

Junior Achievement

JA Company Program Summative Evaluation

Final Report
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	1
II. Methodology	1
Student Surveys	1
Volunteer Online Surveys	2
JA Area Office Staff Online Surveys	3
Focus Groups and Interviews	3
Data Collection Process	4
Analysis	5
Demographic Distribution	6
III. Findings	8
Student Findings	8
Outcomes Assessment: Pre-/Post- Student Survey Results	8
Changes in Students’ Attitudinal and Behavioral Indicators	12
Student Satisfaction	16
Classroom Observation Narrative	26
Pompano Beach, FL	26
Volunteers and JA Staff	29
Volunteer and Staff Profiles	29
Volunteer and JA Area Office Staff Perceptions of Students’ Engagement and Reactions to the Program	29
Volunteer and JA Staff Reactions to the Program Materials	32
Volunteer and JA Area Office Staff Reactions to the Curriculum Content	37
Volunteer and JA Staff Reactions to the Program Overall	39
Volunteer and JA Staff Satisfaction	43
IV. Conclusions	48
V. Challenges and Recommendations for Future Studies	48
VI. Recommendations for Program Improvement	49
VII. Appendices	50
Appendix A: Student Surveys	
Appendix B: Volunteer Survey	
Appendix C: Area Office Staff Survey	
Appendix D: Moderator’s Guide for Students	
Appendix E: Moderator’s Guide for Volunteers	
Appendix F: Moderator’s Guide for Area Office Staff	

I. Introduction

Junior Achievement (JA) Worldwide is a not-for-profit organization financed by businesses, foundations, government, and individuals. The programs are designed to help students learn fundamental business and economic concepts, explore career interests and opportunities, and learn important principles of financial literacy. The purpose of JA is to educate and inspire young people to succeed in a global economy with the expectation that this will improve the quality of their lives.

JA high school programs encompass economics and business curricula for students in grades eight through twelve. The high school programs are developed with a primary emphasis on social studies content, while providing a strong secondary emphasis on mathematics, reading, and writing skills. Through a series of 12 meetings, *JA Company Program*™ is implemented in after-school settings to provide engaging, academically enriching, and experiential learning sessions in entrepreneurship. Following their participation in the program, students are expected to be able to apply their entrepreneurship skills to education, career, and service pursuits and recognize the significance of personal responsibility and financial literacy in making positive life decisions.

In 2007, JA contracted with the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI) to conduct a summative evaluation of JA's high school after-school program, *JA Company Program*. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the program on student learning, as well as address student, teacher, and JA Area Office staffs' attitudes toward the program curriculum and materials. This report presents the study methodology, key findings, and recommendations for program improvement.

II. Methodology

For this study, ETI used a pre-post program and comparison group research design to measure the extent to which *JA Company Program* improved students' knowledge in business and entrepreneurship. ETI relied on surveys, in both online and paper formats, as the primary method of data collection for the evaluation. Specifically, ETI developed surveys for participating students, volunteers, and JA Area Office staff.

Student Surveys

ETI designed paper and pencil pre-/post-test outcome surveys to be administered to program and comparison students and a post-program survey for program students.

Pre-/Post-test Outcome Survey. The pre-/post- test survey was designed to assess changes in students' understanding of curriculum concepts and ideas and consisted of a combination of 21

multiple-choice and true-false items covering the content of the *JA Company Program* curriculum. This section of the pre-post outcome survey was designed to assess any changes in students' content knowledge taking place over the course of the program. Student scores on the subject-specific test were to be analyzed to assess the relative knowledge gains between program and comparison students. In addition, the survey consisted of 15 school-related behavior and attitude questions. A demographic section was also included.

Post-program Final Survey. The post-program survey examined students' overall impressions of the program after completing the 12 *JA Company Program* meetings. Specifically, the post-program survey addressed the following areas:

- Student demographics;
- Meeting likes and dislikes;
- Program likes and dislikes;
- Perceptions of meeting length and content difficulty;
- Volunteer effectiveness;
- Ways to improve the program materials; and,
- Satisfaction with the program overall.

Volunteer Online Surveys

Post-Program Survey. The volunteer post-program online survey centered on volunteers' overall impressions of the program. Specifically, the post-program survey asked respondents about:

- Demographic information;
- Perceived student satisfaction with, and interest in, the program;
- Perceptions of meeting and program length;
- Age-appropriateness of the curriculum;
- Modification(s) made to the program;
- Comfort level in presenting the meetings;
- Enjoyment volunteering for JA;
- Experiences with JA Area Office staff;
- The quality and appeal of the program materials;
- Ways to improve the program materials;
- Program likes and dislikes;
- Suggestions to improve the program curriculum; and,
- The quality of the program overall.

JA Area Office Staff Online Surveys

Post-Program Survey. Similar to the volunteer survey, the JA Area Office staff online post-program survey centered on JA staffs' overall impressions of the program. Specifically, the post-program survey asked respondents about:

- Demographic information;
- Perceived student satisfaction with, and interest in, the program;
- Perceptions of meeting and program length;
- Age-appropriateness of the curriculum;
- Experiences working with the volunteer(s);
- The quality and appeal of the program materials;
- Ways to improve the program materials;
- Program likes and dislikes;
- Suggestions to improve the program curriculum; and,
- The quality of the program overall.

Copies of the student, volunteer, and JA Area Office staff surveys can be found in **Appendices A through C**.

Focus Groups and Interviews

To supplement the surveys, focus groups were held with volunteers, teachers, and students, and interviews were conducted with JA Area Office staff members to gather qualitative data about *JA Company Program*. Participants involved with the program were asked about the following:

- Students' reactions to individual lessons and the program overall;
- Students' understanding of program content;
- The application and quality of the program materials;
- The *JA Company Program* curriculum;
- The successes and challenges of the program;
- Suggestions/recommendations to improve the program; and,
- Overall reactions to the program.

As shown in **Table I** on the following page, from March 10th to April 17th, 2007, a total of 9 focus groups and interviews were held in three states. During the site visits ETI staff also observed program meetings. Copies of the Moderators' Guides can be found in **Appendices D through F**.

Table 1:
Breakdown of Focus Group and Interview Sites

JA Area Office city/state	Site Visit Activities	Date(s)
Pompano Beach, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Observation • Volunteer Interview • Student Focus Group • JA Staff Interview 	March 10 th
Los Angeles, CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Observation • Volunteer Interview • Student Focus Group • JA Staff Interview 	March 19 th
Owing Mills, MD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Observation • Volunteer Interview • Student Focus Group • JA Staff Interview 	April 17 th

Comments gathered from the focus groups and interviews will be presented throughout the report as they relate to the quantitative results evidenced from the surveys.

Data Collection Process

ETI worked with three participating JA Area Offices recruited for the evaluation by JA Worldwide to coordinate the administration and collection process for the surveys. Prior to distribution of the surveys, ETI conducted a conference call with evaluation task force members from each participating Area Office. During the conference call, ETI staff described the evaluation process in detail and fielded staff members' questions regarding the study design and implementation. It was the expectation that the Area Office staff members would lead the site-specific evaluation activities, including survey data collection and site visit scheduling.

The three JA Area Offices participating in the evaluation of *JA Company Program* were able to recruit five program and five comparison classrooms for the study (see **Table 2**).

Table 2
Sample of Participating Classrooms

Area Office	Number of Program Classrooms	Number of Comparison Classrooms
Junior Achievement of Central Maryland	2	2
Junior Achievement of Southern California, Inc.	1	1
Junior Achievement of South Florida	2	2
Total	5	5

Prior to the start of the program at the various sites, each of the JA Area Offices received a set of clearly labeled program and comparison classroom packets for distribution to volunteers and control class contacts who would administer the surveys to students. The program classroom packets contained a letter of instruction to the volunteer and enough pre- and post-tests and post-program satisfaction surveys for each student in the class. The comparison classroom packets contained a similar instruction letter for the control class contact and a pre- and post-test for each control student. Both program volunteers and control class contacts were instructed to administer the pre- and post-tests to their students at the beginning of the program (program classes) or within one week of receipt of the surveys (control classes), and then after completion of the program (program classes) or 12 weeks later (control classes), and then to return the completed tests to ETI using pre-paid FedEx envelopes that were provided with each classroom survey packet. Volunteers and JA Area Office staff were asked to complete an online post-program survey following the last program meeting.

ETI conducted extensive follow up with the sites via telephone and email to facilitate a strong response rate. At the time that the data collection deadline was met, two of four volunteers and three of three Area Office staff members had submitted post-program surveys. ETI matched as many of the student pre-and post-tests as possible and **Table 3** displays the student survey response rate. As shown, 38 pre-/post-matched pairs from program students, 20 completed pre-/post-matched pairs from comparison group students, and 14 post-program surveys (program students only) were returned.

Table 3
Student Survey Response Rates

Area Office	Program Classrooms			Control Classrooms	
	Number of JA Program Classrooms	Pre-/Post-Matched Pairs	Post-program Survey	Number of Comparison Classrooms	Number of Completed Pre-post Tests
Junior Achievement of Central Maryland	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0
Junior Achievement of Southern California, Inc	1	20	14	1	20
Junior Achievement of South Florida	2	18	0	0	0
Total	n=3	n=38	n=14	n=1	n=20

Analysis

The analysis of the pre-post program and comparison data involved several steps: analysis of the demographic distribution of the data; a test for program and comparison group equivalence; analysis of effect size; and item analysis.

