***individual students who struggled with learning*** have you used the following with?

| **Processes used with *individual student(s)*:** | **Have Not Used** | **Use or Have Used with 1-2 Students** | **Use or Have Used with 3-4 Students** | **Use or Have Used with 5 or More Students** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) *Management By Profile* Protocol with an **individual student** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) Entire *Attuning a Student* Process | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) Parts of the *Attuning a Student* Process | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) Entire *Student Learning Partnership* Process | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) Parts of the *Student Learning Partnership* Process | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (f) Demystification with Students Only | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (g) Demystification with Parents and Students Together | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Are there other ways in which you use or have used Schools Attuned with one or more individual students not included in this section?**

SECTION III. USE OF SCHOOLS ATTUNED WITH THE WHOLE CLASS

**Think about your typical instructional practice in the current school year so far, as well as the last school year**. How often do you use each of the following Schools Attuned techniques when you are working with ***groups of students or your whole class***?

| **I use or have used what I learned in Schools Attuned with *my whole class* to...** | **Almost Always** | **Often** | **Sometimes** | **Never** | **Not Applicable** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) implement Schools Attuned strategies for use with the **whole class** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) offer options for completing assignments based on their neurodevelopmental (ND) strengths, weaknesses, and affinities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) differentiate my instruction based on students' ND strengths and weaknesses, and affinities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) vary my instructional practices and strategies based on an understanding of the ND demands of my lessons or curriculum. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) develop and/or adapt classroom assessments based on students' ND strengths and weaknesses | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (f) help students' understand their own and others' ND strengths and weaknesses | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (g) teach lessons about how students learn or specific ND constructs (e.g., memory, higher order cognition, etc.) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (h) embed "learning about learning" within academic lessons | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (i) provide parents of students in my class with resources and opportunities to learn about Schools Attuned concepts and strategies | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**For items marked Not Applicable, please explain:**

**SECTION IV. USE OF SCHOOLS ATTUNED PROCESSES WITH THE WHOLE CLASS**

**Consider the current school year so far, as well as the last school year**. How frequently have you used the following Schools Attuned processes for ***lesson planning or with the whole class***?

| **Processes used with *my whole class*:** | **Have Not Used** | **Use or Have Used 1-2 times** | **Use or Have Used 3-4 times** | **Use or Have Used 5 or more times** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Subject Analysis | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) Lesson Analysis | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) *Management By Profile* Protocol with a **group of students** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) *Management By Profile* Protocol with my **whole class** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) Assessment Analysis | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Are there other ways not included in this section in which you have used Schools Attuned with *groups of students or your whole class*?**

## SECTION V. SCHOOLS ATTUNED IN MY SCHOOL

**Consider the current school year so far, as well as the last school year**. How much do you agree with the following statements about how Schools Attuned works ***in your school***?

| **Schools Attuned *in My School*** | **Strongly Agree** | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Strongly Disagree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) An administrator at my school provides leadership for the use of Schools Attuned (SA) at my school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) There is someone ***at my school*** who can help me with my use of SA. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) I am able to ask my SA facilitator for assistance with problems, feedback, etc. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) SA is aligned with the educational goals or mission of my school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) SA is compatible with other initiatives in my school or district. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (f) My school has groups that meet regularly to discuss and support each other's use of SA (e.g., peer study groups). | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (g) SA is part of the student support process (e.g., pre-referral, child study team, etc.) ***at my school***. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (h) Parents of students in my school are more involved in their children's education through the use of SA. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (i) I have time available to plan and reflect on my SA practice. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Please describe any other factors *in your school* that have supported your use of Schools Attuned:**

**Please describe any other barriers *in your school* that have limited or prevented your implementation of Schools Attuned:**

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

## SECTION VI. COLLABORATION

**In what ways do you collaborate with colleagues in your use of Schools Attuned? (Mark all that apply)**

- ☐ Participate in a professional learning community based on Schools Attuned
- ☐ Attend collaboration meetings based on Schools Attuned
- ☐ Other (**Please describe)**

