

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used in this program evaluation that examines the State's SuccessLink program(s). Survey questionnaires were mailed to a stratified, random sample of 100 school administrators and 1,000 classroom teachers, and focus group interviews were conducted with educators from throughout the State. In addition, data from this study were compared to data from the previous year's study to examine more closely the program's impact on educators State-wide.

The 2002 survey data are based on a 32% response rate, 49% from administrators (49/100) and 30.1% from teachers (301/1,000). These randomly selected groups did not differ significantly in their perceptions of the SuccessLink program(s). However, the randomly selected educators in the 2002 study do differ significantly from the SuccessLink selected 2001 study educators ($n = 212/500$; 42.4% response rate). All statistically significant differences indicate that the SuccessLink selected educators rated the program(s) higher than did the randomly selected educators.

SuccessLink's underlying goal is to disseminate best practices, regardless of which program is accessed by educators to receive this information. It is of interest, however, to determine which method of receiving this information is most effective as well as the relative merit of the information being disseminated. In terms of programs, the Missouri Elementary Science Connections (MESC) trainers rate their program significantly higher than do other educators from throughout the State who are familiar with the program as participants, but not as trainers. The greatest difference is found in questions relating to MESC's focus on the Show Me Standards and the impact on student success on the MAP. The 2001 respondents also rated questions pertaining to the Teacher Toolbox program's training in cooperative learning significantly higher than did the 2002 respondents $F(1, 560) = 5.718, (p = .019)$.

Other than the MESC program, the greatest overall difference in opinions regarding SuccessLink is found in the program's facilitation of the development of interactive / innovative learning environments, $F(1, 560) = 7.317, (p = .007)$. Focus group data confirm this finding as well as the fact that Best Practices and Great Teaching Ideas are viewed by educators, in general, as being the programs most widely utilized by educators. Great Teaching Ideas is rated consistently higher by the 2002 randomly selected sample of educators, and their perceptions of the program do not differ significantly from those of the 2001 SuccessLink selected sample.

In most cases, the 2002 sample of educators did not demonstrate a high level of involvement in SuccessLink programs and did not respond to many program specific questions on the survey. This could be an indication of lack of knowledge of these programs. Since Great Teaching Ideas is accessed more than any other program, a study focusing on the reasons associated with its success should be undertaken, so factors related to its success could be imbedded into other SuccessLink efforts.