Demographic Distribution

The demographic distribution of the data was reviewed in order to determine the extent to which the program and control groups were comparable in terms of grade level, gender, and ethnicity. As presented in **Tables 4** through **6**, our review revealed disparities in students' demographic characteristics.

Grade Level

The largest proportion of program students was in the 11th grade (40 percent), while all control students (100 percent) were in the 12th grade.

Table 4
School Grade Level Distribution

Grade Level	Number of Program Students (n=38)	Percentage of Program Students (n=38)	Number of Control Students (n=20)	Percentage of Control Students (n=20)
9 th Grade	6	16%	0	0%
10 th Grade	10	26	0	0
11 th Grade	15	40	0	0
12 th Grade	7	18	20	100

Gender

As shown in **Table X**, program and comparison group students also differed in terms of gender. Male and female students were evenly distributed in the program group, while the control group consisted of 20 percent more female students than males.

Table 5
Gender Distribution

Gender	Program (n=38)		Control (n=20)	
Female	19	50%	12	60%
Male	19	50	8	40

Ethnicity

Table X on the following page depicts the ethnic breakdown of program and comparison students. Overall, a larger percentage of control students were Caucasian (75%) compared to program students (29%). With respect to minority representation, the program group demonstrated greater diversity, with 37 percent of students collectively identifying themselves as Black/African American (18 percent), Asian (11 percent), and Hispanic/Latino (8 percent).

Table 6
Ethnic Distribution

Ethnicity	Program (n=38)		Control (n=20)	
White/Caucasian	11	29%	15	75%
Black/African American	7	18	1	5
Hispanic/Latino	3	8	2	10
Asian	4	11	1	5
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	3	1	5
Other	2	5	1	5

Summary

The analysis of the demographic data revealed that the program and control groups differed considerably across all variables examined. In addition to taking demographic differences into account when comparing the program and control groups, a test of group equivalence was conducted on the content survey data. A t-test comparing the pre-test scores of both program and comparison group students was performed on the sample to determine if, in terms of their content knowledge, the program and control groups were equivalent before the study began. The results of this and other analyses bulleted below are presented in the **Program Impact** section of this report.

- An item analysis was conducted on the pre- and post-test items in order to evaluate the content areas in which program students excelled and experienced challenges.
- An analysis of effect size was conducted to assess the relative magnitude of any significant differences obtained from the analysis of pre- and post-test scores.

Study Limitations

No evaluation study is without its limitations. Conducting summative studies involving program and comparison groups in the social sciences is a challenging task. The methodological issues and constraints encountered recruiting program and comparison participants, retaining sufficient samples for analysis, and minimizing the number of confounding influences represent common limitations to the reliability and validity of social science evaluations. The summative evaluation of *JA Company Program* was no different, and its limitations are discussed below.

Non-equivalent program and comparison groups

The comparison group for this study was not a “true” control group in the sense that the participating classrooms were not randomly assigned to either a program or comparison group. Program classrooms constituted those classrooms already receiving *JA Company Program* during the spring 2007 semester, and comparison classrooms were identified and recruited by JA Area Office staff. In order to ensure that the program and comparison classrooms would be as similar

as possible, comparison classrooms were recruited from within the same school or community. There remains of course, the possibility that there were initial differences in addition to the demographic variables discussed above which have not been identified, and that these differences might have accounted for some of the differences between program and control students revealed by the analysis.

Size of the Program and Comparison Groups

As mentioned previously, recruiting program and comparison classrooms was challenging, and yielded a sample of program pre- and post-tests that was almost twice as large as the sample of control pre- and post-tests. Large differences in sample sizes have the potential of increasing the variability within each group, which in turn might influence statistical outcomes.

III. Findings

The sections to follow present findings drawn from the student, volunteer, and JA Area Office staff surveys, as well as qualitative data gathered during the focus groups/interviews conducted during the site visits.

Student Findings

Outcomes Assessment: Pre-/Post- Student Survey Results

Test for Group Equivalence

The test for group equivalence is often used when program and comparison groups are being compared on a pre-post measure. The test uses pre-test means to determine how alike or different the program and comparison groups are at the outset of the study. If there are no differences between the pre-test program and comparison means, the credibility of any comparative results increases considerably. **However, when the test for group equivalence was conducted in this case, the program and control groups demonstrated a statistically significant difference at the .05 level, indicating that at the time of the pre-test, program and control groups varied considerably in terms of their relevant content knowledge (Table 7 on the following page).**

Table 7
Test for Group Equivalence
 (**p. </.05)

	N	Pre-Test		
		Mean	SD	T-Test
Program	38	12.55	2.98	2.00*
Control	20	11.00	2.45	

Given the demonstrated differences between the program and control groups in terms of their content knowledge base as the start of the study, as well as the demographic differences between the groups described in the **Analysis** section above, the program and control groups recruited for the evaluation could not be considered equivalent. Therefore, it was determined that any subsequent analyses of program students' content knowledge changes taking place over the course of *JA Company Program* should be examined independently of the control group for the remainder of this report.

Item Analysis of Pre-/Post-survey Content Questions: Program Students Only

To determine the extent to which program students' scores on the content knowledge portion of the surveys changed over the course of *JA Company Program*, each item was analyzed to determine the percentage of students answering correctly at pre- and post-test. A t-test was calculated for each survey question, identifying test questions in which students demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the percentage of students answering the item correctly, as well as highlighting program concepts where students did not demonstrate an increase in understanding or were less likely to answer correctly upon completion of the curriculum

As displayed in **Table 8** on the following page, **students demonstrated an increase in the percentage who answered correctly for 18 of 21 questions, and a statistically significant increase in the portion of students who answered correctly for five of 21 content questions. Survey respondents also achieved an overall increase of two correct questions and almost 10 percentage points, on average, a statistically significant increase at the .01 level.**

There were just three of 21 survey questions where scores dropped: questions 8, 13, and 16 posed a challenge for participating students. These items addressed departmental roles, fixed costs, and the break-even point, and may require clarification in the program materials or time allocated to their discussion during the weekly meetings.

Table 8
Program Class Student Pre-/Post-test Results by Question: Percent of Students Responding Correctly

Survey Question		Pre-test	Post-test	Significance Value (2-tailed)
1.	Company values represent	63%	68%	.422
2.	Which of the following represents the company's dream of where it wants to go and what it wants to be- its ideal	58	74	.110
3.	A mission statement describes how a company plans to accomplish their vision and clearly explains what a company seeks to accomplish day to day and over the long term.	92	95	.571
4.	The Board of Directors of a company are not allowed to own stock in that company.	87	90	.744
5.	According to the Rules of Parliamentary Procedure, once someone makes a motion, if no one offers a second, the desired statement of policy is "dead" and discussion ends.	82	84	.711
6.	Selling shares of stock to get start-up money for a new company is called	47	79	.001*
7.	Which department in a company is typically responsible for overseeing material purchases, production standards, safety guidelines, inventory tracking and quality control?	79	82	.786
8.	Which department in a company is typically responsible for identifying customers, designing advertising strategies, and setting sales goals?	79	76	.711
9.	Which of the following is a way to gain the opinion of potential buyers.	66	84	.020**
10.	Double-entry bookkeeping is a standard business practice that helps prevent mistakes and tracks errors by requiring that each transaction be entered twice. How is the information entered?	11	16	.160
11.	What is NOT included in a business plan for a company?	84	92	.262
12.	Which of the following costs are business expenses that remain the same, regardless of the number of products produced or services provided.	53	63	.210
13.	Which are examples of typical fixed costs encountered by small businesses?	5	3	.324
14.	Which of the following are included in the description above?	79	79	1.000
15.	In addition to the information provided in the description above, what additional information would you need to be able to calculate the number of units that must be sold to cover its costs?	47	58	.324
16.	Please select the best definition of the break-even point.	34	29	.422
17.	"Our new infrared light bulb is small, but it will light up an entire room" is an example of a sales tactic known as the "yes, but" technique.	74	87	.133
18.	Salespeople should not	50	71	.020**
19.	An activity or procedure that is more efficient and effective than others that exist is called a	50	66	.083
20.	The process of converting company assets into cash, settling all accounts, and distributing the remaining cash to company stockholders in the form of a stockholder dividend is called	68	90	.010*
21.	What is the formula used to calculate the book value of the Bright Ideas company stock upon liquidation?	47	76	.010*
Mean Percentage of Items Correct Overall:		59.78	69.55	.000*
Mean Number of Items Correct Overall:		12.55	14.61	.000*

*Indicates significance at the .01 level., **Indicates significance at the .05 level.