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

## SECTION VII. CHANGES IN YOUR OVERALL PRACTICE

Please indicate to what degree, if at all, ***you*** **have experienced a change** in the following as a result of Schools Attuned:

| **Schools Attuned has impacted *my*…** | **Great Increase** | **Moderate Increase** | **Slight Increase** | **No Change** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) overall understanding of how students learn. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) belief that students with learning challenges can succeed. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) confidence in working with students with learning challenges. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) ability to address the learning needs of students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) ability to create educational plans and select strategies to improve academic achievement. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (f) ability to create a classroom climate that protects students from humiliation. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (g) optimism that I can take steps to improve students' performance. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (h) ability to help students understand their own learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (i) ability to form an alliance with student and/or parent as partners in student's learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (j) ability to increase optimism in students regarding their ability to succeed. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (k) ability to communicate effectively with colleagues about student learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (l) ability to communicate effectively with parents about student learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (m) belief that leveraging strengths and affinities is as important as remediating weaknesses. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (n) Other (Please specify): | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Do you have any additional comments about or examples of changes in your practice?**

## SECTION VIII. STUDENT IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

For each of the following statements, please indicate to what degree, if at all, you have seen a **change in *your students*** as a result of your use of Schools Attuned:

| **As a result of using Schools Attuned, I have seen changes *in my students'*…** | **Not an Issue** | **Great Increase** | **Moderate Increase** | **Slight Increase** | **No Change** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Motivation to learn | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (b) Relationships with peers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (c) Engagement in the learning process | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (d) Understanding of their own learning profiles | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (e) Coping with their own learning difficulties | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (f) Class grades | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (g) Standardized test scores (if applicable) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (h) Student-teacher relationships | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (i) Self-esteem | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (j) Confidence in their academic abilities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (k) Ability to advocate for their own learning needs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (l) Optimism about their success | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| (m) Other (Please Specify): | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**SECTION IX. SCHOOLS ATTUNED TRAINING**

**Finally, please answer these questions about your SA training to help us learn more about responses to the survey.**

**1. Did you participate in follow-up sessions after the Schools Attuned Course?**

(a) **Yes**, I completed **all** 10 hours of follow-up (Schools Attuned in Practice Modules)........................................ ☐

(b) **Yes**, I participated in **some, but not all**, of follow-up (Schools Attuned in Practice Modules).......................... ☐

(c) **No**, I **did not** participate in follow-up (Schools Attuned in Practice Modules)........................................... ☐

**2. Have you been involved in Schools Attuned in other ways (e.g. facilitated courses, hosted Understanding All Kinds of Minds events, served as a mentor, etc.)?**

Yes...................... ☐☐ **If yes, please describe:**

No ...................... ☐

## Additional Comments:

Please describe any additional ways in which you are implementing Schools Attuned, noting the strengths and weaknesses of the Schools Attuned program, or provide other additional comments you would like to make.

***Thank you for completing the survey. We appreciate your responses.***

## Sample Schools Attuned Classroom Observation Protocol with Follow-Up Interview

**Part 1: Observation Protocol**

### I. Background Information

1. Observer name: ______________________________

2. School District: ______________________________

3. School Name: ______________________________

4. Date of observation: ______________________________

5. Start time: ____________________ End time: ____________________

6. Was teacher informed about this observation prior to the visit? O Yes O No

### II. Classroom Information

1. Teacher's name: ______________________________

2. Grade level observed: O K O 1 O 2 O 3 O 4

3. Subject area observed: O Math O reading/LA O Other:

4. Scheduled length of lesson in minutes: ______________________________

5. Total number of students in class at time of observation: ______________________________

6. Was there a collaborative teacher or teaching assistant in the class? O Yes O No

7. Use the space below to give a brief description of the classroom setting in which the lesson took place including seating arrangements, space, materials, wall décor, etc.

8. Describe any SA or "learning about learning" materials were displayed in the classroom (enter none, if there were none).

| III. Lesson | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Type(s) of Instruction used during class period (mark all that apply): | O Lecture | O Discussion | O Teacher demonstration |
| | O Hands-on activities | O Use of media/technology | O Homework/test review |
| | O Individual seat work | O Small group/pairs work | O Student presentations |
| | O Other (describe): | | |

For the following items, mark approximately how often you see each one occur during the lesson. **<u>IMPORTANT</u>:** If there is no opportunity to see something because it is not applicable to (NA) or never occurs during the particular lesson observed, make a note in the "Notes" column to ask during the follow-up interview whether this is something that does occur at other times.