Analysis of Effect Size

Effect size (ES) is a name given to a family of indices that measure the magnitude of a treatment effect. Whereas statistical tests of significance tell us that the likelihood that experimental results differ from chance expectations, effect-size measurements tell us the relative magnitude of the experimental treatment. **The effect size of the overall mean difference in scores above (i.e. an overall increase of two questions correct and almost 10 percentage points from pre- to post-test) using Cohen’s d resulted in a value of .74.** In a seminal paper published in 1992, Cohen suggested that effect sizes of .20 are small, .50 are medium, and .80 are large. Thus, the effect size for the comparison above is considered large and indicative of a powerful experimental treatment. In laymen’s terms, **the influence of the program on students’ knowledge in the areas addressed by the pre-/post-test is likely to be quite strong.**¹

Focus Group Findings Addressing Student Learning

During the focus groups, students were also asked to provide examples of what they had learned. As presented in their comments below, students described learning about working collectively, delegating tasks, and how to set and accomplish goals in addition to specific information about how businesses run.

- “We’ve actually been doing a lot of hard work and we’re learning the processes in different teams and it’s really enlightening and I feel like I’m learning a lot.”²
- “I learned that one person can’t do everything and it’s really important to delegate to other people, so a business, it’s not just one person. You have to have a lot of people helping.”
- “I’ve learned specifics considering stocks, mission statement, business plan and vision statement. I needed to know those different kinds of things in order to make it work.”
- “Marketing has more responsibilities than I thought, like advertising.”
- “Communication is key.”
- “I learned where to put people for staffing.”
- “It’s better to start a business with small ideas than big. It makes it easier to accomplish and learn from them.”

¹ Thalheimer, W., & Cook, S. (2002) *How to calculate effect sizes from published research: A simplified methodology*. A Work-Learning Research Publication.

² Comments gathered from focus groups have been edited for grammar/clarity. In addition, during one site visit the focus groups were not recorded due to an equipment failure. Comments from the site have been paraphrased according to notes taken by an ETI staff member during the focus group discussions.

Changes in Students’ Attitudinal and Behavioral Indicators

As discussed in the **Methodology** section, in order to address any changes in students’ attitudes and behaviors toward school resulting from their after-school participation in *JA Company Program*, a Student Attitude Questionnaire was included in the pre- and post-test student surveys. The surveys included items that spoke to students’ attitudes and behaviors toward school, as well as perceptions of themselves and their social interactions. Students were also asked to report on the activities they usually participate in after school.

The first set of questions asked students to indicate the frequency with which they agreed with a number of statements about school on a scale from one, or “never,” to four, or “all the time.” Pre- and post-test means were calculated and then analyzed for differences using a 2-tailed t-test. As displayed in **Table 9**, responses changed little from pre- to post-survey and indicate that students largely held positive attitudes toward school both before and after completing the program.

Table 9
Attitudinal Indicators: School

Survey Question		Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Significance Value (2-tailed)
1.	Do you like going to school? (n=38)	3.1	3.0	.822
2.	Do you feel safe after school? (n=37)	3.5	3.6	.230
3.	Do you study hard for tests? (n=37)	2.9	2.8	.556
4.	How often are you in trouble at school? (n=37)	1.2	1.3	.600
5.	Do you feel comfortable talking to teachers or other school staff? (n=38)	3.2	3.1	.786
6.	Do you get your homework done on time? (n=38)	3.5	3.4	.291
7.	How often do you feel good about school? (n=38)	3.0	3.1	.499

Students were also asked how much time they spend studying or doing homework outside of class time (**Table 10** on the following page). On the pre-survey, 66 percent reported spending from one to two hours, while on the post-test, 56 percent reported doing so, indicating a slight decrease in time spent on studying and homework over the course of the program.

Table 10
How much time do you spend studying or doing homework outside of class time?

Response Option	Pre-survey (n=37)	Post-survey (n=38)
More than 2 hours	n=12	n=9
	32%	24%
1-2 hours	n=13	n=12
	34%	32%
30 minutes to under an hour	n=10	n=12
	26%	32%
Under 30 minutes	n=1	n=4
	3%	11%
None	n=1	n=1
	3%	3%

The survey also addressed students' social interactions and self esteem. While students did not change their responses regarding their interactions with others (**Table 11**), at the time that the post-survey was implemented, four students felt better about themselves (e.g. "great" rather than "okay") than when they completed the pre-survey (**Table 12**).

Table 11
How well do you get along with others, including other students or adults?
(n=37)

Response Option	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Very well	n=33	n=33
	87%	87%
Okay, but could be better	n=5	n=5
	13%	13%
Not at all well	n=0	n=0
	0%	0%

Table 12
How do you feel about yourself?
(n=37)

Response Option	Pre-survey	Post-survey
I'm great	n=27	n=31
	71%	82%
I'm OK	n=11	n=7
	29%	18%
I'm not doing very well	n=0	n=0
	0%	0%

Some students also reported an improvement in their grades over the course of the program. **While 85 percent of students indicated earning at least a B average on the pre-survey, 92 percent reported so on the post-survey.**

Table 13
How are your grades on average?
(n=38)

Response Option	Pre-survey (n=38)	Post-survey (n=37)
Very high (A)	n=17	n=20
	45%	54%
Above average (B)	n=15	n=14
	40%	38%
Average (C)	n=3	n=3
	8%	8%
Below average (D)	n=0	n=0
	0%	0%
Failing (F)	n=0	n=0
	0%	0%

Students were also queried as to how they spend their time after school, but demonstrated little change over the course of the program. Following *JA Company Program*, students were more likely to report talking on the phone/text messaging, or hanging out with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Other changes were not statistically significant (**Table 14** on the following page).

Table 14
What do you usually do after school? (Please check all that apply)
(n=38)

Survey Question		Pre-test	Post-test	Significance Value (2-tailed)
1.	Watch TV	71%	71%	1.000
2.	Play video or computer games	18	34	.057
3.	Surf the Internet or chat online	50	55	.422
4.	Talk on the phone/text message	47	66	.006*
5.	Listen to music	68	76	.373
6.	Hang out with friends	45	58	.257
7.	Hang out with boyfriend or girlfriend	18	34	.012**
8.	Go to the mall	26	29	.711
9.	Play sports	50	50	1.000
10.	Martial arts	3	5	.324
11.	Dance lessons	8	13	.160
12.	Volunteer	45	37	.373
13.	Work	16	18	.661
14.	Chores	50	42	.413
15.	Babysitting	21	26	.422
16.	Homework	89	79	.210
17.	Participate in an after school program	63	61	.711
18.	Eat snacks	63	68	.600
19.	Play board games	5	16	.160
20.	Work on hobbies	29	32	.711
21.	Art	5	16	.044
22.	Band/Orchestra/Choir practice	18	18	1.000
23.	Read	47	50	.711
24.	Spend time with my family	50	47	.711
25.	Other	18	11	.373

*Indicates significance at the .01 level.

**Indicates significance at the .05 level.

Student Satisfaction

During the focus groups, students were invited to describe their expectations prior to the start of the program, whether the program had met their expectations, what their experiences were like during program meetings as they worked with their peers to implement their own JA Company, as well as their interactions with the JA volunteer.

According to the quotes below, students had different ideas about what the program would be like before the current JA Company Program series, and also differed in their opinions of the program after it began.

Expectations Prior to Program Start

- *“I think it’s going to be cool. We’re going to have a lot of fun with this...we’re working in our own store, get to sell things, something that usually teenagers don’t do.”*
- *“I think it’s going to be fun. Because it doesn’t have anything to do with adults or whatever. It’s us, and I think it’ll help us in the future.”*

Ability of the Program to Meet Students’ Expectations

- *“So this year it was a lot more work than I expected even though I was told it was going to be more work.”³*
- *“This year has definitely exceeded my expectations, because there are a lot of components involved in making a successful business and it’s a lot of work, communication. You definitely have to cooperate with other people in your group and you definitely have to set deadlines and meet those expectations.”*
- *“It’s okay, nothing special.”*
- *“I think it’s kind of fun.”*

When students were asked whether they felt the program was typical of a real world experience working in a company, their views were mixed. While they recognized similarities, they also understood that some aspects, such as the volunteer opening a bank account for them, were different from the normal functioning of a company. One student explained that it was difficult to convince others that their JA Company was a “real” company.

³ It should be noted that students from the Southern California site had participated in JA Company Program the year prior.

Real World Applicability

- “It’s realistic, but on a smaller scale.”
- “It’s there, but we haven’t taken advantage of it because we’re not on track. It should improve once we start selling our product.”
- “The timeframe is small, so we’re on fast-forward most of the time. We also have to have stuff done for us sometimes. [The volunteer] opened up our bank account.”
- “It’s like the real world because we’re dealing with co-workers and outside factors.”
- “It’s hard to convince people that we’re a real business.”

The Post-program Final survey examined students’ overall impressions of the program after completing the 12 *JA Company Program* meetings. Specifically, the survey addressed meeting likes and dislikes, program likes and dislikes, perceptions of meeting length and content difficulty, volunteer effectiveness, the program materials, and satisfaction with the program overall. A total of 14 satisfaction surveys were received from participating students at the Southern California site. A demographic description of the students who submitted satisfaction surveys is presented in a bulleted list below.