| | Never | | | | Very Often | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NA | Notes |
| **Teacher** | | | | | | | |
| 1. A variety of instructional strategies were used to help meet differences in learning. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 2. Accommodations (i.e., by-pass strategies) and interventions (i.e., strategies to strengthen weaknesses) helpful to the majority of the class were used. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 3. Lessons and examples included some areas of students' interests/affinities. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 4. Teacher talked about differences in student learning during the lesson. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 5. Teacher used neurodevelopmental (ND) language when talking about students' learning. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 6. Teacher discussed various strategies that would be helpful to address various ND demands. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 7. Lesson included embedded information about ND constructs. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 8. Teacher took advantage of opportune moments to talk to students about differences in learning and/or the ND framework or constructs. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |

| | Never | | | | Very Often | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NA | Notes |
| **Students** | | | | | | | |
| 1. Behavior of students demonstrated a climate in which students felt free and safe to speak up and participate without fear of humiliation. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 2. Students demonstrated supportive and/or helpful behaviors toward one another during the class period. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 3. At least some students demonstrated and/or articulated an understanding of the differences in their learning. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 4. Students demonstrated and/or articulated several strategies to help strengthen their learning. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |
| 5. Students were actively engaged in the learning process during the lesson. | O | O | O | O | O | O | |

Describe any additional or more specific observations made during the lesson related to Schools Attuned (enter none, if there were none).

## Part 2: Follow-up Interview Protocol

Date: _______________

Teacher's Name:________________________________________

1. How did you plan for this lesson? How did you decide what instructional methods to use?

2. <u>IF OBSERVED</u>: During this lesson, I noticed that you paired the students to work on the practice test. What made you decide to do it that way?

3. <u>IF NOT OBSERVED:</u> Do you talk to individual students or the whole class about the process of learning and the different ways that people learn?

4. Overall and in what ways, if at all, has your teaching practice changed as a result of SA training?

5. In what ways, if at all, has grade level collaboration impacted your implementation of SA?

6. In what ways, if at all, have SA staff meetings impacted your implementation of SA?

7. In what way, if at all, has on-site mentoring affected your implementation of SA?

    a. How, if at all, has it changed the school's policies or procedures?

    b. How, if at all, has it changed the school community?

## Sample Schools Attuned Teacher Focus Group Protocol

Introductions

Good morning/afternoon! Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. My name is.............This is .......who will be taking notes. We will honor your time by making sure that we wrap up in the next 90 minutes. (Tips- Assign the notetaker the task of keeping track of the time. Try to identify speakers by their first name each time they speak so the notetaker can attribute comments accurately).

Purpose of project

As a reminder, this focus group is one part of an evaluation study that is looking at the use and effects of the Schools Attuned program at Pono Elementary. Hawaii Resources for School Success has arranged these discussions. We're doing this focus group because we want to hear directly from teachers about their experiences.

No "Right" or "Wrong" Answers and Participation

I will be asking you several questions over the next hour or so. I want to assure you that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it is different from what others have said. If you want to follow-up on something someone said, or if you want to agree or disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. Don't feel like you have to respond to me all the time. Feel free to have a conversation with one another about these questions. We want everyone to have a chance to share ideas. I may need to interrupt or call on people to make sure this happens. Please do not feel offended if I do this.

Confidentiality

Before we get started, I want to remind you that all information shared today is confidential as to who provided it. For example, although we will be on a first name basis today, your real names will not be used in any report. I would also like to ask that if you talk about your focus group experience with friends or colleagues, do not attach anyone's name here with the stories they share.

Icebreaker

Start the questions with an icebreaker, e.g. asking participants to share one thing that drew them to the idea of working with students. Answer that question first yourself in order to put the teachers at ease.

(Teacher Focus Group Questions)

**Now let's spend some time in our group discussion:**

1. Think back to a recent experience using Schools Attuned knowledge or skills you gained in the training and tell me about that experience.

    Probe: Describe the problem or problems you were facing that led you to use Schools Attuned strategies and what you did to address them.

2. What is the value of using Schools Attuned strategies in your teaching? How has using Schools Attuned made a difference?

    Probes:

    - Impact for students
    - Collaboration with colleagues
    - School climate/culture
    - Relationships with parents
    - Impact on teacher's effectiveness, sense of efficacy

3. What has helped you integrate Schools Attuned into your practice and what could make it more successful?

    Probes:

    - Do you receive effective support from Hawaii Resources for School Success? What has been most important?
    - What else might be useful? In what ways could HRSS be most helpful to you <u>now</u>?

4. Like every school, Pono has many initiatives in place, many programs that are taken on by teachers as individuals, by the school as a whole. For you, how does Schools Attuned fit?

    Probes:

    - In what ways might it compliment other programs/initiatives?
    - In what ways might it compete with other programs/initiatives?