- In terms of gender, 64 percent were male and 35 percent were female.
- Students reported that they were 15 (n=2), 16 (n=7), 17 (n=3), and 18 (n=2) years old.
- The majority of students were in the 11th grade (n=9). Other grades represented in the sample included 9th (n=1), 10th (n=3), and 12th (n=1).
- Student’s self-reported ethnicities were as follows: Caucasian/White (n=10), Hispanic/Latino (n=2), Asian (n=2), Palestinian (n=1).
- Eight students had participated in JA programming prior to *JA Company Program*.

Most students attended all 12 *JA Company Program* meetings. Those students who missed meetings cited family obligations, illness, school events, and “other” reasons (**Tables 15 and 16** on the following page).

Table 15
Student Responses to the Question:
Did you attend all 12 meetings?
(n=14)

Response Option	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	n=11	79%
No	3	21

Table 16
Student Responses to the Question:
If no, why not?
(n=14)

Response Option	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Family obligation(s)	n=2	14%
Illness	1	7
School event(s)	1	7
Other	1	7
Transportation problem(s)	0	0
Lost interest	0	0
Too much homework/had to study	0	0

Most (n=13) students felt that the length of the meetings was “just right” (Table 17 on the following page). However, during the focus groups, several students expressed concerns over time constraints. Their comments are presented below and suggest that some would prefer longer meetings or a greater number of meetings during the program.

- *“To me it’s mostly the time constraints.”*
- *“You can’t finish the entire company program in 11 meetings. There’s no way it’s possible.”*
- *“I think [the curriculum] was much too strict to the actual meeting one, meeting two, meeting three...If you stick to it like that, you’ll never get done and you’ll never go anywhere. You need to kind of take it as it comes and still have the structure, but make it fit your product.”*
- *“We can’t accomplish as much during the once a week meetings as we could if we met more often.”*

Table 17
Student Responses to the Question:
What did you think about the length of the meetings?
(n=14)

Response Option	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Just right	n=13	93%
Too short	1	7
Too long	0	0

All students (n=14) indicated that the *difficulty* of the meetings was “just right” (Table 18).

Table 18
Student Responses to the Question:
What did you think about the information you learned in the meetings?
(n=14)

Response Option	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Just right	n=14	100%
Too easy	0	0
Too hard	0	0

Students varied widely in terms of their most and least favorite meetings. Most favorite meetings included Meetings 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 12. Least favorite meetings included Meetings 1, 3, 6, 8, and 10. However, students were most likely to report that they could not remember their most or least favorite meetings.

Table 19
Student Responses to the Question:
What was your most/least favorite meeting?
(n=14)

Response Option	Most Favorite		Least Favorite	
	Sample Size (n=14)	Percentage of Respondents	Sample Size (n=12)	Percentage of Respondents
Meeting 1	n=0	0%	n=2	14%
Meeting 2	0	0	0	0
Meeting 3	2	14	2	14
Meeting 4	2	14	0	0
Meeting 5	0	0	0	0
Meeting 6	1	7	1	7
Meeting 7	0	0	0	0
Meeting 8	1	7	1	7
Meeting 9	3	21	0	0
Meeting 10	0	0	2	14
Meeting 11	0	0	0	0
Meeting 12	2	14	0	0
Don't remember	3	21	4	29

Students liked working in departmental groups most, and liked Student Guidebook activities least. “Other” activities students liked most included earning money, learning, pitches, and sales.

Table 20
Student Responses to the Question:
What did you like most/least about this program?
(n= 14)

Response Option	Like Most		Like Least	
	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Student Guidebook activities	n=0	0%	n= 12	86%
Class activities	2	14	0	0
Board meetings	1	7	0	0
Working in departmental groups	5	36	0	0
Class discussions	1	7	2	14
Communicating with business professionals	0	0	0	0
Other	4	29	0	0

Over half of the students found the Student Guide to be “easy to read and understand” (n=8), while they were more apt to report that they were unsure about whether the glossary defined words they did not understand (n=8) or that it had information that helped them to understand the information being taught in the lessons (n=7).

Table 21
Student Responses to the Statement:
The Student Guide...
(n= 14)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Was easy to read and understand.	n= 1 7%	n=0 0%	n=5 36%	n=5 36%	n=3 21%
Had definitions for words I didn't know in the glossary at the back.	n= 1 7%	n=0 0%	n=8 57%	n=5 36%	n=0 0%
Had information that helped me to understand the things being taught.	n= 1 7%	n=0 0%	n=7 50%	n=5 36%	n=1 7%

When asked how JA could make the materials better, almost half of the students (n=6) indicated that more content should be added to the materials (**Table 22**).

Table 22
Student Responses to the Question:
How could JA make their materials better?
(n=14)

Response Option	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Add more content to the materials	6	43
Better graphics	5	36
Brighter colors	3	21
Easier to understand	2	14
Put the materials in a different order	2	14
Other	0	0

In addition to quantitative data about the materials collected with the satisfaction surveys, focus group participants were also asked to provide feedback about the program materials. According to their comments, some students would have liked a greater level of detail in the Student Workbooks. Others experienced difficulties when they attempted to use the CD-ROM included with the program materials. Of greater concern, at one site students reported that the volunteer had not distributed the Student Workbooks, but rather, verbally explained the program to them.

- *“The student workbook doesn’t provide information on how to develop a business proposal. I had to go online and talk to people to get information.”*
- *“The CDs wouldn’t work in our computers.”*
- *“[The volunteer] didn’t hand out [the Student Workbooks]. He gave us all our positions and then he was like, ‘Well, this is your position; this is what you’re supposed to do.’ He didn’t actually give out all of the books and everything that came in the packet.”*

As displayed in **Table 23** on the following page, **most students responded positively to all questions about the volunteer (n=8-13)**.

Table 23
Student Responses to the Statement:
The Volunteer...
(n=14)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Was well-prepared for the meetings	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=4 29%	n=4 29%	n=6 43%
Arrived on time to the meetings	n=1 7%	n=4 29%	n=1 7%	n=4 29%	n=4 29%
Explained things so that I could Understand them	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=1 7%	n=8 57%	n=5 36%
Presented the program in a interesting way	n=0 0%	n=2 14%	n=4 29%	n=3 21%	n=5 36%
Was a role model I could look up to	n=0 0%	n=1 7%	n=3 21%	n=6 43%	n=4 29%

Almost all students (n=13-14) indicated that JA Company Program was fun, interesting, a great learning experience, and worthwhile (Table 24).

Table 24
Student Responses to the Statement:
Overall, the JA Company Program was...
(n=14)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fun	n=0 0%	n=1 7%	n=0 0%	n=3 21%	n=10 71%
Interesting	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=4 29%	n=10 71%
A great learning experience	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=4 29%	n=10 71%
Worthwhile	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=0 0%	n=2 12%	n=12 86%

Almost all students indicated that the program had helped them to improve in a variety of skill areas necessary to work effectively in a business environment, such as communicating effectively with others, managing time effectively, and working with people from different backgrounds and cultures (Table 25 on the following page).

Table 25
Student Responses to the Statement:
The JA Company Program has helped me...
(n=14)

Response	Not at all	A little	A lot
Communicate effectively with others	n=1	n=5	n=8
	7%	36%	57%
Solve problems	n=3	n=4	n=7
	21%	29%	50%
Think creatively	n=3	n=6	n=5
	21%	43%	36%
Make good decisions	n=3	n=6	n=5
	21%	43%	36%
Manage time effectively	n=1	n=4	n=9
	7%	29%	64%
Communicate more clearly in writing	n=4	n=4	n=6
	29%	29%	43%
Budget money	n=2	n=6	n=6
	14%	43%	43%
Work as a member of a team	n=1	n=5	n=8
	7%	36%	57%
Be a leader	n=2	n=4	n=8
	14%	29%	57%
Negotiate	n=0	n=8	n=6
	0%	57%	43%
Talk to adults who I don't know	n=2	n=5	n=7
	14%	36%	50%
Use computers to manage a company	n=2	n=4	n=8
	14%	29%	57%
Work with people from different backgrounds and cultures	n=2	n=7	n=5
	14%	50%	36%
Make presentations to large groups of people	n=0	n=6	n=8
	0%	43%	57%
Make contributions to my community	n=2	n=4	n=8
	14%	29%	57%

All student respondents (n=14) agreed that they would recommend JA Company Program to a friend.

Table 26
Student Responses to the Question:
Would you recommend this program to a friend?
(n=14)

Response Option	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	n=14	100%
No	0	0

Students’ mean rating for their satisfaction with the program overall was nine on a 10-point scale.

Table 27
Student Responses to the Question:
On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being totally unsatisfied and 10 being completely satisfied, how satisfied were you with the program overall?

Sample Size	Mean
n=14	9

In addition to quantitative data collected with the Post-program Final surveys, during the focus groups, students were also asked to what they liked most and least about the program, as well as to make recommendations to improve the program.

In terms of what they liked most, students enjoyed making their own decisions about the departments they would work in the product they would sell. They also addressed the “real world” experience they gained from *JA Company Program*.