5. Looking ahead, what are some of the new or continuing challenges that you expect to face? What role do you see your Schools Attuned knowledge and strategies playing?

6. Picture Pono elementary 2 years from now actively sustaining Schools Attuned. What does it look like? What will enable Pono to get there?

<u>Wrap-up</u>

Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this focus group and for all that you've shared with me.

## Sample Schools Attuned Administrator Interview Protocol

1. Tell me how have you introduced and implemented the Schools Attuned program to meet the unique needs of your school.

   Probe: Can you describe any policies or practices that have been put in place at the school level that reflect Schools Attuned principles or use Schools Attuned methods?

2. What has helped you integrate Schools Attuned into your school and what could make it more successful?

   Probes:

   - Do you receive effective support from Hawaii Resources for School Success? What has been most important?
   - What else might be useful? In what ways could HRSS be most helpful to you <u>now</u>?

3. What relationship does HRSS's program have with Pono's ability to meet its strategic goals?

4. How has using Schools Attuned made a difference? What do you think the most important results of Schools Attuned have been at Pono?

   Probes:

   - Impact for students
   - Collaboration with colleagues
   - School climate/culture
   - Relationships with parents
   - Impact on teacher's effectiveness, sense of efficacy

5. Like every school, Pono has many initiatives in place, many programs that are taken on by teachers as individuals, by the school as a whole. For you, how does Schools Attuned fit?

   Probes:

   - In what ways might it compliment other programs/initiatives?
   - In what ways might it compete with other programs/initiatives?

6. Looking ahead, what are some of the new or continuing challenges that you expect to face? What role do you see your Schools Attuned knowledge and strategies playing?

7. Picture Pono 2 years from now actively sustaining Schools Attuned. What does it look like? What will enable Pono to get there?

## Sample Schools Attuned Parent Focus Group Protocol

Introductions

Good morning/afternoon! Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. My name is.............This is .......who will be taking notes. We will honor your time by making sure that we wrap up in the next 90 minutes. (Tips- Assign the notetaker the task of keeping track of the time. Try to identify speakers by their first name each time they speak so the notetaker can attribute comments accurately).

Purpose of project

As a reminder, this discussion is one part of an evaluation study that is looking at the Schools Attuned program being used at Pono elementary. Hawaii Resources for School Success has arranged these discussions because they want to hear directly from parents about their experiences.

No "Right" or "Wrong" Answers and Participation

I will be asking you several questions over the next hour or so. I want to assure you that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it is different from what others have said. If you want to follow-up on something someone said, or if you want to agree or disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. Don't feel like you have to respond to me all the time. Feel free to have a conversation with one another about these questions. We want everyone to have a chance to share ideas. I may need to interrupt or call on people to make sure this happens. Please do not feel offended if I do this.

Confidentiality

Before we get started, I want to remind you that all information shared today is confidential as to who provided it. For example, although we will be on a first name basis today, your real names will not be used in any report. I would also like to ask that if you talk about your focus group experience with family or friends, do not attach anyone's name here with the stories they share.

Icebreaker

Start the questions with an icebreaker, e.g. asking participants to introduce themselves and tell the group one thing they have learned since becoming a parent. Answer that question first yourself in order to put the parents at ease.

(Parent Focus Group Questions)

**Now let's spend some time in our group discussion:**

1. Tell me about a recent communication or collaboration with your child's teacher that was positive for you. What specifically about it made it good?
   Probe: In what ways have you and your child's teacher talked about your child's learning this year?

2. Tell me about your child as a learner. How would you describe him/her?

3. How would you describe the Schools Attuned program?

4. Almost all teachers at Pono elementary have gone through the Schools Attuned training. Do you think that it has made a difference in how the teachers work with your child?

5. What impact do you think the Schools Attuned program has on your child's learning or school experiences? Please share specific examples.
   Probes:
   - What kinds of experiences is your child having in school these days? In what ways is this similar to or different from past experiences?
   - What changes, if any, have you seen in your child or how they feel about learning since Pono teachers did the Schools Attuned training?

6. A goal of the Schools Attuned program is to facilitate collaboration between school and home. How would you describe the relationship between Pono and the parent community?
   Probes:
   - How does the school involve you in your children's education?
   - What things could be done to make it easier for parents to collaborate in their children's learning?

7. What do you hope will happen next in Pono's use of the Schools Attuned program?

Wrap-up

Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this discussion and for all that you've shared with me.