Liked Most

- *“I like the process of choosing the product, because I liked how we would get in and we would debate on which product was best and try to think about what our population would like the most.”*
- *“I like how it’s so hands on that we get to make the decisions that affect the whole company.”*
- *“I really love stocks...I mean, when you buy bread at the supermarket you’re getting something for it. When you buy stocks, I mean, it’s just trust and you’re selling nothing, kind of. And I’m hoping that it’ll go up, and it’s kind of a whole different dimension of business. I think it’s interesting.”*
- *“I just think it’s really cool to be learning things at school but then coming here and learning things that could actually apply.”*
- *“This kind of gives me a mini version of what the real world will be like.”*
- *“The idea of starting my own business and being able to achieve that goal.”*
- *“Picking my own department.”*
- *“The volunteer let us to pick our own company and we get to continue on to another project with him if we work hard.”*

Though comments about what they liked least were rare, a handful of students mentioned challenges working with other students, and suggested that the application process to participate in the program should be more serious so only top students would be allowed to participate.

Liked Least

- *“Sometimes the debates get really heated and people would say ridiculous things.”*
- *“I don’t know how to motivate my department. I wish [the other students] were more committed.”*
- *“The application process should be more serious.”*

And finally, when making suggestions to improve the program, comments included requests for an option for class credit, that the JA volunteer be more strict regarding student attendance, and that the first Meeting or a pre-program session offer an overview of the program so students know what to expect.

Suggestions to Improve the Program

- *“All we want to do is make this into a class for next year. How about a 10th grade class and you’ll get credit for it?”*
- *“A luncheon or something like that, whatever you call those, like where we all meet up, all the business kids, so we could just talk to each other and be like, guess what, what went on with you.”*
- *“I wish they gave us more help on how to do proposals and contact businesses.”*
- *“There should be an overview of the program in the beginning so we know what we’re going to be doing.”*
- *“Representatives from real company departments should be invited to come and talk.”*
- *“There should be less students.”*
- *“The volunteer needs to be stricter when it comes to attendance. Only the people who are dedicated should get to be here.”*
- *“We should learn about all the departments, not just the one we are in. Working in one department isolates you.”*
- *“We need examples, like of a business plan. It’s hard to do it without a model.”*

- “Raise the price of the stock...because we’ll get more money!”

Classroom Observation Narrative

To provide first-hand evidence of how the program was implemented at participating schools, ETI staff members conducted classroom observations at three program sites. **Table 28** below displays the program sites observed.

Table 28
Breakdown of Classroom Observations

JA Area Office	Program Site	Meeting Observed	Date
Pompano Beach, FL	Wayne Huizenga School of Business at Nova Southeastern University	Meeting 7	March 10, 2007
Los Angeles, CA	Westlake High School	Unclear	March 19, 2007
Owings Mills, MD	Druid Hill YMCA	Meeting 2	May 17, 2007

Pompano Beach, FL

During the Florida observation, an ethnically diverse group of students from the 9th through 12th grades were in attendance at Meeting 7 of the series. The volunteer began the meeting with a review of stocks and certificates. Following this brief discussion, the volunteer asked the Company President to provide an update of the Company’s progress thus far. The President moved to the front of the room and presented an advertising sheet to the group that had been developed by a student from the marketing department. Students critiqued the flyer, making suggestions for improvement before it would go to print. They planned to use the flyer to sell the Company’s product, discounted tickets for two local roller skating rinks/video arcades.

Students discussed the need to use a “supporting cause” when selling the tickets, meaning that they would explain to potential buyers that profits made on the sale of the tickets will go “directly back to JA.” Students also discussed difficulties they had experienced while trying to sell the tickets over the course of the past week.

Following this discussion, the volunteer stepped in, asking that students review the business plan for their Company. The Company President proceeded to write the business plan on the board, explaining that the skating rinks/arcades had agreed to sell them tickets at a reduced price which the students in the JA Company would in turn sell for a profit. The President experienced some minor difficulty with the financials of the business plan, so the volunteer assisted her to clarify the costs of the tickets, how much they would be sold for, and the profits that students expected to earn on the sales. The volunteer remained in an assistive role, allowing students to discuss their experiences and challenges, and to come up with their own suggestions about how to increase product sales.

During the observation, the volunteer demonstrated an excellent rapport with students. The group was on track according to the program timeline and covered the material as it was laid out in the curriculum. Students participated actively during the meeting and most appeared to be engaged.

Los Angeles, CA

The Los Angeles site was unique in that most students had participated in *JA Company Program* the previous year. Students were recruited for the program from a single, high performing school site.

Over the course of the observation it became clear to the ETI staff member observing the program that few of the students, except for the President and a small number of other department heads, had read the program materials. The students reported that during the previous year they had followed the curriculum very closely and thus they already had the necessary content knowledge and did not see the need to follow the meeting schedule for the current *JA Company Program* year.

The president provided an update on the *JA Company* status, including a quick overview of the product development cycle. Students planned to sell a discount card, which would allow discounts at local retail businesses. A printing deal had already been made to print the discount cards and the students voted on discount card graphic designs. They agreed that the cards would follow a casino theme and card designs included poker chips and playing card images.

The various departments then presented business plans. Many business plans were not finalized, but most included a PowerPoint. Discussion about business plans was kept to a minimum, except for one department: Sales. Sales gave a presentation without any visual aids, but this presentation included a discussion about possible local retail establishments where their product could be sold. After the presentations were complete, each department worked independently on department-specific tasks.

During the observation students were highly self-regulated and organized the meeting without much direction from volunteers. The meeting was well-organized and student-led, with the student President and “CEO” directing group activities. The volunteers gave periodic feedback throughout the meeting, but assumed a peripheral role during all student discussions. Students solicited opinions from the volunteers, but, in many cases, functioned independently. They were able to report clearly about their departments and set clear deadlines for *JA Company* goals such as sales responsibilities, web site development, etc. During the observation, department heads supervised and organized their staff, both during presentations of their various business plans and during department group work.

Baltimore, MD

In Baltimore, *JA Company Program* was taking place at a local YMCA where participating students go to the site every day after school throughout the school year. Normally, students participate in sports and arts and crafts activities. *JA Company Program* was integrated into the YMCA's typical, recreational after school programming by a YMCA staff member on a weekly basis.

On the day that the program was observed *JA Company Program* was scheduled to be held from 4:15 to 5:00 p.m. The volunteer had opted to shorten the length of the meetings to 45 minutes, relating, *"I think after 45 minutes I think they want to do something else."* During the observation a group of eight students trickled into the room over a 30 minute period during which time no program activities took place and students largely chatted amongst themselves. At 4:55 p.m. the program as it was led by the volunteer began. The volunteer did not distribute the Student Workbooks, but rather, provided a brief (10 minute) lecture that addressed the responsibilities of the various department heads, how to pitch stock sales, and explained that the purpose of the program is for students to make money by increasing the price of goods they will purchase for a store that they will open at the YMCA. It was clear to the ETI staff member that the program was not being implemented as outlined in the curriculum, but rather, the volunteer was selecting the topics he felt were most important and describing them to students in his own words. During the interview, the volunteer related, *"I had to make it fun. I couldn't make it the way I was taught. So I had to make it fun for them to understand what it was to consist of. The book text, the textbook, I had to read over it to summarize myself. I couldn't really go through the textbook over it with them. It was boring."* Most students appeared disengaged, and when the volunteer posed questions about how they might move forward with their project, did not have a clear understanding of the program or their roles in it. After approximately 20 minutes of program time, students left to play basketball.

Observation Summary

As is evidenced by the observation narratives above, the three sites varied widely in terms of program location, student composition, and volunteers' and students' use of the curriculum and program materials to guide the meetings.

The Los Angeles site was comprised of an experienced and high-functioning group of students who required little in the way of assistance from the volunteer and chose to implement their Company with little reference to the program materials. The Company in Florida resembled most closely the curriculum and participant roles as described in the curriculum. Students appeared to be moving through the meetings in sequential order, taking on leadership roles and utilizing the volunteer as resource who provided assistance as necessary to keep students on track. And finally, in Baltimore, the program volunteer had chosen to pare down the content of the meetings to little more than brief lectures, opting not to distribute the Student Workbooks and resulting in a high level of confusion among participating students as to the purpose of the program and their roles within it.

Volunteers and JA Staff

As previously mentioned, volunteers and JA staff responded to online surveys after completion of the program. Two volunteers and three JA Area Office staff members submitted *JA Company Program* post-surveys. The following section reports the key findings gathered from these surveys across the two types of respondents. Whenever applicable, supplemental information from the focus groups is presented.

Volunteer and Staff Profiles

Both volunteers indicated that they had volunteered for JA two times previous to the current *JA Company Program* series. These individuals identified themselves as founder and president of their respective organizations. One volunteer was African American/Black while the other was Caucasian/White.

JA Area Office staff participating in *JA Company Program* evaluation had been working for JA for seven years, on average (**Table 29**).

Table 29
Number of Years at JA
(n=3)

Number of Years	Sample Size
4 years	n= 1
6 years	1
10 years	1
Mean:	7

Volunteer and JA Area Office Staff **Perceptions of Students' Engagement and** **Reactions to the Program**

As displayed in **Table 30** on the following page, both volunteers reported that their classes included 12th grade students, while single volunteers taught the curriculum to 9th, 10th, or 11th grade students. All staff members reported that 9th and 10th grade students participated in the evaluation, while two of three recruited classes with 11th and 12th grade students.

Table 30
Grade Levels that Received JA Company Program
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=3)

Grade Level	As Reported by Volunteers	As Reported by Area Office Staff
9th Grade	n=1	n=3
10th Grade	1	3
11th Grade	1	2
12th Grade	2	2

As an alternative index of student satisfaction, volunteers were asked to report on student interest, participation, and enjoyment in the program. As displayed in **Table 31**, **both volunteers (n=2) either agreed or strongly agreed with each statement posed, indicating that they observed students to respond positively to the program.**

Table 31
Volunteer Level of Agreement with the Statement:
Please rate your level of agreement with each statement as it relates to students' reactions
(n=2)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Students were interested in the program's topics	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0
Students actively participated in the sessions	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
The students worked well together in groups	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
Students were respectful of me	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
Overall, students enjoyed the program	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0

When focus group/interview participants were asked to describe students' reactions to the program, the following quotes were provided. Mirroring survey responses, the majority of their comments were positive. One volunteer expressed the opinion that the students would benefit from a deeper level of information than is provided in the curriculum as it now stands.

Volunteers' Comments on Students' Reactions to the Program

- "They're very excited."
- "Students are reacting great to the program. It has been a challenge to go deep on a subject as the curriculum provides surface information and is constantly moving forward. Also, when the students reach a set-back they don't realize that's a normal part of business."

JA Area Staff Comments on Students' Reactions to the Program

- *“They’re really enjoying the program, are engaged.”*
- *“Terrific because this program is interesting...the feedback that I’m getting is good.”*
- *“Students are responding well to the program, but need more ‘fire’ [i.e. motivation]. Their excitement has slowed down a bit but I expect that it will pick up.”*

Volunteers also commented on students' likes and dislikes during the focus groups and interviews. A representative list of their responses is listed below and suggests that students enjoyed visual examples and learning about the various job roles within organizational departments. One volunteer explained that students preferred the first several meetings which are largely led by the volunteer, but that when students were expected to take the lead in their own departments, that they became less excited.

Students Liked Most

- *“Certainly the more visual, consensual meetings I think [they liked the most] and I’m not sure it’s part of the program or its just part of life. They enjoy looking at visuals; they enjoy talking about the business and so on.”*
- *“The main one they liked was when I explained to them what their job descriptions were. They enjoyed that because they did not know... the job titles of the chain of command, how it goes.”*
- *“The first few meetings were ‘whiteboard classes’ that the students found very engaging.”*

Students Liked Least

- “When the meetings were broken down into departments, the students were not as excited when they have to do it themselves.”

Volunteer and JA Staff Reactions to the Program Materials

JA Company Program is highly detailed and contains a variety of materials including the Guide for Volunteers and Teachers, Student Workbooks, posters, department-specific worksheets, and tools for use with specific program activities such as stock certificates, identification cards, sales order forms, and tracking envelopes, among others. To determine staff and volunteer reactions to the various items included in the program pack, the post-program surveys and focus groups were used to pose numerous questions about the program materials. Results from these lines of questioning are presented in **Table 32** on the following page and indicate that **volunteers and Area Office staff members who were familiar with the materials found them to be high quality, user friendly, and to meet the needs of the program.**

Table 32
Volunteer and JA Staff Responses to the Statement:
Please rate your level of agreement with each statement as it relates to the instructional materials
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=3)

	Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The materials facilitated easy preparation for the meetings	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=0	n=2	n=0
The Volunteer Guide was easy to understand	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=0	n=2	n=0
The Volunteer Guide provided a practical, step-by-step description for each meeting	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=0	n=2	n=0
The "Teaching Tips" in the Volunteer Guide were a useful feature of the Guide.	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=1	n=0
The Volunteer Guide and student materials worked well together	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=0	n=2	n=0
The materials were free of stereotyping or bias	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=0	n=2	n=0
The materials were attractive	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=1	n=0
The materials were of good quality	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=1	n=0
The materials appealed to me	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=1	n=0
The materials held the students' attention	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

In addition, when asked to rate the program materials overall, all volunteers and JA staff members rated the materials as good, very good, or excellent.

Table 33
Volunteer and JA Staff Responses to the Statement:
Please rate the overall quality and effectiveness of the JA Company Program materials
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=3)

Respondent	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
JA Staff	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=0	n=2

Effectiveness of the Program Materials

During the focus groups, volunteers and JA Area staff were each asked to rate the program materials and manipulatives in terms of their effectiveness as tools to facilitate student learning and to accomplish the program activities. Participants were asked to rate the items using a one-

to-five scale with five as the highest rating. A summary of their responses is displayed in **Table 34**.

Table 34
Focus Group Findings
Effectiveness of Program Manipulatives to Facilitate Student Understanding
(Volunteers: n=3) (Area Office Staff: n=3)

Item	Respondent	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Mean
Guide for Volunteers and Teachers	Volunteer	4	5	5	4.7
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Student Workbook	Volunteer	2	3	3	2.7
	Staff	4	5	5	4.7
Department Overview Poster	Volunteer	2	1	5	2.7
	Staff	4	5	5	4.7
Program Timeline Poster	Volunteer	2	1	5	2.7
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Business Opportunity Poster	Volunteer	2	3	3	2.7
	Staff	4	5	4	4.3
Charter	Volunteer	2	5	5	4.0
	Staff	5	5	4	4.7
Sales Chart Poster	Volunteer	2	5	5	4.0
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Materials CD-ROM	Volunteer	4	1	3	2.7
	Staff	5	5	4	4.7
Blackline Masters Packet	Volunteer	4	1	5	3.3
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Job Application Pad	Volunteer	1	5	4	3.3
	Staff	4	5	5	4.7
Stock Certificates	Volunteer	5	5	5	5.0
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Identification Cards	Volunteer	1	3	5	3.0
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Stockholder Record Envelope	Volunteer	1	5	5	3.7
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Sales Order Forms	Volunteer	1	5	5	3.7
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Sales Tracking Envelopes	Volunteer	1	5	5	3.7
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0
Product Labels	Volunteer	1	5	5	3.7
	Staff	4	5	5	4.7
Sales Order Envelope	Volunteer	1	5	5	3.7
	Staff	5	5	5	5.0

While the JA Area Office staff consistently rated each item at the top of the scale, volunteers from two of the three sites were more critical in their ratings of some items. To better understand why volunteers selected the ratings that they did, for any items receiving a rating below a four, interview participants were asked to explain why they had selected a particular

rating. Examples of volunteers' responses are below and suggest that the reasoning behind low ratings was highly divergent. One volunteer felt that a number of the program materials/manipulatives were "infantile" for the highly engaged, mature group of students that he was working with.

- *"When it comes to things like a job application pad, I think that's infantile for this group. This is a senior group, a 17, 18 year old group... a job application pad would have sort of denigrated that, really. ID cards were unnecessary. And the rest are sort of unnecessary in many regards, because these guys in the finance department... They have the whole thing laid out on an Excel spreadsheet, so they just don't need it."*

However, another volunteer chose low ratings for a number of items because he had opted not to use them in order to move through the program more quickly, or because he felt that the material was not fun enough to engage the students he was working with.

- *"I had to put the student notebook in terms of having fun. They didn't want to read word for word. It made it boring. So I had to use personal examples... and then go back to the book and let them know, that's what that means. Because if I go ahead and say, company values. And company values means this, these are the things that need to be company values, blah, blah, blah – they look at me like [they are bored]."*

In addition to those provided above, volunteers and staff members offered other suggestions and comments related to the program materials. A complete listing is provided below.

Volunteers

- *"I feel that the posters are very nice, but I feel that when they create their own thing that it's more productive."*
- *"Well, when you do a timeline, to me, when you do a department overview or a timeline, you're putting pressure on [the students]."*
- *"The Student Workbook has too much overview and needs more detail. It glosses over and needs more information on business and entrepreneurship in general; it's too focused on the Company aspect."*
- *"The Materials CD-ROM sometimes doesn't work or can't download materials. Some of the packages didn't have the CDs."*
- *"Students don't get the Business Opportunity Poster."*
- *"The Job Application Pad does what it's meant to do, but it's not relevant for entrepreneurs. It doesn't give information on what department they would be good at."*

JA Staff

- “No one is really using [the Blackline Masters Packet], they’re using the CD-ROM.”
- “The Business Opportunity Poster could be spunkier.”
- “The Charter contained confusing concepts to students because it’s not hands-on.”
- “Maybe add examples of real stock certificates, a marketing plan, etc. from recognizable companies.”

The post-program survey asked volunteers and JA staff for suggestions to improve the JA Company Program materials. As displayed, **two volunteers felt that the materials would benefit from added content and more activities.** The JA Area Office staff member who selected “other” suggested that the materials should contain “*more real examples from known companies.*”

Table 35
Volunteers and JA Staff Responses to the Question:
How can JA make the program materials better?*
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=3)

	Volunteers	JA Staff
Better graphics	n=0	n=1
Brighter colors	0	0
Easier to understand	0	0
Add more content to the materials	2	0
Add more activities to the materials	2	0
Put the meetings in a different order	1	0
Other	0	1

* Note this is a multi-response question.

All volunteers and staff members who submitted post-surveys reported that the glossary had adequately supported the session.

Table 36
Volunteers and JA Staff Responses to the Question:
Did the glossary adequately support the session?
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=3)

Response Option	Volunteers	JA Staff
Yes	n=2	n=2
No	0	0 ⁴

⁴ One Area Office staff member did not respond to survey items addressing the glossary or student engagement.

Volunteer and JA Area Office Staff Reactions to the Curriculum Content

After addressing the program materials, the post-program surveys queried JA Company Program volunteers and JA Area Office staff members about the content of the curriculum. In many cases volunteers were reluctant to rate the curriculum as it related to student reactions and engagement. JA staff members, however, were overwhelmingly positive in their ratings of the curriculum (Table 37).

Table 37
Volunteer and JA Staff Responses to the Statement:
Please rate your level of agreement with each statement as it relates to the curriculum
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=2)

	Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The curriculum encouraged students' creativity and imagination.	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0
The activities in the curriculum were hands-on.	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0
The activities in the curriculum varied from meeting to meeting.	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
The information in the curriculum conveyed the programs' concepts to students.	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0
The curriculum held the students' attention.	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
The curriculum resulted in a high level of student participation.	Volunteer	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0	n=0
	JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0

The volunteer post-survey also asked respondents if they had modified the curriculum structure, and if so, how effective the modification(s) was/were. Both volunteers indicated that they had modified the structure, and their explanations are below.

- “I added business planning, presentations, job interviews, and more.”
- “I added my own personal experience in business to supplement the material.”

When asked a similar question during the interviews/focus groups, volunteers provided a variety of examples in which they had modified or expanded upon the JA Company Program curriculum.

For example, volunteers assisted students to develop binders documenting their experiences, allowed them to fire company employees, described their own experiences in the workplace, and summarized the program content into their own words to retain student interest and/or facilitate student understanding.

- *“So I think it’s a great basis for teaching as opposed to the be all to end all. But I think for all volunteers, it allows you the proximity to add to it, which makes it more creative.”*
- *“They’re going to each come away with a binder that takes them from resume to company to our ending dinner.”*
- *“I’m going to bring in on a weekly basis, 20 minutes to half an hour, networking colleagues from different businesses.”*
- *“We allowed the students to fire company employees.”*
- *“The [Student Workbook], I had to read over it to summarize myself. I couldn’t really go through the textbook with them... They weren’t interested. So once I start telling them my way, then they understood, then I would bring down the book and I say, this is what this word means or this is what this title means.”*
- *“I had to use street terms or store terms for them to understand what the word meant.”*
- *“I added my own personal flair by adding business laws and real-life experience so they don’t feel like they are in a classroom; I include corporate culture since the curriculum doesn’t have this.”*

When queried as to whether they had added any materials or manipulatives to the lesson that were not included in the program materials, both volunteers agreed. One volunteer *“added principles of business and character development,”* while the other included *“business planning materials.”* Both individuals felt that the additions had been effective.

During the focus groups/interviews, volunteers and JA staff were also invited to provide general comments on the curricular content of the program. **Both volunteers and JA Area Office staff were largely positive about the JA Company Program curriculum, indicating that the content is accessible and meaningful and that students were gaining a valuable experience through their participation.** A representative sample of their quotes is provided below.

Volunteers

- *“I think [the program] is really good. At this age, from 9th to 12th, they really need this.”*

- *“The JA curriculum is awesome. I feel that I would have benefited from this class at that age. As an entrepreneur I can handle the curriculum. Everything’s covered.”*

JA Staff

Quality

- *“High quality. One of the best new products released over the past few years.”*
- *“The program contains valuable information...I have heard awesome, excited things from students.”*
- *“It’s really getting the job done.”*

Student Understanding

- *“By the time the kids are getting this material, they have learned some of these concepts in school and they can definitely, through their own fun that they’ve had in this program, my guess is, pay more attention in school when a concept comes up about the economy. Because it’s like, oh yeah, yeah, that’s right, we did learn about that.”*
- *“This group of students understands the concepts. In the past, some students got the concepts and some didn’t.”*
- *“Students are able to connect the material to the real-world, but they would understand better with more real-life examples so they could connect more to daily life.”*

Impact

- *“In school and also as consumers, I think [students are] making good connections and good decisions based on what they’ve learned.”*

Volunteer and JA Staff Reactions to the Program Overall

In the post-program surveys and during the focus groups/interviews volunteers and JA staff were asked to report on their satisfaction with various aspects of the program such as meeting and program length, interactions between Area Office staff members and volunteers, and volunteers’ comfort level and level of preparedness with/to present the lessons.

Volunteers’ Comfort Level and Level of Preparedness

When asked to report on their personal experiences teaching the *JA Company Program*, volunteers reported that they felt comfortable and well-prepared to teach the program.

Table 38
Volunteer Level of Agreement to the Statement:
I felt comfortable teaching the *JA Company Program*
(n=2)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0

Table 39
Volunteer Level of Agreement to the Statement:
I felt well-prepared to deliver the *JA Company Program* curriculum to the students
(n=2)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0

Time

All volunteers reported that they were able to complete the material in the recommended time.

Table 40
Volunteer Level of Agreement to the Statement:
I was able to complete the material in the recommended time
(n=2)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0

However, staff and volunteers varied in their attitudes about meeting and program length. Volunteers who indicated that the meeting/program length were not ideal were asked to qualify their answers. Volunteers related:

- “Because of the lack of time and the length of time one has to get this going, I think that the pace has to be changed a little bit.”
- “I don’t have time to go deeper because of time limitations. Make the meetings longer or increase the number of meetings.”

Table 41
Volunteer and JA Staff Responses to the Question:
On average, the length of the weekly sessions was...
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=2)

Response Option	Volunteer	JA Staff
Just right	n=1	n=1 ⁵
Too short	1	1
Too long	0	0

Table 42
Volunteer and JA Staff Responses to the Question:
The length of the program overall was...
(Volunteers: n=2) (Area Office Staff: n=2)

Response Option	Volunteer	JA Staff
Too short	n=1	n=0
Just Right	1	2
Too long	0	0

In addition, volunteers were asked how much time they spent, on average, preparing for each program session. **Both volunteers indicated that they spent between one and two hours preparing for each session.**

JA Staff Interaction with Volunteers

To determine JA Area Office staff members' experiences working with *JA Company Program* volunteers, the post-survey asked a series of questions directly addressing their interactions. While two staff members felt that the level of support required of *JA Company Program* volunteers was similar to other programs they had been involved in, another felt that the volunteers for *JA Company Program* required a greater level of support.

Table 43
Level of Support provided to the JA Company Program Volunteers

Response	Frequency
Low level	n=0
Average level	2
High level	1

When asked to qualify their answers about the level of assistance volunteers required, Area Office staff offered the following explanations.

An Average Level of Support

- “Having previously taught JA’s programs, the volunteers seemed at ease.”

⁵ One Area Office staff member did not respond to survey items addressing program or session length.

- “[The volunteer] and I worked very closely so he assisted with working with the schools and getting kids to sign up for the program.”

A High Level of Support

- “They need more specialized training and support. This is especially pertaining to administrative issues like opening the bank account, tax issues, charters, etc.”

Despite differences in attitudes about the level of support volunteers required, as displayed in **Table 44**, all JA staff members reported that they had positive experiences working with the volunteers who delivered the program. The comments listed below support the ratings that they provided.

- “[JA Company Program volunteers] definitely need more hands-on management, but the return is worth the investment of time!”
- “[The volunteer] conducted two student company programs and put tons of time into the program. He is very passionate about the program and will be teaching again next semester.”
- “The volunteers were from the YMCA; usually they are comfortable letting me know if there are any problems. To my knowledge all went smoothly.”

Table 44
Overall Experience working with the JA Company Program Volunteers
(n=3)

Response	Frequency
Excellent	n=2
Very Good	0
Good	1
Average	0
Poor	0

Area Office staff were also asked to comment on how volunteers were responding to the program, as well as on the role of the volunteer in the success of the program. **The staff members reported that volunteers responded well to the program and emphasized their importance in delivering a high-quality curriculum to the students.**

Volunteer Reactions to the Program

- “[Volunteers] like it. The program is much better laid out than it used to be. They have everything they need.”
- “For some volunteers the after school setting is better time-wise.”
- “Volunteers like the program, but the time commitment makes it hard to recruit volunteers.”

- “This is definitely a lot more in-depth than the other programs. There’s a lot more commitment required from the teacher, the volunteer and the students.”

Role of the Volunteer in Program Success

- “Having a passionate volunteer makes all the difference. The volunteer, coupled with the program materials, has been great.”
- “In the delivery of the curriculum, the volunteer makes the difference.”

Volunteer Interactions with JA Staff

Conversely, volunteers were also asked to respond to questions about their interactions with the Area Office staff members who recruited and trained them. Both volunteers indicated that they had been contacted by JA Area Office staff between five and seven times during *JA Company Program* for general discussion and agreed or strongly agreed that the staff had always kept them informed (data not tabled). In addition, **volunteers agreed or strongly agreed with every statement displayed in Table 45 below, suggesting that their interactions with the Area Office staff members were helpful and positive.**

Table 45
Volunteer Level of Agreement to the Statement:
 Please rate your level of agreement with each statement as it relates to JA staff

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The JA staff always kept me informed	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
The JA staff were good listeners	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
The JA staff delivered top quality customer service in a timely and efficient manner	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
The JA staff kept their commitments and promises	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
I was satisfied with the support provided to me by the JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2	n=0	n=0
I had a good rapport with the JA staff	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0

Volunteer and JA Staff Satisfaction

The volunteer post-program surveys included several additional satisfaction items addressing respondents’ interactions with students and their willingness to volunteer with Junior Achievement in the future. **As is displayed in Tables 46 through 50, volunteers’**

experiences working with students were positive overall. Both volunteers agreed that they would like to volunteer with JA again, and would recommend volunteering for JA Company Program to their friends or coworkers.

Table 46
Volunteer Level of Agreement to the Statement:
 Please indicate how volunteering for JA Company Program has affected...

	Decreased a lot	Decreased a little	No change	Increased a little	Increased a lot
My sense of connection to young people...	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2
My respect for the capacity of young people to work as a group independently of an adult...	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1
My enjoyment or satisfaction in working with young people...	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=2

Table 47
Volunteer Level of Agreement to the Statement:
 Please rate your level of agreement with each statement as it relates to your experience

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I enjoyed volunteering for JA Company Program	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0
My participation in this program was personally rewarding	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=0

Table 48
Volunteer Responses to the Statement:
 I would like to volunteer with Junior Achievement again

Response Option	Frequency
Yes	n=2
No	n=0

Table 49
Volunteer Responses to the Statement:
 I would recommend volunteering for JA Company Program to my friends or coworkers

Response Option	Frequency
Yes	n=2
No	n=0

Table 50
Overall Experience volunteering for JA Company Program

Response	Frequency
Excellent	n=1
Very Good	n=1
Good	n=0
Average	n=0
Poor	n=0

Finally, during the focus groups, volunteers and JA Area staff were invited to share the program's greatest challenges and successes, as well as any additional suggestions for program improvement. Comments from both respondent groups are presented below.

Program Successes

Volunteers

- *“Teaching kids about business. That’s the success, because the world runs on business.”*

JA Staff

- *“I just think anyone who participates in this program, it’s a success. Because, even if it’s a loss at the end of the day, you had trouble selling stock – there’s just no better way to learn than hands on. And I don’t care if it’s cooking, mechanics, whatever. This is the best way to get a real perspective into a company.”*
- *“[The program is] very implementable.”*
- *“The program really changes [students’] lives... [they are] more engaged in school...it gives them hope, hands-on experience.”*
- *“The program gives students opportunities to be leaders of a department. Parents report that their children have opened up more, are developing their personalities.”*

Program Challenges

Volunteers

- *“Motivating the kids, I’d say. Getting them excited when you don’t have a group like this [of committed students]. I can see how difficult it can be because I’ve done it, or attempted to, and as a volunteer, there’s only so much you can do.”*

JA Staff

- “Recruiting high quality volunteers for the program.”
- “In this day and age [finding volunteers] that have that time to commit.”
- “Recruiting volunteers, especially for longer programs like JA Company Program, and volunteer retention.”
- “You know, the only thing about after school is the kids, the attendance rate isn’t always as consistent.”
- “Opening bank accounts... [State] laws make it difficult.”
- “It was a struggle setting up a bank account.”

Suggestions for Program Improvement

Suggestions to improve the program were offered by volunteers and Area Office staff. Among volunteers, suggestions were made to better include technology into the program such as through the JA website or provision of a DVD that introduces the program. Interestingly, while some volunteers felt that the program should be pared down to make it more fun or more easily applied to different age groups, others expressed the opinion that the program should be expanded and/or restructured.

Volunteers

- “You must use electronic means... I think the curriculum is missing in that regard.”
- “JA should make information available online on the JA website.”
- “There’s a section missing on technology. And I think it would be really great to teach someone how to write a basic email. What email etiquette is in terms of responding and saying, yes, I received it or whatever the case may be.”
- “I think market research can be really beefed up.”
- “The program should require [students] to create a biography instead of a job application.”
- “There’s not enough getting together of the volunteers, so there’s no brain trust.”
- “If you put a DVD in to show them how it’s created, it’s interesting, they see it... the DVD will show them, at least if the DVD is being made by another group of kids actually doing what

they're doing, they see it... That will help a lot because it will get their focus and it will get their attention."

- "I sort of see the whole program as needing to be staged, if you like, at different levels [for different ages], because things grow at different levels."
- "There's too much. It's good information for somebody that wants to really know business, but a person that really doesn't want to know business...make them break it down, a little more logic than paperwork, make it fun."
- "The meetings could be moved around. Since everything has to move so quickly, it makes more sense for the order to be: (1) decide on a product, (2) write business plan, (3) decide on name, (4) sell stocks, and (5) sell product."
- "Add more detail to the program and make it longer. It would make a greater impact on the students with more time."

Area Office staff were more likely to discuss the program's links to the "real world."

JA Staff

- "I would love to see, in a perfect world, more connection [to the real world]...the program taking it to the next level...adding a deeper career exploration piece...a road map for students to take with them."
- "The program needs more relevancy for students to the real world, such as 'this is how McDonald's does it.' The program doesn't connect the activities to real companies, and it could benefit from physical examples or videos of different business aspects."

IV. Conclusions

- Program students demonstrated a statistically significant increase in content knowledge over the course of the program.
- Students who submitted Post-program Final surveys:
 - Were satisfied with the program and volunteer.
 - Enjoyed working in departmental groups most and Student Guidebook activities least.
 - Found the program to be interesting, a great learning experience, and worthwhile.
 - Gained important business skills such as effective communication, time management, and how to work with others from different backgrounds and cultures.
- Volunteers and staff members found the program materials to be high quality, user friendly, and to meet the needs of the program.
- Volunteers and staff members who attended interviews/focus groups were largely positive about the curriculum, indicating that the content is accessible and meaningful and that students gained valuable experience through their participation.
- Staff members reported that they had positive experiences working with the volunteers who delivered the program.
- Staff members reported that volunteers responded well to the program and emphasized their importance in delivering a high-quality curriculum to the students.
- Volunteers reported that their interactions with staff were helpful and positive.

V. Challenges and Recommendations for Future Studies

While the conclusions above suggest that stakeholders who submitted data for the evaluation via surveys, interviews, and focus groups were largely satisfied with the program and that participating students gained valuable content knowledge about business and entrepreneurship, a number of challenges were experienced over the course of the evaluation. A small number of sites were initially recruited by JA Worldwide to participate in the study and a significant portion of the sample did not submit surveys (more specifically, neither student nor volunteer surveys were not submitted by the Baltimore, MD site), producing a small data set for the Final Report analyses that did not include feedback from approximately one third of the program participants recruited for the evaluation. As such, while findings from available respondents have been presented above, it is likely that results are not representative of the program as a whole.

It is recommended that a larger number of sites and classrooms be recruited by JA Worldwide for future studies of its programs, and that the Area Office staff members be held accountable for ensuring that survey data are submitted from program and control groups in a timely

manner. JA may also offer incentives to sites for their participation in evaluations of its programs to further ensure that a sufficient data set is collected for evaluations of its programs.

VI. Recommendations for Program Improvement

As was clear from the site visits and observations conducted by ETI, volunteers and students varied widely in their implementation of the program. *JA Company Program* is comprised of a lengthy and detailed curriculum which requires a high level of commitment and diligence from a high quality volunteer. While some volunteers had successfully implemented the program with students who were engaged and interested in the curriculum, the Baltimore site was indicative of the staff availability and student populations at many after school settings. If JA values *JA Company Program* as an after school program, it may be useful to develop a less detailed, more “fun” focused version of the program that conveys the core concepts of the curriculum but places fewer demands on students and volunteers who are unable to dedicate the time necessary to carry out the program in its current form. In this way, Area Office staff can offer the more detailed version to sites where the program is likely to be fully implemented as it is described in the current curriculum, as well as offering a less involved program for sites with inconsistent student attendance or less capacity to ensure the delivery of a time and commitment-heavy curriculum.

Other recommendations are as follows:

- Instruct the volunteer to give students an overview of the program prior to its start so they have a sense of how the program will flow from start to finish.
- Add specific examples of documents such as business plans and stock certificates from well-known companies that students can use as models.
- Revisit the CD-ROM as volunteers and students experienced difficulties with its use.
- Incorporate a greater use of technology, such as an overview DVD, training on appropriate email correspondence, and increased use of the JA website.

VII. Appendices

Appendix A: Student Surveys

Appendix B: Volunteer Survey

Appendix C: Area Office Staff Survey

Appendix D: Moderator's Guide for Students

Appendix E: Moderator's Guide for Volunteers

Appendix F: Moderator's Guide for Staff